



Barton Allotment Society News

COVID-19

JUNE 2020

By January 2020 Covid-19 was beginning to draw international attention while **we** were probably starting to look through seed catalogues, dreaming about the 2020 growing season. Plans were well underway to celebrate the 70th Annual Horticultural Show, with Doug Stewart from Radio Humberside agreeing to officially open the event. The judges had marked their diaries and several businesses and charities in town had pledged financial support.



As early March unfolded, speculation was rife that over 70 year olds as well as those with underlying health issues may need to self-isolate for up to four months. Less than a week later all pubs, clubs and restaurants were forced to close, including the Corn Exchange in the Market Place, long time venue for our committee meetings. Not to be defeated, the grassed area near the main shed was utilised for an emergency meeting. Looking back, we all laughed at having to sit 2 metres apart and shout. The following day, Monday March 23rd 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the country was now on a total lock-down expect for front line services. We were not allowed to leave our homes except for essential food, medicines, work we couldn't do from home and exercise. Groups of two or more were banned outside the home. Government Minister Michael Gove clarified 'exercise' explaining this included "going to an allotment" for an "hour or two". It is well proven that having an allotment is good for our physical and mental wellbeing, but during lockdown, it has felt more like a life saver. It's a chance to be outside, exercising and being part of our varied and unique gardening community.

With most traffic at a standstill, the roar from the Bridge vanished and bird song replaced it. More birds were noticed on the plots than in a long time. Our very own swallows of course, but also we've had wrens, bullfinches, blackbirds, sparrows, ump-teen different tits, as well as a pigeon that can read! "I LIKE PIGEON PIE SO DO NOT EAT ANYTHING FROM THIS SITE!" Reportedly, this sign next to the bird's nest worked. Neither parent nor their two chicks touched anything we didn't want them to!

We are extremely lucky to have these plots, and it's all thanks to people from many years ago who took out a mortgage to buy the land. Those people understood the value of providing food fresh for the table as well as being so close to nature. During lock-down, having an allotment has been a true blessing. It's not just an escape from four walls, but for some, a reason to get out of bed in a morning.



Good luck with all your crops. The plots are looking fabulous right now!

THANK YOU!



Many, many thanks to those who have helped the Society in any way during this time; tarpaulins and plastic sheets have been loaned, un-worked plots covered, over-grown areas rotovated and strimmed, unvisited plots weeded, wheelbarrows mended, the main shed cleaned out, the avenue weeded and plants and signs added for site decoration. The main shed has also been treated without the swallows being disturbed.



THINGS YOU'VE BEEN DOING DURING LOCKDOWN



Wendy's cinnabar moth



Helen's face masks



Andy's painted birdhouses



Den's patchwork sunshade



Alison's tortoise



John's raised bed

AND FOR THE KIDS...



Painted stones

Plot holders have always generously shared surplus seeds, seedlings, plants, cuttings and general garden gifts. 2020, so far, has been no exception. If you have any spare items that you would like to share with other plot holders, please leave them in or outside the main shed.

WATER COLLECTION

We are hoping to enhance water collection on the site and are looking for ideas. If you have anything you can suggest please let a committee member know. Colin will pull them all together for us to evaluate.



Plant up Grandad's old boots



Bottle bird feeders



ALLOTMENT RHUBARB DONATED TO MEALS ON WHEELS

The Ropewalk Meals on Wheels service has now delivered 3000 meals to vulnerable and elderly people in the town. Normally meals are delivered three times a week to around 130 people, but 200 households have so far benefitted from the service. Twenty two volunteers are involved from food sourcing and preparing, cooking, boxing up the meals and, of course, delivering. Recipients are asked to donate if they can, but the service has received £5000 from the Town Council and cash and food donations from a host of other individuals, shops and organisations in the town. The Allotment Society is of course on this list with the 74 pounds of rhubarb donated in April, and many plot holders are emptying their freezers of spare fruit from last year, to make way for the coming crop. Please contact Monica Jacques, chief food scrounger, with any freezer offers. (tel: 632438, email: monjacques@hotmail.co.uk).

The Committee is asking for anyone willing to donate any surplus produce for the meals on wheels service to please contact Colin Andrew, plot 22 (tel: 633445) - thank you.



COLLECTING SEEDS

Years ago people collected flower seeds to mix and sell. They were packaged in brown paper school dinner money sized envelopes, and sold for a few pence at mainline stations - in the days when trains had windows that opened. If you look carefully you might still see embankments lined with lupins, a testament to those long gone times. Who is to say how many other wild flowers grow in our fields and meadows as a result of that seed collecting venture?



If we saved the seeds from easy to grow flowers and herbs we could mix them together and spread them among hedgerows around the town. Perhaps people have unused packets of seed that could be added.



Why not keep a container in your shed, just for this project. Let's do it! We could collect in autumn and redistribute in the spring, encouraging children to take part too.



AROUND THE PLOTS



Have you thought about putting up bird boxes?
Or building a pond?



Could you sow a small patch of borage for the bees?



The Weather - were the saints to blame for our frosted plants?

In mid May this year committee member Colin tried to alert us to a cold snap that was expected to affect the UK. Several plot holders did cover their potatoes and tender crops with fleece but the frost still found them.

Treasurer Wes told us a story he originally heard whilst living in Brittany. His neighbour warned him about the period between 11th -13th May which, in Europe, is known as the "ICE SAINTS". These days fall on the feast days of St. Mamer-tus, St. Pancras and St. Servatius. Although poo-pooed by meteorologists, it is a well documented weather phenomenon, noted over many hundreds of years, that on those days there will be a blast of cold weather with the last frosts of the spring occurring.

Fellow plot holder Michaela was also aware of this phenomenon when she lived in Germany, where this period was referred to as "Eisheiligen". Switzerland, Austria, Poland and the Czech Republic all share similar folklores but with differing names. Czech gardeners say "the old men are coming". Switzerland includes two more saints, Boniface and Sophie, also known as Cold Sophie. Gardeners in many parts of Europe avoid planting any cold sensitive plants until Ice Saint Sophie's Day (May 15th this year) has passed.

That old English folklore,

"Ne'er cast a clout 'til May be out"

certainly rang true this year.



DECEMBER 2019 CHRISTMAS BASH

With so much changed, both on the plots as well as in the outside world, its good to look back to pleasant events and look forward to better days to come.

The Old Mill provided a fabulous three course meal for all those plot holders who could make it. John, Jackie, Kev, Cyril, Colin and Christine all contributed some wonderful raffle prizes, making this an evening to remember.



EVENTS DIARY— CANCELLATIONS DUE TO PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS

The Ropewalk Garden Day was cancelled.

The Allotment Midsummer Garden Party will not take place this year.

Open Gardens is cancelled too.

The Annual Open Horticultural Show will not take place this year, but the **70th Anniversary** event is only postponed until 2021 when we hope it will be bigger and better than ever before.

At this stage, no plans have been made for the Harvest time BBQ - BUT - **we are hoping the Christmas Bash could still be a possibility. Only time will tell.**

SITE INFORMATION

WELCOME TO:

Jon 7b
 Alan 17
 Sam & Daisy 19a
 Nick 61
 Ed & Helen 29a
 Stan 35
 Ruth & Rich 34b
 Richard 51b
 Jenna & Holly 48b
 Joanne & Martin 56

Our waiting list has begun to grow while a few plot holders reluctantly opted to hand their plots back, allowing newer people to take over and take care of the land. While it is often sad to see people go, it is also encouraging that gardening and 'growing-your-own' seems set for a healthy revival.

This is a plea for us all to **maintain the 2 metre distancing** so we can keep the plots safe (and open) for everyone. Not all of us are as risk free as the next person. Showing respect plays an important role here.



Allotment access bridge wall was re-topped just before Christmas 2019

IMPORTANT REMINDER

IF YOUR CAR IS THE LAST ONE INSIDE THE PLOTS, **ALWAYS CLOSE THE GATES BEHIND YOU**, EVEN IF IT'S EARLY IN THE DAY



CONTACT US:

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Plot application forms, Committee minutes, Show Schedule can be found on the website.

Facebook: Barton upon Humber Allotment Society

Website: Barton-upon-Humber-Allotment-Society.com

