



The End of an Era

Following the recent major cuts in Local Government Grants, we have to report that the post of Ealing Council Allotments Manager has now disappeared. Our sincere thanks go to Stephen Cole who has occupied this post so ably for the last twelve years. His support of the team of volunteer site managers and the various Local Allotment Associations in the borough will be greatly missed. Much of his work, as far as most of the allotment community is concerned, has been behind the scenes and often gone unnoticed. However, we should all remember that boundary fences and water supplies don't maintain themselves and problem tenants don't mend their ways without fair and informed intervention. He will be sorely missed!

EAP will continue to work with the Council in an effort to minimise the damage of the loss of dedicated support to the allotment service. Hopefully, we will be in a position to inform members of the Ealing allotment community of any planned changes in the way that the Council manages its allotment system in our next newsletter. In the meantime, it would be sensible for individual sites and associations to think seriously about their way forward. A brief look through the "Around the Associations" section of this newsletter underlines the fact that those sites with active Local Associations are the most likely to be able to call on local community support if problems arise. It may thus be a good time for sites with Local Associations to think about joining the increasing number of sites that have adopted Local Management and hence have a greater say both in how their sites are run and access to funds to help develop and maintain them.

Alium Leaf miner - updated

As reported in the Spring edition of this newsletter, alium leaf miner is beginning to be a major problem on Ealing allotments. Many of you will have seen its effects on your onion crop this year. The activity of the grubs of the miner fly commonly leads to twisted stems which then tend to split with what looks like new leaf growth trying to force itself out of the main stem. Eddie Weston (Whitton Drive) reports that his purple onions seem to have escaped the damage whilst standard white onions on neighbouring plots have suffered



badly. It could be that certain varieties are more resistant than others but as he admits that his was a late planting a more likely explanation is that the fly which emerges in March-April had died off before his red onions were a significant target. Winter-grown Spanish onions also appear to be largely unaffected, again possibly because their main growth period coincides with the fly's dormancy period.

Worryingly, there are reports of finding the small (2-3 mm) reddish brown cocoons of the miner grubs in garlic bulbs suggesting that some springtime protection might be necessary. Leeks are, however, still the most obvious targets. Be warned that leeks looking extremely healthy at the moment, having been planted and grown after the March-April fly attack, could be prime targets for the second wave of fly activity in September-October. Hilary Jayne (Framfields) recommends using horticultural fleece as an effective barrier to fly attack.

Site Profile

Brentham Allotments

Brentham is a large site tucked between the A40 and Brunswick Road; it borders the lovely Brentham Estate and the Brent water meadows, a popular spot for dog walkers. It has 190 plots occupied by allotmenters old and new. It is a friendly, mixed community with plot holders of many nationalities, some of whom live outside Ealing. My friend and I share a plot and I would highly recommend this if you have lots of outside commitments. I also find it much more motivating to be working alongside someone, rather than toiling alone.

The site has a large car park, which is handy, a trading hut open on Sunday mornings and supplies of free wood chippings and stable manure. Water is supplied via dip tanks which are well distributed across the site.

There are social events throughout the year on the grassy area at the front of the site – to welcome new tenants, to sell plants and a summer get-together which last year attracted 100 people contributing food and drink for all in the glorious sunshine.



Summer Social (left) and Plant Sale Day (above)

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We also have regular working parties which help improve the area. In 2014/5, we installed a hard-core footpath along the centre of the site - and now have easy access throughout the year. Hard work – as shown opposite – but well worth it when the winter rains came!

There are flower borders near the site entrance and trading hut tended lovingly by a former plot holder. Some willing volunteers have also planted garden plants along the fence bordering the footpath for the benefit of passers-by,



This year we have transferred to Local Management. Brentham Allotments and Gardens Association (BAGS) – which all plot-holders are automatically members of - have taken on responsibilities for tasks such as rent collection and minor maintenance, which used to be undertaken by a council-appointed site manager. In return, we get to keep a proportion of the rent which the BAGS committee hope to use to develop and improve some of the site facilities. We'd like to install a composting toilet, for example, as the current Portakabin has seen better days!

Brentham allotmenters are a friendly bunch – happy to buddy up with new plot holders and share their knowledge. Their wisdom ranges from bee and chicken keeping to viticulture and, of course, growing a wide range of fruit and vegetables.

As new plot holders, my friend and I have been made to feel welcome and have taken advantage of the activities offered by the wider Ealing Allotment Partnership.



- Last year we took the children to the Frog and Wildlife day at Framfield allotments and this spring were inspired to create our own wildlife pond (opposite) on a spare piece of land adjoining our plot. Now all we need is for the frogs and dragon flies to find us!
- This year we have joined the Council's food and garden waste composting trial, and hope to have lots of lovely compost soon - courtesy of a fellow plot holder who has devised the method described in the Winter 2014 edition of the EAP newsletter.



I am always amazed and inspired by the diversity of how people use their plots. It's a pleasure to wander round the site. Whether you like serried rows of fruit and vegetables, food cooked in a clay oven or a Copacabana tucked away in the trees, there's something for everyone!

Jane Fernley

Around the Associations

Horsenden Allotment Association

Five years ago I acquired the keys to the allotment gates of one of the three Horsenden sites and with it my own small corner plot with which to have a go at growing (hopefully) my own fruit and veg. Little did I know then that not only had I gained a small haven to get away from my day-to-day stresses and rest my computer eyes - but that I had opened the door to finally discovering a local, like-minded community of people - something that had eluded me for the previous ten years of living in the area.

Since having taken on the running of the allotments ourselves a year and a half ago, the sites - and the group spirit that comes with them - have gone from strength to strength. By the time this newsletter goes to print, we will have had our second social BBQ. Our first, last year, had a very reasonable turn out but this year's promises to be a much bigger affair.

One of the things we are very much looking forward to is to finally use our 'community garden' for a large social event and show others what we have achieved with it so far. With the aid of generous donations from Lords Builders Merchants and Wickes (who between them have supplied materials for the paving area and covered pergola), plus the marvellous promise of funding from North Greenford Ward Forum (for some decent toilets and a greenhouse), we will soon have a space that everyone in the local area can start to benefit from.



The community garden started life as an overgrown plot just at the entrance to one of the sites, which although it has had a few tenants over the years - never seemed to improve. In our aim to make the allotments more of a community focus, we decided to create a place that others from outside the allotments could come and enjoy. Older members who may now struggle with a garden of their own will be able to visit it and, once the greenhouse and new toilets are installed, pupils from local primary schools will hopefully come and learn the joys of growing and eating their own produce. We have already held a few coffee mornings there where people come along to enjoy a cuppa, sitting outside in a relaxed, natural environment beside the pond we have constructed - and have a good natter.

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Later this month, as part of our community focus, we have the first of two group visits from the NCS (National Citizen Service) - a scheme set up for young adults aimed at encouraging them to get involved in team projects in their local community (www.ncsthechallenge.org/). Last year we had a group of 22 who helped clear one of our excessively overgrown plots and get it ready for a new tenant. This year we have two separate groups. We have given one the project of designing and helping build a nice entrance area to one of the sites. The other group is making a longer visit and we have planned work on the upkeep of outdoor furniture, doors and gates - plus spending time with individuals on their plots to see how they work them. I remember going along as a teenager to my uncle's allotment site and being amazed at what he grew and finding the whole thing really fascinating - so maybe, hopefully - some of our volunteers will get the same enjoyment and fascination and we can nurture some allotment tenants of the future!!

Finally - one of our decisions on taking over the running of the allotment was to start up a website to enable us to keep everyone in the loop as to our aims, objectives and any events we have organised. It is now available to view at www.greenfordhaaga.wordpress.com Here you can view the latest pics of our garden. We'll be adding some write-ups on the BBQ and NCS visits once they've happened and there are already dates on there for future coffee mornings (which all are welcome to come along to). With the allotment plots themselves looking better than they have done in years and with so much achieved so far and much more in the pipeline - I have high hopes that the spirit, friendships, enjoyment and involvement we initially set out to create at Horsenden will flourish!

Milly Mills
HAA Chair

Framfield

Framfield Centenary Celebrations:

This has to have been the busiest summer in the whole of Framfield's 100 years!

In June we hosted a visit from the wonderful Mikron theatre company. On a perfect summer evening, more than 100 people came along to enjoy the show, including many of our neighbours. The weather was great, the performers really talented and funny, and we made a good profit on the beer and Pimms! We've already booked them for next year!





Framfield Allotments were 100 years old on July 6th. That seemed like a good excuse for a celebration! (Not that Framfield need one!). The fantastic support from our plot holders, their friends and families and many of our neighbours made this a really special day! For the first time we enjoyed live music, and what a really good choice of musicians! Fresh from their triumph at the Hanwell Carnival, the Hanwell Ukulele Orchestra entertained everyone. Please go and see them if you get a chance!

The culinary feast provided by our plot holders reflected all our nationalities, from Kumiko's sushi to Dennis' venison burgers and Tom's Caribbean chicken bbq. Our favourite local brewery, Weird Beard Brew from Hanwell, supplied suitable refreshments to enhance the food!



Following their first visit to us last year, artists from the 4020 Art Group (based in Hanwell Community Centre) are becoming regular visitors to Framfield. During their visits in June, they were tasked with producing some art work for exhibition at our social. The results were absolutely stunning! Our new meeting room, used for the first time, made a great space for exhibiting the work and many of the artists sold

pictures on the day. Two pictures were kindly donated for auction – Steve Pound MP made a wonderful auctioneer. Local history expert David Blackwell shared the meeting room with a really interesting exhibit of the local area over the last 100 years. His research has been used to produce an account of the last 100 years of Framfield Allotments. If you would like to browse through our history, go to the link given below.

Visitors included John and Tina from the Searchlight Trading Hut who became mobile for the first time. Cultivate London again supplied some of their quality plants for sale, and we sold lots of jam and raffle tickets. Our new centenary garden is taking shape and will make a great long-term legacy. It made a great space for children - face painting and children's activities provided by Froglife (the national wildlife charity), proved very popular.

We'd like to say thanks to Ealing Council's Bubble team for funding the events, to Steve Pound who managed to conduct yet another raffle draw for us with humour, and to Councillors Penny Jones and Ciaran McCartan for taking the blame for the plot judging. Special thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers - can't wait to see what they can achieve over the next 100 years!

http://www.ealingallotmentpartnership.co.uk/images/Framfield_Timeline.pdf

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Oldfields

New Water Pipes and Self-filling tanks:

We had our first good news in February – when the Borough of Ealing started to install new water pipes and tanks! This took some time to complete and though our lovely grass paths are still suffering, we are now beginning to get them back to normal.

The Big Lunch:



On Sunday 7th June, we hosted our local “Big Lunch” in our community area, “The Oak Tree”, for the third year running and again it was a great success. The weather was fantastic. Our Association supplies marquees, tables and chairs etc., and our neighbours, friends and allotment holders bring their own food and drinks to share with other participants. Around 65 people attended including

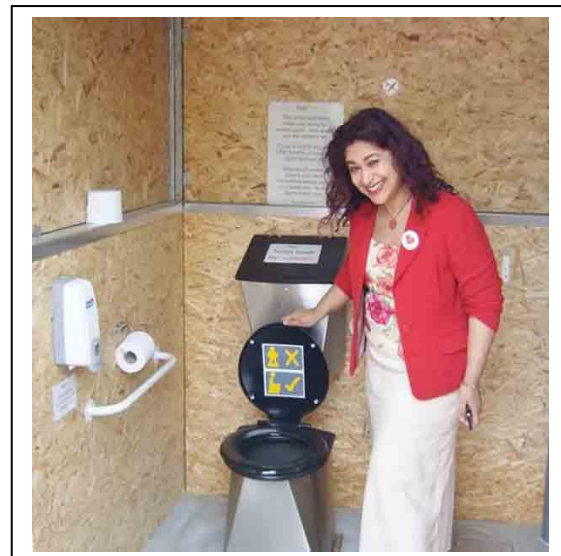
Cllr. Aysha Raza and our local MP Stephen Pound. This year we had a collection for the earthquake disaster in Nepal. We collected £240, which was passed on to “The Umbrella Foundation” that supports children in the disaster area.

New Composting Toilet Installation:

Back in February, we attended The Greenford Green Ward Forum’s meeting and asked if they could help us with funding for a composting toilet. We had a very positive response and, as illustrated opposite, it has already been installed! The Oldfield Allotment & Gardens Association have also funded a new pathway along the shop to the new toilet to ensure ease of access.

Supporting our Neighbouring Special Needs School

A plot has been given over to the Belvue Special Needs school, who now also occupy the Ken Acock centre next door. They show





such a great willingness to learn, help with maintaining the site and joining in all our events – it is a pleasure for all of us.

2015 has definitely been a full and exciting year for us, and we're only half way through it!

Northfields Allotments

What brings an allotment community together? Love of gardening would have been my first answer. But it seems the real answer to bringing a group together is a BBQ (and a special project).

I've always believed that you can't expect people to volunteer their time without giving something back. We've always provided tea and cake. Now we have the BBQ. We had our first BBQ in February. Around twenty of us stood around wrapped up warm against the cold eating Sainsbury's finest. Never has a hot sausage tasted so good. Luckily the weather is now warmer and plotholders have been bringing along a few beers to our monthly sessions. We even had elderflower champagne and sloe gin this month to help wash down the sausages.

The volunteer days have really made a huge difference in turning the site around. I cannot thank everyone enough for their time and effort. We are finally getting on top of the rubbish clearance and maintenance that was desperately needed. So much so that we can now move onto those nice projects which add character to the site. This month it turned out to be a very poignant project, especially for some of our older plotholders.

During a previous hedgerow clearance session, we found an old Anderson air raid shelter. I must have walked past it hundreds of times and never knew it was there. It was rusty and in a bad state, with some bits missing. It had obviously been given a new role as an allotment shed and was being used to store a few plastic chairs - but it was mostly hidden from view behind skip-diving treasures. Once we realised what we had, we convinced the plotholder to let us remove it, repair it and re-site it for everyone to see.

The repairs have been a labour of love and all credit should go to Simon Coleman, our wildflower expert and plotholder, for putting in so much effort to make this project happen. On the 1st August, six plotholders put together a man-sized Meccano set of corrugated iron, dug a hole and brought the old shelter back to life.

Now that it is complete it is quite strange seeing it there. I wonder which Ealing family took shelter



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inside while London was being bombed. Once you stand inside it, you can start to imagine how frightening it must have been sitting in the cold and damp, waiting to see if your home was still standing after the all-clear was sounded.

If you'd like to see the Anderson shelter (and step inside) you can, at our Allotment Open Day on Saturday 15th August between 2pm and 5pm. I'll bring my old wind-up gramophone player and let our Gracie set the mood. Site entrance is via the main gate on Northfield Avenue (midway between Mattock Lane and Occupation Road). Admission is FREE (but there are cakes, refreshments and plants for sale). I'll be doing a walking tour at 3pm to explain the site's history. We would love to show you around.

Christina Fox

Chair of the Ealing Dean Allotment Society

High Lane

Well into the growing season now and I'm delighted to report that we are full, with a substantial and ever-growing waiting list – We had 10 spare plots on a 40 plot site this time last year. This in turn means there's always someone to say hello or chat to whenever you go down during the day or evening.



The forming of the High Lane Allotment Association and going for the Local Management route has had a very positive effect: not the least is that it gives us the ability to apply for grants. We were grateful to receive funding from our Ealing Council Bubble application and held an extremely successful Open Day for ploholders, friends and families. It was well-enjoyed despite being hampered by the first downpour for a month whilst we were setting up (mixed feelings for someone having had to water every day before then).

Knowing there's now a band of willing volunteers also allows us to plan improvement projects. We have had our first school visit – picture the scene with the digging up of a new potato treated to a general gasp from 30 young minds!

High Lane recently welcomed the replacement of the old water supply together with new dip tanks, although the site looked like the Somme earlier in the year – it's getting better all the time. Links we have made with other sites can also reap dividends – we now get a regular supply of woodchip, and once our communal compost area is complete, we'll be getting free manure as well.

Simon Higginson

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Brentham

Most of the recent news from Brentham, including our recent move to Local Management, has already been covered in this month's Site Profile. We would, however, like to make a brief mention of our 2015 Summer Social. We are lucky at Brentham in having a large Portuguese community a number of whom have traditional clay ovens on site – and are marvellous cooks. Thanks to their, and the efforts of many other plotheolders, we had a real feast and the weather was pretty good too!



Ealing and Hanwell



Affiliated with the
Royal Horticultural
Society

Ealing & Hanwell Allotment Association

NEW
this year
children's
categories
+stalls

Annual Show

Saturday 12th September 2015
at the Polygon St Mary's Church

open to all

allotment holders and local residents
of Ealing, Hanwell and Acton.

Vegetables, flowers, fruits and domestic categories.

Now with plants, jams and cake stalls.
Supported by Ealing Transition and The Selborne Society.

Enjoy high tea and a raffle from 4pm



Pick up a show schedule for the rules at the
Ascott or Searchlight trading huts or for an online version
go to: www.ealingallotmentpartnerships.co.uk
or allotmentshow@gmail.com and we'll email a copy to you.

With thanks for the sponsorship from **John Lewis**

*The show is affiliated to the RHS, the National Dahlia and Chrysanthemum Societies

Ealing and Hanwell allotment association are running their "Annual Show" in September. As always all Ealing allotmenters are invited to submit entries under the show's many categories – go to http://www.ealingallotmentspartnership.co.uk/images/Show_2015.pdf for details. Even if you are not tempted into entering yourself, come along and enjoy the fun!