

Syston Allotment Society



NEWSLETTER SUMMER to AUTUMN 2017

Welcome to the 2017 summer and autumn issue of the allotment newsletter.

By now, many of this year's newcomers will be reaping their first harvests and generally experiencing the lay of the land here at Syston allotments. For those newcomers and for everyone else, it's worth reminding you that previous editions of our allotment newsletters are available on the allotment website: www.systonallotmentsociety.uk

Looking back at old issues can be a useful reference for particular searches that can help us solve commonly recurring questions about the specifics of our growing conditions, for example we generally have sandy soil and there are handy tips to help with that. There's often comfort in learning that something that you notice on or about your plot, has been experienced by others and covered in the newsletter, so there is a shortcut to giving and receiving advice in its pages. Perhaps you might want to extend your range of companion planting or see how others have tackled an issue –

This year crinkly, dry onions seem to have been an ongoing conversation! If anyone has the answer to this one, do let us know.

If you have tips to share, ideas or items to contribute to the newsletter, please give them to me, Kate on plot 19b. If I'm not there, there is a suggestion box near my plot number by water butt. I'm not on facebook, so good old fashioned word of mouth or written communication works a treat. Have a chat with me or drop a note in the box, not forgetting date, name and clear contact details.

Talking of facebook – I have noticed that due to the immediacy of facebook's sharing of photos and comments, items that might once have been saved as topical and relevant for a newsletter 'round up', are now getting shared so quickly, that preparing non repetitive content for the newsletter increasingly requires repeated re-editing. Non specific newsletter article content could just as easily be found within our own individual magazine choices. However, we must remember that there are members who are not on facebook and for them the newsletter information remains hopefully fresh. So perhaps some repeated information across the different mediums is okay?

This was discussed at the August committee meeting - The committee is very keen for the newsletter to continue in the email, website and hard copy formats.

NB. The notice board near the entrance is also still very useful for updating information in addition to the newsletter and technology. Please acquaint yourselves with whatever communication works for you.



LOO SURVEY UPDATE

Thanks to Kate Windridge, Ann Shellard, Beth Cowley and the committee for their ongoing research and discussion efforts on this topic.

What were people's views about allotment toilets?

Thank you very much to everybody who completed a survey online or on paper to give their views on allotment toilets. There were 42 completed surveys which was very pleasing. Here is a summary of all the responses to the most crucial questions:

Are you in favour of having a toilet and hand sanitiser on site?

Yes: 33

No: 6

No strong feelings: 3

So 79% of those who replied were in favour.

Would you be willing to be on a rota to clean the toilet?

Yes: 25

No: 16

Plus one who said it depends on what type of toilet: yes if it's a composting toilet, no if conventional toilet.

So 60% of those who replied are in principle willing to help with cleaning. This is great.

How often would you be prepared to clean the toilet?

Several times a week: 1

Several times a month: 12

Several times a year: 12

Thank you also for taking the trouble to write comments. There is no room to reproduce all of them but here are a few:

'It would be very handy as long as it was responsibly used and maintained

'Personally we just go [to the] toilet before we go to the allotment'

'I regard such a facility as a luxury but being male I have certain advantages over our female colleagues and it is because of this I support the initiative'

'Think this would be very beneficial when spending lots of time on our plots'

'Frequency of use would depend on the season. Probably a couple of times a week in the summer, possibly never in the winter'

Conclusions:

So although less than 50% of our 129 plot holders were in favour, the committee decided that there was a significant number of people who wanted a toilet and that their views should be met if possible. They also considered the fact that 25 people have kindly offered to help with cleaning several times a year or more (this even includes one or two who had no strong feelings about toilet provision). This means that, in theory, those volunteers would need to clean the toilet only twice (or occasionally three times) a year.

Bearing both these things in mind, Syston Allotment committee decided to go ahead with the toilet project.

August committee meeting - Continued research into appropriate models is being done by Kate, Ann and Beth with a trip to look at shortlisted toilet designs.

Toilet continued ...

What next?

A range of options available were discussed at the May committee meeting. In an ideal world a composting toilet would be desirable and would save water. However, there were serious concerns about how to avoid misuse (such as putting non-compostable items into the toilet, which someone would then need to take out by hand). The other major drawback of a composting toilet would be to do with the disposal of the composted waste.

Firstly, the waste would need to be dug out and removed regularly and this is a job for which no volunteers have come forward. Secondly, it is our understanding that unless a composting toilet is on domestic premises, treatment of the waste can be complex: for instance it may be subject to controls under Environmental Regulations.

(Waste cannot be spread directly on land growing plants that are for human consumption because of potential health risks, so we cannot just add it to our own compost heaps! Also there are types of medication taken that pass through the body and that we might not want in compost for growing vegetables).

At various times the members of the committee have also explored the possibility of a purpose-built flushing toilet block, but the costs of connecting to the main sewer on Upper Church Street (which is probably higher than the allotment site system) would be prohibitive.

The suggestion which will be taken forward as a 'trial toilet' is to explore how much a 'portaloo' would be. This would have several advantages: it is relatively cheap to have it pumped out, its utilitarian nature will mean that people would not be tempted to loiter in it but it's nevertheless there as a facility when needed, and last but not least, if there are any unforeseen problems it is much easier to remove it than it is to remove any other type of toilet. It therefore seemed a reasonable solution and the committee voted unanimously to take it forward.

In theory, if it is popular and if there is a need, there is nothing to stop a choice of a permanent toilet being reviewed again in a few years.

OPEN DAY 13th August 2017



COMPETITIONS AND RESULTS



Expert garden broadcaster Derek Cox kindly judged again.

TALLEST SUNFLOWER

Romaio & Francesca Sheffield. Plot 53b

Their Sunflower was 175cm tall or 5ft 8½. Can anyone beat it next year? Thanks to all the kids who entered this year.

BEST PRODUCE (Mixed boxes)

1ST	Tammie Gant	Plot 65b
2nd	Unlabelled	?
3rd	John Clarke	Plot 8a

BEST USE OF PRODUCE

1ST	Shane Briggs & Bev Sheffield	Plot 53b
	<i>(4 different jams)</i>	
2nd	Kate Hubbard	Plot 19b
	<i>(Cherry infused vodka & dried herbs)</i>	
3rd	Helen Lake	Plot 63b
	<i>(Chilli Jam)</i>	

BEST NEWCOMERS PLOT

John Taylor Plot 13b

Botanists have developed a vegetable that eliminates the need to brush your teeth.....Bristle sprouts.



Reminder about our surplus veg and gluts

Readers of the Winter/Spring newsletter may recall the article about surplus vegetables from our plots and what we can do with it all ...Donate it to this official local creative community project that uses all sources of surplus food which would otherwise be wasted.

They are always grateful for surplus vegetables from our allotments to use in their café, where people can choose to pay what they feel a meal is worth either by using money or perhaps washing up or donating something else useful like an informal barter exchange. (tidying up, fixing broken stuff, volunteering, other things you might think of).



If we take them some of our spare vegetables, we can get a 'free' meal in exchange.
(Imagine feeling too tired to cook after being on your plot & being able to just drop in here for a free meal!)

**Open : Thursday evenings for meals
Tuesday and Friday for lunch**

The Real Junk Food Project Leicester

The West End 'PAYF' Café
The West End Centre LCIL
Andrewes Street
Leicester, LE3 5PA

<http://realjunkfoodleicester.org/contact-us/>

trjfp Leicester@outlook.com

<http://realjunkfoodleicester.org>
[Facebook](#) + [Twitter](#)

TRIP ADVISOR ★★★★★

Reviewed 11 January 2017

[Fantastic place](#)

"Meals are cooked with regard to donations. There isn't a regular menu. Pay what you feel. If you have no money then fine - if you are able then help with clearing up. You can also buy veg and store cupboard food that they haven't been able to use." Coreen.

The Real Junk Food Project Leicester

25 – 30 cafes opened in the first year 2013
Approximately 110 new cafes about to open

Aim: Intercepting food waste / surplus food

Business model: is to make themselves go out of business!

Roughly **one third of the food** produced in the world for human consumption every year - approximately 1.3 billion tonnes - gets lost or wasted.

Sources: *Global Food Losses and Food Waste* – FAO, 2011
The environmental crisis: The environment's role in averting future food crisis – UNEP, 2009

Some 795 million people in the world do not have enough food to lead a healthy active life. That's about one in nine people on earth

Sources: [State of Food Insecurity in the World](#), FAO, 2015

TEABAGS IN OUR COMPOST?

Have you noticed your teabags don't disappear?

Make a cuppa and read this ...

As environmental awareness, tastes and conscience become ever more sophisticated, many of us are trying to compost our 'biodegradable' products including teabags, trusting that our ethical choices and the labelling are as correct for us as possible.

When it comes to teabags, (*who would have thought there was so much written about the subject!*) we learn that even industry insiders are being hoodwinked about inaccurate labelling and product materials.

Many of our favourite brands: Twinings, Typhoo, Yorkshire, PG, Clipper, Tetley, Teapigs etc are trying their best, but are actually only 70 to 80% biodegradable. Even the virtually invisible stitching on otherwise biodegradable paper teabags is synthetic polypropylene (plastic) which does not fully compost.

Even the Nylon bagged Teapigs which were transformed to corn starch, remain dubious as the corn used is GM genetically modified.

We are advised that we can tear our bags for the tea to still do its magic in our composts. AND we are told that composting is still the safest thing to do with the microscopic plastic, as there is nowhere else to safely put it! – not an ideal solution.

Just one of many articles on the subject

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/jul/02/tea-bags-biodegradeable>

Not just for kids!

WORDSEARCH

WATERS OF THE WORLD

WORDS ARE HIDDEN IN THE GRID. THEY MIGHT BE WRITTEN UP, DOWN, BACKWARDS, FORWARDS OR DIAGONALLY. TICK EACH WORD OFF THE LIST AS YOU FIND IT. HAPPY HUNTING

OPTIONS: 1. Can you spot one French canal in the grid? 2. How many times do Italy's Po and Fiji's Ba rivers appear in the Grid?

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

Kate © 2008

CAPEs

- COD
- FAREWELL
- FOULWIND
- GOOD
- HOPE
- HORN
- REINGA
- YORK

GULFS

- ADEN
- AQABA
- ARABIAN
- CARPENTARIA
- MEXICO
- MORO
- SIRTE
- SUEZ

STRAITS

- BASS
- BERRING
- BOSPHORUS
- COOK
- DAVIS
- DOVER
- GIBRALTER
- TORRES

RIVERS

- AMAZON
- CLYDE
- CONGO
- DANUBE
- DARLING
- DEE
- DON
- DORDOGNE
- ELBE
- EUPHRATES
- GANGES

+ ONE FRENCH CANAL, CAN YOU SPOT IT?

- IRRAWADDY
- INDUS
- JORDAN
- LIFY
- LIMPOPO
- LOIRE
- MISSISSIPPI
- MISSOURI
- MURRAY
- NILE
- ORINOCO
- PO / BA
- RHINE
- SEINE
- ST LAWRENCE
- THAMES
- TIGRIS
- URAL
- VOLGA
- YANGTZE
- ZAIRE
- ZAMBEZI

Difficulty level: This is a HARD one.

No peeping!

Lots of red herrings.

A BIT OF FUN..

A season of 'size matters' banter

A friendly competition between a couple of allotment holders resulted in Shane Briggs winning with a 20lb Russian cabbage, all in good fun. Coming a close second was Richard/Grizz with another whopper at 17lb



Photo provided by Shane Briggs

PLOTS AND THEIR PEOPLE

*God loved the birds
and invented trees.*

*Man loved the birds
and invented cages.*



Jacques Deval, *Afin de vivre bel et bien (In order to live)*



FIRST AID KIT



Syston Town Council donated a First Aid Kit to the allotments at the end of June 2017. Whilst this gesture may be very useful to us, there has been much grubby handed scratching of heads about where it should be kept for maximum access, given that there is nowhere permanently 'open' onsite, as allotments are not a serviced provision, with staff or volunteers, nor a 'community group'. Allotments are unique. The most secure and accessible place is the cabin by the gate.

As we understand it from the National Allotment Society legal advisor, allotments do not require the formality of trained first aiders, accident books or to follow a health and safety policy that a place of employment must.

So, plot holders remain individually responsible for common sense, their own health and wellbeing and general activities on site - it has always been thus in the history of allotments.

For those that choose to use it (while stocks last) **We can best access the First Aid Kit in the cabin** in the mornings when some committee members *may* be available for access to the cabin by the gate. (Please remember plot holders are gardeners not first aiders).

Should any mishaps occur in the afternoon - *(and by soily, sods law, they will - when no one is around)* - As has always been the case, it is recommended to have your own basic medical kit on your plot in a weatherproof tub with items of your choice, such as: **Various plasters, bandage and bandage tape, large adhesive sterile pads, antiseptic wound spray, wound closure strips, and scissors [that you don't also use for your string, twine n' grubby jobs] etc.** It is stating the obvious to ensure your phone is with you and fully charged. The nearest **DEFIBRILATOR** is outside the Community Centre on School Street.

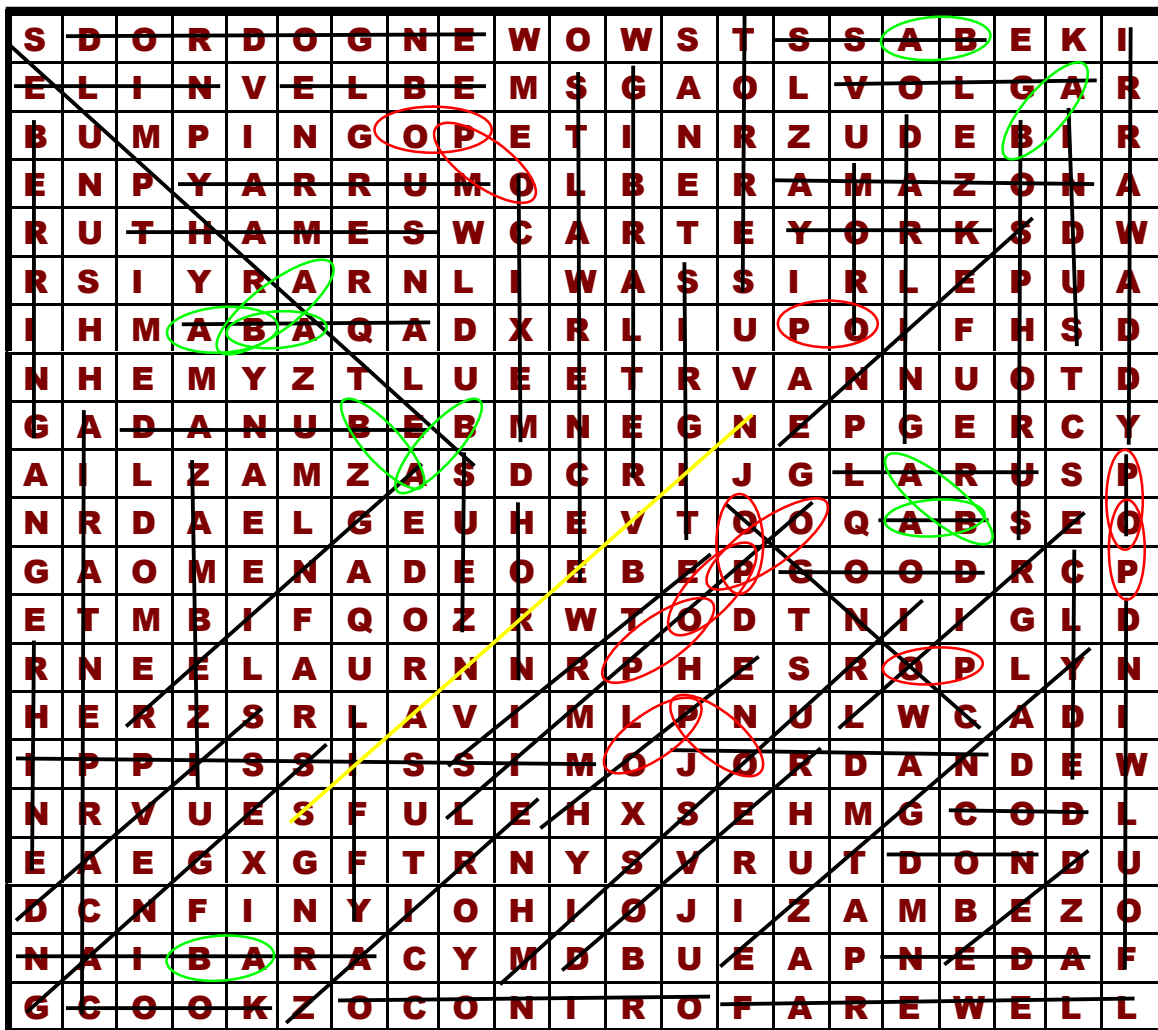
Committee 2017 and their plot numbers
(This information is always on the notice board)

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

All photographs, art work and text by Kate Hubbard unless otherwise stated
Free to use Clip Art from Microsoft

ANSWERS

WATERS OF THE WORLD



CAPES GULFS STRAITS RIVERS + ONE FRENCH CANAL, CAN YOU SPOT IT?

- | | | | | | |
|----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| COD | ADEN | BASS | AMAZON | IRRAWADDY | PO ¹² / BA ¹⁰ |
| FAREWELL | AQABA | BERRING | CLYDE | INDUS | RHINE |
| FOULWIND | ARABIAN | BOSPHORUS | CONGO | JORDAN | SEINE |
| GOOD | CARPENTARIA | COOK | DANUBE | LIFFY | ST LAWRENCE |
| HOPE | MEXICO | DAVIS | DARLING | LIMPOPO | THAMES |
| HORN | MORO | DOVER | DEE | LOIRE | TIGRIS |
| REINGA | SIRTE | GIBRALTER | DON | MISSISSIPPI | URAL |
| YORK | SUEZ | TORRES | DORDOGNE | MISSOURI | VOLGA |
| | | | ELBE | MURRAY | YANGTZE |
| | | | EUPHRATES | NILE | ZAIRE |
| | | | GANGES | ORINOCO | ZAMBEZI |



You may need a mirror to reveal the answer to this canal question — *mirrored*

Difficulty level – HARD. Lots of red herrings. Po and Ba rivers may be counted within other words

SYSTON ALLOTMENTS OPEN DAY

13th August 2017



Terry Bailey mans the produce & plant sale table



Francesca and Romario plot 53b congratulated by Derek & Richard



Bev Sheffield's winning jam plot 53b



The produce entries table filling up



Best Newcomer plot winner John Taylor 13b



Tammie Gant 65b winning produce box



Kate W tries to chat with a newcomer..



..but he seems too busy dancing 'Gangnam style'
(Think of Ed Balls bouncy dance on 'Strictly')

Thanks to all who came along to visit or support the Open Day by entering competitions on another wonderful sunny summer Sunday. Thanks also to all those who gave their time and energy to organising or helping with the event, without them it couldn't happen.

Thanks to Kate Windridge for most of the photos on this page and the portrait of Derek Cox on page 3