



LATE AUTUMN NEWSLETTER No 12 - November 2011

What wonderful autumn weather we have had! A great deal was achieved at the work parties, and many ploholders have been working hard with autumn plot preparation and planting. I wonder what the winter will bring? Could it be as harsh as the last two?

The water supply to the taps/dip-tanks will be switched off on Monday 28th November to protect the pipework from frost damage during the winter (or earlier, if severe frosts are forecast). So please ensure that any cleaning of greenhouses, tools etc is done before then. The water will be turned back on in the spring once the danger of frosts has passed.

The annual bonfire night party cum BBQ on the lower field on November 4th was a tremendous success. Earlier in the day, Sydney Mygind (one of our most senior ploholders), Stuart Lee and Eric Chasseray had ably constructed the bonfire and Camilla Sykes had lit the pathway with nightlights in bottles. About 80 members, their families and friends, including many children, watched Sydney light the bonfire with one match! Robin Noble manned the BBQ and Rebecca Hurley looked after the mulled wine and soft drinks. Several ploholders had baked cakes and a memorable "happy bonfire night" iced cake had been created by young Amy Hughes. Everything was eagerly consumed!

At 8pm we had a grandstand view of the impressive 25 minute firework display at Kingsmeadow before setting off a few of our own. The event was greatly enjoyed by all and eventually, as the last partygoers left at about 10pm, light rain began to fall.

The two work party weekends in October achieved a considerable amount and most of the projected tasks were completed by the 40 members taking part. The work carried out included the following:

- (a) Spreading scalpings in the car turning area and on the driveway in the upper field and compacting them (with a wacker machine kindly loaned by new member Andy Dodds).
- (b) Clearing brambles by the manure corral, the composting toilet, the hot composting box, the upper field lawn and driveway.
- (c) Clearing the ditches in the woodland and clearing around the recently planted boundary trees; removing rubbish (including a Honda motorbike!) from the woodland.
- (d) Repairing the lower field communal shed roof and fitting gutters and rain collecting tanks to the shed.
- (e) Trimming back the blackthorn hedge between the fields and digging out tree stumps between plots 62 and 64.

The following members (in no particular order) helped at the work parties –Lionel Luxon, Mike Lapworth, Joan McConn, Sidney Mygind, Charlotte Stockley, Maria and Chris Outrim, Ruth Green and Sue, Ann O'Sullivan, Jeff Hollingworth, Linda Moore, Andy Watters, Pat Marchant, Barbara and Stephen Knowles, Ian Turnbull, Frances Shortt, Camilla Sykes,

Stuart Lee, Jeff Townsley, Gordon Bell, Julie Blythe, Rebecca Hurley, John Ibbett, Val Steed, Maya and David Aviram, Rosalind Netherwood, Helen O`Donovan, Pascal Boulvais, Sophie and Graham Evans, Phill Hughes, Tony Pell, Eric Chasseray, Claire Porter, Tom Morrell, and Dave Murwill.

If I have inadvertently left anyone out please accept my apologies.

Remember that these are your allotments and some effort by all members is essential for them to be a success. If you have not helped in these or any of the previous work parties the committee and I hope that you will be able to do so in future ones next year.

Many thanks to the ploholders who have paid their plot fees for 2011 on time. If you have not yet paid then a prompt cheque to Rebecca or direct bank payment would be greatly appreciated. I would just like to remind you that if you have a friend or partner working your plot with you (and they are not a named ploholder) they can still have the benefits of AGAA membership and NSALG insurance by becoming an associate member for a subscription of only £5 pa. The application form can be downloaded from the website, or obtained from Ian Turnbull.

Last September the Committee carried out an inspection of all the plots on the site and contacted those members whose plots were the cause of some concern. This process has enabled us to free up three poorly worked plots which will be made available to people who are on the waiting list (which currently stands at over 50). Please remember that the Rules require plots to be at least 50% worked in the first year and 75% in the second. **All existing tenancies will be entering their second or third year in 2011 and so the higher 75% requirement of cultivation will apply to every existing member next year.**

A few ploholders contacted regarding the state of their plot(s) expressed concern that as the inspection was carried out in September this did not represent a true state of their activity on their plot(s) during the growing season. It must be appreciated that as the committee members have their own plots in various parts of the allotment they can see what is going on throughout the year, not just at one inspection date. However, to ensure fairness, the committee may decide to have several inspection dates throughout next spring and summer.

There have been recent deliveries of wood chippings and horse manure to the allotments. Please help yourselves freely to as much chippings as you need for paths, mulching etc. If you are already part of the manure scheme or wish to join it please **pay the annual £5 subscription for manure** directly to me at 9 Grove Lane or at the allotments. The scheme runs from **October** of each year and entitles you to 30/40 barrows of manure annually. As I have to pay for the deliveries (in cases of Fosters lager) the subscription receipts must cover the costs. At present there are a number of past scheme members who have not yet paid, so I would be grateful for receipts as soon as possible.

Copies of the latest issue of the NSALG magazine '**Allotment and Leisure Gardener**' are now available to borrow in the two communal sheds.

Finally, the Committee and I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We hope that you will have plenty of allotment sprouts and other winter vegetables for your Christmas dinner and that next year your allotment will produce an even more bountiful crop.

Karol Smal
Chairman
On behalf of the AGAA Committee