

Syston Allotment Society



NEWSLETTER Winter/ Spring 2016 - 2017

Happy New Year to all, and a big welcome to all new plot holders! We hope newcomers will enjoy every minute spent at the allotment site; don't hesitate to talk to other plot holders if you have any questions or just want a chat. Some plot holders are also committee members for Syston Allotment Society. Here is where to find them:

Plot 15B	Richard Thorpe (Chair)	Plot 63B	Helen Lake
Plot 65A	Terry Bailey (Treasurer)	Plot 11	Mick Streetly
Plot 62A	Ann & Marie Shellard (Joint Secretaries)	Plot 54	Paul Windridge
Plot 59B	Beth Cowley	Plot 73B	Richard Kirk
Plot 23	Gerald Pownall		

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: MARCH 21st All plot-holders welcome!

March 21st 2017 at Syston Social Club, High Street 7.45 pm. All plot-holders and their spouses/partners are very welcome. There will be a raffle, a chance to chat to other plot-holders, and a chance to give your views on what matters to you.

OPEN DAY 2016



Syston allotments have had a productive year despite the best efforts of slugs and the vagaries of the weather.

Thank you to all who came along for the Open Day on the very sunny Sunday of 7th August 2016. It was the first event of its kind for many years, and was well attended. The plant sale, raffle and donations for the tea, coffee and cake helped us make a total of £144.50. This paid for the outlay and made us a few quid. There were many positive comments about the event both from visitors and plot holders. On the strength of the fun people had, we aim to have another Open Day in Summer 2017 so keep that in mind.

Well done to all who entered produce of varying types across all the competition categories. The turnout was very encouraging, so local expert gardener Derek Cox, our very experienced competition judge, had plenty to look at. The quality and quantity of food and produce displayed, gave the allotment holders much to be proud of.

Derek kindly commented on the enjoyable atmosphere at the allotments and of the light hearted approach to the Open Day. The emphasis was on the fun of joining in collectively rather than serious competition.



Derek Cox judging exhibits

COMPETITIONS	WINNERS
Tallest sunflower	Hillman children
Best produce	Terry Bailey
Best use of produce	M. Jeeves
Funniest vegetable (Laughing potato)	Name not supplied
Best newcomer	Debbie Taylor plot 62B

The Open Day was a useful event for attracting more people onto the waiting list, which we all know is beneficial for the long term future of the site. Perhaps we could each be proactive in aiming to encourage at least one more person to join the waiting list in 2017. Maybe we could even award a prize at the next Open Day for the plot holder who achieves the most confirmed new potential members. Anyone want to rise to the challenge?

The event was primarily initiated by Ann and Marie Shellard, whose time and energy, along with that of volunteers and committee members put together an event that represented the allotments very well. Ann is pictured with Derek and Committee members Paul, Terry and Richard / Grizz.



HEARTFELT THANKS TO TERRY BAILEY FOR KINGS SEEDS WORK

Members of the National Allotment Society are eligible to order seeds from Kings at a whopping 40% discount (see next item). For many years, Terry Bailey has given up his time to hand out catalogues, collect in and transfer all our individual orders onto a single order form, send it to Kings, then divide up and distribute the seeds when they arrive. He is now stepping down from this task. Each plot-holder who is a member can now fill in their own order form and hand it in to the committee with £1 which pays Kings to pack each member's order separately (taking over just a part of Terry's work). All the packs will be sent to the committee for collection by members.

We give heartfelt thanks to Terry for all his work on our seed orders over the years. (This is separate from his role as Treasurer).



Terry Bailey

If anyone would like to take over from Terry as 'seed secretary', the Syston Allotment Society will benefit from a

further 10% discount from King's by collating our orders onto one form, rather than lots of individual order forms, then matching seeds to orders and distributing them. If you would be interested in this role please let a committee member know.

NATIONAL ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

Membership of the National Allotment Society or National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) brings us many benefits. We get legal advice (e.g. in the event of threatened changes in land use), insurance, and discounted seeds from Kings Seeds who have been growing fruit, flower and vegetables seeds for over 120 years. They supply the UK's best known brands and are The National Society's official seed partner, offering a **40% discount** on retail prices to members who buy through the seed scheme. It is well worth paying the £3 fee kindly collected by the council; without it we would have no insurance and no legal advice to hand in case of problems. (Some plot-holders are already life members, or pay an individual subscription. They would not be expected to pay the £3 fee in addition to their other subscription). Belonging to the National Society means that we are part of the most important nationwide organisation for the promotion of allotment gardening, which matters more and more these days to protect our allotment sites.

IS GARDENING GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH?

Do you think your health is better, or worse, than it would be if you didn't have an allotment or do any other gardening? A report just published in the journal 'Preventive Medicine

Reports' brings together the findings from studies published since 2001 that compare the health of gardeners with the health of non-gardeners. The results show that gardening has a significant positive impact on health. This applies to things such as 'reductions in depression and anxiety symptoms, stress, mood disturbance, and body mass index, as well as increases in quality of life, sense of community, physical activity levels, and cognitive function'. (pp 96-97).



One study looked at how children benefit from nature and found that for children facing significant stress in their lives, stress levels when they were in natural surroundings were lower than when they were surrounded by man-made, non-natural settings.



WHAT ABOUT YOUR BRAIN?

Just seeing plants can help in unexpected ways. Seeing trees can even improve your ability to solve maths problems apparently. If you look at the two pictures below you will see that they are of the same street, but one has had some trees added. Researchers split people into three groups. All three groups had to look at pictures like these on a computer screen and then do a maths test. The first group looked at pictures without trees for a few minutes. Their math test scores were the lowest. The second group also looked at pictures without trees but the researchers added in trees for a microsecond, then took them away again. The time was subliminal - so short that people were not even consciously aware of it. Despite this their maths scores were better than those of the first group. The third group looked at pictures with the trees added for a full minute. Their scores were as high as those of the second group.



SURPLUS - NOT TO WASTE

So, you have carefully sown your seed, established a root system, weaned seedlings through their most tender weeks. You've nurtured your emerging vegetables through the visitations of slugs, watched them adapt to transitions from small trays and pots under glass to then flourish freely in the open ground. You've mastered their protection – outwitted all the pests, watered and fed correctly. You have maybe even altered your holiday diary to accommodate their neediest weeks. You feel chuffed that your attention to detail, time, energy and use of good tips combined with years of knowledge or pure good luck and the odd miracle has resulted in successful and plentiful crops.

You can now see and taste your green fingered handiwork ... but hang on a minute, there's too much of it!

When your crops are ready for harvesting there is delight in supplying family and friends with nutritious, healthy, home grown food, but sometimes gluts can become onerous burdens to find a good home for. Perhaps the freezer is full, friends and neighbours may be away in the summer just when your abundance is peaking – what can you do with the extra? After all the effort you've invested you don't want to waste it. Read on..

It is hard to escape the increasing news about food poverty caused by social and financial hardships and food waste particularly from supermarkets and perhaps overly stringent laws about *sell by* dates, or misshapen rejects of perfectly adequate vegetables that supermarkets won't

willingly supply to the public without a quirky project inspired by TV.



Some pals rejected by supermarkets

'Waste' food from British farms with very minor imperfections in shape or size such as those we might happily produce on our allotments is crippling the farming industry which has already faced penalties for their success in production.

This accidental or deliberate commercial over production collides with an epidemic of mismanaged waste. Each year across the world one third of the food produced for human consumption (approximately 1.3 billion tonnes) is lost or wasted.

Surplus food created by some farms exceeding production quotas and creating food mountains of perfectly good food is not always wisely redistributed through no fault of their own. In fact, if it is redistributed with common sense it does not become wasted at all and there lies the solution for us all, *redistribute surplus food*.

In any context of over production – moving the crops on in whatever quantity, be it a small allotment glut or a huge industrial and commercial level, makes sense.

HELP IS AT HAND

There are increasing initiatives trying to tackle these issues. For one example on the commercial level; Tesco's who created 30,000 tonnes of edible waste in 2016 has begun a partnership with UK charity 'Foodshare' to redistribute their waste food into British communities and charities rather than Anaerobic Digestion Energy Plants or for use in animal feeds (which is a whole other story).

On a local level – if we have surplus gluts on our plots we can contribute them to community groups in Leicester such as '**The Real Junk Food Project Leicester**' which is part of a global network of Pay-as-you-feel cafés originated in Leeds in 2013. They intercept waste or surplus food and chefs make perfectly good meals with it (in their 5 star hygiene rated kitchens). They welcome fresh produce from allotments. The cafés are for all walks of life like any café and are open on Thursday evenings and Tuesday and Friday lunchtimes.

www.realjunkfoodprojectleicester.org

Surplus Allotment food Please deliver to:

The West End PAYF cafe
LCIL West End Neighbourhood Centre
Andrewes Street, Leicester. LE3 5PA

BRICK EXCHANGE!

Most plot-holders have a number of old house bricks on their plot, being used to weigh things down or prop things up. If you look closely at these, you may find that some have the name of the maker stamped on them.



Dennis Gamble, who comes from Syston, has made a study of local bricks and would love to hear from you if you find a brick with the maker's name on the largest face (frog or indent: the part covered by mortar once used in a wall). Very occasionally you may find the builder's name. This will be on the longer face visible once used in a building (stretcher). Dennis's research shows that there have been at least 280 brickmakers in Leicestershire from 1820 onwards, including fairly local ones such as Thurmaston 'Star' brickworks.



Syston Pottery (the 'bumpy' bit of land on the left near the Ridgemere) may have made bricks and was owned by T. Baker. If you find any bricks with a maker's name and would be willing to donate them to his collection he will exchange them for other less historic ones so that you do not go short. You can contact Dennis on 07947725361.

COLLECTIVE NOUNS FOR GROUPS OF BIRDS

WORDS ARE HIDDEN IN THE GRID. THEY MIGHT BE WRITTEN UP, DOWN, BACKWARDS, FORWARDS OR DIAGONALLY.

P	U	R	P	E	P	I	R	T	E	U	Q	U	O	B
U	C	A	T	S	P	A	D	D	L	I	N	G	U	P
D	A	U	A	M	U	T	A	T	I	O	N	T	A	A
D	S	N	W	A	C	T	H	I	N	G	U	R	D	R
L	T	K	R	A	F	T	S	A	C	P	T	I	R	L
I	M	I	T	I	N	G	R	T	H	Y	R	B	I	I
N	L	N	R	P	U	N	D	P	A	X	I	E	F	A
G	A	D	S	N	O	I	T	A	R	U	M	R	U	M
U	M	N	T	L	B	R	E	Q	M	A	M	U	T	E
N	E	E	O	X	R	E	D	R	U	M	S	O	O	N
K	N	S	O	H	S	T	U	O	F	L	I	G	H	T
I	T	S	C	B	U	T	Q	X	I	R	S	I	U	Q
N	I	T	E	N	O	I	T	A	T	N	E	M	A	L
D	A	U	N	O	I	T	A	T	L	A	X	E	L	F
W	N	S	T	N	O	I	T	A	T	N	E	T	S	O

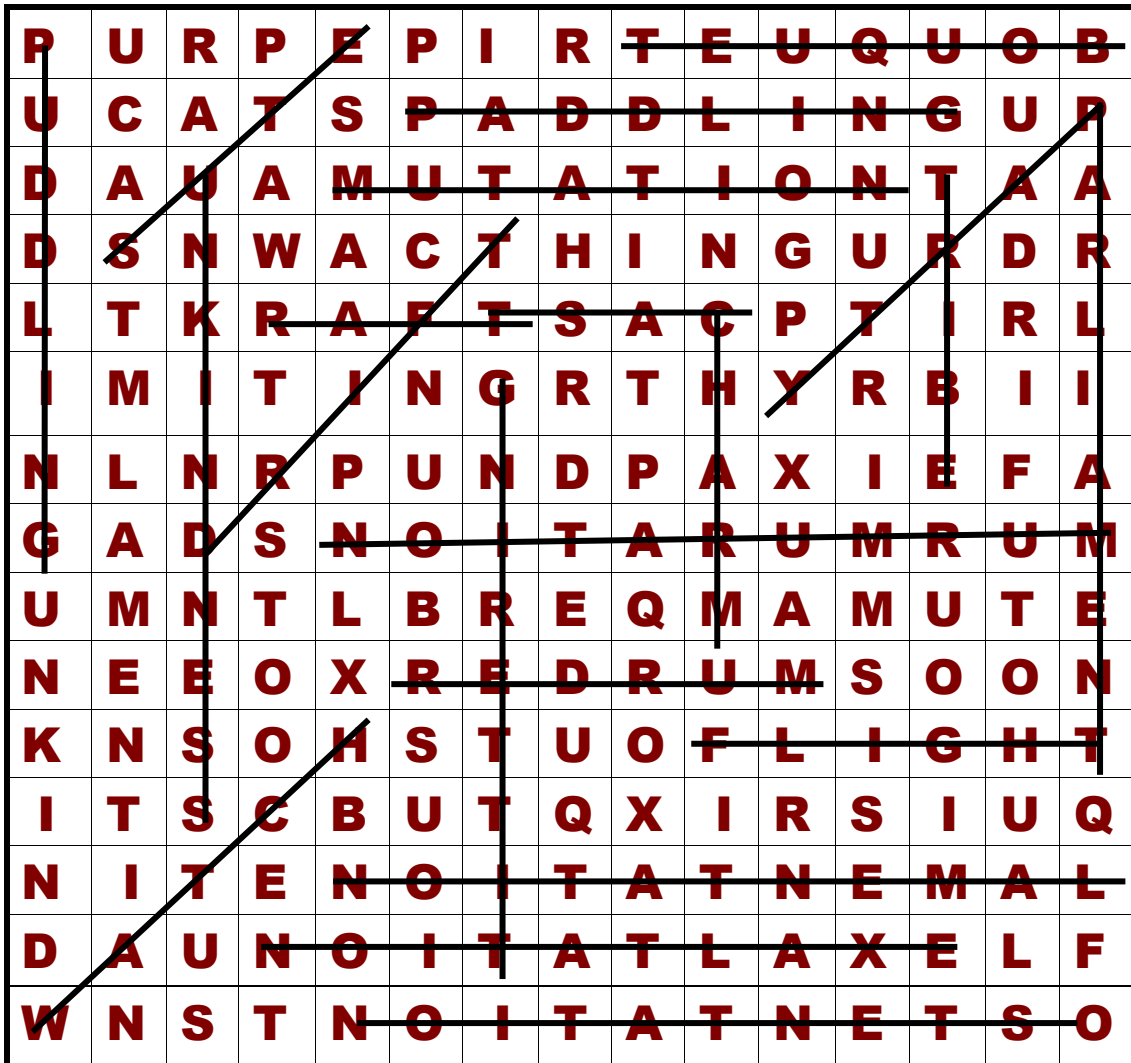
BOUQUET	of Pheasants	PADDLING	of Ducks
CAST	of Falcons	PARLIAMENT	of Rooks
CHARM	of Finches	PARTY	of Jays
DRIFT	of Quails	PUDDLING	of Mallards on water
EXALTATION	of Larks	RAFT	of Coots
FLIGHT	of Swallows	SUTE	of Mallards on land
LAMENTATION	of Swans	TITTERING	of Magpies
MURDER	of Crows	TRIBE	of Sparrows
MURMURATION	of Starlings	UNKINDNESS	of Ravens
MUTATION	of Thrushes	WATCH	of Nightingales
OSTENTATION	of Peafowl		

Additional - Can you also spot the hidden name of a famous racehorse?

© Created by Kateora

ANSWERS

COLLECTIVE NOUNS FOR GROUPS OF BIRDS



Answer: famous racehorse Red Rum

YOUR VIEWS ON AN ALLOTMENT SITE TOILET

Syston Allotment Society committee would like everyone's views on providing toilet and handwashing facilities on the site. If this is popular, and if there is a way of keeping the facilities clean, then the committee will look into the possibilities. Alternatively, plot-holders may not think this is important – we just don't know. There is a link to a survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/FYPJCM7> or you can find a link on a 27th Jan facebook post, or you can fill in this paper survey, or you can come along to the AGM on March 21st and fill in a paper survey there. **Please can you give your views by 21st March.** There is a space for comments overleaf so let us know what you think. Thank you.

If you have already completed the survey online, thank you! There is no need to complete it again.

1. What is your plot number? (Please answer in box below)	
2. Are you in favour of having a toilet and hand sanitiser on site? (Please tick yes or no)	
	YES
	NO
3. How many adults from your plot would use an onsite toilet? (Answer in box below)	
4. How many children from your plot would use an onsite toilet? (Answer in box below)	
5. Approximately how <i>often</i> would somebody from your plot use an onsite toilet?	
	EVERY DAY
	MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK
	LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK BUT MORE THAN ONCE A MONTH
	LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH
6. Would you be willing to be on a rota to clean the toilet?	
	YES
	NO
7. If yes, how often would you be willing to clean the toilet?	
	SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK
	SEVERAL TIMES A MONTH
	SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR
	NOT APPLICABLE
8. Would you be willing to be involved in fundraising for the toilet, if needed?	
	YES
	MAYBE
	NO

9. Thank you very much for your answers. If you have any comments or questions, please use the space below and over the page.

Comments or questions cont'd overleaf:

COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS RE ALLOTMENT TOILET:

**THANK YOU! PLEASE TEAR OFF THIS SHEET AND RETURN TO THE
POSTBOX ON THE ALLOTMENT SITE, OR TO A COMMITTEE MEMBER, OR TO
95 WANLIP ROAD**

NOTICES

PLANT SALE

There will be a PLANT SALE on Saturday 20th May 2017. It's a chance to raise money for the allotments at the same time as finding homes for your surplus seedlings or the offspring of any house plants. More details to come, but meanwhile, pot on!

EMAIL ADDRESSES

For information: Syston town council would like to send out future allotment letters electronically where possible. If you use email, they will be grateful if you could supply your email address. They will still use printed letters for those who do not have a way of receiving it electronically.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Photos: Kate Hubbard, Grace Hicks, Kate Windridge, Chun-Yen Chang (Lin et al article below).

Journal articles: Lin Y., Tsai C., Sullivan W.C., Chang P., Chang C. (2014). *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5 (906).

Soga M., Gaston K.J., Yamaura Y. 2017. Gardening is beneficial for health: A Meta-analysis. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 5, 92-99.

The Birds

Happy who for a season
may absent themselves on buoyant wing!
The birds that Winter drives away
Will surely come again with Spring.

They of our ills will mindful be,
And when at length the storm has passed,
They will return to this same tree
Which has so often felt the blast.
Then to our fertile vale will they
A more auspicious presage bring!

The birds that Winter drives away
Will surely come again with Spring.

Pierre-Jean de Béranger (1780–1857), "The Birds," translated from the French in *Love & Music*, 1883 by Percy Reeve.