

- Stop Press -

RHS Wisley

Last few seats remaining! **Coach trip on 20 June.** At the bargain price of £10 for members and £12 for non-members. Information Caroline/Graham 01923 679139

Sunday Plant Sales

On dry Sundays plants and other gardening related items are placed on a table outside the Shed to sell for Association funds. Do come along and take a look. Donations are gratefully received. As the growing season progresses it is hoped surplus produce can also be sold. If you have anything to spare – please either bring it down on Sunday or drop it off at 2 Mill Cottages. From 10.00am

Ian Getley

Ian will be out of action for a few weeks from July 1st. Pat will be standing in for him as Site Co-ordinator during his absence. Contact her on 01923 671277 in the first instance if you have any concerns relating to the allotments.

'Volunteers' needed

To help put up fencing around the site. Date to follow. Please email Barbara if you can help.

Dates for your diary

- 5 September BBQ and Sunflower judging competition
Last year we had a great time – so do try and come
- 5 December Christmas Disco

St Stephens Gardening Club Events

- 29 July ¹Bretingham Gardens
12 August ²Quiz Night. 7.30pm Greenwood Park
12 September ³Annual Show
How Wood School. 2.30-4.30pm

¹Bretingham Gardens

16 acres of gardens with over 50 island beds with more than 4500 varieties of perennials and more! £22 for members and £24 for non members. The coach departs from Bricket Wood, How Wood Shops and Chiswell Green. Further details from Martyn Dadswell on 01727 872127 or email martyndadswell@yahoo.co.uk.

²Quiz

Tickets £8:50 each with teams of six. Contact Martyn Dadswell. (Hopefully we can make up a team and give them a run for their money! - editor)

³Annual Show

Gardeners/allotmenters display their produce, flowers, photographs, etc. The trading hut will be closed but limited supplies will be available at the show.

Trading Hut

In Drop Lane, Bricket Wood. Open every Saturday from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. Offering a wide range of gardeners' requisites at very reasonable prices. You do not have to buy (we would like it if you did!) why not just pop in for a chat? Martyn

Messages from Ian

The site gets better and better – the best in the district! The judges from the 'Best Kept Village' competition were taken to see the site on June 5. Compliments were received from the judges who said the plots were clean and tidy and showed a strong community involvement. Thank you to everyone involved! This was a feather in our caps – the judges are not known for their generous remarks! Keep up the good work!

Fencing - You should have received an email from Barbara, following agreement by the Council to provide funds to upgrade site security. They request that BLAA provide a working party to expedite the job. Dates have not been agreed. If you haven't emailed Barbara but would be willing to help please let her know. (Barbara has already had a good response but more 'volunteers' needed).

Grass cutting and damage to fences - I have thanked the contractors for the good job done on the grass cutting and added that we hope this will continue.

No one has given me any details of strimmer damage to their fencing. I need plot numbers if repairs are to be arranged.

Manure - When manure is taken from the heap please leave it in a tidy state and NOT spread across the

parking area and over the wooden bollards used to protect the fences on adjoining plots. Also please put empty bags (and donate any others you acquire) in the large builder's bag so they are not blown about.

Security

3 security cameras have been purchased and will be installed in strategic positions.

Perimeter Chestnut fencing

The Council have now agreed to re-fence the site and have already received one quote. The maximum height of 6 foot has been requested. It is not known when this work will be carried out. We are grateful for their help. (See Ian's message)

Manure

Plot holders should be aware of the drawback of putting fresh manure directly onto their plots as whatever weeds the horses ingest come out the other end - ready to germinate! You are strongly advised to compost manure for at least 6 months and preferably a year or add it to your compost heap as an excellent accelerator.

You should be aware that the 'free' non-bagged heap contains a high proportion of bedding material. Decomposition seriously depletes the soil of nitrogen (your crops will turn yellow!). It is therefore suggested you let this stand for 12 months prior to use.

Please put used bags (together with any others you acquire) in the large builders' bag by the gate.

The Gate

Your committee are considering 3 options

1. an extension welded onto the existing gate to increase its height.
2. strong mesh attached to the gate making it difficult to climb
3. The purchase of a totally new gate.

Your views would be welcome!

Highlights from the AGM held in April

A full version of the unconfirmed minutes is available on the website.

Security

Site security remains high on the agenda and almost everyone now locks the gate behind them. Thank you!

Members welcomed the news that the Council have agreed to provide funding during the current financial year for fencing.

Relationships with the Council are positive resulting in significant benefits to the site.

Joint Allotments Group

Allotment societies in St Albans have formed a group with representatives from each site who regularly meet with St Albans Council to discuss matters of mutual

interest. Most of the matters discussed are common to all the sites and this Group will benefit us all.

Proposed New Council Rules

Various comments were made concerning the draft of the proposed new rules. These have been forwarded to the Council.

Pat's Poem

THE FIRST FEW MONTHS OF 2009

What a wonderful start to the year we have had,
Our New Year get together was really fab.
We had hot mulled wine and mince pies galore
Lovely company, laughter and more.
Then on to the Quiz Night, what a roaring success.
Generous winners giving way to our guests.
With our super plotters giving lots to our sale
The plants and cakes could never fail
To leave our stalls empty and put money in the pot
For all to enjoy, planting and preparing their plot.
Planting and sowing at this time of year
Has to be done, of this we are all clear.
Some seeds have been sown but we have been caught
on the hop,
That naughty Jack Frost has damaged our crop
The potatoes were burnt and legumes as well
But our broad beans and cabbages are doing swell.
Now the saying goes "Nere cast a clout till May is out"
So perhaps we should wait and not be in doubt
Till the beginning of June when all should be fair,
Let the temperature rise and the sunshine glare
Upon us all and help produce our treasures,
Experiencing such fun and many other pleasures.
Burydell is such a magical place to be
Peace and quiet blissful serenity.
So, our fellow plot holders let battle commence
With our veggies and flowers spare no expense,
Grow thick, fast and tall and have at least
A bountiful harvest and a delicious feast.

Social Events

Quiz Night 8 April

More than 80 people attended our first quiz night which will become an annual event. Only one minor hiccup and the evening ran smoothly and everyone had a thoroughly good time. Trophy's were engraved and presented to the winning team 'Redrum'. The event made a profit which will be ploughed back into association funds.

Our thanks to Derek for providing the trophies and to Caroline, her father and their team who worked hard to ensure the success of the event - editor.



Plant Sale 19 April

The sun shone as we purchased plants and other gardening related items, drank tea and ate cakes and scones. The event was well supported and it is hoped to make this an annual event. A profit went to association funds.

Thank you for your support and we hope to see you at future events – watch this space! Caroline – Social Secretary

Membership

Thank you everyone for your membership payment for our second year. Most plot holders on Burydell are members of the Association now, new 'plotters' having joined us for the year 2009/2010.

I have only had a plot for 2 years and I am told that the site has changed beyond recognition since all plots have been taken and are being cultivated – fewer rabbits because there is less cover for them now that the overgrown areas have been cleared, although a visit to the site in the early morning and evening will show that there are still plenty to be seen. Sadly it is difficult to stop the mice and pigeons eating our crops but that's nature.....

There is a waiting list of 18 for our site at the moment.

Great enthusiasm and a good community spirit prevails and this is reflected in almost 100% membership of our year old Association. Long may it continue!
Jan - Membership Secretary

Fund raising

Our books have now been audited for the year 2008/2009 and I am happy to say the accounts are all in order. We have small amounts of money trickling in thanks to Barbara's idea of having a plant sale each Sunday morning and the purchase of manure. Thanks to our members for supporting the fund raising ideas. It all helps to increase the bank balance to enable us to improve the site. Pat -Treasurer

Cartoon



A weed is a plant in the wrong place

How do you 'cultivate' your plot? Many 'weeds' are in fact edible. Packed with vitamins and minerals often having medicinal benefits Food foraging is fashionable. They are not called weeds but 'wild greens' and cost a fortune in upmarket restaurants. You could add some colour to your salad with Viola flowers?

To name a few Chickweed, Clover, leaves and flowers of the Daisy, White Dead Nettles, Brambles and Cleavers (known as Sticky Willy to school children). One of the worst weeds to eradicate - ground elder can be eaten as a spinach substitute.

Dandelion – the leaves cooked but more usually in a salad, the buds and flowers are all edible. Try adding some flower buds to a spaghetti sauce for an interesting taste.

Plantain – used in salads, teas and soups. Medicinal benefits include helping with asthma, bladder problems and to curb smoking desires. Also used topically as a poultice, with supposed antibacterial properties

Japanese Knot Weed - brought into the country as a decorative plant by the misguided Victorians and now causing huge problems as it forces its way through motor ways and into foundations of buildings – well you can eat the tips!

More information from Richard Mabey's Food for Free.

Favourite Garden Tool

In the mid 1970s we had a gardening club where I worked and I was introduced to the 'Daisy Grubber'. A hand tool looking like a two-pronged fork with a Uri Geller influence. This is a wonderful tool if you wish to 'potter', great for any long tap roots eg Thistles and Dandelions but intended for digging Daisies from the lawn. Because this tool is always to hand I frequently 'misplace' it, wherever I have been working - even in the compost heap. The cry goes up "I can't find..." and my long suffering husband asks questions such as "where did you last use it?" (well I don't know do I). Gradually the paint wore off the handle and it was the colour of the earth. My husband painted it turquoise quite sure I could never lose it again – do you want a bet!

Recipe

Have you tried growing Pak Choi? It really is an easy crop to grow, reliable and slow to bolt. There is still time to grow it this year.

Cut 450g into 2cm slices and steam until tender, about 3 minutes. Heat 2 tbsps of oil in a wok, add 1 tsp each of grated ginger and garlic and 2 skinned and chopped tomatoes. Cook for 1-2 minutes, then add the steamed pak choi, tossing together for 30 seconds. Add chopped spring onions, season with salt and pepper and serve with buttered noodles.

