

Hempland Lane-Heworth Allotment Association



Spring Newsletter 2021 Hot from the Hut!

Committee Members

Name		Plot
Julian Ayres	Committee Member (Hempland Haven Rep)	67A & 67B
Ellen Bradbury	Committee Member	9
David Brinklow	Site Secretary and Treasurer	14
Nigel Collinson	Secretary	66
Gayle Enion-Farrington	Chair and Publicity Officer	34, 35
Moira Grainger	Committee Member	93a
George Hughes	Committee Member	108
Amy Johnson	Committee Member	63b
Jean Pulleyn	Committee Member (Hempland Haven Rep)	81
Lisa Tindale	Committee Member	59b
Lisa Maunder-Wood	Committee Member	95
Lorraine Wood	Shop Manager	64
Dave Wood	Shop Manager	64
Mark Farrington	Website Administrator (not part of the committee)	35

Co-op Community Fund

We were delighted to confirm in October 2020 that we had raised a total of £4,372.87 thanks to the Co-op Community fund. So far we have spent £3400 to purchase and pay for installation of a Modern wooden gazebo which will be sited within Hempland Haven (adjacent to the BBQ area).



It is 3.4m x 5.9m in size, so large enough that can still accommodate social distancing, to make it future proof. It will have a felt roof and is being adapted during the installation stage, to have a raised lip. George Hughes, our newest committee member, (replacing one of Karel and Kevin Hollands positions, still one more if you wish to join us!), has kindly agreed to then install a sedum roof to the Gazebo, which

promote wildlife and allow the structure to blend into its environment. We hope it will be completed by March 2021.

Update from Gayle, Chairperson

Thankyou to everyone who took part in our AGM on 1st February 2020 via zoom. From that meeting we agreed that now formal gatherings will be organised this year but during National Allotment week 9-15th August 2021 we will organise another socially distanced scarecrow competition and a celebration of best plots etc. Please submit your ideas for our scarecrow theme to any of the committee before our next meeting on Monday 29th March 2021.

Did you know these facts about the “not so humble” Gooseberry – every plot should have some!

Nigel Collinson Plot66

Botanical name: *Ribes uva-crispa*

Origins: Gooseberries are native to temperate areas of Eurasia and North Africa

First cultivated: The cultivation of gooseberries in England was first recorded in 1276

Types: Gooseberries come in four colours; red, white, green and yellow

Skill level: They are fairly easy to cultivate but are greedy feeders.

Did you know? (Mainly courtesy of the RHS but not all!)

Cultivation of gooseberries was first recorded in England as far back as the 13th century, however they were not widely grown until the early 1500s - a time when many fruits were being introduced and popularised through increased trade with the Continent. By 1831 the Horticultural Society's London garden housed a collection of 360 different gooseberry cultivars.

The 19th century saw a great rise in the prominence of the gooseberry; they were so popular that 'gooseberry clubs' were formed across the UK, with their members competing to grow the heaviest fruit. They were most numerous in the north of England where a few of these wonderful old clubs are still in existence today. There was even a national publication for enthusiasts called 'The Gooseberry Growers Register', which in 1845 listed 171 separate gooseberry shows.

The current world record for the heaviest gooseberry was set in 2013 at 64.49 grams (2.27oz). This is about the size of a large hen's egg (well one of Moiras!). It was the first ever gooseberry to weigh more than 40 'pennyweights'. For centuries 'pennyweights' and 'grains' were the traditional measure for the size of gooseberries.

The long history of gooseberries in the UK has led to a great number of local names: 'Carberry', 'Dabberry', 'Dayberry', 'Dewberry', 'Fayberry', 'Feaberry', 'Fabes', 'Fapes', 'Feabs', 'Feaps', 'Goggle', 'Golfob', 'Goosegog', 'Goosegob', 'Groser', 'Groset', 'Grizzle', 'Honey-blob', 'Thapes' and 'Wineberry', to name few! As a child, we always new them as "Goosegogs".

'Gooseberry' was one of many historic names given to the devil and it is thought that this may be why the 'unwanted' third party accompanying a romantic couple is sometimes referred to as a 'gooseberry'.

We are now most familiar with gooseberries as a jam or used as a fruit in sweetened desserts, but because of their slightly sharp flavour they were traditionally served with fatty meat or oily fish. In France gooseberries are called 'le groseillier à maquereau', which can be translated as 'the mackerel currant' as they were popularly eaten with mackerel.

Allotment popularity!!! Nigel Collinson Plot66

Applications for council-run allotments & private run ones in England have soared during the Brexit negotiations & the Coronavirus pandemic - despite there already being at least 18-month waiting lists. People are seeking "the good life" and to grow their own their fruit and vegetables during the current ongoing situation.

Figures released on recently by the National Allotment Society (NAS) reveal that 40% of English councils that responded to a survey reported a "significant uplift" in applications to join waiting lists during 2020, with up to a 300% some areas.

The NAS also reported a 45% increase in the number of requests for information through its own website. The NAS said: "With one in eight of the UK population having no access to a garden - one in five in London - and a rise in awareness of the fragility of our food systems, perhaps now is the time for central government to reassess the potential of allotments to support public health and make a significant contribution to food security." It added that during the second world war during the "Dig for Victory" campaign, 18% of the UK's fruit and vegetables were grown in gardens and allotments, falling to just 3% in 2017-18. There are an estimated 330,000 allotment plots in England - the vast majority of which are the responsibility of local councils - while the National Trust has also provided many sites.

Book Review "Dig for Victory" by John Harrison - Nigel Collinson Plot66

I was kindly given this book for Christmas as a present from my step daughter Jess. I have read many gardening books in my time which have been very enjoyable and this was no exception.

Based on the original "Dig for Victory" book much of this is original and obviously from the 1940`s but with some modern comments on each month of the year by John. There are lots of the old adverts' in the text from the likes of Suttons, Carters who still ply their trade today but also from many companies who no longer exist or were "taken over" by larger competitors.

Having read the book, a couple of things that have changed dramatically that you would not see in modern day print. Firstly many of the illustrations feature a man smoking a pipe (very politically incorrect nowadays) whilst digging, harvesting, composting, cleaning his tools etc! And also virtually all the illustrations feature men, hardly any women & no children, quite sad on reflexion.

How we would like the costs in the adverts to still be the same 75 years on (dream on). Examples like 100 Leek plants 5/- (25p today), Fisons Tomorite 28lbs 9/6d (48p), The Easi-HOE 5/6 (28p) & Hop Manure from ADC Compost 56lbs 13/6 (68p). For those who can remember pre-decimalisation this is monetary memory lane! Also note Hop Manure so the modern equivalent to "Spent Hops".

The book runs through each month on the allotment or in your garden with the wartime guides. Many of the things we do today were obviously also done then, crop rotation, forward planning, composting, which has always been important but even more so in 1945 due the lack of availability of animal manures.

There are a lot of similarities with the ending of the war to the current dire situation with Covid we sadly find ourselves in. Once the war ended a lot of people thought things would "return to normal" in a matter of weeks, that obviously didn't happen. People are hoping with the vaccination role out that things will "return to normal", whatever that might be in a matter of weeks. Sadly it is widely expected that will not be the case, we shall see, fingers crossed? John Harrison's gardening books are easy reading, I think this is his 9th so give it a whirl. I have not gone into great detail on purpose, but if do give it a go do enjoy.

Is it worth it? Profit and loss on the plot

When I got my plot two years ago, I started keeping a note of my expenditure and of what my produce would have been worth if I'd bought it in a supermarket. It was done for fun, but I do also like the "make do and mend" and recycling possibilities of having a plot. The idea of getting something for if not nowt, then for not much is always appealing...

In my first year I had one off costs like tools, which were kept down by taking advantage of Nigel's occasional old tool sales. Some of those I needed I eventually found in my shed, abandoned by a previous owner. I dug over my plot, and bought fruit plants with varying degrees of success; dead looking bits of blackcurrants and raspberry canes from Poundland grew like mad, while expensive mail order strawberries keeled over.

By the end of the year, I had spent £160, including rent, membership and manure, with £70 going on plants and seeds and £10 on paint for the shed. I hadn't managed to grow much fruit, but vegetables and a few flowers had given me £162 of produce. Not only had I found an absorbing hobby and enhanced my social life, but I'd made a healthy £2 profit! This didn't of course include my hours of labour, but equally I felt no need to buy a gym membership in order to get some exercise.

Going into the second year, I decided to grow more flowers to reduce the amount I spend on cut flowers for the house. Due to the lockdown, and in desperation at the closed nurseries (no Deans!), I grew more plants from seed. I bought things from the excellent allotment shop, and the plant stall at the end of David and Lorraine's plot was like a gardener's sweetshop, as well as a life saver when (frequently) germination failed. Kind people gave me plants, and I swapped surplus plants too in casual trade-offs. Unlike the first year, I didn't need to buy tools or fruit bushes, and I had some seeds left from the previous year. I found clumps of comfrey and plenty of nettles on my plot, left them in a bucket of water and didn't need to buy any liquid plant food.

Based on the previous year, I thought I had some notion which crops might work well - i.e. the ones that shouldn't take up masses of time or space or be entirely eaten by pests. I learnt that things can work one year but not the next, and this apparently is what makes

having an allotment interesting. So my cabbages (apart from some plants I was given) were largely a dead loss, producing crops worth £4.75 for an outlay of £2.50 on seeds and plants, and £2 on netting. I won't be tangling with them again. The tomato plants I got for £4.99 from Aldi did even worse. They produced £4.50 of fruit before giving up the ghost to blight, so I had a net loss of 49p!

Fortunately for my pocket and morale, there were successes. My sweetcorn costs were £4 for seeds plus a few plants from Nigel, resulting in £14 worth of cobs (and they were delicious). Seed potatoes (earlies) cost £2.50 for a kilo and produced a crop worth £23, and onions that cost £7 for sets ended with £32 of onion strings hanging in my garage. The runner beans were absolute financial stars; I grew them from seed I'd bought the year before and harvested £29 worth of zero cost beans. Chard and kale were also well worth growing, both being things I used to buy quite often. Having found reduced price seeds in the shop for £1.60 I grew plants that have kept producing for months, and which I would previously have paid £23 and £21 for.

The biggest returns overall were, I think, on the flowers. Tulip bulbs weren't my best idea, costing £8 and giving £10 of cut flowers, but I might get a few more flowers from the bulbs this year. Otherwise, all I spent was £4.99 on dahlia tubers; I propagated chrysanthemums from last year's plants, and used other seeds bought or saved in the first year. This resulted in multiple mixed bunches of chrysanthus, dahlias and sunflowers that would have cost me at least £44 to buy, and bunches of each flower that I estimated were worth £10, £12 and £6. I had masses of lovely scented sweetpeas and grew £16 worth of wallflower plants to replant in my back garden. Altogether the flowers added up to an estimated value of £168 and used relatively little space. They weren't much trouble to grow or look after. And I didn't buy any cut flowers at all from May to the end of November.

This second year there has been a big increase in productivity compared to the first, and a decrease in costs. I spent £114.25 on rent, membership, manure, sundries, seeds and plants, and got the following return:

Fruit £59.50 (blackcurrants, gooseberries, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, rhubarb). The raspberries did particularly well.

Herbs £8

Flowers £168

Vegetables £243.80

Total £479.30

"Profit" for the second year was therefore £365.05 - a heady £1 per day! But the pride and pleasure I got from eating home grown parsnips and sprouts on Christmas day was incalculable. And the value of a worthwhile (in every sense) activity, especially during lock down, is entirely beyond price.

Alison
Plot 49A

Last summer for our unusual vegetable we decided to try to grow gourds. At first it didn't look like we would get anything, just a mass of sprawling plant matter. But in the autumn when the leaves starting to die down we discovered a beauty. We nursed it throughout the winter, leaving it in a cool and well ventilated area, turning it around every few days and wiping off any mould that did appear. Until we could hear a few seeds rattling inside when we shook it; a sign that it had dried through.

The plan was to have quite a few of them to be able to do some bird nests to hang around the allotment. Since we only got one, we decided to keep it as a natural sculpture inside. The children have started to paint it but like most things in this household gourd called 'speckled swan' it is an ongoing project.
George Hughes Plot 108



HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE

Lets all hope and pray we are all going to have a better year than 2020. The Corona Virus seems to be pretty stubborn. The first Lock down was bearable because it was nice weather and the days were longer. We were able to spend lots of time on the Allotment and we could sit outside in the fresh air. I had more time at home, so ventured into growing things that I had not tried before. Our late Rasps were amazing and we were picking them everyday. I made lots of gorgeous Raspberry Jam.

I was offered lots of Victoria Plums as it was a really good year for fruits. So I made lots of Plum Jam too. We have a good stock of Jam now !!

The second Lock Down ! found harder to cope with as we could not do anything much in the garden or on the Allotment. But we have had our delivery of Seeds delivered from Nigel, so ! am looking forward to getting into the Greenhouse and starting planting !!



Last week when ! walked down the garden ! was delighted to see a lovely hint of Spring. The Rhubarb is poking its way through the frost, and the recent Snow and also the beautiful Snowdrops.

I took a couple of Photographs because it certainly cheered me up . I had just been for a walk over the fields at the back of the Allotments and the Beck was

extremely high and covered the bridge completely.





I have been able to keep in touch with quite a few of our Allotment friends as I go over to the Hut every Sunday morning. Nigel and Pam have done an amazing job all winter providing people with wonderful cakes, jams and chutney etc. Also Dave, Lorraine and Nigel have made us lots of money by keeping the Plant Stall going. A huge Thank you from me ! It is becoming difficult to stay positive as we move on into 2021 and are now in the third Lock Down and the Virus is still very visible, but lets hope we can re-open our wonderful Haven very soon and enjoy our Coffee Mornings again this Year !! That is something to look forward to without a doubt.

Moira (Grainger) Plot 93a

If you would like to write something for the next newsletter, please email it to gayle.farrington@btinternet.com, +