

The Grower



Allotments Open Day - 13th August 2011

Our Open Day 2011 was yet again another success story, not just for the Allotment Holders but more importantly for the vast number of towns people who visited us and were able to go home with local organically grown vegetables and fruit in return for a small donation. They were also able to sit in the sunshine enjoying the teas, coffees and wide range of cakes available from the focal point hut. Mind you there was a bit of luck involved regarding the weather. It had been raining in the early morning and was still rather damp when the Committee Members and helpers met at 8.30 to finish erecting the marquee and set up all the produce stalls and get the refreshments ready to go. However by the time Chesham Town Mayor, Cllr. Derek Lacey arrived to open the proceedings it could have not have been finer. In his opening speech he revealed that his visit was really emotional for him as for many years his family had rented an allotment at Cameron Road and he well remembered being there with his father. In his introduction Vince Crompton stressed the importance of keeping the people of Chesham

involved in the allotments so that they would still be there for generations to come. The Mayor and his wife were joined by other councillors and Town Clerk Bill Richards. Phil Folly's 'Scavenger Trail' was both educational and fun and helped entertain the many children who attended. Allotment Group Chairman Allen Tilbury would like to express his sincere thanks to everybody who helped during the day and made it such a success; also to all those who had donated produce and raffle prizes. Nearly £400 was raised which will go towards Allotment Group projects. More photos in the October issue!



Town Mayor Councillor Derek Lacey with his wife Trudi, together with Allotment Group Vice Chairman Vince Crompton

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
The Allotment Holders Annual General Meeting is being held on September 15th at Chesham Town Hall - 7.30p.m. Please attend and have your say!

COFFEE MORNINGS 2011 EVERY SATURDAY until Oct 15th at the FOCAL POINT - CAMERON ROAD
Note - on Sept 10th we will be at Asheridge Road see story Page 4

We need a Secretary!

Want to be more involved? For the past year your Allotment Committee has been functioning without a dedicated **Secretary**. Would you be interested in joining the Committee and taking on this Officer position? Responsibilities would include:

- ◆ Preparing the agenda for the meetings and sending them to Committee members.

- ◆ Attending 6 Committee meetings, the Open meeting held in April and the AGM; taking the minutes and sending them to all concerned.
- ◆ Preparing any correspondence, as and when required.

If you are Interested in joining our friendly team please contact our Chairman, Allen Tilbury, ASAP. We would like any interested party to be available for nomination at this years AGM held on the 15th September.

Allotment Cheese and Wine Evening



James, the youngest attendee!

What a lovely evening! The Cheese and Wine evening at Cameron Road Allotments on Saturday 23rd July was a great success, attended by around forty people who enjoyed the warm, dry weather. The food, delicious as ever, was served in the marquee where most people were seated - thank you to all those who provided goodies, including Waitrose for providing six bottles of wine and loads of cheese. It was a pleasure to have children joining us and to see them making potato-cut art work in the setting of the beautiful landscaped garden on the Focal Point. Committee chairman Allen Tilbury gave an update on current topics and forthcoming events before finishing the evening by drawing the raffle. Thank you to everyone who helped to organise the evening, especially the marquee movers and shakers who now know how not to erect a marquee!



Phoebe and Sebastian Craig, the young artists



In the Marquee..!

Contact us: Email: thegrowernewsletter@googlemail.com or at pengyworld@hotmail.co.uk

Letter from America...

"OK, the title for this 'letter' isn't exactly correct. Canada is part of North America, and it has often lost out to it's bigger and more populous neighbour, the USA. British Columbia: like it says, it has a strong British feel about it. It is one of the most beautiful "fruit baskets" of Canada. Overflowing with vines, fruit trees, soft fruits, and vegetables, BC has a lot going for it. It has the most spectacular scenery you can imagine, from the highest snowcapped mountains, to the most beautifully blue lakes. Because of the mountains, many areas of BC have unique climates. The Okanagan Valley, where I am, is one of those with the most wonderful climate. And I am in my element. Things grow easily here. It gets incredibly cold in winter, but it is not damp and cool so things don't rot off. It is then very hot in summer, so there is no problem with ripening. However, the right amount of water is imperative and I have seen large irrigation systems in use all day long!!! Well, they have a lot of water - Canada has the largest number of lakes in the world. It is amazing how they utilize the land between the mountains; terracing is very common. The soil is mainly sandy, ideal for vines and it is very fertile. There are problems though. They don't have slugs or rabbits quite like we do, but they have deer - and they eat everything. Fencing is important, or you grow things in pots up high!!! In addition, there are gophers which burrow underneath the soil and their burrows can cause lawns and growing spaces to collapse. I have made contact with the Penticton Urban Agricultural Association, and I hope to be doing a bit of volunteering there. Their vision: "To create a Centre for Urban Agriculture as a source of information and education to the public and schools." "To be a hub for collaborative work among people running projects related to the development of a diverse and reliable local food supply for the South Okanagan/Similkameen area." Like us, they are recognising the need to grow and eat locally grown foods. BC is great at growing, but much of it is exported to Alberta. There's money there (something to do with oil). So, getting people to consider the local market is a new initiative here. Seems strangely obvious to me. There is still a large amount of fruit and veg imported from California. There's something not quite right there. As I write this, the spring and early summer in the Okanagan has been unusually wet. Rivers are running high and everything is about 3 weeks behind. But the temperatures are rising, and Penticton can expect days of over 36degrees every day. Thankfully, I'm living up a mountain, so temps are about 6degrees. What am I missing? Not a lot really, except good friends, family and coffee mornings. Well, hope the summer season works for you and that you reap a great harvest. And Vince, win some more silver please! **Kate Hobbs**



CHS Early Show - 3rd July 2011

Competition at the Chesham Horticultural Early Show held at the Trinity Baptist Church was fierce this year, with Vince Crompton and Neil Page battling for the highest points to carry forward to the Late Show on September 3rd when the prize winners will be decided. The displays of flowers, fruit and vegetables were excellent despite the challenges of the cold winter and dry spring, so well done and thanks to all those who exhibited. If you missed out, then why not have a go at the Late Show - you could easily be a prize winner! There were two notable successes at the Early Show (apart from Vince and Neil): Loraine Faulkner won the National Sweet Pea Society award for her sweet peas; Amy Spinks, the youngest exhibitor, won first prize for her vase of flowers, see photo.

We love to see the youngsters getting involved, so please encourage them to enter in September, there are several classes including one for the largest sunflower. Get growing!

Exhibiting or not, do come along to the Late Show and see the excellent produce, flower displays, and cookery exhibits. Maybe you will be inspired to have a go too! **Yvonne Webster**



A delighted Amy Spinks proudly shows off her certificate. Well done Amy!



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LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

ALLOTMENTS GROUP

10th September	Coffee Morning and Hedge cutting at Asheridge Road Allotments
15th September	Allotment Holders Annual General Meeting - Town Hall—7.30p.m.
12th November	Fish and Chip Supper (for booking form see Page 4)

CHESHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

3rd September	Late Summer Show at Trinity Baptist Church — members only
17th September	Coach outing to Anglesey Abbey & Lode Mill, near Cambridge
9th November	CHS Annual General Meeting, 7.30pm at Trinity Baptist Church

YOUR ALLOTMENT GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

ALLEN TILBURY (CHAIRMAN)
Plot 104 CR

VINCE CROMPTON (VICE CHAIR)
Plot 36 CR

ANDREW REYNOLDS (TREASURER)
Plot 48 CR

YVONNE WEBSTER (SECRETARY -
MINUTES) Plot 63A CR

JIM ABBOTT Plot 31/32 CR

CHRIS CHALLIS Plots 46A, 65A CR

MICK GOODMAN Plots 6B and 11A AR

DAVID PAGE Plot 29 CR

ROBIN PLUMRIDGE Plot 232 CR

SARA SAUNDERS Plot 84B CR

ANDREW SINCLAIR Plot 45B CR

COLETTE LITTLE (COUNCIL)

GILL WALKER (COUNCIL)

CR = CAMERON RD

AR = ASHERIDGE ROAD

KATE HOBBS Plot 62A/B CR (ON LEAVE)

RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show - 2011

Having been hooked by the BBC Gardening programmes from Hampton Court on the previous Thursday and Friday and having a free day to 'do my own thing' on the Saturday I decided to go to the show – my first visit there for about 8 years. Saturday probably isn't the best day of the week to visit the show if you wish to avoid the crowds but it did mean I could take full advantage of my bus pass. As there are no time restrictions on a Saturday I took the A30 service to Heathrow Airport leaving Chesham at 8.15 am. From there I took a Route 111 bus which took me directly from Heathrow to Hampton Court Palace, a service that runs every 10 minutes. Complete journey time just under 2 hours, cost - free! Initially the admission price of £31 came as a bit of a shock but compared to what I been paying for a 90 minute Premiership football match or a 2 hour rock concert I suppose it's quite good value. I had checked the website the previous evening, and ticket availability was 'limited' – but I had no trouble in getting in. Once in, I tried to plan my day. I usually visit the Floral Marquee early on as past experience has taught me how packed (and hot) it gets in there by early afternoon. The usual fantastic floral displays were everywhere but having seen the report on the television my main interest was the lavender exhibit by Downderry Nursery. It was good to see all the different types of lavender displayed together; and as it was fairly quiet I had the opportunity to ask the staff which types did better in certain soils, which were more frost resistant and how plants are generally cultivated. I then took notes on the various stand numbers I wanted to visit to buy plants from later in the day. I then walked through the Country Living Pavilion, just a short visit as the main item of interest for me was the RHS Edible Garden and Grow Your Own Marquee. The Edible Garden is a fantastic showcase and contains everything from a beer production display complete with stilt walkers 'picking' the hops, to the giant vegetable garden. Someone told me that although they may look good and win shows these giants are not necessarily the best for the kitchen, I don't know if that's true or not but they would certainly be the talking point of any allotment!



The giant vegetable garden

I decided to take an early lunch break in the Swinging Sixties Marquee, as I walked in an announcement was made informing everyone that the Catwalk in Bloom show was just about to start. No sooner had I found a seat I had a sample of Harvey's Sherry with ice a slice of orange thrust into my hand, very refreshing. The show was good fun and is loosely based on the theme that flowers and fabric design are closely linked; the clothes were modelled to a background of various hits of the 60's. More samples were then taken!

It's interesting all the facts you find out whilst doing the rounds, after sampling various apple juices from Copella Fruit Juices I was told that English eating apple orchards are disappearing at an alarming rate. In 1972 there were over 55,000 acres of orchards in the UK; by 2010 this had fallen to 4,886 acres. Copella are doing their best to try and reverse this trend. Wherever possible they use the juice from English Apples and are encouraging people to plant an English apple tree in their garden. They are also trying to compile a database of all the apple trees growing in private gardens.

Which brings me nicely into the Show Gardens, My personal favourite was 'Control the Uncontrollable'. It was designed by Jill Foxley to highlight the problems caused by an overactive bladder. A half (pink) walled garden with a generous display of colourful bedding plants with a pair of taps, running whilst seemingly unconnected was receiving much attention from the public. This garden received a well deserved Silver Gilt Award. I also enjoyed The Naked Garden by

David Domoney, various plants growing in 'see through' pots with all their root system exposed. All the nutrients the plants need being added to the liquid in the pots. This gained a Silver Award whilst 'The World Vision Garden' sent out a strong message of a world divided by the haves and the have not's and was awarded a Gold Award.



The World Vision Garden

The Conceptional Gardens are for the most part totally impracticable but always good fun to look at. My favourite was definitely the 'Excuse Me While I Kiss the Sky' garden by Anoushka Feiler. The title comes from lyrics included in the Jimi Hendrix song Purple Haze. I think if I had gone home from the show some 40 years ago and told my parents I had used mirrors to see plants growing upside down in pots with the sky as background they would have instantly thought 'wacky baccy' and shook their heads in despair. It was very different and well deserved it's Silver-Gilt Award. My other favourites in this category was 'The Coppa Feel' garden by Hugo Bugg, being highly interactive, colourful and built using a combination of materials. This received a Gold Award.

I think I'll have to leave it there, space is running out and I haven't even mentioned the Small Gardens, the English Poets Gardens, The Children's Gardens, the roses or any of the hundreds of other exhibitor's stalls. Hampton Court still represents very good value but I think it would be unrealistic to try and see everything in just one day. There's something for everyone with an interest in gardening. Food and drink prices are quite reasonable and there are many outlets that cater for all tastes. **David Page**

Thank you from Vince!

As a lot of you know our Vice Chairman, Vince Crompton recently underwent an operation and is currently having to obey doctor's orders where the allotment is concerned. He has asked me, through The Grower, to pass on his thanks to all those who have wished him well and are offering to water his crops, etc. He says he has been very touched by everyone's concern for his welfare. No problems Vince, and after all the help you have given others in the past it's the least we could do, The Grower wishes you a full and speedy recovery!

Allotment Security

In the last issue we reminded you about the need to be vigilant with regard to gate security. We would also like to ask all allotment holders not to walk on to other peoples allotments, unless of course you have an agreed arrangement to water someone's crops whilst they are on holiday. If you have asked someone to do this for you (and maybe help themselves to produce) perhaps it would be a good idea to let your neighbouring allotment holders know to save any embarrassing questions being raised. Feel free to challenge anyone on an allotment you don't know, if they are genuine they shouldn't be offended. If in doubt bring the matter to the attention to one of your allotment group representatives.

No Fly - Tipping, please!

It recently came to our attention that someone has been leaving grass cuttings and other garden rubbish near the Stony Grove entrance, Allotment holders are reminded to keep the grassed areas dividing allotments, and along the grass boundary inside the fence bordering Cameron Road, clear of debris to enable the Council to periodically mow and strim. Thank you.

CHESHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
Late Summer Show 3rd September at Trinity Baptist Church — members only. Entries forms to be in by 12.00 mid-day on Friday 2nd September. Contact Yvonne Webster for details.

Secrets of Herbs—Parsley

Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) is a native to the central Mediterranean region (southern Italy, Algeria, Tunisia) but has been naturalised elsewhere in Europe. It is widely cultivated as a herb, spice and vegetable. There are two main groups of parsley used as a herb. There is the common 'curly leaf' variety and the Italian, or flat leaf variety. The latter more closely resembles the natural wild species and is preferred by some as it is easier to cultivate, being more tolerant to both rain and sunshine and said to have a stronger flavour. The curly leaf parsley is preferred by others because of its more decorative appearance in garnishing. Another type of parsley is grown as a root vegetable, although it is little used in this country it is very common in central and eastern European cuisine for use in soups and stews. Although root parsley looks similar to parsnip it tastes quite different. Parsley is usually grown from seed and does best in moist, well drained rich soil in semi shade. Sow the seed 1/2" deep in April for a summer or autumn crop and again in August for winter use. Germination is slow, taking up to six weeks or longer; plants grown for the leaf crop are typically

thinned to 10 cm apart. Water plants well in dry weather. In this country parsley is a biennial and overwintering plants are best covered with cloches. Pick regularly and you will have a continuous crop of fresh leaves. Parsley has a wide range of culinary uses. Curly leaf parsley is often used as a garnish on potato dishes (boiled or mashed) or on rice dishes such as risotto, on fish, fried chicken, lamb, steaks, meat or vegetable stews (such as beef bourguignon or goulash). White sauce with chopped parsley has always been popular, especially served with white fish such as cod. Parsley attracts a variety of wildlife. Swallowtail butterflies use parsley as a host plant for their larvae; their caterpillars are black and green striped with yellow dots, and will feed on parsley for two weeks before turning into butterflies. Bees and other nectar-feeding insects visit the flowers and seed eating birds such as the goldfinch feed on the seeds. It is also widely used as a companion plant in gardens; like many other members of the carrot family it attracts a range of insects, including wasps and predatory flies which in turn tends to protect other plants nearby.

Rats, and ways to discourage them

There have been lots of reports recently regarding rats on the Cameron Road site. The Council will be reviewing this problem in the near future but unfortunately there is no way of eradicating them completely; and the problem is a national one. However, there are certain things we can all do to discourage them from the site and it really is everybody's responsibility. Here are some tips that may help prevent them making your plot their home! When sighting a plastic compost bin place a small gauge wire mesh lining at the base to prevent rats from burrowing in, or place it on paving slabs. Turn the contents of your bin regularly, this not only quickens the composting process but also disturbs any rats that may have set up home there. Have an appropriate tool ready to hit any escaping rats with. Regularly kick or bang your bin so that any rats in residence have no peace. Check that there are no signs of rats taking up residence in your tunnel or greenhouse, especially in the winter. Make sure that you don't keep discarded rubbish on your plot. Old carpets, fleeces and piles of timber also provide nice homes for rats. Be careful what you compost. Cooked foods, meat, bones, dairy produce etc will all attract rats. Potato peelings are also a favourite for rats, so try not composting them. Do not leave crop failures (fruit or vegetables) on your plot. Put them directly into your compost bin. Make sure that you harvest your vegetables when ready so they are not a gift for the rats. Never attempt to eat any produce that looks like a rat has started eating, pick it and compost it. Always thoroughly wash all your produce before eating it. Please report any specific rat problems to a member of the Allotment Group, especially if you think an allotment neighbour is encouraging them. Do not put rat bait down. This will put other wildlife at risk, it is against the law in public places and could even lead to prosecution. We are lucky to have three or four cats that regularly patrol the site and have been known to have caught rats and mice regularly.

Asheridge Rd, Coffee Morning and Hedge Trimming - September 10th

On Sat. 10th Sept a coffee morning will be held at the Asheridge Road site from 10.00 am to 12.00 am. On the same day volunteers are meeting to trim the centre hedge which runs almost the length of the allotments between the 'Asheridge Road' allotments and the 'Bellingdon Road' allotments. The hedge trim working party starts 09.00am thru till 14.00hrs (2.00pm); but we don't expect the same people to be there from start to finish. The more willing helpers the better. No power tools are allowed – only hand loppers and secateurs. Insurance cover by Town Council. The arisings / cuttings to be placed on Hard Standing for the Council to dispose of. Heavy duty gloves and goggles supplied, but use your own if preferred.

Asheridge Road Security

Reports of intruders in the Asheridge Road allotments are still coming in. May we remind all allotment holders that gates at all allotment sites must be locked when leaving as noted in the last issue of The Grower. At Asheridge Road the council has now put a grill above the fence in the entrance from Harries Close, any attempt to get over the fence will result in damage but it is hoped that this will stop anybody getting in. Also, a seat that was near the Asheridge Road fence has also been removed to make it less easy for intruders to get over the fence. The Council has been in touch with Thames Valley Police about this problem and they have asked for any incidents to be reported on 0845 8 505 505 noting height, age, description of any trespassers. We ask all allotment holders to remain vigilant at all times regarding security.

Buzy Lizzy looking Dizzy?

If your Bizzy Lizzies are looking a bit sick please be advised of the virus 'Impatients Downy Mildew' which has been well publicised recently. The symptoms of the virus are:
On leaves: Affected leaves turn yellow and are rapidly shed from the plant. A fine white fungal growth may be visible on the lower leaf surface, affected leaves decay rapidly.
On flowers: Flowers are commonly shed, and the plant is often reduced to bare branches with a small tuft of yellow leaves and flower buds at the tip. Severely affected plants will eventually die.
 Please note that this virus is a national problem and is no way related to the quality of the plants that your local nursery or supplier has supplied. Some nurseries are already talking of discontinuing this line of plant next season.

Fish & Chip Supper with Quiz, Saturday 12 Nov, 7pm, Temperance Hall, Chesham

BOOKING REQUIRED FORPERSONS, COST £6.50 PER HEAD

I enclose payment for.....
 Name.....
 Address.....

 Tel. No.....

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

Please bring your own drink; Wine, Beer, or non-alcoholic AND a dessert with a view to sharing.
 There will be a raffle, so bring some extra cash.

Contact either Vince Crompton, 16 Hillside, Chesham (01494 782926) or Robin Plumridge, 8 Bennetts, Chesham (01494 793746), or hand your form / money to any Allotment Group Officer/Representative, there's usually someone at the Coffee Mornings. Make any cheques payable to Chesham Allotment Group. Thank you. This form may be photocopied.

