



WEST WICKHAM ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

www.wwallotments.org.uk

Newsletter – December 2019

From our Chairman

Somehow another year has flown by and it's been something of an historic one as we will enter 2020 as a Limited Company. The most important news, however, is that our future is secure for the next 20 years as our new status will guarantee the renewal of our lease with Bromley Council.

It was good to see the return of our Open Day and St Christopher's Hospice benefitted by over £1000 as a result, a great effort all round. The BBQ saw a record attendance as well.

The wildlife pond and surrounding area has matured remarkably quickly and we already seem to have a thriving population of frogs, newts and toads who have their role to play in keeping bugs and slugs under control naturally.

The introduction of our greenhouse has been a huge success this year so look out for updates throughout next year to help you buy quality plants at extremely competitive prices

We will enter the New Year in very good shape with the site looking generally very good and congratulations to our new plot holders this year who have improved the site.

It just remains for me to wish everyone a great Christmas and a Happy New Year and you can get the ball rolling on December 22nd with our Christmas Drinks and the now legendary raffle.

Enjoy!

Barry



Notes from the Trading Shed

*"Chestnuts roasting on an open fire, Jack Frost nipping at your nose,
Yuletide carols being sung by a choir and folks dressed up like Eskimos,
Everybody knows a turkey and some mistletoe help to make the season bright.
Tiny tots with their eyes all aglow will find it hard to sleep tonight.
They know that Santa's on his way, he's loaded lots of toys and goodies on his sleigh,
And every mother's child is going to spy to see if Reindeer really know how to fly,
And so, I'm offering this simple phrase to kids from one to ninety-two
Although it's been said many times, many ways: Merry Christmas to you"*



Well yes, it's that time of year, darkening afternoons, and dark mornings too. Now is the time to clear our plots and prepare for the new seasons coming along.

Many of us have placed seed orders through the trading shed and the discount we have is a whopping 45%!! Interestingly, only about 18% of plot holders used this service so I'd like some feedback on how to increase this number. Do people not know we offer this?

Plans are afoot to grow more plants to sell next year under the guidance of Paul Rispoli.

We still have some Spring planting bulbs to sell at a good price along with onion sets, shallots, broad bean seed and garlic.

When you've cleared your plot, we have rolls of black plastic ground cover to prevent weeds growing and to protect over the winter.

Don't forget, we'll be closed from **December 15th** to **January 5th** so if you feed the birds, you might like to stock up on seed or fat balls.

Here's hoping that you have a wonderful Christmas and New Year season and hope that 2020 will be a fantastic growing year for us all.



Keith & Liz



Topical Tips from Paul

Some tips and observations for the next few weeks.....

Sorting out your seed box

Not so much to do on the plot right now, so preparation for next year is a good idea. Looking at the seed catalogues, and browsing the internet, helps a few winter hours pass by. I've just gone through my seeds from last year discarding some which are about to go out of date. Seeds are marked with a 'use by' date but this does not always mean that the seeds will not germinate. The germination rate for old seed may well decrease, so you will need to sow more than you need. It's also possible that out of date seed will produce less prolific growth and, thus, a smaller yield. The only seeds which I use fresh each year are parsnips and sweetcorn. Don't forget that if you save your own F1 hybrid seeds (see the packet), you will not get the hybrid plant as it reverts to one of the parent varieties. Here's some information about F1 hybrid seeds plus info on seed shelf-life and saving your own seed.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=710>

<http://www.realseeds.co.uk/seedlife.html>

Companion planting

When buying your seeds, it is worth considering companion planting. The benefits of growing tomatoes near marigolds are well known -the smell deters aphids and the marigolds release a beneficial fungicide into the soil. Last year, the Shop sold out of our home grown French marigold plants within hours - they were great value so we shall sow many more for next year. By chance, I have found that petunias and courgettes/cucumbers seem to get on well!

There are so many other options as you can see in this chart (click the chart to enlarge it):

<https://permaculturenews.org/2013/06/20/companion-planting-chart/>

Crop rotation and soil care

You should not grow the same crop in the same place each year or you could reduce crop yield and encourage diseases, though runner beans might be an exception! A four year cycle would be: potatoes (1), roots (2), peas/beans (3), brassicas (4). If you get any serious diseases, for example, club root on brassicas or white rot on onions, make sure follow the online guidance about where to sow those crops in future years.

Here's some info on crop rotation:

<https://www.growveg.co.uk/guides/crop-rotation-for-growing-vegetables/>

Also, here's an interesting article on soil care from RHS:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/plant-care/soil-care>

Fruit

There is still time to plant cane fruits, fruit bushes and trees and rhubarb (check the instructions for the particular variety). Some fruit trees and bushes need pruning, see focusing on diseased and damaged growth. Use sharp tools. The pruned twigs and sticks can also be used for 'pea sticks' next year. Here's some info. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=90>

Happy plotting and Merry Christmas!

Paul



From the Secretary's desk



Thank you for the 36 members that attended the AGM. The change of status of WWAA to a limited company was discussed and the lease will be renewed.



The knife sharpener visited the site in the summer. If anyone would like him to visit to sharpen tools ready for Spring please contact me.

Also, is there anyone who can spare an hour or so on a June morning in the summer to help with the school and nursery children visits?

Hope to meet you all at the Christmas get together.

Regards

Viv



The Ted Goodall Cup

As you know, the newcomer to the site who has been judged to have made the best improvements to his/her plot is awarded the Ted Goodall Cup and this is presented at the Christmas Drinks event. It occurred to me that I knew nothing of Ted Goodall, who was he and why was the Cup named after him? I have contacted several plot holders who knew Ted and I am so grateful to them for taking the time to send me their memories of him.

I have collated these into the following article which I hope is of interest and will perhaps make the presentation of the Cup a more meaningful event. Viv Roach

Ted Goodall had plots on our site for over 50 years. He organised and helped install the site's galvanised water pipes with the help of a plumber who was also a plot holder. He was, with others, who we can thank for all we take for granted like the water supply, roads, the sheds and shop. Ted was Chairman of WWAA - the earliest date we could find was 1966 when an Agreement with Bromley Council was signed by Ted for part self management. Full self management was signed by Ted in 1970; he also signed the present lease which we are now working to update with Bromley Council.

Ted was very well known as he was on the Committee of the Kent Allotment Association and BALGAF. He would rarely miss a committee meeting or AGM, sometimes travelling long distances for the Kent ones (Ted didn't drive). Our own Committee meetings would start at 9.30 on a Saturday morning and did not finish until about 12.30 - most of the time being taken up by Ted talking about the past and every meeting was the same old story! You could discuss anything at the meetings and then Ted would say how it would be!

Ted was part of the 'old boys' who ran the site. Everything was run very much how they wanted it to be - quite traditional - and, as said before, what Ted said went every time! With his wife, Ted cared for his two plots, one by the Trading Shed and the other backing onto Glebe Way; he had photos of them working on the plot with their daughter in her pram. He had years of experience of growing and was happy to pass on his knowledge. He always had pounds of beautiful strawberries each year and he grew Ambassador Peas on his plot which grew to at least 6 feet every year.

When his wife died the allotment became very important to Ted and the social life it gave him which meant he could guarantee company every day. The seats and table by the sheds was the meeting place every day for elevenses. A gong was struck at around 11am and from all corners of the site the 'old boys' would make their way for tea and coffee and put the world to right from where Ted's distinctive, gravelly laugh could be heard all over the site.

In his later years as his health declined Ted struggled with his plots. He had a small plum tree which one day disappeared; another plot holder had thought that the plot had been abandoned and that the tree needed a new home so he planted it on his plot without anyone's permission to remove it. Ted soon tracked down the plum tree and replanted it back to its original home. Later Ted moved to another plot taking the tree with him, this poor tree had many lucky escapes from the strimmer which Committee members used to keep the plot tidy - much to Ted's annoyance! Marian Sanderson was asked to suggest to him that giving up one of his plots might be a good idea - it was the only time he had strong words with her! She remembers him as being a lovely man and she became very fond of him. She says she thinks the 'old boys' came round to quite liking having women on the site; when Ted broke his leg and was in Bromley hospital the nurse commented on how many lady visitors he had!!

Sadly, Ted died in 2007; he was almost 81 years old.

Ted worked for Selfridges as an upholsterer and at that time Doug Mackenzie was also working in the furniture department. Ted would often talk about his allotment and his family. After leaving Selfridges Doug lost contact with Ted so imagine his surprise when 18 years later in 2002, after becoming an allotment holder himself, he met Ted whilst struggling with his new plot.

Doug played golf and won the Selfridges Golf Cup and when the following year the competition stopped Doug was allowed to keep the Cup. After Ted died Doug asked the Committee if he could give a cup in memory of Ted, intending to use the Selfridges cup. Unfortunately it was damaged by the jeweller when trying to remove the name band. The jeweller agreed to supply a new cup for which Doug paid an amount towards the cost.

The cup was first awarded in 2008.

With many thank to Doug Mackenzie, Brian Maclaren, Brian Rochester and Marian Sanderson.