

TRAP GROUND ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Autumn Newsletter 2007.

Floods.

Summer flooding on our site had not happened within living memory, so this year's debacle is, fortunately, a rare event. For those whose plots were also submerged in the winter, the experience was particularly testing, and some recently restored plots seem to be too low lying to be worth letting and, having been abandoned, will be withdrawn from cultivation. Fortunately we can survive the loss of crops, and the rotten potatoes and others can be removed and burned to destroy spores of mildews and other possible problems which sun and rain do not gradually correct.

Website.

This is being put together and will be available in a few weeks. We will give essential information about the site, its administration, history, gardening calendar and growing tips. We hope it will be a useful introduction for new members, and a source of ideas for everyone, and we will keep it fresh with updates.

The Shop.

Having installed the secure container, fitted with shelves and paved for access, Vibeke Mannion is acquiring a comprehensive list of supplies from fencing to fertilizer and has recruited a team to man the sales at what, we hope, will be best times for most people. The website will have a list of things available some being seasonal, like seed potatoes, and all at prices which will combine economy with convenience. Kings seed catalogue will be available within the next two weeks, and can be collected from the shop, John Porter plot 72, Vibeke Mannion plot 34 or from 30 St Margaret's Rd. The completed order form together with cheque made payable to Trap Ground Allotment Association should be returned to Vibeke Mannion, 30 St Margaret's Rd. by November 6th.

Plant Sale.

Peter and Carol with their helpers sold every last leaf this year; a message to contributors not to hold back with offerings. The money raised - nearly £600 - has been helpful in employing people to restore paths rutted by heavy vehicles, recover neglected plots, and to keep our machinery in working order.

Summer Picnic.

Gillian and Stuart Skyte arranged a festive set of tents and musicians to accompany the delicious food on one of the warm and sunny Saturday afternoons of this year's more traditional English Summer. We celebrated Bill Sutton's retirement from plot number 1 after sixty years of crop cultivation on our site with a presentation of a wooden bird table. Bill's answer to cheerful, active longevity included the discipline of his gardening. Two weeds and you were out was a post war rule he relished recalling.

Harvest Supper.

This will be on Saturday 10th November at 7pm in St Margaret's Institute. All welcome and please bring the usual sweet or savoury for twice your number of diners and your own drinks [no spirits - house rules]. Please let Stuart and Gillian Skyte [30 Plater Drive, Tel: 559618] know your preferred food offering when you sign up; numbers have been high in recent years so it would be helpful to book early. Entry £3 for the hall hire and musicians.

Access.

The territorial ambitions of Phil and Jim School are still not resolved, so the land swap of the northern strip in the Town Green for the southern triangle enclosing our access route and car park is still being negotiated.

In the meantime, please drive, cycle and walk with customary caution to avoid kicking up dust, splashing, collision, and upsetting train drivers. My list is prompted by comments made by aggrieved gardeners inconvenienced by rumbustious passers by.

Security.

A shed was burned down recently, being a sorry pile of ash and charred tools by the time the fire service found their way to it. It had not been locked and may have invited the repose of vagrants. Whether or not we lock our sheds is a personal matter, but in my case the police advised me to improve my lock which I have done.

Children need to be guided about their playing on the site, particularly in relation to wells. Whilst this may be obvious recent cases of fairly wild play could lead to trouble and we have been asked to remind people to rein in over-exuberance of the young.

Similarly, dogs. They should be on a lead, particularly in the spring when seed beds are vulnerable to disturbance. The excitement of a rabbit's scent is likely to overwhelm the self-restraint of the most disciplined dog.

Soil.

The city's Department of Environmental Health has applied for a DEFRA grant to look again at the levels of pollutants over the whole site. The base lines are changing and the results need to be recalibrated, so if money is allocated this will be done. In the meantime, we are advised to use the usual precautionary methods of washing surface vegetables, peeling roots, and preventing soil ingestion.

Working Parties.

Age, infirmity, inclination, etc. etc. appear to have led to their atrophy. The mowing team has done wonderful work and would appreciate paths being widened to at least 2 feet to allow mowers to pass. Also, displaced netting and such like, causes fiendish fouling of the blades, so please keep these things off the paths.

The autumn skip will be in place soon; only non-organic rubbish please.

Tony Hollander, Chairman, [Plot 69]. John Porter, Treasurer [Plot 71].

