

System Allotment Society Newsletter

Summer 2012

Welcome to the Summer 2012 issue of the newsletter. The drought conditions at the start of summer seem some way off as we have now had the wettest June on record, and for good measure we've also been battered by giant hailstones. Despite this, we have had some successful events and have brought a little bit of allotment history back to life by getting the well working again.

Well water usable again

When the allotment site first came into being more than 100 years ago, a well was dug about half way down the track and a hand pump installed to draw up the water. This was the only source of water on the site until mains water was installed.

This historic pump has been out of action for a long while, and SAS committee members have been looking at ways to get it working again. After looking at the piston mechanism inside the lead pipe running down to the water, it was decided it couldn't be repaired and an alternative was needed. A solar pump was considered, but the manufacturers couldn't guarantee the pump would lift the water seven metres up the well shaft and into a tank. Not wanting to waste money on something not up to the job, SAS found that a Patay twin diaphragm bilge pump would be a simple and cost effective alternative.



The new installation in front of the historic pump

These pumps are used by the RNLI and the Army, and are extremely reliable and robust. Patay pumps cost about £200, but one was

found on Ebay for £107, and with the filter and hose the total cost was only £147.



The Patay pumping lever

The pump was installed in May alongside the existing pump, which will be kept for its historic value. Given the recent weather, the new pump has not yet been seriously tested but come the drier weather – who knows, it may happen – SAS is confident it will play a significant part in reducing the water bill.

Calling local historians

SAS has proof that the allotment site has existed since at least 1902, but it is likely the site was here before that. Do you have any documents that could prove the site was in existence before 1902? If you do, please contact a member of the Committee – thank you.

Spring plant & produce sale

Despite the poor weather, the spring plant and produce sale on 26th May was a record breaker, with takings of £187.10.

As ever, rhubarb was a sure fire seller and salads, radishes and tomato and herb plants sold very well. The sellers were kept very busy during the mid-morning rush and had practically sold out by the close at midday.



SAS Treasurer Terry Bailey with his damaged greenhouse

Spring Gardening Show



On 12th May, nearly fifty plot holders and their friends and family visited the Spring Gardening Show in Malvern. A coach took the group from the allotment site direct to the Malvern showground, where they were free to spend the day looking around the vast site full of gardening displays.

There were entertaining talks, displays of 'plant art', Jubilee themed gardens created by local schools and even some gardens brought from the Chelsea Show. Specialist clubs tried to entice new members, but for those happy to pass on fuschias or zinnias there was plenty to buy, and even a plant cloakroom for anyone not wanting to carry around their purchases.

Hailstorm creates havoc

On June 28th, a freak hailstorm battered Syston and the allotment site suffered damage to both crops and greenhouses. A number of greenhouses had their glass panels shattered, and crops were battered down and broken by the force of the marble sized hailstones.

Broad bean and potato stems were snapped and the growing tips of runner and French beans were broken off. Even established rhubarb stems were crushed, and the leaves were left peppered with holes.



Rhubarb battered by hailstones

Bonfires – a reminder

Syston Town Council's rule about bonfires says that bonfires are NOT allowed during the months of July and August. From September onwards, bonfires will be allowed from two hours before dusk. As a guide, some sunset times for the rest of the year are:

Sept 1 st 7.52 pm	Sept 15 th 7.19 pm
Oct 1 st 6.41 pm	Oct 15 th 6.09 pm
Nov 1 st 4.34 pm	Nov 15 th 4.10 pm
Dec 1 st 3.53 pm	Dec 15 th 3.50 pm

Dates for your diary

Committee meetings are on the first Tuesday of the month at the Syston and District Social Club, starting at 7.45. Any non-committee members are welcome to attend.