



Tuesday, December 14, 2004
Issue 3

The Plot Thickens...

This month's articles...

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Don't forget if you have any articles to contribute for the next Newsletter, please leave them in the shop. Hopefully this will be produced sometime

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Introduction to issue 3

We wanted to get a Newsletter out before Christmas to wish all you plot holders a very Happy Christmas and a

Healthy and Prosperous New Year. Keep digging and growing all those lovely crops – the evenings will soon be

getting lighter and planting time will be here before you know it!

Christmas Raffle

The Christmas Raffle was held in the shop on the 12th December which was the last day of trading this year. Mulled wine and mince pies were enjoyed by all and it was nice to

see some friendly faces despite the cold easterly wind. The mulled wine soon warmed us all up! Shirley Gunn made some lovely Christmas cakes and shortbread as prizes, and also a bottle of her famous

blackberry liqueur and there were some wonderful mince pies made by the ladies! A full list of prize winners is displayed outside the shop and most people have collected their prizes already.

Allotment News

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 12th January 2005 at the Bransbury Park Community Centre at 7.30 pm. Everyone is welcome and tea and home made biscuits will be served by Sheila and Gina. If anyone has any suggestions or queries to put to the Committee please come along.

Brian (the Trading Officer in the shop) has done a great job this year and tells me that

the potatoes will be on sale at the end of January/beginning of February (depending when the stockists send them out). Apparently they won't deliver them if there is frost about! He has now got a large roll of bubble wrap on sale for lining greenhouses etc. Also there are still some Aquadulce Broad Beans left! The shop will open again on Sunday 16th January. Val Peach has offered to run a coach trip to

Kew Gardens at some time next year which will be very nice! More details in the next Newsletter!

Someone has been tipping household rubbish at the end of the main path past the shop and there are now fridges and a cooker down there. If anyone sees this happening can they take a number and let someone in the shop know and we can try and do something about it.

History of the Allotments

Andrew Leonard (the fern man) had the brilliant idea of trying to find out the history of the allotments, so we looked at old Ordnance Survey Maps at the Museum and old copies of The Evening News at the Library. This turned up some really interesting facts:-

In 1859 the area taken up by the allotments was all shown as marshland. In 1910 there were no allotments on our sites but there were a few next to the Thatched House where Seaway Crescent was built in the 70's. In 1933 the map showed allotments at Eastney Lake but Milton Piece was just shown as a piece of waste land with a few buildings on it just where the shop is now. Does anyone remember these buildings?

In a copy of the Evening News from 1939 it states that the total number of allotments in Portsmouth was 1,688. By 1944 there were 3,130 for the war effort. In 1951 there was still a tidal pond where Hope Cottage is now. There was a tidal creek which ran alongside the allotments now filled in and grassed over, I think in the 70's. There were some allotments on the other side alongside Ironbridge Lane and also some in Bransbury Park. Milton Piece allotments were developed after 1966.

In a map of 1968 the allotments were exactly the same as today with Milton Piece, Eastney Lake and Hope Cottage all shown.

Obviously these statistics are only a

rough guide and we could not find out when Eastney Lake started exactly as allotments even though in the map of 1933 they were there. Does anyone have any details to add which can be put into the next Newsletter? A Mr Blackman an Associate Member of the Association was telling me in the shop that he used to have an allotment in Milton Piece in 1966, number 90, and still has his membership card from then. The membership fee at that time was 2/6 (about 12 ½ p in today's money). Also at some time it was used as a tip by the Victorians – we know this because of the old bottles, china etc. which we dig up, especially in Milton Piece!

in 1966 the allotment society membership fee was 2/6d. (about 12½ p in today's money)



Taken from the Ordnance Survey Map of 1859 - showing marshland where the allotments are now. Hope Cottages was a tidal creek.

Caption Competition

We thought it would be nice to have a little competition so if anyone can come up with a witty caption for the photo below let us know. Answers, with name and plot number to be given into the shop. The winner with the best caption will receive a bottle of whisky! Details of the winner will be in the next newsletter, sometime in February/March, depending on the level of news etc.

The winner with the best caption will receive a bottle of whisky!



Photo courtesy of Mike Montgomery, who took all the photos at the Autumn Show and can be reached on 023 92346771, email: mrmontgomery@ntlworld.com

London Flower Show

The London Flower Show is seeking about £25,000 in sponsorship

An article found in a leading newspaper about the London Flower Show by our Chairman Mike Simpson states:-

The 25th City of London Flower Show, which finished last night, could be the last time flowers, vegetables and arts and crafts are exhibited at the Great Hall. The event is seeking about £25,000 in sponsorship after losing out from budget cuts within the Corporation. Despite taking place in the heart of the City, the event is pretty much like a village flower show and has 158 categories of entries. When we think how successful our show was last Autumn, perhaps we ought to give them a few tips, and we even made a profit. When I say our, I mean as belonging to the Allotment holders as it is truly a community show and belongs to us all!

Top Tips for Organic Growing

Spend as much time on your compost heap as your planting. Masses of manure and compost can help anything to grow. Encourage natural predators such as birds, frogs and hedgehogs, with food and shelter according to their needs. We don't want the bad bugs but without the baddies you won't get the good guys and it has been estimated that a family of blue tits can eat a million or so aphids in a summer so what would happen to them if aphids weren't around. Don't grow the same

crop in the same place each year. Don't allow plants to go short of water in summer – if they are under stress they're naturally weakened and watch how plants grow and you will learn what they need to do well. Quote from Alan Titchmarsh:- "I'm not claiming that gardens run on organic lines are pest and disease free, simply that common sense suggests they will boast a larger population of beneficial predators as well as the pests. It's not as if chemical methods of

pest and disease control are effective in anything except the short term. I mean, if slug pellets are so good, why do you have to keep using them. There are other things that can help plants too – kindness to soil for a start." So lets all make a New Year's Resolution to be kind to our soil next year! My New Year's Resolution is to win that compost cup at the Autumn Show next year! So John Langley (you of the hot compost heap) take note!

Quote from Alan Titchmarsh:- "I'm not claiming that gardens run on organic lines are pest and disease free"

Recipe

Christmas Apples

6 firm cooking apples, 4 oz mincemeat, 6 tablespoons dry white wine or cider, 1 heaped tablespoon apricot jam, icing sugar.

Wash the apples remove the cores and place in a shallow dish. Fill the centers with the mincemeat and pour

over the wine or cider. Bake in a moderately hot oven – 190C/375F, Gas Mark 5 for 30-40 minutes until soft. Lift the apples carefully from the baking dish and pour the juices into a saucepan. Add the apricot jam (sieved, if necessary) and stir over a low heat until syrupy. Pour over the apples and then drench with

icing sugar. Decorate each apple with a sprig of holly. Christmas apples are particularly popular when everybody has been eating an excess of rich food over the Christmas holiday and a nice way to use up that left over mincemeat.

Christmas apples are particularly popular when everybody has been eating an excess of rich food over the Christmas holiday

...and finally

Membership Fees are due at the end of January. You need to pay a membership fee to use the shop. It is £2.50 but £1.50 of this money goes to the

National Society of Allotment And Leisure Gardeners. The NASLG does a lot of work protecting and preserving Allotments and issues a magazine,

copies of which can be borrowed from the shop. The shop also has some very good gardening books which can be borrowed.

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