



HARLOW HILL ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

SUMMER NEWSLETTER JULY 2022

For all Plot Holders and Associate Members

KEEP WATERING, BUT DON'T WASTE IT!

Welcome to the summer edition, and what weather we've been having! I started to compile this edition on 19th July with the temperature at 37 degrees and a record 40.3 degrees at Coningsby in Lincolnshire. We've been used to regarding long hot days, sunny skies and not a hint of rain as "good weather", but it's clearly no good at all for lots of purposes. In fact, if it carries on like this, apocalyptic disaster is not far away. Certainly for me as an allotment gardener, it hasn't been good weather this summer. As well as the incredibly hot weather, it has also been very dry and I have had to water my vegetables virtually every day for weeks on end. But it's water them, or lose them! If we don't, we jettison several weeks of tender, loving care that so far has kept the plants alive and well during this difficult summer. So keep watering! But don't waste water by pouring it on the ground where it isn't needed. Please make sure you fill up the butt after use, and make very sure you turn the tap off!!!



Sean's peas – plot 6A



Rose of Sharon and Valerian by the cul-de-sac gate

CHAIR AND SECRETARY NEEDED

At present, the Committee has no Chair and we shall soon need a new Secretary as Angela is standing down after the AGM next March. We have coped at Committee Meetings by having an acting Chair (actually several different ones) and this has worked well. However, the duties of the Chair are more than chairing the committee meetings and the AGM: our Chair is also our leader who not only represents us as and where necessary, but pushes and prods us in the direction we should be going.

Replacing Angela will be a very difficult act to follow, but it should be possible to share out some of the tasks that Angela has done. We cannot function properly without someone to manage communications; keeping our records up-to-date and working with the Chair and committee to ensure that everything that has to be done is done. Amongst other things, some computer skills are required. If you might be interested please contact Angela to find out more - it doesn't commit you at this stage.

Our allotment site cannot run effectively without people taking on these key roles, so please consider putting your name forward.

SITE MAINTENANCE, PETROL AND MOWERS

Gez Byrnes, plot 44A, has kindly agreed to take over the management of the site maintenance when Paul Knight steps down at the end of the year. This is another essential role, so we are very grateful to Gez for taking this on.

Many thanks also to Andrea Stanley, plot 38A, who has agreed to take on the maintenance of the gate padlocks.

We still need someone to take on the job of getting petrol for the mowers and checking them for any problems. This is a small but essential task if we are going to keep the grass mown. If this is something you could do, please contact Angela or Paul.



PLOT RENTS

Whilst it is some time before your rent will be due again, there are a couple of points to alert you to.

Firstly, as many of you will know, we rent the whole site from the Council and pay a site rent to them. The agreement is that the Council will increase our rent by CPI up to a maximum of 5%. As obviously inflation has been well over that this year, when the plot rent calculation is done in January, we will have to reflect the Council increase in your plot rent

Secondly, there are now 122 plots on our site. Due to the layout of the site and how plots have been split in the past, there are hardly two of the same size. Now whilst most of the plot rental work has been automated, with 122 different invoices, this still means a considerable amount of work for the Treasurer.

After some discussion, the committee has agreed to implement a banded system of plot rents, coming into effect from next season's (Feb 2023) rents.

Many other sites band their plots as full, half or quarter and charge accordingly. With the range of sizes on Harlow Hill this is impractical and so we will use a 10m² plot size banding. i.e. all plots sized between 40 to 50m² will have the same rent (based on a 45m² plot), and then the rents for each subsequent extra 10m² band (i.e. 50 to 60, 60 to 70 etc.) will also be calculated based on the midpoint size for each band. This will mean just 13 different invoices (and in the future potentially just 10 when larger plots are split), making the whole process much more manageable and less time consuming.

Of course, the consequence of this will mean that some people have a slightly cheaper rent and some a slightly more expensive rent. In most cases this will be less than £1 difference.

Chris Dicken, HHAA Treasurer

PICNIC ON THE PLOT

Saturday 6th August at 1200. The picnic will be held near to the Allotment Shop and the gazebo will be put up. Please bring food to share and come ready to have a good chat.



OPEN DAY- A GREAT SUCCESS

Open Day on the morning of Saturday 29th May was a great success. The weather was fine and warm, and lots of people came along, plot holders and nearby residents, and plot holders from other sites. There was a well-stocked plant stall, a cake stall and refreshments. Anna Spratt, plot 31C(i), organised some children's activities too. The newly-purchased gazebo showed it was up to the job, as well as being much easier to put up and take down than the old one. The plant stall raised £247.50 and the refreshments £275.10. A donation of £250 was made to each of our nominated charities: Resurrection Bites and Harrogate Homeless Project. Letters of thanks have been received from both.



Thanks to everyone who worked on the stalls, contributed plants and refreshments, or helped in other ways.

BEES NEWS



The bees came into last winter with only one very small hive which did not make it through the spring. Things are now looking up and there are bees in three of the hives – two from swarms and one from a transfer. The peak swarming period (May to June) is now over and there should not be any more swarms this year – although bees are very unpredictable at the best of times. If anyone notices any clouds of bees or a clump on a bush – then please let me know and I will come and investigate.

Bees have a “good press” these days, being seen as part of the environmentally friendly movement with stories about how much less yield would be from crops in their absence. The main interaction on the allotments would be with fruit trees (e.g. raspberries, blackberries, apples and plums) and also with annual herbs such as borage (a prolific self-seeder) and phacelia which is sometimes grown for “green manure”. I don't envisage that there will be masses of honey produced this year as the early forage crops have finished and the bees will have to rely on the later season such as willow herb and himalayan balsam. The latter plant is very controversial as some groups (e.g. Pinewoods and Harrogate Biodiversity) set up squads of “Balsam Bashers” to try to reduce it, as it is alleged to out-compete native species. The fact remains that it is a very good source of both nectar and pollen at a time of year when there are limited alternatives. As the bees can forage for up to three miles from their hive, I am sure they will find some shortly. As far as I can tell, the bees in situ are reasonably tempered i.e. they don't come at you and follow you around (unless someone out there knows differently). The priority for the bees at this stage is to try to get them in a good condition so that they can overwinter. In beekeeping, like allotmenting, this year has been ok – but next year could be really good.

Peter Gregory

Ed. Thanks Peter for an informative article.

Information for plot holders: the hives are at the back of the Allotment Shop.

BROWNIES VISIT THE ALLOTMENTS

Eight brownies from the Menwith Hill Base with their leader, another adult and some of the parents visited the allotment site on 5th May. They were shown what people grow on their allotments, planted some potatoes and lettuce, and had a look at the bees and the nature reserve. It was just a one-off visit, and seemed to be much appreciated.

WORK WEEKEND

Thanks to everyone who helped at the Work Weekend on 2nd and 3rd July. The hedge along the ginnel was cut (no small job), and the nearby ditch cleaned up. Most of the hedge up to the shop was also cleared.

Other site maintenance jobs that have been carried out recently are repairs to two of the mowers and a water butt on the small site has been raised and fitted with a tap to make it easier for nearby plot holders to access water.



Hedge trimmed at the Work Weekend



Refreshments at the Work Weekend

SITE JUDGING

The judging of the Harrogate Allotment sites took place on 8th & 11th July. Rob Gooderidge from Ripon Allotments and Rob Snow from Knaresborough were the two judges this year and they visited Harlow Hill on Friday 8th July. The judges wandered around the whole site and I explained some of the key events that had happened during the year such as our Open Day, Work Weekend, links to Resurrected Bites, Picnic-on-the-Plot etc. I also provided the judges with a folder containing our newsletters and policies. Three of our committee members had previously selected our top 5 plots and these were shown to the judges so that they could choose our top plot. As well as these excellent plots, sadly there were also several which weren't up to scratch and which let us down this year. Many thanks to the ride mowing teams, to those people who did make the effort and to those of you who made a particular point of cutting the paths between your plots and tidying up the edges around your plot. It does make a difference.

The sites are judged against set criteria and Gold, Silver Gilt, Silver and Bronze certificates awarded. The results will be displayed at the Allotment Show. The trophies for Top Site and Top Plot will be awarded at the end of the Show and the certificates will be distributed.

Angela Dicken

OUR TOP PLOTS

As mentioned above, three of our committee members chose our 5 top plots to present to the site judges. They were (in plot number order):

- 6Bi/7A - Sean & Helen Flynn
- 33Aii - John & Maureen Hammerton
- 37A - Angela & Chris Dicken
- 40A - Gerry Hansford
- 57B - Ken Windross & Linda Howling

Many congratulations go to these plot holders and well done on all your hard work. The judges' choice of our top plot will be displayed at the Allotment Show.



Ken Windross and Linda Howling's attractive blend of flowers and veg on Plot 57B.

WAITING LIST

There are 36 names on the Waiting List at the moment with the last person to have accepted a plot having waited 23 months. People on the waiting list have been invited to Picnic-on-the-Plot.

As we have such a long waiting list, it is incumbent on the committee to ensure that all plots are well-cultivated.

ALLOTMENT SHOP

We have continued with the shop opening and email orders as planned. The remaining opening times for this year are:

Month	Opening dates	Email order
September	10 th and 25 th	10 th
October	8 th and 23 rd	8 th
November	12 th	12 th

The stock is starting to go down, so we will aim to have a delivery of manure etc. towards the end of August/early September.

I will ask everyone for their feedback on the opening times and the shop stock at the end of the year.

Angela Dicken

SEED ORDER

Steph Byrnes has agreed to look after the Kings Seed order this year. She will be sending out information later in August.

We are going to keep the Kings seed order and the Acorn seed potato order separate this year. I will send out information about the seed potato order soon.

Angela Dicken

HDAF NEWS and SHOW



2021 Show benches

The 61st Harrogate & District Allotment Federation Annual Show will take place on **Sunday 21st August** in the Sun Pavilion, Valley Gardens.

Show schedules and Entry forms for the show are available in the shed next to the Allotment Shop or on line at www.thehdaf.co.uk or in Members' Area of our website www.harlowhilaa.org (password for Members' Area is Beesmakehoney)

We hope that lots of you will enter the show again this year: both plot holders and associate members are eligible to enter. Children or grandchildren of plot holders may enter the children's classes. There are lots of options – **Fruit & Veg, Flowers, Baking, Novices, Children** – so give it a try! You don't have to be an expert gardener. **Entries cost £3 per adult, £1 per child and you can enter for as many classes as you like for that one fee** but each person entering needs their own entry form. Leave your entry form, with the entry fee, at my house, 74 Otley Road, Harrogate. **The deadline for entries is 11th August.** If you need any advice or information, please contact me. There is also some advice about showing on our website and on the HDAF website.

This year's charity is **Woodlands Community Garden**. We will be raising funds to provide an information board at the entrance to the garden.

There will also be a range of craft stalls, stalls run by the allotment associations, the Buzz coffee van run by one of our associates and a saxophone quartet in the Band Stand to entertain us. As usual we are running the **Tombola Stall**, so we would be very grateful for any unwanted gifts, toiletries, bottles, confectionery or other items suitable for tombola. Details of where to drop off your tombola prizes will be given soon. **We already have some volunteers to help on the stall on the day – many thanks to them.** If anyone else can help for an hour, please let me know.



Baking Section

Plants, produce and cakes will also be needed for the stalls run by other sites. Preferably, take plants, produce and cakes to Valley Gardens on the day, or, alternatively, contact me.

We have some **raffle tickets** to sell. Chris sold lots at our Open Day and he'll be selling some more around our site and at the picnic. Many thanks to all of you who have already had your arms twisted! Good prizes – 2 x £50 cash and 1 x £25 plus other lots of other vouchers.

Volunteers are also needed to help set up in Valley Gardens early on the Sunday morning from about 7.00 a.m. and to help dismantle the tables etc. at the end of the day from 4.00 p.m. If you can help with any of these tasks, please let me know.

It's a great afternoon out, so please support the Show.

Angela Dicken

YORKSHIRE IN BLOOM

The Yorkshire in Bloom judge visited our site on Wednesday 20th July as part of their judging route in Harrogate. We were the only allotment site that he visited, so we put up a display to showcase the other Harrogate allotment sites and two members of Pine Street Allotments came to talk about their fund-raising and Open Day. The YiB results will be announced at the awards ceremony on 6th September.

Angela Dicken

GARDENING ADVICE

Whether you are an Absolute Beginner or have been trying to do it for years, it is sometimes useful to seek advice on gardening matters. For those who have a computer, the RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) website is excellent. Just enter "Growing" the particular plant you want help with e.g. "Growing Potatoes" or "Growing Celery" and follow the RHS link. The RHS advice is also very well illustrated. For those without a computer, try "The Vegetable Expert" one of Dr D.G. Hessayon's many useful gardening guides (should be available at Harlow Carr book section). We also have a range of gardening books – including several Dr Hessayon guides – in the Allotment Shop which you are more than welcome to borrow. Just call in when the Shop is open or contact Angela. Chatting to your neighbouring plot holders can also be very useful as they will know what varieties grow well at Harlow Hill.

WASTE NOT WANT NOT

If you have any spare produce, please donate it to Waste Not Want Not, the yellow boxes beside the allotment shop. The boxes are collected on Mondays, delivered to Resurrection Bites where the contents are turned into lovely food. Please make sure that the vegetables and fruit that you donate are in good condition. Rhubarb still very acceptable. Many thanks in anticipation.



SEASIDE ALLOTMENTS



I'm always interested in other allotment sites. They all have very definite similarities, but they all have subtle differences. The one in the photo has a wall round it - no hedge to trim! The yellow flower in the foreground is ragwort growing on the wall. The allotments are at Berwick on-Tweed, and probably the most northerly site in the country. On the left and grassed over are the town walls. North Sea and Tweed estuary in the distance.

PLANT REPORT: BROAD BEANS



I've done quite well with them this year. I set a variety called Aquadulce Claudia out in the open in early October, and the seeds germinated well. I netted them to make sure that throughout the winter they would survive the predations of hungry pigeons and jackdaws, though they would probably have survived in any case. In early spring not much happened and then in May they suddenly took off, grew a couple of foot or more in next to no time.

Broad beans are quite an attractive plant with white flowers that the bees also seem to appreciate. They require

little attention and are powerful enough to cope with any weeds. Aquadulce Claudia are only medium height (for broad beans, that is), and cope well with the High Winds of Harlow, though a few got blown sideways. They need watching for black fly, but this year the black fly came along too late to affect them. The great bonus is that Aquadulce Claudia crop early and I was picking our first broad beans on 17th June. Even though it is virtually mid-summer, it is a time when there are hardly any fresh vegetables around, except those flown in from abroad. In fact in some peasant societies June used to be known as the "hungry month". Mind you, it's no good if you don't like broad beans, and plenty of people don't. Make sure you eat them when they are young and tender, then they are quite a delicacy. If you possibly can, pick them before they go old and hard – by that time they are as tough as old boots and certainly not a delicacy. Maybe a second sowing, say in late October or early March may be worth trying and give a longer supply of young beans – I might try it next time. Another criticism of broad beans is that you don't get many beans to the masses of foliage and pod that they produce. Nonetheless, if you want an early in the season veg that's quite easy for allotment gardeners in the north of England to grow, try broad beans – they are also good for the soil. If you miss out on Aquadulce Claudia, try an early March sowing of Witkiem Manita, medium height and cropping late June/early July.



Keith Wadd

(I have had great success for several years with De Monica, which I plant in early April – *Angela*)

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 6th August at 12.00

Picnic –on-the-Plot

Thursday 11th August

Deadline for HDAF Show Entries

Sunday 21st August 11.00 -16.00

HDAF Annual Show

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter your experience of growing a particular plant and variety, please feel very welcome.

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