

# Hempland Lane-Heworth Allotment Association



Newsletter  
Winter 2011

Hot from the Hut!



## Introducing the Committee

Name		Plot
Ellen Bradbury	Committee Member	9
David Brinklow	Site Secretary and Treasurer	14
Phil Copley	Secretary	89
Gayle Enion-Farrington	Chair and Publicity Officer	34,35
Ulrike Manara	Minutes Secretary	40
Lisa Tindale	Committee Member	59b
Lorraine Wood	Shop Manager	64
Dave Wood	Shop Manager	65
Trevor Day	Easy Access Plots Rep	68D+E, 67K
Nigel Collinson	Committee Member	65
Chris Lee	Committee Member	88A
Mark Farrington	Website Administrator	35 (not part of the committee)

Well another year has past and I hope you are all organised on your plots before the winter weather arrives? My father-in-law has come up trumps again and helped us dig over the plot so that we can plant next year. He usually comes to help every 2 to 3 months but this time was a real cry for help. If you have wondered why you have not seen me for a bit, I damaged my achilles and ruptured my calf muscle in September and have been on crutches for the best part of 2 months! I can hear you saying, "but Gayle shouldn't be getting an injury commonly suffered by footballers!" I'm afraid it was during a team building exercise at work and I was winning in the egg and spoon race! I'm afraid I must have got too competitive.

## News from the Chairperson

Well, I hope this year doesn't see the same winter has last year. 6 weeks I was snowed off the allotments and couldn't even use the time to go out horse-riding! I hope that this winter, if the snow comes, it is for a short period and over the festive time. The perfect time would be when we are too full to garden, full of the sumptuous delights from the Christmas table and have consumed too much Christmas cheer!

Unlike previous years, however I am not putting anything the ground until the winter weather has past, so for the first time ever I am making good use of our greenhouse and I've planted our wintering items such as onions, garlic etc in pots and left them to develop in the greenhouse before I transplant out next year. I'll let you know how this goes, as this year we lost so much early on due to the poor weather.

If weather conditions are poor, I have put together a list of things that can be addressed in the New Year to make up for lost time.

- Fertilise hedges by sprinkling fertiliser over the soil on both sides of the hedge, then cover with a mulch of compost easing both into the soil surface with a fork.
- Tying up the long stems (last year's new growth) of summer flowering soft fruits, to encourage fruiting along the whole length.
- Covering rhubarb for early tender growth.
- Sprinkling potash - rich fertiliser over the soil at the base of fruit trees and bushes for good flowering and fruiting.
- Setting out early seed potatoes in trays in a light frost free place to form three or four shoots.

In the meantime, continue to collect fallen leaves and store until next autumn in old compost sacks or black bin bags, punching a few holes in the bags before sealing the top. And make good use of tidying up for plots and bringing your garden tools in from the cold!

Have a wonderful Christmas and see you all in the New Year at the AGM

**Gayle Enion-Farrington, Chairperson**

## **Review of 2011**

Our **Summer Fete** on 16 July 2011, was a great success and gets bigger each year. This year we raised £102 with a tombola, and sales of produce, jams and pickles,

and strawberries. The money is not the main outcome; it is more about getting our allotment community together.

We partnered with **Hempland Primary School** again and got involved in various school projects around the site. Our latest event was their National Festival Circus & Summer Fair - Saturday 25th June 2011. It was a lovely sunny day and we manned a stall selling allotment produce, jams, marmalade, chutneys and scones & muffins. We raised nearly £100! Big thanks to Daphne who helped me man the stall.

I'd like to say a big THANKYOU TO ALL THAT HELPED with our **Strimming Weekend of the Wildlife area** in Autumn 2011 unfortunately I couldn't attend due to my leg injury!

Our **Allotment Website** is growing from strength to strength and we have had over 2460 visits to our website. If you haven't had a look - please log on and enjoy surfing! [www.hempland-lane-allotments.co.uk](http://www.hempland-lane-allotments.co.uk)

I'd like to thank Nick Mansell for supplying me with his diary of a bee keeper articles for the newsletter. If anyone else would like to put an article in the newsletter or have pictures etc please email them to me, via the website **Gayle Enion-Farrington, PR Officer**

## **Car Parking**

Parking is at a premium on our allotment site so please park your carefully and be considerate to others. DO NOT park any cars in front of the Chippings, Manure Bay and Skips.

## Dates for your Diary

### **Hemland Allotment AGM at Heworth Golf Club on Tuesday 17th Jan 2012 @ 7.30pm - ALL WELCOME**

As far as we are aware, no one is intending to step down from their committee posts. However, we would welcome some additional members to the team. Can you spare 5 Tuesday evenings a year and around 3 weekends to help?

#### **Membership Cards**

New membership cards will be available at the AGM and thereafter. You can renew your association membership with a payment of £3. They can be purchased at the AGM and from the allotment shop every Sunday (during spring, summer and early autumn). You must be an associate member in order to buy items from the shop, collect Manure and chippings (with a donation) and get a 10% discount from all gardening purchases at Deans & Vertigrow (please show your card before you pay at the till).



#### **DIARY OF A BEEKEEPER Part 2** by Nick Mansell

Last winter was one of the coldest on record and I had real fears that my bees may not survive. It turned out that a healthy colony can survive extreme cold, it's the damp they don't like. The bees huddle around the queen in a ball to keep warm and are able to maintain a constant

temperature. Winter is a period of hibernation when they are best left alone. However they still need food to survive and should be left with at least three full frames of their honey to feed on until spring arrives otherwise they need to be fed sugar supplements. For this reason I took no honey crop last year and left what they had in the hive.

On the sunny days during winter, a few bees would emerge to take exercise and 'cleansing flights' but it was not until April that I took my first peep inside. Hurrah, they had survived and I was able to find the queen which I marked with a little white nail varnish blob on it's back to help me spot her in the future. They soon began foraging in earnest and I would watch them returning to the hive and enter the small entrance with pollen stuck to their hind legs.

I had no idea where they flew to but they can travel several kilometres and within the allotment boundary there is an abundant supply of chestnut, lime, pussy willow palm and hawthorn at that time of year. Following this came the peas, beans and fruit blossom, not to mention the garden flowers all around us. I was optimistic for a bumper crop of honey, so in May I added a second box called a super. Full of a dozen empty wax frames, they then draw out into the hexagon shaped cells to store their honey. Each super holds about 40lb of honey and second and third supers can be added in good years.

The next couple of months are critical. June and July is the swarming period when bee numbers multiply rapidly. When it gets overcrowded some look for a new home to populate. The workers build

enlarged queen cells like an acorn and when the queen lays an egg in that cell they feed the emerging grub a special compound known as royal jelly which converts it into a queen. The old existing queen will not tolerate her new offspring and will either kill it or leave the hive, taking about half the colony with her. To avoid this you look out for queen cells on your weekly inspection and destroy them before they hatch out, but on returning from a week's holiday in July a neighbouring plot holder told me that she had seen a swarm of bees heading from my hive towards the direction of the wild life area. Sure enough, they had swarmed but despite the colony being reduced by half, they quickly recovered to a healthy number (approx. 35,000)!!!!

Later that month I was even able to split them in half, hatch out a new queen and start up a second hive at my brother's farm near Malton. This was soon joined by a third hive which I filled with a swarm captured by me from a nearby garden.

These two new colonies foraged on the nearby fields of oilseed rape until late August when I took them to Farndale to feed on the heather. Two weeks later disaster struck. Not only had one of colonies themselves swarmed into a nearby orchard than, I was hit by the vicious gales and the hives blew over. The bees were not happy but after much rebuilding and several stings, the queens and their entire families soon returned home. Of the two hives on the moors only one produced any honey. 16 lbs of lovely thick nectar.

Back at the allotment my original hive yielded a similar amount of lighter,

runnier honey, only a small crop but enough to make it all worthwhile and to keep me and the family going over winter.

Extracting honey is a messy business. I had been given an old zinc centrifugal extractor which was almost a hundred years old but after a good clean, it worked a treat on the light honey. For the heather honey which is more crystallized and thicker I borrowed a heavy press.

All in all, a year of mixed fortunes and a fascinating learning experience. The bees have all survived and are once again bedded down for winter. I am looking forward to next year and hope to build up my colonies with further hives and hopefully a larger crop of honey. Perhaps you may be able to buy a jar in the Sunday shop so if you have any unwanted jam jars they would be most welcome.

### **Anti-social behaviour, vandalism and theft**

Please report any incidents to the police on 0845 60 60 247 and get an incident number. This helps with police monitoring of events on site and could help if we need any action to be taken, such as extra patrols, meetings with police officers, etc.



### **Rats**

If you know where rats are nesting on or near your plot, you can have them removed free of charge by contacting the Allotments Officer on 553399.

