



NEWSLETTER

Here's hoping for a good growing year!

As the weather warms up sites across Birmingham are waking up from the winter break, crops are beginning to fill up beds and we are all hoping that we avoid floods and droughts this year.

Across the city we have many talented growers and well-run sites that never enter either the Site Competitions or the Annual Show. The BDAC would like to welcome more entries, so please feel free to "show off" what you do best. If you are an association that has never competed we will give you a mentor to help you through. As an added incentive... ***do you realise that the competition prize winners get cash prizes as well as trophies?***

Walsall Road Allotments would welcome your support by signing their petition on their **SAVE WALSALL ROAD ALLOTMENTS Facebook page. The Council are no longer promising that their land is safe from Commonwealth games re-development. **Read more about this on the back page****

Dates for your diary
Executive meetings are held at the Guild Guide Headquarters, Trefoil House, Brownsea Drive, B1 1QL
Meetings starts at 7 p.m.

Monday March 4th
Monday April 1st
Monday May 14th

AGM Saturday June 1st
at Bordesley Green Allotments, Bordesley Green B9 5PD - have your say!

Annual Show 2019

Following the success of last year's show, we will once again hold The Annual Flower and Vegetable Show in the MAC over the August Bank Holiday. If you have competed before your schedules will be posted to you by the Show Secretary. If you are a new competitor contact Derek Cullen by e-mail: bdac.show.sec@gmail.com or phone: 0121 384 7715 and request a schedule. Copies will be posted for download on our web site.

THE ANNUAL SHOW IS MAIN EVENT THAT PROMOTES ALLOTMENT GARDENING

It is important for all of us that we attract new plot holders every year to ensure the future of Birmingham's Allotments. The Annual Show is an opportunity to advertise how wonderful allotment gardening can be. The Show has costs and we would ask once again for Allotment Associations to support us with these.

Many thanks for your help last year we hope that you consider sponsoring the Show again by donating £10 to the BDAC. Or alternatively sponsor a Class.

In return for your support we will ensure that your site's name is prominently displayed in the MAC. Your £10 will go a long way to help us promote your site and all the other sites in Birmingham.

To contact us about this please e-mail bdac.allotments@gmail.com or phone Barbara Smith on 07746062410. Many thanks

A very watery problem!

Moor Green Allotments, Moseley - 300 tenants, 23 stand pipes, a very busy licensed Clubhouse, a domestic user sharing our water infrastructure and an increasing number of poly tunnels were all conspiring to give our Association a 'watery-headache'. Add to that a diverse group of plot holders, aspiring to grow 'fields' of pumpkins, courgettes and other squashes as well as exotics reflective of their culture and heritage and our budget simply could not cope. It was a conundrum but such is the tenacity of allotments gardeners that we determined to do more than mandate water harvesting on every plot.

Geo-tech investigates

There were a couple of relevant conditions that we knew about the site. For example, a couple of streams flow through the site, fed by a natural spring and that double digging at the lower part of the site revealed a very high-water table. This led to the idea of investigating the potential of our own water supply. It was Jon, experienced project manager, together with Duncan, geological expert, who began the process of a feasibility study with Geotech, www.geotechnicaltd.co.uk. Geotech undertook a hydrogeological prognosis into the possibility of sinking a borehole. The study came back positive...but...

Roopa, fund-raiser extraordinaire

...how do we afford such major capital expenditure? It was agreed to seek sponsorship¹, apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and raise as much as we could through our own efforts. Thereafter began a campaign and Roopa 'stepped up to the plate'. At rent renewal she badgered everyone - can you bake cakes? make jams? grow for a plant sale? Will you join our sponsored walk, ask your Club house party guests to put their spare change into the 'borehole bottle'? and much, much more. No one could escape her persuasive power of separating people from their cash. Plot holders and social members alike responded more than generously. Meanwhile David, experienced in bid writing, put together a very robust application to HLF. We waited anxiously to hear back. With the success of our bid, matched by sponsorship and fund-raising we reckoned we had enough to commission Geotech to start drilling. Of course, there were permissions to seek, but they also came back positive. So, the exciting work began! ¹ Bennett's Landscapes donated £1k to get us started



Cake sales



and Sponsored walks! And much, much more!

Part Two of the adventure in June's Newsletter.

Manor House Lane Allotments
Celebrate 40 Years of Enjoyable Allotmenting

The council opened The Manor House site in 1973 which comprised of 60 plots accessed by a muddy track leading from the main gate in Manor House Lane, Yardley then branching off left and right travelling up and down the hill. During the early years the pot holed muddy track was covered over with broken bricks and rubble and eventually covered with a layer of tarmac.

The site had no other facilities other than a concrete garage with an asbestos roof. In time an old large shed was acquired and erected by the men on site and appropriately was called the pavilion, that shed still stands today thanks to the many maintenance projects carried out by the members, and it is still used today as a storage shed for our annual show equipment.

The earliest copy of minutes of a Committee Members Meeting was on 6th June 1979 at the chairman's residence, the birth of our association.

In the 1970's a Water supply was installed with 5 stand pipes built up and down the hill to furnish all 60 plots.

In the late 1990's Electricity was connected to the site via a small meter cupboard located just inside the site by the main entrance gate, at a later date the electricity supply was installed from the meter cupboard to the old concrete garage which is now our site shop selling all manner of goods to our loyal members.

Over the past 40 years our association has seen the growth of allotmenting bringing together individuals interested in leisure gardening into an ever-flourishing team of gardeners working together, not only working on their own plots but also assisting in improving and maintaining their allotment site.

We have found that by encouraging tenants to take pride in their site, together you can achieve many things.

We are all very proud of what we have achieved, winning the "Best Allotment Site in Birmingham" (Robins Rose Bowl) 13 times and second 3 times, winning the "Best Association" (Frank Carter Memorial Trophy) 7 times and second on two occasions.

In 2001, following a suggestion from one of our members, we entered an exhibit into the "Chelsea Flower Show" titled "Good enough to eat" and proudly won a Silver Gilt medal.

In 2002 another one of our members won the Daily Mail's Competition for the "Best Allotment Gardener"

As the allotment site became more and more popular we decided that we required a larger pavilion so we embarked on a fundraising mission holding coffee mornings, making and selling garden furnishings etc, etc and together with a grant from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund our new 48 square metre Pavilion was built and officially opened on 18 June 2005 by our local MP.

In 2006 we won "Britain's Best Community Building Competition" sponsored by NSALG/Kitchen Garden Magazine.

Our involvement with local schools and in particular a school for impaired children a need for a disabled toilet facility was identified and a group of our members volunteered to construct the building, following approval from the council our new Toilet Block was built and completed in 2008.

Our success continued and in 2012 another of our members achieved a Silver Gilt Medal from the RHS- Queens Silver Jubilee Show.

Bringing us right up to date, last year our volunteers have, with the council's approval, constructed a "Community Garden" consisting of six raised beds, greenhouse and shed which can be accessed from the drive or from a newly built raised balcony attached to the pavilion.

All this success has been achieved by our team of members of Manor House Leisure Gardens Association, will be celebrating our ruby anniversary, 40 years of enjoyable allotmenting in June 2019.

From Manor House Leisure Gardens Association

Manor House Lane is in Sheldon

TAKE SOME TIME TO READ ABOUT THE THREAT TO WALSALL ROAD ALLOTMENTS

IMPORTANT NEWS ABOUT WALSALL ALLOTMENTS.

The Council are no longer promising that the Allotment land will not form part of any re-development due to 'The Legacy of the Games'. Walsall Road Association, with support from the BDAC, want the Council to know what a fantastic resource the Allotment site is and how upset we would all be if this popular and thriving site, that has featured on 'The One Show', should close. **Site Secretary Betty Farruggia** is spear heading a campaign to persuade the Council that their site should not be included in the re development plans when they are finalised in MAY. Walsall Road Allotments should be an Ambassador for the games as its ethos reflects all that is great about the Commonwealth Games-people from different back grounds celebrating their differences. Please lend your support to them. Write letters to your Councillors, and add your names to the petition. Your support will be much appreciated.

Go the following Face book page SAVE WALSALL ROAD ALLOTMENTS.

Apple Day (an uncollected harvest)

We plot holders at Coney Green Drive Allotments, like all allotmenters, strive to produce a bumper harvest. We water, feed and pamper our crops. We moan about the weeds, the weather and everything else that can affect our fruit, veg and flowers.

Being so busy we sometimes miss the obvious. There are a few empty plots on site and some plot holders never pick all the fruit on their trees.

Stan our site manager commented on the amount of uncollected fruit on the allotments; which got us thinking. One of our plot holders, Ian, has a small apple press and 'Apple Day' was born! On Sunday 7th October, as our end of season event we picked, pulped and pressed the apples to make the most fantastic apple juice. We also ate apple pie and enjoyed a chat.

We created a really nice event from using fruit that would have gone to waste and we will definitely do it again.

From Coney Green Drive Allotment Association in Northfield.

You are invited to a Quiz Night!

The BDAC will be organising some social events this year for all plot holders to meet together. The first will be a quiz- a friendly quiz you don't need to be 'Masterminds'- the date is yet to be finalised. Association Secretaries will be informed of the venue, date and any further details, as soon as it is set. Should be a good night! Hope to see you there.

The National Allotment Society AGM is in June this year. Form, sent out with the members magazine, to Head Office by **Tuesday 2nd April**, if you cannot attend and wish to appoint a proxy Executive Member Mick Merrill will be happy to collect these, please contact him on 07980779745 or post the forms to: 37, Dwyer House, St Georges Ave., Erdington. B23 6UF

Web links

If any Association would like a link to their website in the BDAC website please email your web address to Executive member, Mark Hanson using the following address: markhansonbdac@gmail.com. And he will install the link for you.

From time to time we have prospective plot holders visit our site and make plot requests the link will help you publicise your site.

To contact the BDAC

Chairman: Clive Birch phone 0121 354 1512 e-mail: clivebirch@blueyonder.co.uk
Secretary: Barbara Smith phone 07746062410 e-mail bdac.allotments@gmail.com
Assistant Secretary: Anne Murphy phone 0121 449 7340

For lots of information visit our Website www.bdacallotments.co.uk
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