

The GROWER

December 2015

www.cheshamallotments.org.uk

Email your articles, ideas or news to thegrowernewsletter@gmail.com

MERRY



CHRISTMAS!

Wishing all allotment holders Seasons Greetings and A Happy and Prosperous New Year

Fish & Chip Supper/Quiz Night



The triumphant winners looking very confident!

The November Fish and Chip Supper / Quiz Night was well attended, with 72 people turning up to exercise their brains and fill their stomachs! The fish and chips (or alternatives) went down well and then the quiz started. After the first two rounds we had a break for a delicious selection of deserts and the raffle. The final two rounds and the picture quiz completed a very close-run contest, with the winning table only pipping the two tables in 2nd place to victory by 2 points!

Yvonne Webster had a craft stall and was very pleased with the amount of money she was able to make for charity. Many thanks to everyone who contributed raffle prizes and puddings. Also thanks to the tribe of helpers who set everything up. Finally the evening could not have happened without Phil Folly our magnificent question master who once again made our grey cells do a lot of work and made £184.26 for Chesham Allotments Group.

Thank you Phil!

Beverly Mackay



Sprouts, Sprouts and more Sprouts

Was there ever a more controversial vegetable? Many otherwise sane people turn their noses up at sprouts though they are delicious and also fun. It is basically a mini cabbage of one's own: it's like toy food. Mind you, they have born the brunt of some very bad cooking. Having had my mother-in-law's sprouts (I know there are always jokes about this but she did honestly start to cook them an hour and a half before eating — boil them for 15 mins, leave to cool in the hot water and then reheat: this is the recipe if you, too, wish to serve your guests a grey mound that dissolves into grey water as soon as the slightest pressure is applied), I am always surprised that my husband has still managed to have a passion for them.

Although it is very pleasing to have a solid green cannonball on the plate, I find that the best way to cook them is to simply cut in half lengthways and steam them. Steaming has three advantages - less water gets in, you have slightly longer to catch that delicate moment between being underdone and being overdone, and you can cook something else in the water underneath at the same time. Particularly useful when cooking the Christmas dinner.

I love them tossed then with melted butter and garlic (very little does not go well with melted butter and garlic. In Northern Ireland they smother their chips with the combo, well worth trying). For Christmas Dinner I like them plain though, as they are an excellent vehicle for bread sauce. Just don't overcook them!

The Brussel Sprout is a little elusive in its history. First mentioned growing around Brussels in 1213 they were mentioned as ordered for wedding feasts in the Burgundian Court at Lille in the 1400s then they disappear for 300 years. In America, Thomas Jefferson planted them in his garden in 1812. The first English recipe was by Eliza Acton in 1845—smother in butter and serve with a spoonful of veal gravy. Sounds good.

Brussels Sprout Salad

(yes, really), think coleslaw)

Slice a **handful of young sprouts** very thinly, mix with **half a crisp apple**, also thinly sliced. Add a **squeeze of lemon juice**, a **tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil** and some **thyme or other herbs or your choice**. Crumble in a **slice of cheese: cheddar or Stilton** or your fancy. Sprinkle a few **nuts**, toasted or otherwise on top.

Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Shallots

from River Cottage Veg Everyday

Serves 4

400g sprouts
350g shallots peeled and halved
3 tablespoons rapeseed oil
Sprigs of thyme or cumin seeds
Salt and pepper

Put the ingredients in a roasting tin and mix together. Roast in a preheated oven 190°C/ Gas Mark 5 for 35mins, stirring halfway through, until crispy and caramelised. Add a **squeeze of lemon juice** and serve.

CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP CALENDAR

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Coffee mornings	Saturday 10am –12pm They will resume in 2016 for the Chesham Horticultural Society Potato days 20th & 27th Feb and 5th March	Focal Point Hut, Cameron Road

CHESHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY DATES

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Potato Sales	Saturday mornings 20th & 27th Feb and 5th March 2016	Sales Hut (1st gate Cameron Road)

DISCOUNT REWARD CARD SCHEME

The new discount reward cards will be valid from 1st March 2016 for 1 year. Both South Heath Nursery and JPS Stationers are offering a 10% discount to cardholders. The new cards are free and will be available in the first instance at the CHS potato sales in February and March. If you are not able to get your card on any of those mornings, they will also be available at all Chesham Allotments Group events.



CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

ALLEN TILBURY (Chairman) Plot 104 CR	TIM ANDREW (Vice Chair) Plot 48A CR	RAY WILLIAMS (Treasurer) Plots 215/216 CR	YVONNE WEBSTER (Secretary—Minutes) Plot 63A CR
ANDREW SINCLAIR (Correspondence Secretary) Plot 45B CR	JIM ABBOTT (Representative) Plot 31/32 CR	VINCE CROMPTON (Representative) Plot 36 CR	BEVERLY MACKAY (Representative) Plot 3B AR
VINCENT LUCAS (Representative) Plot 227D CR	KATE HUTCHINSON (Editor—The Grower) Plot 58D CR	DAVE HALL (Representative) Plot 12CR	TONY MUIR (Representative) Plot 28 AR
JANE MACBEAN Town Council Representative	CR = CAMERON ROAD AR = ASHERIDGE ROAD		The representatives are here for you. Please do come and talk to us about any issues!

Life As A New Allotment Holder — part one

What daunting task we faced, as we looked on at our allotted plot.

It was completely selfish of us to expect that a ready-made shed would be on our plot with the ground ready dug and composted and weed free.

Well life is not like that is it? What did I expect—warm hand shakes and fanfare welcome from my fellow allotment holders ?

Fine I get on with the tasks ahead; dig and weed . The first weed comes out of the ground with ease, what an achievement and what a reward it was. I believe the next fifty will be Easier; no, it has taken a toll. No one told me about the backache and the reasons for wearing gloves. All those introductions and not one of the Seasoned Allotment Growing Experts (SAGE,s) informed me about the blood ,sweat and tears, not to mention the name of the game and that in the first 30 mins of the garden fork in my hand....the splinters!

That night the shower was a blessing, and every night thereafter . On finishing a busy work day, I returned enthusiastic and determined to our plot. It has cost many hours of dedication on the allotment this year. It has been a learning curve .If only I had a mentor like that of Obi-Wan Kenobi Jedi master to Luke Skywalker .

Oh well it's been only been the first few weeks and every time I try to do something it seems wrong. There are the constant telltale signs from the SAGEs' comments such as I would not do that , Don't plant that there, What, you do not know the Latin name of what you're planting? You don't watch Gardeners' World? That won't work, it's not wood and recyclable! How many hours you put in a week?

To be continued

Colin Wilson

I wonder if Colin had read the useful guide that is sent to all new allotment plot holders when they first get their plot? It is a tricky line to walk for the seasoned allotment holder when a newbie appears—offer advice and help or stand back and let people make their own mistakes? Any thoughts? All new allotmenters should know that their new neighbours will be pleased to see them as no-one wants to be next to an overgrown weedy plot!