

# Cheltenham and District Allotment Holders' Association

**President: Christine Ryder**

[www.cheltenhamallotments.org](http://www.cheltenhamallotments.org)



*Affiliated to the National Allotment Society and the Gloucestershire Federation of Gardening Societies.*

## NEWSLETTER

## Autumn 2017

CHAIRMAN: Mr M D Hunt, 6 Arle Close, Cheltenham GL51 8JZ. Tel: 01242 230609  
VICE-CHAIRMAN: Mrs D M Ashdown, 20 Cromwell Road, Cheltenham GL52 5DW. Tel: 01242 582008  
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### **CDAHA Autumn Meeting** **Monday, September 4th at 7pm in the Municipal Offices**

The speaker will be David Cropp, he is an RHS qualified gardener, retired from teaching - not by trade!

He has run three full sized allotments himself which were recovered from a derelict state. All three are different styles, and include fruit, flowers and vegetables, including salads. He likes to experiment with unusual varieties to see what they are like – sometimes awful!

He has developed a successful style of overwintering allotments, which improves their condition dramatically come the spring.

Raffle tickets will be on sale at the meeting.

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### **Website Passwords**

#### **C&DAHA Website**

The new password for access to the members' area of our website is **Asterix** this is a variety of celeriac.

#### **National Website (nsalg.org.uk)**

The User Name is: s9327

Password: nsalg12

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### **Facebook**

Follow us on Facebook, look us up under 'Cheltenham & District Allotment Holders Association', [here](#) is a link.

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### **Information on the Internet**

A website that contains a wealth of information about allotments. Visit <http://www.allaboutallotments.co.uk/>

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### **Seed Scheme 2017/2018**

Please see the last page of this newsletter for details of the seed scheme.

**If you have not received a seed catalogue by 30<sup>th</sup> September, please contact Colin.**

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### **Membership Subscriptions**

Membership subscriptions for 2018 become due on 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2018. The subscription is £6 for the year. A renewal form is available on the last page of this Newsletter.

#### **Advantages of membership include:**

- **The seed scheme (savings of approx. 40%),**
- **10% discount at:**
  - **Dundry Nurseries, Bamfurlong Lane,**
  - **Cleeve Supplies, Tobyfield Rd,**
  - **Mobile chiropodist, Tel: 07713209729**
- **insurance giving public liability cover related to your plot**
- **a Newsletter four times per year**
- **Three meetings per year – two with guest speakers**

*(Please inform your neighbour plot holders who are not members of these benefits).*

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### **Email addresses**

If you are a new email user or have changed your email address, please let me know. This ensures you receive this quarterly newsletter promptly as well as the occasional bulletin of topical news. Please notify changes to [newsletter@cheltenhamallotments.org](mailto:newsletter@cheltenhamallotments.org)

## Dates for Your Diary

### C&DAHA Meetings for 2017

Monday December 4<sup>th</sup> – Annual General Meeting (AGM)

All meetings Start at 7pm and are held at the Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham. All members are invited to attend.

### Reddings Horticultural Show & Fete

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 at 2pm.

Schedules available from The Reddings Community Centre, Dundry Nurseries and Springfield Provisions.

### Malvern Autumn Show

23<sup>rd</sup> September – 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 9am until 6pm each day. Three Counties Showground Ground, Malvern.

### Cheltenham Horticultural Society 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Talk by Nick Macer

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October at 7:30pm

As a special event this year the CHS has asked Nick Macer to talk about “Plants from around The World”. Nick Macer is an experienced and passionate Plant Hunter, owner of PanGlobal Plants and last year was a co- presenter on BBC’s Gardeners’ World. Come and join us to listen to and see some ‘planty highlights’ from far flung places around the world.

The talk will take place at Balcarras School, East End Road, Cheltenham GL53 8QF 7.30pm  
Tickets cost £6.00. Light refreshments will be on sale before the talk. If you would like tickets, on a ‘first come, first served basis’, please contact, Yvonne Gregory, 9 Textile Drive, Brockworth, Glos GL3 4WD or email [yvonnegregory@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:yvonnegregory@yahoo.co.uk)

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### John Viveash – a Tribute

Many of you will already know that John died in May after a short and sudden illness. Even if you did not know John personally his name is probably familiar as he had been an allotment holder at Hatherley Road site for many years and had won many competitions during that time. His plot was always a joy to visit. John was generous with his knowledge and with his crops and is very sadly missed for his cheery smiles and friendship.

Submitted by a Hatherley Road plot holder.

## AGM of the National Allotment Society

### Report from Dennis Sutton

This year the meeting was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> June in Bath and I was asked to represent C&DAHA. There were representatives from societies and associations across the country. There were the usual formal reports from officers including the Treasurer who reported an £80,000 surplus for the year following a £29,000 deficit in 2016.

The President for the next three years is Phil Gomersall from the Yorkshire Region – A very active and colourful character – especially his braces!

The annual report included and outline of the strategic plan which I report in full below.

“Through our agreed Strategic Plan the National Allotment Society will:

1. Create a flexible and responsive management system that is more effective
2. Assess the needs of our staff (including volunteers) to ensure their needs are met.
3. Bring Regions into a consistent framework, following good practice from these areas.
4. Develop effective lines of communication to the grass roots level.
5. Have an image by the start of 2018 that is current, attractive and relevant.
6. Talk and engage with more Local authority members.
7. Increase the overall membership figures.
8. Engage with key decision makers i.e. Government, Local Authorities, Policy Makers to ensure the rights of the allotment holders and people on waiting lists and the general public are upheld.
9. Be seen as an organisation with a set of values which people can get behind.
10. Offer a first-class service to everyone interested in allotment gardening”.

Currently, NAS is urging the authorities to make adequate allotment provision in the proposed garden cities and towns. There is already Section 106 Grant Funding money which can be used for allotment development in new housing developments in existing towns and cities. We were urged to get to know the status of our allotments, particularly whether they were temporary or statutory.

After lunch, there were three presentations. The first was given by the seed buyer from Kings Seeds on sowing seeds. I hope to report his useful advice in our spring newsletter in time for the 2018 growing season. This was followed by a presentation on bees on the allotment and a final one on modern, heirloom and heritage seed varieties.

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### **The Origins of the C&DAHA – from Dennis Sutton**

Our allotment association had its origins in a protest meeting held to protest at the Borough Council's proposal to raise allotment rents between 400% and 800%. Following the protest meeting the first committee meeting of the Association was held on Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> April 1976. Mr. Douglas Trapp was elected chairman and Mr. Terry Ashdown was elected secretary. (Their names live on in two of the awards in our allotment competition). Letters were sent to councillors protesting against such steep rises. Up to that point the Cheltenham Horticultural Society had spoken on behalf of allotments on the relevant sub-committee of the Parks and Recreation Committee. It was felt that the interests of allotment holders would be better represented if a dedicated allotment association were formed to deal directly with the Borough Council. Representatives from each of the sites were called for.

A letter was sent to the Echo describing the proposals and ending with a call for all allotment holders to write to the Town Clerk. The committee sent letters to:

- The Chairman of the Parks and recreation Committee
- The Rt. Hon. Shirley Williams, M.P.
- The Department of the Environment.
- The Prices and Incomes Board
- Ms. Sally Oppenheim

Councillors were lobbied to support allotment holders' case.

Notwithstanding these efforts the Borough Trustee Body voted to raise allotment rents by the proposed amounts. Councillor Irving, Chairman of the Finance Committee, had been adamant that all departments must pay their way.

Following two public meetings the association was legally established on June 10<sup>th</sup> 1976 with a membership fee of 50 pence per year.

(Source: Minute book of the Association April 1976 – February 1981).

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### **Kate's Allotment – Summer**

So far, with a few exceptions, this has been a very good growing year for me. Not too many bugs and lots of veg and fruit to eat.



Despite a frost wiping out the early flowers on my strawberries, I subsequently had a good crop. The broad beans didn't over winter well, I had to replace about ½ of them in the spring, then they all grew and produced lots of beans and as well as eating plenty, I have a nice supply in the freezer.



I love celeriac, last year I lost most of them to slugs, this year, they nearly all bolted. After I'd pulled out all the ones producing flowers, I had 3 left (out of 12) – these are producing nice bulbs. I think I might try starting them off much later next year.



I grew mixed and purple beetroot (boltardy and Detroit 2), but I preferred the purple to the white and yellow ones. The peas shown here are Kelvin Wonder, which were excellent (though not self-supporting as claimed on the packet). The potatoes are violetta, they had a good flavour and looked good on the plate with a salad, but I think prefer pink fir apple.



This is the caterpillar of the cinnabar moth, kindly eating some groundsel for me.

The onions sown in the autumn suffered from the winter weather, I harvested about 1/3 of the crop I'd put in. They were lifted and eaten in early June.



The spring sown onions and shallots did very well, I lifted them in mid-July as one or two were starting to show signs of onion white rot, most of them were fine and although I know they won't keep as long, I have found that by doing this, I lose very few and they seem to last well enough for me to use them all. Also

seen here, the first of the pink fir apple potatoes – which were and are delicious.



These plants are Good King Henry, they are perennials and can be used in the same way as spinach. I bought seeds which took ages to germinate. I put many seeds in 8 pots and so far, have 4 plants.



Pigeons have been a continual problem this year, so I've kept brassicas covered. The seedling on the right are savoy cabbages, they are looking a bit sorry for themselves due to being attacked by flea beetle (they didn't go for any of the other brassicas), I have resorted to spraying them as the vinegar and water that seems to have kept the caterpillars and white fly off the rest of the brassicas, doesn't seem to deter them. Flea beetle also affected my turnips which also had lots of grubs in them. I have yet to grow turnips successfully.



The sweet potatoes have been growing well (T65 and Carolina Ruby), I hope the current cool spell doesn't upset them. You can see the tops of salsify (Sandwich Island) in the background, it's the first time

I've grown it, so it will be interesting to see what it's like when I dig it up in October.



Very soon we shall be eating this sweetcorn and the parsnips are looking good and will be lovely roasted over the winter.

I'm starting to plan for next year. Onion seed to overwinter goes in mid to late August, Broad beans in mid-October, I have the seed, I just need to work out where I'm going to put it ☺.

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## Tips

### Control of Onion White Rot – from John Rendell

White rot is the number-one threat to onion family crops worldwide. It's so severe that, in some areas, it has [destroyed the allium growing industry](#). Alarming? Certainly. Treatable? No – not currently, anyway. However, there are steps you can take to prevent it from entering your garden, and to limit the damage and spread of the disease if it's already present.

### Onion White Rot Symptoms

Onion white rot can affect all alliums (onions, garlic, leeks and shallots, as well as ornamental alliums) are at risk. I've found garlic to be the most susceptible, closely followed by onions. My shallots haven't yet been affected, and I've only ever had one leek show signs of the disease, but I may have just been lucky – if any aspect of having a white rot-infested garden can be considered to be lucky!

One of the worst things about onion white rot is that symptoms tend to appear when it's too late to do anything about it. The first sign that anything is wrong is usually yellowing foliage, often just before harvest time when you'd expect the leaves to start dying back anyway. This means it's possible to overlook the disease entirely.

When you dig up an infected plant it will pull free from the soil easily; no tenacious tugging required! Depending on how far advanced the disease is, you

may see a mat of fluffy white mould on the basal plate (where the roots sprout from), which will probably have tiny black growths like poppy seeds strewn across it. In severe cases, the bulb will have turned black and be totally rotten.

The little poppy seed growths on the base of infected allium bulbs are called 'sclerotia' and these are the means by which the disease spreads. They will drop off and hang around in the soil until another allium crop is planted in that spot, at which point chemicals in the plant roots trigger the sclerotia to germinate and colonise the bulb with white mould.

### Onion White Rot Control

There are no white rot-resistant varieties of allium available, so when buying in young plants make sure they're from certified disease-free stock and inspect the basal plates carefully discarding any that show signs of mould. Or start your plants from seed instead. If your plants do contract white rot, dig up the crop as soon as you're aware of it, and dispose of every scrap of plant tissue by burning or in your household waste. Do not compost it.

It's vital to avoid spreading the disease around the garden, so make sure you wash any soil from infected parts of the garden or allotment off your boots and tools before working on other garden beds.

Crop rotation can help limit the prevalence of the disease, but unfortunately the sclerotia can lurk in the soil for many years. You'll need to avoid growing alliums in the infected soil for at least eight and possibly as many as 20 years.

Growing in containers of bought compost may turn out to be a more practical solution or

Plan ahead so next year's onion bed is treated this year using dried garlic powder. This can be bought quite cheaply in large containers from equestrian suppliers. The smell from dried garlic powder stimulates the sclerotia to wake from its dormant state, but gives it nothing to feed on so it withers and dies (we hope). Rake or water in garlic powder, working it in with normal hoeing then water well. I dress 3 times June, July and August about 1 oz per sq. yd. (about 75gm per sq. metre) just hoe in each time.

(Editor's note – I prefer to mix the powder into water in a watering can, then water the ground with it, I have found spreading it any other way results in me and all my clothes smelling very strongly of garlic! ☺).

## Results from the use of biodegradable fabric – from John Rendell

As described in the summer newsletter, this year I am using black biodegradable fabric ground cover for my onion seeds and sets. By harvest time the fabric had accommodated the onion growth and was starting to decompose. Over the growing cycle approx. 30mins of weeding had been needed. Varieties in this experiment were Cupido from seeds, Hybound from seed and Troy over winter sets from Dundry which produced an excellent crop. I lifted the onions with a fork, 8 inches below onion to ensure the root system came out whole as I understand it the onions need them for the drying out process for storage as it uses the roots drawing the moisture to dry out the stems of onions preventing rotting. You can see in the photo below the harvested crops drying out.



Top Tip For those that want to give it ago. White rot protection for the next years Onion crop as per previous article, now is the time to sprinkle garlic powder at a rate of roughly 1oz per sqyd. This causes the white rot to hatch and causes them to wither and die due to there being no actual food. Ideally sprinkle in 2 or 3 times during June, July and August. Note do not use crushed garlic as this provided food for the White Rot.

## Horizon Potato Trial

Dundry was trialing a new potato called Horizon. They were interested in growers experience. The result we had from three roots was 10lbs or 6kg.



## Notes

I have a plea from Max Westwater, who has a plot in Ryworth Road. They have a major problem with moles. He would appreciate any advice that could be given about how to deter them.

## Recipe – from Val Berry

A good courgette recipe! It uses lots of courgettes, the Dolcelatte cheese is expensive but resulting soup is well worth it. I did not bother with the single cream as it was rich enough!

30ml olive oil  
15gm butter  
1 onion, peeled and chopped  
900gm courgettes sliced  
Dried oregano  
1 vegetable stock cube in 600ml water  
Salt & pepper  
150gm Dolcelatte cheese diced  
300ml single cream (optional)

Heat olive oil and butter in a pan. Add onion and courgettes. Sprinkle over 1 tsp dried oregano and cook for 2 mins.

Season, then pour in the vegetable stock. Bring to the boil, half-cover the pan and simmer for 30 mins.

Add the Dolcelatte cheese and stir until melted.

Blend the soup until smooth then stir in 200ml single cream. Heat through slowly without boiling. Ladle the soup into warmed bowls and divide 100ml single cream between them, swirling it on top of the soup. Garnish with a little crumbled Dolcelatte cheese and freshly ground black pepper.

**Many thanks to all who have provided input to this newsletter 🍷.**

## Seed Scheme 2017 – 2018

If you are a new member, or have used the seed scheme before, an order pack will normally be delivered to you by volunteers. Please ensure that your allotment plot has a clearly visible number as this will expedite delivery. The pack comprises the Kings Seeds catalogue, an order form and a coloured summary sheet. If you have not received your pack by 30<sup>th</sup> September, please call Mr Colin Smith on 01242 523740.

Our seed scheme, which is operated in conjunction with the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd. and Kings Seeds, offers good quality seeds at very favourable prices compared with Garden Centres and other retailers. Kings Seeds are one of the largest seed companies in the UK and also supplies seeds to a large sector of the commercial market.

Again this year we are taking advantage of the option provided by the suppliers under which they make up individual member's orders prior to despatching the bulk order to us. The charge for this service is £1 which is already entered on the summary sheet. **Please do not forget to add it** in when calculating the total amount on the summary sheet.

**Please also enter a Collection Code on the summary sheet, details are provided on the back of the summary sheet.** The closing date for receipt of Seed Scheme orders is **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017.**

As before, **fruit bushes and asparagus** are ordered on the same sheet as the seeds. Delivery of these will be to your home address in March, weather permitting. **Seeds will be available for collection at the AGM on 4<sup>th</sup> December or 11<sup>th</sup> December at 11am and 2pm from Asquith Rd** or please contact Colin Smith on 01242 523740 to arrange collection.

Late orders for seeds etc. can be accepted, but must be accompanied by an additional £3 to cover postage.

All you have to do is enter your requirements on the order form enclosed with the catalogue, total the value of your order, complete your details on the summary form and return it with your remittance to:

Mr Colin Smith, Linara, 15 Dunster Rd, Cheltenham, GL51 0NL. **Please do not send to E W King & Co. You should retain the catalogue and send only the order form, summary sheet and remittance to Colin Smith.**

You may ignore the part of the order form which asks for your membership number which is intended for Societies or Associations and not individual members.

Please check with your catalogue and order form that you have ordered what you actually intended to order before sending your form. Your catalogue enables you to check your order on receipt of your seeds/plants. Please keep it safely.

Please complete your order form(s) and the coloured summary sheet and return them to Colin Smith together with your remittance no later than Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

Please make cheques/postal orders payable to C&DAHA and do not send cash through the post.

**Please do not order seed potatoes from this catalogue as we will not accept them.** You will get a better deal at the Dundry Potato Festival.

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### MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION 2018

To: Mr. Colin Smith, 15 Dunster Road, Cheltenham, GL51 0NL

Please find enclosed £6.00 to renew my membership for 2018 Please make cheques payable to (C&DAHA).

Name..... (Please print)

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Email address.....

Allotment site.....Plot No.....