



HARLOW HILL ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

For all Plot Holders and Associate Members



Our Summer allotment site

Welcome to the Summer 2023 Newsletter and hope all your plants are doing well.

It has been a bit of a funny year so far for gardeners, but what year hasn't been? This year, a long, wet spell throughout much of March and April gave way in mid-May to a long, dry, and often sunny period of weather and then the hottest June on record. Soon I was watering virtually every day. But it has been time and effort well spent: the seeds I set out in the open have germinated fairly well, and those I first set in pots have taken hold since planting-out and embarked upon a course of rapid growth - particularly the runner beans.

June isn't a good time for locally grown vegetables because it's too early for them apart from the rhubarb. In peasant societies June was regarded as the "hungry month": the previous year's supplies had run out and there was little if anything to take their place except boiled nettles. Then towards the end of June something miraculous happens and a time of scarcity becomes a time of plenty. Things start maturing – broad beans, strawberries, gooseberries, the first new potatoes, perhaps an early lettuce, even some peas. And however many years you've gardened and seen it all before, it still gives so much pleasure and delight, and makes it all worthwhile.

OPEN DAY A GREAT SUCCESS



Refreshments & Cake Stall



Plant Stall

Open Day on Saturday 3rd June was favoured with a glorious June morning, warm, sunny and dry, couldn't have been better. Lots of people came along, plot holders and their friends and family, local residents, members of other allotment societies. The major attractions were the Plant Stall and the Cake Stall. The Plant Stall on the ride not far from the main gate had a wide variety of good quality plants on sale plus lots of rhubarb. Many thanks to the plot holders who worked on the stall, the plot holders who contributed plants and produce for sale, and to the many people who came along to make purchases.

The Cake Stall in the gazebo at the far end of the main ride was very popular. On sale were lots of cakes and other delicious confections, plus tea, coffee and soft drinks. I much enjoyed the Dundee cake and it lasted for several days, each bite a delight. There were chairs and tables in and around the gazebo and many people had a sit down in the warm June sunshine with a cup of tea or coffee and enjoyed a natter with old and new friends. Thanks, in particular, to Sian and Tony for organising the refreshments, chairs and tables, thanks to the team that put up and took down the gazebo. Thanks to everyone who provided refreshments, and this included Balterzens and Bettys.

Richard Wriglesworth organised the Beans in the Jar competition – 50p for a guess at how many beans in the full Kilner jar. Far more than I thought!



*Little Huts & Flowers
Martin Hayes*

Many visitors also took the opportunity to have a look at the plots, and I'm sure they were very impressed. One of the visitors was Martyn Hayes a graphic designer in his day job, but also an artist who draws and paints in his spare time, mainly landscapes, buildings and people he sees around him. He always carries his sketch book with him. He thought the allotment site would make a nice drawing, which it did.

The event was a great financial success. The Plant Stall made £234, the Cake Stall £408.70, and Richard's beans £57.50, adding up to a grand total of £700.20. The proceeds have been donated to Harrogate District Foodbank and Resurrected Bites. Open Day was also valuable in contributing to our allotment association's success in being part of the Harlow Hill community. Local residents now know more about what it looks like inside the allotment gates, and how we do our best to be a good neighbour and a valued part of the local community.



Sian Gamble with visitors from Resurrected Bites

ALLOTMENTS FACEBOOK GROUP



We now have a new Facebook Group for Harlow Hill Allotments as an extra channel of communication and therefore effectiveness of our little community.

Images of our produce, allotment events, together with sharing tips and plants, will helpfully help us all to get to know each other more; to share our gardening experience, whether we are new or 'old hands'.

If you have been generous with your seed-sowing and have too many seedlings, or now have a glut of rhubarb, pears or apples, feel free to post it and let people know where they can pick them up. Or if you have slugs on your peas, maybe you have a top tip to share on how to get rid of them.

Let's see your happy face when you reap your beetroot – it all adds to the community spirit and sharing increases our enjoyment of our allotments.

So, if you are on Facebook, we hope you find this useful and another way to get to know and support one another.

Search for Harlow Hill Allotment Association and request to be added. This is a private group and only allotment holders will be admitted.

If you are not on Facebook, this will not replace emails, so you will not miss out on vital information.

At time of writing, only 36 people have joined the Facebook Group so please do have a look and help the group fulfil its potential.

Jayne Mitchell

BEEES RETURN?

Better news on the bee front – the bees nosing around one of the hives that I thought were robbing it are in fact a small colony. I don't know where they are from but hopefully, they will build up. I also intend to put another small colony up there which originate from Beckwithshaw. So, things are looking up and all the phacelia and borage will come in useful.

Peter Gregory

Editor: This update was dated 13th June, and we hope the good progress is continuing. The hives are at the back of the allotment shop.

WORK WEEKEND: JOB DONE

Work Weekend took place on a very hot weekend in late June. The hedges were cut on the ginnel footpath on either side of Beckwith Avenue; the ditch was cleared; the hedge from the ginnel gate to the shop was cut; the lawnmower shed on the main site was painted; the two benches outside the shop were painted, the box and the shop door were all painted; and a great deal of unwanted vegetation was removed from the Wildlife Area.

All these successfully completed jobs enable our allotment site to be well-maintained and continue to operate efficiently for all plot holders, to look attractive, and to fulfil its obligations to the local community and the walking public who use the ginnel.

Many thanks to everyone who came along to help on such a hot weekend, including at least one volunteer who isn't even a plot holder. (Phil - please pass on our thanks to your son.) Thanks too to those who took the bags of rubbish to the amenity tip.

Steph Byrnes



Job done!

WAITING LIST

So far this year 9 of our 122 plots have changed hands and 15 new people have joined the waiting list which now stands at 48. The last person to take a plot had waited 27 months. With this number of people keen to obtain a plot at Harlow Hill it is incumbent on all of us to keep our patches tidy and productive. If circumstances arise which make it difficult to keep on top of your plot, please make sure your committee member is aware of your plan to recover it.

Richard Wriglesworth

MOST IMPROVED PLOT



In 2022, Issy Holmes, plot 4B, was awarded the Roland Buckton Trophy for Most Improved Plot. Unfortunately, Issy wasn't able to attend the AGM in March to receive her trophy, so Richard awarded it to her on her plot.

GATE LOCKS

Following the theft of the locks from our entry gates, we had to buy new locks and change the code.

Please scramble the locks when you arrive at the site to avoid the same thing happening again.

PARKING

When parking at the allotment site please do not park too close to the cars of other plot holders and local residents. This applies particularly to parking in the cul-de-sac and on Beckwith Avenue

GOOD DISPLAY FOR JUDGEMENT DAY

Site Judgement Day was on Thursday 29th June and the Harlow Hill site looked good as the crucial day neared. Thanks to all the plot holders who put in that special extra bit of effort. The general standard at Harlow Hill was high and there were several really outstanding plots – good strong vegetables and flowers, lots of colour, and everything spick and span.

Three committee members chose our top 3 plots to show the judge – they were 6B(i) & 7A (One plot holder); 37A and 38B.

Feedback is that the actual site judging seemed to go well.

The judge was impressed by quite a few plots and stopped to congratulate a plot holder and chat with him. The judge asked a lot of questions about water butts, composting, environmental issues, bees, and links with the community.

The criteria for site judging takes into account the different sizes of sites, and the proportion of poor plots to good/satisfactory plots. The mark scheme included range and quality of the plants across the plots, maintenance of the site, environmental diversity, community participation, and overall impression. The results of the judging will be declared at the Allotments Show on Sunday 20th August.



Plot ready for judging

ALLOTMENT SHOP

The summer months are always a bit quieter for the Allotment Shop, so now we don't open in June and August and have just one Saturday opening in July.

We did a bulk order of Strulch in June and had just enough orders to buy the largest pallet of 48 bags. There were no spare bags for the shop this time – we don't have enough space to store another 48 bags and it's more expensive to buy the smaller pallets. I'm sure we'll be doing another order next year.

We've restocked the shop with Dalefoot Lakeland Gold. This is Dalefoot's traditional claybuster and autumn mulch. It encourages worms and enriches your soil. We use it to mulch our beds in Autumn usually mixed with the organic manure as we believe it improves nutrition and adds moisture retention.

The Shop will be open twice a month again from 9th September until 11th November. The dates are on our website, on the allotment gates and on our noticeboard.

It will soon be time for the Kings' Seed Catalogue and the Seed potato Order, so watch out for information about these.

Angela Dicken

HDAF NEWS

The Harrogate allotment site judging took place on 29th & 30th June. Simon Collier, retired head gardener from Valley Gardens and Rob Snow, Chair of Knaresborough Allotments & Self-Help Scheme were planned to be the judges. Unfortunately, Simon caught Covid-19 a few days before the judging, so Rob had to judge on his own – though he was supported by one HDAF committee member on each day who was there as an observer. Rob used our new judging scheme and mark sheets, which were compiled by a group of people from across the Harrogate District and agreed at the Site Chairs' meeting in March.

The results will be announced at the Allotment Show on Sunday 20th August. Certificates will be awarded to each site and there will be cups for the Top Site and Top Plot.

Angela Dicken

HARROGATE & DISTRICT ALLOTMENT FEDERATION ANNUAL SHOW

This year's HDAF Annual Show will take place in the Sun Pavilion, Valley Gardens on **Sunday 20th August**. The schedule and entry forms for the Show are available on our website www.harlowhillaa.org, on the HDAF website www.thehdaf.co.uk and hard copies are available in the shed next to the allotment shop and in the shed on the small site. **Entries need to be in by Thursday 10th August**. There's some advice and tips about entering the Show on the websites too.

You don't have to be an expert gardener to enter. You can enter as many classes as you like for just £3 (£1 for children) and there's something for everyone to enter – vegetables, fruit, flowers, baking etc. - so please consider having a go. Harlow Hill usually has the most exhibitors, so it would be good to keep up that tradition. We have a few families with children on site now, so I hope you will encourage them to enter too – there's lots of fun things like making a dinosaur out of vegetables, painting a picture of the King & Queen, making four mini pizzas, or making a bug hotel. There's a cup for the

child with the most points from Harlow Hill Allotments.



Four mini pizzas

Harlow Hill will be running the tombola stall again at the Show, so we'll soon be asking for gifts, toiletries, bottles, confectionery, children's toys etc. Details about where to leave these will be given nearer the time.

We'll also be looking out for helpers - for the tombola stall, for helping set up the Show (from 07.00 - 09.00) and clearing up (16.00 - 17.00). If you think you can help, please let me know email: dicken.angela@hotmail.co.uk

The Show is a charity event and this year proceeds from the Show will go to Ripon in Bloom to support their work in replanting Bedern Bank.

If you need more information about the Show or if you have any questions, please contact me.

Angela Dicken

BEWARE BLACK FLY



Black Fly is attacking the broad beans - as it usually does at this time of the year. It is recognisable by lots of little black flies at the top of the main shoot of the broad bean plant. After the black fly have feasted, the broad bean plant wilts, and no beans. For those who don't know the cure, it's a) vigilance, and b) when you see the black fly infested broad bean top, nip it out and the black flies with it.

A TAKEN-FOR- GRANTED GARDENING GADGET

We so casually take it for granted that it is easy to overlook the profound effects this humble machine has had on our lives and history. Certainly, I was unaware of it. Then a few weeks ago I was casually reading the May 2023 edition of "Garden", the magazine of the RHS, and buried amongst all the perennials, the innovative gardens, the plant trials, and the horticultural hints was this surprising article by Ben Dark on – you'd never guess – the lawnmower.



What appears to be the first lawnmower was patented by Edward Budding in 1830. It was adapted from cutting cylinders used in textile mills to trim the nap from cloth. When the patent ran out in 1855 the lawnmower ran amok. It not only transformed the suburban lawn and the municipal park (but a bit too early for allotments), it also helped to create modern sport. Think of football or cricket without a mown pitch! Or golf without mown greens!

Notions about what is a desirable lawn are now beginning to change. The supposed merits of the closely mown, chemically cosseted, weed-free lawn are being challenged, and lawns with a variety of lusty colourful species such as dandelions and self-heal among the grasses are being advocated. Allotment rides and paths may also soon come under review.

But part of the pleasure of having a lawn or fairly weed-free grassed area is that it provides an attractive contrast with a colourful flower border or vegetable plot, so the days of the lawnmower may not yet be numbered.

Keith Wadd

Please look after the site's lawnmowers:

- Don't use them on too low a setting - don't scalp the grass.
- Clean them after use – clean off the grass and carefully remove any string/twine that's caught in the blades.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

PICNIC ON THE PLOT	Sunday 6th August at 12.00
HDAF ALLOTMENT SHOW:	Sunday 20th August (deadline for entries Thursday 10th August)
ALLOTMENT SHOP OPEN	9th & 24th Sept, 7th & 22nd Oct, 11th Nov.

Please feel welcome to submit articles (even of a controversial nature), news, plant trials, photos etc.

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