



Federation News



NEWSLETTER FOR ALL BRIGHTON & HOVE ALLOTMENT HOLDERS

Welcome from the Chairman

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Federation Annual Newsletter. Its main purpose is to inform all members/plot holders of the forthcoming AGM, to which I officially invite you to come. Of course the business part of the meeting has to take place but you also get the chance to network, partake of wine/soft drinks, cheese and biscuits, talk to plot holders from other sites and generally meet your committee members.

The year has not been without its problems. The revised allotment rules have caused many tenants concerns, examples include, the height of trees, cultivation notices and plot clearance to name a few. These concerns are not insurmountable and talking to your site representative in the first instance, or the Allotment office can usually resolve them.

Another wet and cold winter has meant that we haven't had many opportunities to get an early start working on the plot, but hopefully now that spring is round the corner things will improve. I look forward to meeting you all at the AGM.



Allotment Competitions



The Allotment Federation are now running the allotment competitions. In addition to the children's competitions (see page 11) there are categories for '**Best Newcomer's Allotment**', '**Most Creative Allotment**', and the well known Coronation Bowl; a trophy for the '**Best Kept Allotment**' which has been running since 1963.

For entry into the children's competitions please complete the form on page 11. For the categories above please visit the Federations web site www.bhaf.org.uk or e-mail me directly at johnburns.22qaa@btinternet.com or Tel. 01273 503363.

John Burns



The Allotment Federation AGM

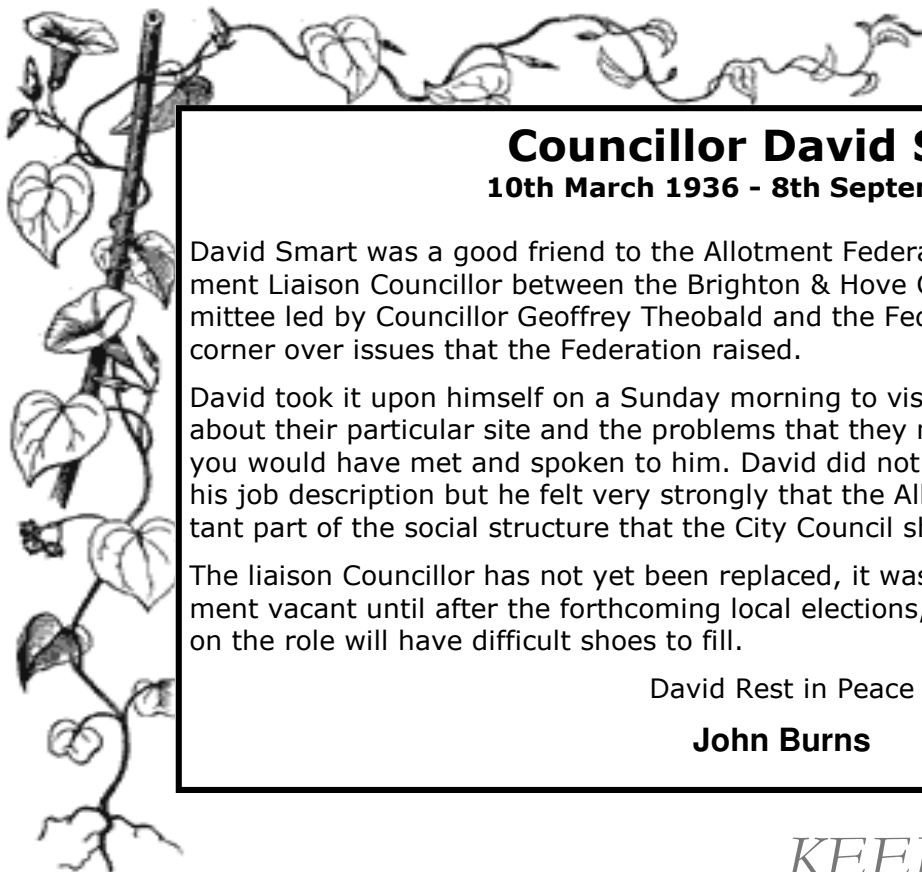
Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove BN3 4AH

Tuesday 29th March 2011,

get there at 6.30 for a 7 pm start.

An opportunity to meet site reps, federation officers, Council members and officers and your chance to ask them questions!

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!



Councillor David Smart

10th March 1936 - 8th September 2010

David Smart was a good friend to the Allotment Federation, in his position as the Allotment Liaison Councillor between the Brighton & Hove City Council Environment Committee led by Councillor Geoffrey Theobald and the Federation, David would fight our corner over issues that the Federation raised.

David took it upon himself on a Sunday morning to visit sites and talk to tenants asking about their particular site and the problems that they may be encountering, many of you would have met and spoken to him. David did not have to do this it was not part of his job description but he felt very strongly that the Allotment Service was an important part of the social structure that the City Council should support in every way.

The liaison Councillor has not yet been replaced, it was decided to leave the appointment vacant until after the forthcoming local elections, all I know is that whoever takes on the role will have difficult shoes to fill.

David Rest in Peace

John Burns

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Keeping in touch with what is going on within the local area has never been easier, why not sign up to our e-newsletters, by visiting our website and clicking on the 'Newsletter sign-up' button and following instructions, for updates or visit the following websites:



www.bhaf.org.uk

The Allotment Federations website offers lots of additional information about your local allotment and horticultural societies and growing groups. There is up to date news and diary dates for your information. You can also view our previous BHAFF E-Newsletters

Also you can find out about the federations £6,300+ 'Development Fund', through which any tenant can apply for a financial grant to make improvements for the benefit of their whole allotment site and tenants.

www.bhogg.org **B·H·O·G·G**

Pay a visit to the website of Brighton and Hove Organic Gardeners (BHOGG). It is full of advice and tips on organic growing, including a very useful grow your own 'how-to' section. It is regularly updated with news of local events and is easy for anyone to submit items for publication.

There is a message board where gardeners can ask questions - or answer ones posted by others and a section where people can share their favourite seasonal recipes. Visitors can add comments about articles on the site and view useful tables about companion planting and seed sowing guides.



www.harvest-bh.org.uk

Visit Harvest for up to date details of their training courses, their top tips and a good recipe selection for those gluts of veggies that we all seem to have, no matter how good the planning.

COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

The Allotment Service.

2010 was a busy year for the allotments team. We now enter 2011 with two full time maintenance operatives and a dedicated allotments administrator, all of whom are doing a fantastic job. On top of this we have new allotment rules and updated web pages, which now include answers to 'Frequently Asked Questions' which explain rules and answer questions about cultivation, what to do about notices, and much more besides. Why not have a look at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/allotments. On top of this we increased the number of available allotment plots by 10%.

The objective for the team is that the administrator will improve communications with tenants and the operatives will speed up and improve pre and post letting clearance work, as well as undertaking developmental work such as removal of shade trees and asbestos and the upgrading of haulage ways. The team are now in post and doing a great job, we only ask that tenants allow time for the team to make their mark and that you do your bit by ensuring your plots are well managed and clearly numbered so our maintenance team know where they are.

Last year the council created 30 learner plots across the city. These plots were for new allotment tenants who require a smaller easier space to get started on. This year we have been working with BHAF to develop growing advice bulletins to help learner plot holders. The bulletins shall be written by Bridgette Saunders, who is a well known Brighton based grower and gardening author. These bulletins will be emailed from late March onward directly to tenants. If you would like to receive these advice bulletins from BHAF then please email allotments@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

This year we are creating over 20 Easy Access plots on a number of sites across the city. These plots are smaller easily managed plots with excellent access and parking, being ideal for tenants with restricted mobility. If you have mobility issues, and would like to view an easy access plot, then please contact us by calling us on 01273 292929, or by email.

Tenants will have noticed the new rules are much tougher on certain materials being brought on site. Carpet has always been in breach of rules but we have now added glass bottles and tyres. Tyres leach toxins into soil and are very expensive to remove, and bottles invariably smash and pollute the soil with broken glass. We also ask tenants to not bring painted timber or MDF on site as both of these will pollute the soil for future growers.

Last year saw two cases of gas cylinders exploding in sheds, one of which resulted in a tenant being hospitalised. Obviously a cup of tea is a vital element of the allotment experience, but in the name of safety we need to clarify the rules to maximise the size of gas cylinders allowed on allotment land to 1kg, and we require all cylinders to be taken off site at the end of the day. Also we would like tenants to always consider a poly-tunnel as a cheaper soil friendly alternative to glass.

We all hope that 2011 will be a bountiful year for allotment growers, but last summer saw many crop failures due to several weeks without rain. Please consider rain water harvesting from sheds and using mulches to cut down on your water use. Water is a precious resource and there were instances last year of tenants blatantly taking too much water and not sharing this communal resource. Please think about your fellow growers and use water responsibly.

Thank you for your time

Matt Hewes & the Cityparks Team



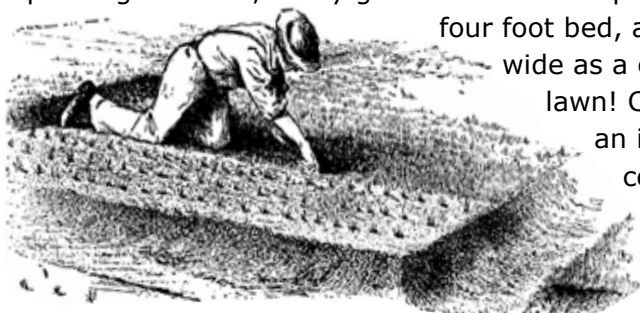
Rules, Rules, Rules,.....What it's REALLY about!

Once upon a time allotments were the preserve mainly of old men with sheds harbouring their precious bottles and packets of weed killer and pesticides. Generally speaking, allotment gardening was not a popular pastime and many tenants had two, three or any number of plots. We will all grow old, some of us into old men but hopefully that lust for chemical solutions is well and truly buried and the material safely disposed of at the tip.

Happily, in recent years, growing ones own veg has become the vogue, creating vast waiting lists of eager budding gardeners. It must have been like this back in the old days when the Roman Empire was collapsing and those Anglo-Saxons were enviously eyeing our green pastures from across the channel. However, there the similarity must end because nowadays we are civilised. So, in place of bloodshed and violence, we, the Allotment Office of the Council and the Allotment Federation, got together to craft revised rules in order to, among other things, create a fair and transparent process by which tenants who were not adequately using their plot could be relieved of their burden and it passed on to one claiming to want to.

The genius of the revised rules, if I may use such a graphic word, is that cultivation is now determined by what we can see. Can we see that activity such as weeding, hoeing, planting, watering, manuring, feeding, mulching, harvesting etc. etc has taken place or not, and therefore neglect? And, as a measure of the Councils benevolence, this only has to be seen on three quarters of the plot! On the remaining quarter you can build that totem to the allotment gardener, the shed, or have a lovely lawn for sun-bathing.

Speaking of lawns, many gardeners now adopt different methods of cultivation. One of these is the four foot bed, accessed from intervening paths. These can be as wide as a generous 75 centimetres. Wider than that and it's a lawn! Collecting rainwater and making compost; these are an invaluable part of gardening and so, rightly are considered to be part of the three quarters. Hopefully, that is all as clear as not mud, but a soil rich in organic material and displaying a good crumb structure.



The Federation has held a training session on two occasions now, when, weather permitting, we have walked around a site, looked at various plots and reached an understanding of how these rules can be applied in practice. Further sessions are intended, so if you are interested, let us know.

Steve Lucas



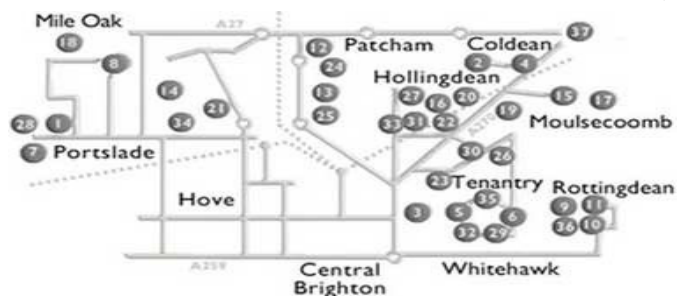
Update the City Council with your e-mail address

Please can all plot holders with email addresses forward their details to the allotment office, so that they can quickly email everyone on an allotment site with valuable information on site developments, up and coming events and inspections.

e-mail the allotment office at allotments@brighton-hove.gov.uk and fill in 'keep in touch' in the subject line and your name, allotment site and plot number. It only takes a minute to complete.

ALLOTMENT SITE INFO AND NEWS

Waiting lists are correct as of February 2011



1. CAMPSITE Windlesham Close (W. side, near S. end) BN41 2AA

Easy access. 160 plots, 12 vacant (96 on waiting list)

Site Reps:

Ian Broughton plot 86 tel. 380085 e-mail brendadollimore@hotmail.co.uk

Brenda Day plot 41 tel. 380085 e-mail brendadollimore@hotmail.co.uk

Site store Open Friday/Saturday/Sunday, 9.30am to 11.30 am

2. CHARLTONS The Charltons (north side) BN1 9EG

6 plots (1 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Heather Smith plot 4/1 tel. 682974 e-mail heather_or_jai@yahoo.co.uk

3. CHATES Albion Hill (south side opposite Grove St) BN2 9JS

12 plots (24 on closed waiting list)

Site Rep

Steve Chapman plot 7/2 & 8/1 tel. 606324 e-mail stevechapman2@gmail.com

4. COLDEAN Coldean Lane (near Chalvington Close) BN1

Easy access **& Limited mobility plots** 44 plots, 2 vacant (26 on waiting list)

Coldean has provision of 6 raised beds for gardeners with Limited Mobility where with paved access, shelter, composting toilet and a small orchard makes for easier gardening.

Site Rep

Gerry Nevill, plot 4/1 tel. 681931 or 07930 7135588 e-mail gerry.nevill2@virginmedia.com

Site store Coldean Horticulture Society have a store hut which is open at the weekends during the summer season.

5. CRAVEN EASTATE Whitehawk Hill Road BN2

This site of only 1 tenant has now been incorporated within 100 new plots on Whitehawk Hill & Craven Vale and will not be listed in the future.

6. CRAVEN VALE Beresford Rd (north end) BN2 5DD

152 plots, 12 vacant (50 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Peter Elliot, plot 49 tel. 07901 847802 e-mail petesiterep9@live.co.uk

Jane Hawkins, plot 5 e-mail jane.hawkins1@ntlworld.com

Site News:

New Plots - Approx 70 'new' plots were created from the long-derelict area at the North of the site. Most were let early last year and throughout the spring and summer. Growing conditions on them are 'challenging' - thick bramble roots, glass and concrete from old greenhouses, no shelter or windbreaks, poor soil. Nevertheless, a small group of new plot holders are making a success of it. They are known as 'the Pioneers'. All credit to them, it is inspiring to see how hard they have worked.

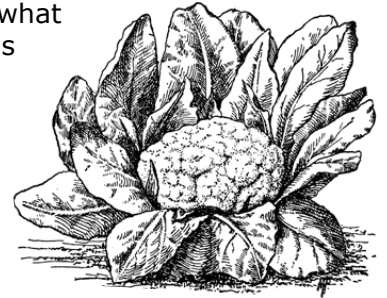


Website - Last summer our combined website for Whitehawk Hill as well as Craven Vale went live. Many thanks to Webmaster Rick for designing, setting it up and keeping it updated. On it there is a forum so that we can communicate with each other. Check out the lovely pics in the Galleries using this link: www.hilltopallotments.co.uk

Events - We held a seedling swap in May and a Harvest Festival in August. Both were successful and we plan to do the same this year.

Break-ins and vandalism - There seem to be more incidents over the past year - since we had the new fence put in around the new plots at the North end. The shiny, new, but not very thick or high fence seemed to tempt people to climb over or cut holes in it to see what was worth nicking. A PCSO patrolling for a period during the light evenings seemed to have some beneficial effect. Over the winter months there has been a spate of shed break-ins and thefts.

Maintenance - We are still waiting for the haulage ways to be repaired. Hopefully this will happen soon as it was top of the list of maintenance priorities. We have many senior plot holders and several people with disabilities who find it very difficult to get to their plots without the use of a car.



7. EASTBROOK Old Shoreham Rd (nr Manor Cls & Hadrian Av) **BN42 4NW**

Easy access 126 plots, 20 vacant (79 on waiting list)

Site Rep position available

Ian Duvall plot 13/1 tel. 07528638648 e-mail ian.eastbrook@live.co.uk

8. FOREDOWN Thornbrush Crescent (N. end) BN41 2GW

Limited mobility plots 48 plots, 4 vacant (23 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Beverley Anderson plot 10 tel. 07890 683011 e-mail bevanderson@googlemail.co.uk

Carol Downie plot 21 & 22 tel. 07906 644440 e-mail caroldownie@gmail.com

9. HILDESLAND The Green (N side of track off NW corner) BN2 7HA

25 plots, 2 vacant (17 on waiting list)

Site Rep

John Low, plot 16 tel. 07989 146573 e-mail hildesland@ntlworld.com

10. HOGGS PLATT The Green (track off NW corner past extension) BN2 7HA

20 plots (18 on waiting list)

Site Rep

David Medhurst plot 6 tel. 300698

11. HOGGS PLATT EXT. The Green (S side of track off NW corner) BN2 7HA

8 plots (6 on waiting list)

Site Rep

David Medhurst plot 6 tel. 300698

12. HORSDEAN Vale Avenue (north side) BN1 8YU

Easy access 49 plots (24 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Granville Wilcock plot 1&2 tel. 204421 e-mail g.wilcock2@ntlworld.com

For more information about the site visit [http: www.horsdeanallotments.org.uk](http://www.horsdeanallotments.org.uk) or the allotments topic section of www.mybrightonandhove.org.uk

Site information & news cont'd.

Site Store open Sundays 9.30am-noon from mid February through till October

13. KESTON Highview Av South (near Ladies Mile Rd) BN1 8WQ

Easy access 75 plots, 7 vacant (45 on waiting list)

Site Rep

David Frost, plot 15 tel. 559338 e-mail dfrostrep@ntlworld.com

Joanna Hunt, plot 43 tel. 0771200384 e-mail kestonrep@googlemail.com

14. LARK HILL Park Rise (near Northease Drive) BN3 8PG

Easy access 19 plots, 2 vacant (13 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Vicky Heape, plot 15 tel. 327379 e-mail vickyheape@yahoo.com

15. LOWER BEVENDEAN Bevendean Crescent BN2

2 plots (waiting list closed)

Site Rep

David Andrews plot 4&5 tel. 602416

16. LOWER ROEDALE Lynchett Close (track adjacent to playground) BN1 7FP

Easy access 166 plots, 19 vacant (102 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Jill Squire, plot 119 tel. 509669 e-mail jill_squire@hotmail.com

Melanie Matthews plot 92 tel. 07880 791308 e-mail lower.roedale.rep@googlemail.com

Fiona Langdon, plot 59 tel. 549129 e-mail fiona.langdon@googlemail.com

David Andrews, plot 4 & 5 tel.602416

Store Hut (open 10-12 Saturdays, and the first Wednesday am each month)

RAGS hold a committee meeting on the SECOND Monday of every month at 7.30pm in Laburnam Grove Common Room, Burstead Close, Hollingdean, BN1 7HX - all Roedale Allotments and Gardens Society members welcome.

17. MANTON ROAD Manton Rd (near Plymouth Ave & Fitch Dr.) BN2 4FB

32 plots, 5 vacant (18 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Clifford Tidy plot 6, 12/1 & 16 tel. 697982

18. MILE OAK Overdown Rise (near Gorse Close) BN41 2YX

Easy access 71 plots, 4 vacant (30 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Alan Langridge, plot 41 tel. 412899 e-mail langridge@tesla.co.uk

19. MOULSECOOMB ESTATE Natal Rd / Nesbitt Rd (corner) BN2 4BN

Easy access 206 plots, 40 vacant (82 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Ali Bulough, plot 5/2 tel. 07960293550 e-mail amb@ccb.ac.uk

Nathan Ashby, plot 56 tel. 608701 e-mail Nathan@georgiaandnathan.com



Site News:

Moulsecomb Estate Allotments has for the past 2 years participated in The Garden Gadabout fundraiser for the Sussex Beacon hospice, and the allotment has raised over £700 in total. This year we will open for Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd July. Many plot holders will open their plots to the general public to compare notes and have a good horticultural chit chat, we will be selling cakes and refreshments and opening the site shop to members of the Moulsecomb Horticultural Society to purchase seeds plants and horticultural supplies at discount rates (anyone can become a member for just £1). Please come along and support a great local charity by having a fun day out.

20. MOULSECOOMB PLACE Queensdown Rd (by railway stn) BN2

10 plots (1 on waiting list)



Moulsecomb Place allotments is a small site of only 10 allotments behind Moulsecomb train station. It is also the home of the **Moulsecomb Forest Garden and Wildlife Project**, who have 9 of those with the remaining plot holder on our management committee. People are welcome to come up and visit the project - which boasts a Iron age roundhouse, compost loo, wildlife pond, shed on stilts, outdoor clay oven and all the usual fruit and veg. Our workdays are Tuesday and Fridays 10am-3pm. You can read our latest annual report and our management plan for the woods behind the project on our website **www.seedybusiness.org** (*In 2010 the site featured in the television programme 'Secret Millionaire'*)

Site Rep

Warren Carter, plot 9-11 tel. 07988 837951 e-mail info@seedybusiness.org

Warren has also written a very interesting book of local history '*Seedy Business - Tales From The Allotment Shed*' which can be read via the website or is available from the local libraries.

21. NORTH NEVILL Eridge Road (south end) BN3 7QD

Easy access 114 plots, 1 vacant (51 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Jude Stevens, plot 61 tel. 561578 or e-mail jasbrighton@yahoo.co.uk

Tina Huggins, plot 95&96/1 tel. 07828 885211

22. OLD WATERWORKS Freehold Terrace / Saunders Park View BN2 4AY

32 plots (10 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Mr. Chris Webb, plot 11 tel. 07812 543982 or e-mail chris.webb@sky.com

23. PANKHURST Pankhurst Avenue (north side) BN2 9YP

7 plots (1 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Steve Lucas, plot 5 tel. 699916 or e-mail margaretandsteve@yahoo.com

24. PATCHAM COURT Vale Avenue (south side) BN1 8YF

Easy access 22 plots, 4 vacant (17 on waiting list)

Site Rep

Charlie Coverdale, plot 2 tel. 07799 247033

25. PEACOCK Peacock Lane (west end) BN1 6WA

Easy access 9 plots (9 on closed waiting list)

Site Rep

John Smyth, plot 1&7 tel. 508195 or e-mail wellingtoniasmyth7@yahoo.co.uk



*Site information & news cont'd***26. RACE HILL** Wilson Av / Swanborough Drive BN2 5QD

Easy access 74 plots (14 on waiting list)

Site Rep**John Kay**, plot 45 tel. 07715601063 e-mail john.racehill@hotmail.co.uk**27. ROEDALE VALLEY** Golf Drive (top end) BN1 7LB

Easy access 274 plots, 18 vacant (213 on waiting list)

Site Reps:**Jane Child**, plot 45 tel. 07891 117597 e-mail jc.roedaleallotments@yahoo.co.uk**Andrew Amos**, plot 26 tel. 07786 487511For more info about the site visit www.mybrightonandhove.org.uk/page_id__7408.aspxStore Hut (open 9.30 - 12 Saturdays, 9-9.45 Sundays)**28. ST LOUIE** Prince Charles Close (north end) BN42 4PT

Easy access 77 plots, 6 vacant (23 on waiting list)

Site Reps:**Peter Todd**, plot 38/1 & 39 tel. 592880 e-mail lornamy@ntlworld.com**Alan Varney**, plot 47 tel. 416600 e-mail marian.varney@ntlworld.com**29. ST MARKS** Bristol Gate / Manor Rd BN2 5BD

7 plots (8 on closed waiting list)

Site Rep**Mrs. Terry Paine**, plot 4 tel. 601958 e-mail tel_den@hotmail.co.uk**30. TENANTRY DOWN** Tenantry Down Rd (both sides) BN2 3ED

Easy access 250 plots, 31 vacant (137 on waiting list)

Site Reps:**Ian Law**, plot 12/2&2/1 tel. 07939 987903**Trudi Carter**, plot 153&154 tel. 07794 379952**Peter Burrows**, plot 107&108 tel. 671815

This site has its own allotment association 'The Tenantry Down Allotment Association'.

Come along to one of their monthly meetings at The Pub With No Name, 58 Southover St.

For more information visit their web site at www.tenantrydown.org.uk**31. THOMPSON** Thompson Rd (adjacent to railway line) BN1 7BH

41 plots, 11 vacant (15 on waiting list)

Site Rep: Position vacant**32. WALPOLE** Walpole Road, off Whitehawk Hill Rd BN2 0YT

37 plots, 1 vacant (15 on waiting list)

Site Rep**Charlie Jones**, plot 4 tel. 07722274033 e-mail bigcatdetective@hotmail.com**Derek Brown**, plot 32 tel. 679720

33. WAVERLEY Waverley Crescent (south end) BN1 7BG

6 plots, 2 vacant (6 on waiting list)

This is a small site with 4 used plots bordered by housing and railway embankment. There is bounty of wildlife on site including foxes, birds, slow worms.

Site Rep**Liz Carpenter** tel. 01273 385518 e-mail ecar0@lycos.com**34. WEALD** Weald Avenue (north end) BN3 7JNEasy access & **Limited mobility plots** 411 plots, 33 vacant (282 on waiting list)Site Reps: First point of contact is the allotment shop and phone, or find the reps on site**Len Penfold**, plot 318 north west quarter**David Cole**, plot 262/1 north east quarter**Peter Ferris**, plot 91/92 south west quarter tel. 07926 187834**Mo Andrews**, plot 117 south east quarterlimited mobility plots**Peter Richards**, plot 121 tel.420482 e-mail urchikuri12@googlemail.com

Shop open to all who join the association, great discounts and large selection of seeds and horticultural sundries and free advice. tel. 772684

In the shop we have a couple of fascinating items – an AGM photograph from 1935 and photographs of a medal, awarded by the HHAA to Mr D H Torrance in 1928. Intriguingly, the medal has Royal Horticultural Society stamped around the outside!

If you know anything about Mr Torrance or have a family history of allotments at the Weald, or just think you might recognise somebody in the AGM photograph, please come and have a look and see if you can help us fill in some of the blanks. We'd love to hear your stories of the Weald Allotment site in past times too!

Follow our blog at: <http://wealdallotment.wordpress.com>**35. WHITEHAWK HILL** Whitehawk Hill Rd (near radio mast) BN2 0YQ

Easy access 171 plots, 19m vacant (113 on waiting list)

Site Reps:**Jacob Nowinski**, plot 102&103 tel. 07751 076395 e-mail Jacob_nowinski@yahoo.co.uk**Jane Griffin**, plot 46&47 tel. 682847 e-mail janegriffin@waitrose.com

The Whitehawk Community Food Project site covers nearly 1 acre and has beautiful views of both the sea and the South Downs. It is an established and productive community garden including fruit, vegetable and herb beds, poly tunnels, ponds and a forest garden/orchard area. The site has been developed for people to be able to enjoy and participate in organic, biodynamic and permaculture techniques and principles. "We aim to be an inspiring and valuable demonstration site where people of all ages can learn through practical hands-on experience."

Come and help out on our regular gardening days of Thursday and Sunday - 12 til dusk and find out more about food and food growing. Check out the web site www.thefoodproject.org.uk

36. WINDMILL HILL Sheep Walk (off Nevill Road) BN2 7HG

23 plots, 1 vacant (12 on waiting list)

Site Rep**Mark Shanahan**, plot 11/1&12/1 tel.301227 or e-mail mws257@gmail.com**OVINGDEAN** Greenways (West side, South of Ovingdean) BN1

19 plots

Site Rep**Jeff Woods**, plot 43 tel 303698 or e-mail jwoods@kennedy-hygiene.com



CHILDREN'S COMPETITION

Brighton & Hove Allotments Federation Children's Competition Registration Form

The 2011 Children's competition was officially launched at Seedy Sunday on February 6th and we are hoping to get lots of entries this year. The categories are open to all the age groups Please encourage all your younger family and friends to get involved and **register their entries** on the form below **by 30th June** .

For the 2011 competition we are welcoming entries in age categories Under 7, 8-12, and 13 plus and you can enter as many categories as you like. Seeds for categories 1 and 2 will be sent on receipt of registration form and are being provided by Harvest.

Judging will take place in August 2011. The top 10 entrants in each category will be selected and judged in person to finalise the winners. Winners will receive their prizes at the 'City in Bloom' celebration in September.

1. "Tallest Sunflower"

The challenge is to grow the tallest sunflower. Sunflowers are good for attracting insects to your plot, so we want to see them reaching to the skies, with their heads facing the sun across Brighton & Hove. Each entrant will be provided with five sunflower seeds. Entrants must submit a maximum of three photos, with the height of their sunflower clearly shown and labelled.

2. "Largest Courgette"

The challenge is to grow the largest courgette. Each entrant will be provided with five courgette seeds. Entrants must submit a maximum of three photos, with the length and diameter of their courgette clearly shown and labelled.

3. "Best 1m x 1m vegetable plot"

How good are your growing skills? We want you to show us what you have learnt from your family and friends on the allotment about growing good, tasty vegetables that are free from pests and diseases. Your plot should be 1x1 metre (ensure you have the allotment holders permission first!). Entrants will need to submit a diary or project plan with a maximum of six photos, showing progress over time and how you have managed you plot to consider the design (planting choices, location, and timing) and pest control.

4. "Best Scarecrow Design"

When growing vegetables we face competition from many pests, and not just slugs and snails, but also birds. The traditional method to stop birds eating their way through your vegetables is to make a scarecrow. We want you to design and make a scarecrow that makes best use of environmentally friendly or recycled materials. You must think about how it will be effective in scaring away birds. Entrants must submit their design (on A4 or A3 paper) with a maximum of three photos of their scarecrow in place at your parents/guardians allotment.

Name and age of entrant: _____ Age _____

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Allotment site plot is located at: _____ Plot Number _____

Contact address: _____

Contact number and e-mail _____

Please register by 30th June 2011, or by 10th May if seeds are needed for the category.

Send your registration form to:

Children's Competition, c/o Carol Downie, 22 Silwood Road, Brighton, BN1 2LF,

Or email to: caroldownie@gmail.com

RATS ON ALLOTMENTS

You may recall that last year we had an article covering the health issues of rats on allotments and steps that can be taken to try and discourage them from your compost heap....seemingly their favourite place.



The advice included keeping rats out of plastic compost bins by placing a small gauge wire mesh or paving slabs at the base to prevent rats from burrowing in underneath and to keep meat, dairy, bones, cooked foods or other inappropriate items out of your compost bin.

You may have noticed that Brighton & Hove City Council are currently promoting the composting of food waste and we asked for their advice on how this could work on allotments. One suggestion offered by the council is to use a 'rat proof' food digester and as part of their 'Love food hate waste' scheme they are offering Green Johanna food composters at subsidized prices.



The Green Johanna food digesters work in a similar way to composters but is designed to get a lot warmer. The advantages are that you can add all your food waste to it, including cooked food, meat and bones. The other big advantage is that they are rat proof! The base of a food digester is specially designed to stop mice and rats penetrating it whilst allowing air ventilation within the container. Adding some garden waste to the mix creates a right balance to make good compost.

Please look through the enclosed leaflet for more information. You can also get more information on composting by going to www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/composting

Another option could be to start of the composting process at home with a Bokashi composter or 'kitchen composter' as they are called on the councils web site link.

Bokashi is a method of intensive composting and can be carried out in the home, usually within the kitchen and is reported to have no negative health issues or bad smells.

Within a special air tight container, kitchen waste (including vegetable, fruit, fish, meat and dairy) is layered with Bokashi EM mix and the container sealed to encourage anaerobic activity; the layers are continually added until the container is full. It is then left for a couple of weeks for the EM to act as a microbe community within the kitchen scraps fermenting and accelerating breakdown of the organic matter. The contents would become transformed very quickly developing a good layer of mould over them and a smell similar to pickled apples.



After 14 – 20 days, the fermented mixture can be added to a compost pile to finish decomposing, it also accelerates the composting within the heap and is not of interest to rats and foxes who might raid your compost pile otherwise.

You could also opt out adding it to your allotment compost heap by added to simply digging it deeply into the soil, it will have the added benefit of positively influencing existing soil microorganisms and therefore of improving plant growth and yield.

EM mix is usually wheat bran which has been inoculated with composting or 'effective organisms' (EM) such as natural lactic acid bacteria, yeast, and phototrophic bacteria. It could be considered a pro-biotic for your garden.

If rats have already made a home on your plot you don't need to deal with them on your own. Help is at hand with the Council's pest control team and you can contact them on tel. 01273 292170 or e-mail pest_control@brighton-hove.gov.uk

THE 3 SISTERS GARDEN - *an ancient method of growing*

Our thanks to Lester Orman who submitted this excellent article to the BHAF website – we have chosen this as our favourite article of last year, and have reproduced it for those of you who don't have web access.

*If you DO have access to the internet, please check out our website on **www.bhaf.org.uk** – its a community site so you can submit pages, make comments or ask questions. Its also a great place to get ideas, advice and tips.*

What is a Three Sisters Garden?

It is an ancient method of gardening using an intercropping system which grows corn, beans, and squash crops simultaneously in the same growing area that is typically a rounded mound of soil, often called a hill.

Corn is the oldest sister. She stands tall in the center.

Squash is the next sister. She grows over the mound, protecting her sisters from weeds and shades the soil from the sun with her leaves, keeping it cool and moist.

Beans are the third sister. She climbs through squash and then up corn to bind all together as she reaches for the sun. Beans help keep the soil fertile by converting the sun's energy into nitrogen filled nodules that grow on its roots. As beans grow they use the stored nitrogen as food.

How do I grow a Three Sisters Garden?

In mid-Spring clear a sunny garden area of grasses, weeds, and large stones. The area should be roundish in shape and at least eight feet across. Cover the area with a few inches of compost or well rotted manure. Turn the compost in to loosen the ground and create a moisture retaining growing medium with increased fertility. Water it well. Check the growing area frequently over the next few weeks to remove any sprouted weeds.

In late-Spring sow about seven or eight corn seeds in the center of the growing circle, in a ring pattern, spaced out about six inches from each other. Plant the corn seeds an inch under the soil, firm the soil above by patting it down with the palm of your hand. Water the growing mound well. The corn will sprout and begin to grow in about two weeks.

After the corn has grown to about ten inches high, using a hoe or hand trowel, pull up some soil from the growing mound around the base of the corn stalks. The corn should not be buried entirely, it's upper half should be above the soil that has been mounded around it's stems. The corn will send roots into the mounded soil to hold it steady and upright in the wind.



After mounding soil around the base of the corn stalks sow about a dozen pole bean seeds in a ring pattern six inches outside the corn stalks. Push the bean seeds about an inch under the soil and firm the ground above them by patting it down with your hand. Water the growing mound well. The beans will usually begin to sprout in about 7-14 days.

About a week after the beans sprout, sow six or seven squash seeds in a ring about 12-15" outside the beans. Push the squash seeds about an inch under the soil and firm the ground above them by patting it down with your hand. The squash seeds will sprout in about a week.

As the corn grows the beans will begin to climb, you can help them early on by wrapping the bean vines around the corn stalks. The squash will begin to grow its vines and the large squash leaves will soon cover the growing mound and shade its soil. On occasion help the squash continue to cover the mound by turning the ends of its vines towards the center of the mound. Water the mound well during weeks where there has been little or no rain.



When can we harvest our Three Sister's Garden?

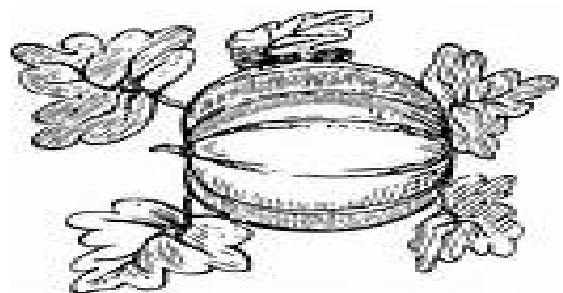
Corn may be harvested while in its green corn stage, but traditionally it is left to ripen and is harvested in Autumn. The cob is sun dried and stored for winter use. To harvest green corn observe the silky threads coming from the tops of the ears, when the silk is dry and a dark brown color the corn may be harvested. To remove an ear of corn, hold the stalk a few inches below the ear. Pull the tip of the ear toward the ground until it snaps off.

Beans may be eaten fresh or allowed to mature and dry on the vine. Fresh beans can be harvested when the pods are firm and crisp, but before the seeds within the pods have begun to swell. Pick beans in late morning after the night-dew has dried from the plants. This helps to prevent the spread of bacteria which can harm the plants. Pick the beans carefully to avoid bruising or snapping the growing vines. Bean plants will continue to flower and more bean pods will develop if they are harvested before bean seeds can mature.

Squash should be picked only after its skin has hardened thoroughly. Be careful to not damage or break off the stem of the squash...this can wound the squash and it will begin to rot. Cut the stem 3-4" from the fruit with a sharp knife. Allow the squash to sit in the sun for a few days to cure and the stem to dry. Store squash in a single layer and not touching each other, which can foster rot. Squash can last at least two months, depending on the variety.

Enjoy growing your Three Sisters Garden!

Lester Orman

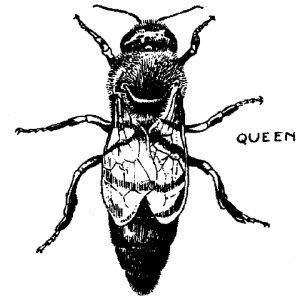


KEEPING BEES ON THE ALLOTMENT

Buzz, Buzz, Buzz.....

My partner and I keep two bee hives on our allotment, with the proper permissions from the Council obviously! I always wanted to keep bees, not as much as a money making concern from the sale of the honey but rather, because they are so fascinating.

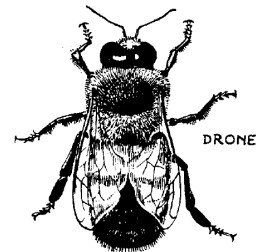
We purchased our first nucleus colony from a bee keeper in Waterlooville in Hampshire in May 2009, the queen bee being of Hawaiian origin and she has been an absolute star! She has lain prolifically and has bred a lovely docile, easy going colony of bees which have been brilliant to work with as novice bee keepers.



It would be fair to say that our first season involved a steep learning curve, lots of reading, lots of hive inspections and scratching of our heads as to whether, or not, we were doing ok with our new bees. I think we did do very well actually and even managed to harvest 39lbs of honey in the September; so all in all, not a bad start!

After we had harvested the honey in September, we treated the hive for the Varroa mite (a truly horrible pest which poses a threat to every bee colony), gave the bees a good feed of sugar solution (to replace the honey we had taken) and put them to bed for the winter, with our fingers crossed that they would survive. Of course, winter 2009/10 proved to be a cold, hard one but, on opening the hive up in February, our bees had come through in fine form, much to our relief. Such was our joy and enthusiasm, we set about reading how we could take a second colony off the first and, hence, we set up the second colony last spring.

Despite our vigilance, our second colony swarmed taking our new queen with them and, so as not to cause too much disturbance to the first colony by trying to manipulate the breeding of another new queen from that colony, we decided to buy in a new queen for the second colony. So, off I went to Haywards Heath where I purchased a new queen who, compared to the Hawaiian Queen, has raised an altogether different temperament of bee. They're more aggressive and a bit more challenging for us novices!



We took honey again in September from the first colony, a pretty good yield on top of the spring honey we took in May, and repeated the process of treating for Varroa, feeding the bees up and putting both colonies to bed for the winter.

Our fingers are firmly crossed that, in the next few weeks or so, we will be able to open up both hives on a warm sunny day and discover that both colonies have made it through the winter. Watch this space and I'll keep you updated in the e-newsletters as to our progress through our third season!

Tracey Llewellyn

CROP ROTATION

Last year's newsletter had an article especially for those who had their first allotment – all about starting your plot. We hope you find it useful. If you are new this year and want some help and advice, you can find out more on our website at www.bhaf.org.uk/starting. If you don't have access to the internet call Melanie on 07880 791308 and she will print a copy of the article and post it to you!

This year we have an article for those who have had at least one year on their plot and are now planning their planting for this year. You may have heard that crops should be rotated – but what does that really mean?.....

Rotation – what's it all about?

If you grow the same crop in the same place year after year soil-borne pests and diseases which are specific to that crop will build up in the soil, and levels of soil nutrients will become unbalanced.

There are so many recommended rotations - and some are very complicated and just not possible in a small space. If in doubt, just don't grow the same thing in the same soil two years in a row (except of course permanent beds such as rhubarb and asparagus).

Some crops may surprise you in that they fall into a rotational group you might not expect. Swedes being a root crop, you would naturally think of them as falling in with the carrots and parsnips but they are actually a brassica. Tomatoes are part of the potato family, and artichokes are in the same family as lettuce!

A basic 3-year rotation is roots and bulbs, fruit and seed, and leaf and stem. But most gardeners will want to be a little more sophisticated than this and many find a 4-year rotation works well (Potatoes, legumes, brassicas and roots). John Harrison from the excellent Allotment.org.uk website recommends a 5-year rotation:

1. Potatoes, followed by mustard green manure and lime following
2. Legumes (peas and beans) followed by additional lime if required
3. Brassicas (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, minuzza, mustard greens, swede, tatsoi, turnip.)
4. Sweetcorn, squashes, pumpkins, courgettes etc
5. Roots (carrots, parsnips) and onion family, followed by manure

The upshot is that if you ask 5 gardeners you will be told 5 different rotation plans. Everyone likes to grow different vegetables (if you don't like brassicas then you don't need them in your rotation!), so find one which suits you, but follow these basic principles:

- *Keep lime away from potatoes* because it increases the chances of them getting scab. Conversely, brassicas like a limey soil. So potatoes should be planted as far away from the application of lime as possible and brassicas can go in to soil that has been limed.
- Potatoes like a rich soil, which is slightly on the acidic side so *manure before planting potatoes*.
- Root crops such as carrots and parsnips do not want soil that has been manured the previous autumn. It will cause them to fork and split. They tend to like a light soil on the alkaline side so lime can be added if the ph is low (unlikely in Brighton and Hove)
- Beets and onions don't need rich soil either so can fit with the roots in a rotation if needed.
- *Legumes like manure*. Legumes take nitrogen from the air and store it in their roots (called nitrogen fixing). This nitrogen is valuable for brassicas which often follow legumes in the rotation cycle.
- Where possible, *keep plants of the same family together* as their requirements will be similar lettuce and cut-and-come-again crops can be fitted into any gaps, as can cucurbits (cucumber, courgette, pumpkin and squash) if they don't have a separate section in your rotation.

Happy gardening!
Melanie Matthews