

# The GROWER

October 2015

[www.cheshamallotments.org.uk](http://www.cheshamallotments.org.uk)

Email your articles, ideas or news to [thegrowernewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:thegrowernewsletter@gmail.com)

## *THE AGM—Thurs 10th Sept*

There was a good turnout for the AGM, which was attended by Bill Richards, The Town Clerk. The chairman, Allen Tilbury, thanked everyone who has contributed to another successful year on the allotments.

Tony Muir was elected on to the committee as a representative for Asheridge Road, replacing James Bole who has stepped down. All other committee members were re-elected including Allen Tilbury as Chair, although he made it clear this is to be his last year in the post, having served both on the committee and as chair for many years.

The finances of Chesham Allotments Group are in good order through fundraising efforts of coffee mornings, the Open Day and the fish and chip quiz nights, and the committee will consider how to use them to further benefit the allotments.



*Tim Andrew, Vice Chair, receiving the award for Best Small Plot from Bill Richards*



*Tony Muir—Best Large Plot Asheridge/Bellingdon Road*

Mike Allenby from Chesham Horticultural Society, who with his colleagues, Brian Beningfield and Lesley Mountain, inspected the plots in June and August, announced the awards for the Best Kept Plot and Best Small Plot. The allotments were thought to have been of a generally high standard especially after the dry conditions this year. However they were disappointed that only four of 25 new tenant plots were worthy of note in June and only three were worth judging in August. The awards were presented by Bill Richards. Jim Abbott won Best Large Plot Cameron Road with a rather staggering 176 points out of 200, the highest score of the night.

Bill Richards gave an amusing presentation, mentioning it was 11 years since his first attendance at the allotments group AGM and he praised how the well-being of the allotments has improved in that time, in great part due to the efforts of CAG. He reported the council are to put up a new boundary fence at the Asheridge Road site at a cost of £10,000. Rents are being increased by 10p per pole from October 2015.



*Mr K Wilson—Best New Tenant*

Regular inspections four times a years have reduced the waiting lists on both sites but there was some discussion on how best to assist potential/new allotmenters who may not realise how much effort is involved in running a plot. All new tenants already receive a Welcome and Induction Pack.

The repair of the water leak in Cameron Road is proving complicated due to the different authorities involved but Bill promised to try and push the matter on, especially for those tenants affected by loss of water who are currently relying on bowsers.

***FISH AND CHIP SUPPER/QUIZ 21ST NOV  
— BOOKING FORM INSIDE!***



## CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP CALENDAR

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Coffee mornings	Saturday mornings until 17th October 10am—12pm. They will resume next year for the Chesham Horticultural Society Potato days 20th & 27th Feb and 5th March	Focal Point Hut, Cameron Road
Fish & Chips/Quiz Evening	Saturday 21st November 7.00pm	Trinity Baptist Church, Red Lion Street

## CHESHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Wisley Harvest Trip	Saturday 24th October	Wisley
AGM	Wednesday 18th November 7.30pm	Trinity Baptist Church, Red Lion Street
Potato Sales	Saturday mornings 20th & 27th Feb and 5th March 2016	Sales Hut (1st gate Cameron Road)

**Fish and Chip Supper/Quiz Night**  
**7pm, 21st November 2015**  
 Trinity Baptist Church, Red Lion Street

**BOOKING REQUIRED FOR .....PERSONS, COST £7.50 PER HEAD**

I enclose payment for.....  
 Name.....  
 Address.....  
 .....  
 Tel. No.....  
 Email.....

**Please bring your own drink and nibbles AND a dessert with a view to sharing.**

**There will be a raffle, so bring some extra cash! Contributions for raffle also gratefully received.**

Please Indicate the number of meals required below :
FISH
SAUSAGES
FISH CAKES
VEGETARIAN

**Contact Vincent Lucas on 01494 774198 or Allen Tilbury on 01494 782926 to reserve your places or hand your form / money to any Allotments Group Officer/Representative. Please make any cheques payable to Chesham Allotments Group. Thank you. This form may be photocopied.**

## WILD ABOUT THE ALLOTMENTS!

Allotments have just about got it all. It's somewhere where you can get off the treadmill of modern living and unwind, grow some real organic fruit and vegetables and get some regular exercise. Furthermore there is also the possibility of seeing some of the wonderful wildlife which inhabits the area.

I have had two wonderful and unexpected experiences here this year. The first came at the end of April / early May. An allotment neighbour, Jim Abbott, had asked me to keep an eye on his 'tunnel' whilst he was out and about in Belgium for a few days, probably sampling the local Trappist beers. I had watered his tomatoes and cucumbers on the Saturday night but as it had been quite hot on the Sunday morning I thought I would check them on the Sunday afternoon. As I approached his 'tunnel' at about 4.00 p.m. I saw a small face peering at me through the undergrowth. At first I thought it was a small cat but as it came through the long grass and I saw it face to face I knew it was a young fox cub. Furthermore, as I watched this cub seemingly not having a care in the world, I heard more rustling and activity going on in the background. On careful inspection I noticed that there were **three** other cubs playing without any fear at all. All the cubs had small black tails and it was one of those moments when you just wished you had a camera with you. Then all of a sudden there was a 'bark' and they were all gone. I never saw them again but sadly Jim found one of them dead on this allotment a few weeks later. Obviously it was the 'runt' of the litter that the mother had abandoned.

My second experience occurred in early June. I was minding my own business removing some of the couch grass and bindweed from my strawberry patch when I heard a 'clump - clump' sound of something on the path. When I looked around I was surprised to see a fully grown fallow deer, yes a fallow deer like the ones that can be seen in the Ashridge Estate, not a muntjac. It was standing around the area where my French beans had just started to come through the ground. I just stood up, yelled 'oi' and the creature darted off towards the focal point. Thank goodness nobody was in its way, they could have sustained quite an injury!

If you've had any close encounters with wildlife on the allotments, e.g. seen any rare birds or butterflies or even noticed some rare plants I'm sure we would all be interested to hear about them.

*David Page*

**From Chesham Library:** WEEDS, WEEDING (& DARWIN) The Gardener's Guide by William Edmonds.

An amusingly written guide to one hundred common garden (and allotment) weeds with excellent colour pictures and how to get rid of, or learn to live with, each of them. A couple of extra chapters on weeding techniques and Darwin in the garden (natural selection being key to weeds success) make very good reading too. A good bedtime book.

### **CHESHAM IN BLOOM— GOLD AGAIN!**



Huge congratulations to Chesham in Bloom for winning Gold again and the award of Best Large Town in The Thames and Chiltern area. Any volunteers for next year will be very welcome. They also have a 2016 calendar, available from JP Stationers (don't forget your Discount/Reward card) if you wish to support their efforts in a less physical way!

### **DON'T FORGET - YOUR GROWER NEEDS YOU!**

When the winter weather keeps you inside with nothing much that can be done on the allotment, don't just sit there dreaming of the summer months; instead - what could be better than to pen a few lines for The GROWER? How do you choose which seed companies to use? What have you learnt *not* to do since becoming an allotmentee? Doesn't have to be a long article, anything of interest will do. This is a forum for sharing knowledge so please put your green fingers to the keyboard and email me a few lines! *Kate*  
thegrowernewsletter@gmail.com

### **Inspired by the Great British Bake Off???** Get baking!!!

Once again, the coffee mornings this year have been very successful. In addition to providing a chance to discuss the latest runner bean situation or to get advice from fellow allotmentees about potato problems (or to tease Marshall Hall about his cake addiction), the coffee mornings help raise funds for the allotments. At only £1 for a hot drink and a piece of homemade cake they are certainly the best value in town. Beverly Mackay is our coffee morning co-ordinator. If you would be happy to spend an occasional Saturday morning serving at the Focal Point Hut or you would like to provide a cake sometimes please contact Beverly at [beverlymackay@virginmedia.com](mailto:beverlymackay@virginmedia.com).



**Chesham Town Council**

**Chesham Town Council, Town Hall, Chesham, HP5 1DS**  
Phone: 01494 774842. Fax: 01494 582908  
Email: [admin@chesham.gov.uk](mailto:admin@chesham.gov.uk)

## JERUSALEM (F)ARTICHOKES - *Helianthus tuberosus*

*“In my judgement, which way soever they be dressed and eaten, they stir and cause a loathsome filthy stinking wind within the body, thereby causing the belly to be pained and tormented, and are a meat more fit for swine than men!”*

John Goodyer, English botanist (1592-1664)

Not a fan then, the good botanist. But I am. Despite all of the above. The carbohydrate in Jerusalem artichokes is not the starch our bodies are used to, but inulin (not insulin), which is not digested by the human gut but passes through to the colon where the bacteria feed on it joyfully, causing gas. (These are good bacteria — inulin is an ingredient in many of those little expensive pro-biotic yoghurt drinks). Because our bodies can't get at the sugars, they also low in effective calories and a good food for diabetics, as well as being 10% protein and high in iron and potassium and a lot of other good things besides. Christopher Lloyd, in his book *Gardener Cook*, suggests making soup with equal quantities of carrots as they have a 'quieting effect'; I think it dilutes the taste too, alas. The best way it seems to lessen the effects is to slowly build up a tolerance. Don't dig them all up and instantly have a huge bowl of soup; instead add one here and there to other dishes over a few weeks so your body can adjust. Then reward your self with a big helping of roasted Jerusalem artichokes. The sweetest, most delicious tuber you will ever eat. And John Goodyer did conclude with *“yet some say have eaten them, and have found no such windy quality.”* If you haven't tried them yet, you may be one of the lucky ones!

### Palestine Soup

**1 large onion chopped.**

**1 clove garlic (minced)**

**28g (1oz) butter**

Sweat in a pan until soft

**500g (1lb) Jerusalem**

**artichokes (or half and half chokes and potatoes) peeled and chopped**

Add to onion for a few minutes.

**1litre chicken or veg stock +bayleaf.**

Pour in and bring to the boil. Simmer for 10-15 mins until soft. Blend (remove bayleaf first). Add salt and pepper to taste and a little water or milk to get the desired consistency and some more butter or cream if feeling indulgent.

Finish with chopped parsley.

### Jerusalem Artichoke Chips

Cut them in half lengthways and deep fry with all usual precautions. They are soft and gooey and crisp all at the same time.

### Roasted Jerusalem Artichokes

Heat some sunflower or rapeseed oil in a roasting tin. Gas 6/200C. Scrub chokes, cut in half lengthways and put in oil outside down. Roast for about 30mins.

### Raw Sunchoke Salad (serves two)

In a medium bowl mix together:

**Juice of 1 lemon, 30ml** (couple of tablespoons) **olive oil** and **30ml walnut oil** (nutty flavour is good but try other oils too)

Peel **6 good size sunchoke**s. Slice each one thinly using the peeler and drop straight into dressing and coat to stop discolouration. Add some **chopped parsley** and a few **toasted walnuts** or **hazelnuts** if you desire.

### Jerusalem Artichokes à la Provence

Peel **500g Jerusalem artichokes**. Chop into walnut sized pieces. Put in pan with **2 glugs of olive oil, a handful black olives, zest and juice of 1 lemon, glass white wine**, sprig of **thyme**, pinch of **pepper** and water to just cover. Cover tightly and bring to a simmer. Cook until just tender—25 mins or so. Stir in **2 cloves chopped garlic, 1 tsp chopped parsley** and **1 tsp breadcrumbs**. Cook until breadcrumbs start to

## 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!