

# The GROWER

September 2015

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

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



*Busy serving cakes*

## *Open Day 2015*

The CAG Open Day celebrated the beginning of National Allotments week. Many hands made light work of erecting the shady marquee on Friday night ready for the cake-makers delights and the generously donated fruit and veg, jams and pickles to arrive on Saturday morning. Lorraine Faulkner produced bunches of herbs and flowers from the Focal Point garden. Floriferous hanging baskets lent by Vince Crompton adorned the marquee. All was set up and the urn was hot and ready to go by 10.30am when the proceedings were opened by Cllr Peter Hudson, the Town Mayor. The day was also attended by our own Town Council representative Cllr Jane MacBean and other councillors, as well as Bill Richards, our Town Clerk. It was great to see so much Town Council support for Chesham Allotments.



*The Mayor and Allen opening the day*



*The abundant veg stall*

Over a hundred people came and enjoyed wandering around the allotments on a beautifully sunny day getting inspiration for their own plots whether large or just a few pots on a patio. Following that with delicious cake and the chance to offer a donation for freshly picked fruit and veg, it's not surprising that some found themselves unable to leave - "I came for one hour and stayed for three!" said Emily Culverhouse who, amongst others, posted up some smashing photos on the Facebook page OurChesham later that day. Phil Folly may have regretted offering to do Treasure Hunts with the visiting children after he ended up giving his train set away to one little boy!

Many thanks to so many Allotment Holders for all their efforts in setting up the marquee, making cakes and donating fruit and veg. Thanks also to everyone for their generosity on the day which helped to make it another successful and memorable occasion.

*Coffee, cake and chat*



## CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP CALENDAR

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Coffee mornings	Saturday mornings until October 10am—12pm	Focal Point Hut, Cameron Road
Chesham Allotments Group AGM	Thursday 10th Sept 7.30pm	Chesham Town Hall
Fish & Chips/Quiz Evening	21st November 7.00pm	Trinity Baptist Church, Red Lion Street

## CHESHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY DATES

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Late Summer Show	Saturday 5th September	Trinity Baptist Church
Wisley Harvest Trip	Saturday 24th October	Wisley

### *COFFEE MORNINGS*

If you have not yet sampled the culinary delights and excellent company of our coffee mornings, then please do join us any Saturday between 10 am and 12 noon. You are all welcome, along with your friends and families. I have now taken on the role of coffee morning coordinator. This means that I will be looking for volunteers to help the coffee mornings in 2016 run smoothly. I would like to make 2 lists of people who are able to help. The first list will be coffee morning servers. This entails filling 2 flasks with boiling water, buying some milk (the money is reimbursed) and serving tea/coffee and cakes to your delighted customers! You will also be asked to provide 3 cakes each, so that we have 6 cakes on offer each week. Now these can either be made yourself if you are an avid baker, or by your friends and family. If you are unable to source 3 cakes then that is where my second list comes in. I would also like a list of people who are able to make cakes for coffee mornings – even if it is just one or two in the whole year. The more people who are willing to bake occasionally, the more variety of cakes we have on offer and the more the load is shared. Cakes are reimbursed at £2 per cake. If you are willing for your name to go on either or both lists, then please speak to me at a coffee morning or email me at [beverlymackay@virginmedia.com](mailto:beverlymackay@virginmedia.com). All help will be gratefully received!! Beverly Mackay



### *CHESHAM IN BLOOM*

On 20th June there was a special coffee morning in aid of Chesham In Bloom. Many thanks to all who came and had coffee and cake, including the Mayor, Peter Hudson. Over £70 was raised. A special mention must go to Lorraine and Larry Faulkner for their sterling work maintaining the Focal Point area garden and lawn, and the wildflower beds by the main gate which, as well as being lovely for us allotmenters, also impress the Judges who, this year, made their trip round the allotments on 21st July. The results will be announced in September!



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# CHEESE & WINE EVENING



*A beautiful evening at the Cameron Road Allotments*

What could be nicer on a summer's evening than to sit with friends who share a mutual interest, enjoying a glass or two, eating nice food and watching the sun go down across productive and well-tended gardens? And so it was arranged. The Allotment Group's annual Cheese and Wine evening was held on Saturday 18 July at the Focal Point. Volunteers had stayed behind after the coffee morning to put up the marquee and set the tables and chairs. All that was needed was the food and drink. Everyone brought something for sharing, from bread, cheese and home-made quiches and chutneys to trifles and cakes. Waitrose had given us some cheese and wine at a very generous discount to get us started. The tables groaned under the weight of it all. It obviously has a reputation as an enjoyable evening. 45 people had arrived by 6.45, and over the evening about 60 people attended: allotment holders, family and friends, with the age range from small single figures to somewhere – I guess – in the 80s.

The weather was fine and the rain held off until long after we had finished. The food was lovely and was provided in generous quantities. The constant buzz of conversation and laughter was testimony to the good time everyone was having.



As the sun went down and the breeze began to have a nip, the last to leave willingly and cheerfully cleared up, and in a few minutes everything was put away.

Another lovely social evening. Well done organisers!

Report by Tim Andrews

*Tim fails to mention the raffle—perhaps that's because his table kept winning all the prizes!*



*Empty plates testify to the delicious food!*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All allotment holders are invited to the AGM and Prize-Giving on 10th Sept 7.30pm at Chesham Town Hall. Please come if you can so that a full committee can be constitutionally elected, and to have your say on current and relevant allotment matters. The winners of Best Kept Allotment large/small and Best New Tenant will also be announced.

Please refer to the AGM agenda enclosed.

**WEEDS**

According to one dictionary a weed is "a plant that is considered undesirable, unattractive or troublesome, especially one that grows where it is not wanted." I don't altogether agree with the first part.. Buttercups, dandelions and many others are not unattractive in themselves and look wonderful in the fields around Chesham.

I have been thinking about weeds because of what is happening in my garden. I love informal cottage garden borders where plants jostle each other and seed themselves but when I moved to Chesham three years ago I came to a garden that had been seriously neglected. It was covered in brambles, bindweed, a plant I call "sticky weed" and another that smells vile but whose name I don't know. I like blackberries but the brambles were vicious and had to go. Autumn was spent clearing major weeds and in Spring I was enchanted to see primroses, forget-me-nots, and bluebells appearing. Later to my delight I discovered foxgloves, a flower I had tried to grow for 40 years in London clay but without success. Last year I was proud that one of my foxgloves was well over 7 feet tall but this year I am beginning to feel differently. The forget-me-nots have taken over the borders, filling every available space not already colonised by the bluebells, and allowing more invidious weeds to prosper unseen beneath them. The foxgloves too have self-seeded everywhere and some of them are definitely in the WRONG PLACE. They have insinuated themselves close to expensive plants I bought from Garden Centres and have been carefully nurturing. With the lives of these costly plants threatened I now think of some of the foxgloves as weeds but I feel sad as I pull them out.

It is a relief to go to my new allotment there where anything that I have not deliberately planted is definitely a weed and can be ruthlessly EXTERMINATED! *Gill Hutchinson*

***PRESERVING COURGETTES or What to do when they all get too much*****Pickled Courgettes**

Put sliced courgettes into boiling, salted water. Turn off heat and leave for 10 mins. Drain and put into sterilised jars. Boil together  $\frac{3}{4}$ pt water,  $\frac{3}{4}$ pt white vinegar, 6oz white sugar, salt to taste, 1 dsp dill seed for 3 mins. Pour over courgettes and seal.

**Courgette Sauce for freezing**

Cut an onion and some courgettes finely and sauté with butter or olive oil very gently until soft and mushy. Add some garlic if you wish. Freeze in bags and you have an easy sauce ready for pasta or rice or a baked potato in the winter. Even better topped off with grated cheese.

*If even that is too much trouble, you can freeze courgettes whole. Cut off the ends and just stick them in the freezer. When you want to use them, defrost for 20mins, then slice and cook straightaway.*

**CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED!**

Huge thanks to Beverly Mackay who has edited and written The GROWER for the past three years and who is swapping the computer desk to be in charge of coffee mornings and to spend more time with her allotment. As your new editor, I would really appreciate contributions for The GROWER from everyone. Doesn't have to be a long article, anything of interest will do. A recipe, a tip for growing, a suggestion for best varieties for clay or chalky soil, pest prevention—anything that might be usefully shared with other allotmenters. Write about your long experience of allotments or what it is like to be a newbie on a plot! This is a forum for sharing knowledge so please put your green fingers to the keyboard and email me a few lines! *Kate Hutchinson* [thegrowernewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:thegrowernewsletter@gmail.com)

**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
JAMES BOLE (Representative) Plot 9A/B AR	VINCENT LUCAS (Representative) Plot 227D CR	KATE HUTCHINSON (Editor—The Grower) Plot 58D CR	DAVE HALL (Representative) Plot 12CR
JANE MACBEAN Town Council Representative	CR = CAMERON ROAD AR = ASHERIDGE ROAD		