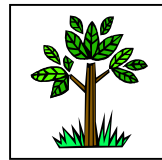




# Grass Cuttings



The Newsletter of **S**ale **H**orticultural & **A**llotment **S**ociety – January 2005

## Chairman's Report

We have come to the end of an unusual and difficult year but thankfully we have righted the ship financially, we now have a productive executive committee in place, but still have a few gaps to fill particularly on the social side which has suffered this year.

Our last social happening the Buffet and Awards Night, held at St Mary's Church Annex on 23 October was a great success being attended by 48 members and their friends, our outside caterer served up a very nice varied buffet, washed down with wine or minerals. The quiz and bingo were enjoyable and well received with Albert Williamson one of our mature members winning one of the bingo prizes.

Many thanks to our helpers before and after the buffet and to all who attended.

The Amenity Building is almost complete as shown in the photos below and right. We will have an official opening in the New Year, but in the meantime it is available now for any members who wish to meet /socialise/play cards/ dominoes. We have two folding card tables, larger folding tables, chairs, microwave oven, kettle, heater, playing cards and dominoes. Please remember to bring your key for the Amenity Building and milk if you want to have a brew (there is a small supply of T-bags, sugar, coffee and cups under the sink unit). When leaving the building please remember to switch off all lights and the switch for water heater before locking the metal door.

If any member would like to help as organiser to start off this social activity say for one afternoon to see how many are interested please contact me and I will arrange a notice to be circulated and put on our notice boards. Please contact me or any committee member if you have any questions or suggestions.

In closing could I repeat our thanks to our band of helpers and to you our members for your support through this difficult year.

A Happy New Growing Year to you and yours.

Don Jackson.

## Contact Details

Don Jackson – Chairman – 0161 973 5256

Email: [chairman@shas.org.uk](mailto:chairman@shas.org.uk)

Sylvia Steer – Secretary – 0161 282 8664

Email: [secretary@shas.org.uk](mailto:secretary@shas.org.uk)

Ken Bostock – Memberships – 0161282 8059

Email: [memberships@shas.org.uk](mailto:memberships@shas.org.uk)

Jonathan Richards – Treasurer – 0161 286 2681

Email: [treasurer@shas.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@shas.org.uk)

Nicola Lewis – Plots – 0161 973 5031

Email: [plots@shas.org.uk](mailto:plots@shas.org.uk)

David Taylor – Equipment – 0161 973 0867

Kevin Brooks – Groundsman 0161 962 3218

Website: [www.shas.org.uk](http://www.shas.org.uk)



**Sylvia writes:**

The Harvest Supper as a social get together with its quiz, and bingo seems to have been enjoyed by all who went. It was good to see some future gardeners there as well as old hands. I would like to say thank-you to Danny and Carys who helped with the raffle and indeed Danny proved a very competent bingo caller making his dad practically redundant!

Congratulations to the TURNIP TOPS who proved themselves more knowledgeable than the rest of us in winning the quiz which was compiled by Jonathan. Cathy from The Olive Connection provided the delicious buffet, and we look forward to next year's Supper, which is open to any ideas you may have.

**SEED SCHEME**

I have not yet received the catalogues from Kings, but expect them soon. I have the Marshall's catalogues already. I try to send the seed order in at the end of January, sorry there less time to plan your bumper crops for this year...Please ring me on 282 8664 if you would like the catalogues.

Gala Evening Photos below and right – originals available on request

**Sylvia Steer**



**The Membership Secretary writes:**  
**Memberships**

At our AGM in April members voted to increase membership fees for 2005 to £4.50 for Full Members and £4.00 for concession members. A notice for payment of subscriptions for 2005 should be attached to this Newsletter. Membership fees are due on 1st January 2005. All plot holders should await receipt of their rental invoices and should remit both membership fees and rentals as one payment as detailed on the invoice. I wish all members a very happy and good growing New Year.

**Ken Bostock**



## **Allotment Secretary's Report:**

### **Plots**

The committee has recently carried out a survey of plots regarding sizes and conditions and paths. For those of you who are plot holders, you may see a revised plot rental cost. This is to reflect the true square yardage that you have been allocated. Most have stayed the same; some are paying slightly more whilst some lucky devils are having an almost free year!

I am pleased with the overall condition of most plots with many having improved dramatically over the last year. Some are yet to be up to scratch and one or two committee members have had a gentle reminder also! This, combined with our new plot holders is contributing to the revival in the plots and the society and hopefully everyone can be proud to be a part of Grosvenor Road Allotments. Let's hope 2005 continues in that vein.

### **Footpaths**

It is still a matter of concern that a number of plot holders have been allowing the boundaries of their plots to extend on to the designated footpaths. We have re-staked paths in many cases, but if plot holders cannot be considerate enough without the committee reminding them, then the committee will be forced into re marking all paths and asking people to remove crops/flowers and in some cases reinstate them with grass etc.

Please try to remember to keep them straight and make them at LEAST wide enough to get a power mower along. Some paths are inaccessible even by mountain goat!

### **Cars on site**

Again, a reminder that you may bring your car on to the site to drop off and collect items from your plot and then must park it on the road.

**Finally – A happy New Year to you all, Nicola Lewis**

## **Treasurer's Report**

Hello everyone – well the few months since our last newsletter definitely have flown by. I am pleased to say that due to the efforts of all the committee members this year we have managed to keep administration costs to an absolute minimum saving around £700 on the previous years' administration costs alone! We are now in a strong enough financial position to be considering capital investment programs in improving the state of the plots. Things that we will be looking at will be waste removal, drainage, bringing several plots back to a lettable condition etc. If you have any ideas on what you would like to see an investment in, please let Don, myself or indeed any committee member know and we will look into it.

The society membership hasn't been forgotten either – as evidenced by our super Gala Supper Evening late last year but we are hampered by not having a social secretary – so any volunteers out there?

Remember, memberships and plot rentals fall due on 1<sup>st</sup> January this year to bring us back in line with the correct trading year dates. You need to be a fully paid up member of the society in order to be a plot holder.

**Trading Hut** – news, views and questions regarding the trading hut continues on the back page  
Happy New Year everyone, **Jonathan.**

## **Listen and Look, an item by David Bancroft**

We all enjoy harvesting our precious produce  
Many of us enjoy the exercise when working the land  
Few of us I fear enjoy the bird life in our midst  
So let's look at what is on offer

On the eastern boundary in the tall trees we have two resident crows, they can often be seen in aerial combat, sometimes chasing wood pigeons or maybe a kestrel or larger gulls and sometimes a not so agile heron, Also to be seen quite often is a high flying sparrow hawk being harassed by 20 or 30 starlings who clearly believe in safety in numbers,

Birds which can be seen on most days include Jays, Mistle Thrushes, Green Finches, and Gold Finches, these are in addition to the ones we take for granted such as Robins, Blackbirds, Chaffinches, Blue Tits, Great Tits, Wrens and Dunnocks.

Because gardening necessitates our downward gaze we need to exercise our listening facilities (or hearing devices!). You only have to listen and look from time to time to catch some interesting sightings, Mistle Thrushes make rasping calls which make them easy to locate. Jays make very harsh shrieks and shouts, they fly across our plots from trees on Grosvenor Road; crows, everyone knows about, whilst the little wren must have the loudest voice in relation to its size. Robins can be seen and heard all year round. No melody was ever composed by a congregation of Jackdaws but their short and frequent calls are always cheerful.

So come on you gardeners, use your ears and practice your identification skills in time for the nesting season when there will be many more bird songs to enjoy. In the meantime watch out for winter visitors like Redwing and Fieldfares and perhaps even Waxwings.

## **Food For Thought: An article by Brian Snelson**

What did you do with those part used packets of vegetable seeds that you planted during 2004? Do you play safe and buy fresh each year? Or do you store them in a cool, dry, dark place until the following year? The following list gives you some idea of the shelf life – in years - of opened packets of seeds. Who knows, it may save you money!

Aubergine 4, Beetroot 4, Broad beans 3, Broccoli 4, Brussel sprouts 3, cabbage 3, carrot 2, cauliflower 3, celeriac 4, celery 4, Chinese cabbage 4, chives 0 (use or throw!), cucumber 3, French bean 2, kale 3, kohlrabi 3, leek 2, lettuce 4, marrow 3, melon 4, okra 4, onion 1, parsley 2, parsnip 0(use or throw!), pea 2, pumpkin 2, radish 3, runner bean 2, soya bean 2, spinach 4, squash 3, sunflower 4, tomato 3, turnip 4.

If you need more information, please borrow my "Seedsavers Handbook". You might be tempted to save your own seed! 0161 962 1558

PS – Please bring in your unwanted seeds from this year to the trading hut on its first day open next year and we will offer them free to other members. Perhaps you can trade your surplus seeds.

## TRADING HUT

### Thank You

Firstly the committee would like to thank all those who have helped in the trading hut this previous year and thank you in advance for 2005! Last year was a resounding success despite the change in personnel running the trading hut and the loss of stock late the previous year and that is down to all of you who use this service. The committee is dedicated to providing a value for money service to our membership and as such prices from last year will be held wherever possible and in some cases even reduced. This follows a detailed analysis of the previous years' purchasing and mark up patterns that was historically charged.

It is important to understand that we are a small organisation and cannot hope to compete with the likes of Wilkinson's, but we aim to keep our prices as low as possible. Please know that any profit made immediately goes back into the society for improvements in the plots and events for members or for subsidising mid season price changes from the wholesalers.

### Potatoes

We have secured a good deal from KG Loach, who is offering us certified scotch seed potatoes at a very cheap price. I have had to act quickly and order some now! The following varieties will be available from mid February. Please pre-order to avoid disappointment, as there will only be a limited stock.

First Earlies	£ / Kilo	Second Earlies	£ / Kilo	Main Crop	£ / Kilo
Aaron Pilot	60p per KG (approx 27p / lb)	Maris Peer	60p per KG (approx 27p / lb)	Maris Piper	60p per KG (approx 27p / lb)
Home Guard	60p per KG (approx 27p / lb)			Cara	70p per KG (approx 33p / lb)
Pentland Javelin	60p per KG (approx 27p / lb)			Desiree	60p per KG (approx 27p / lb)

### Shallots & Onions

Available mid February

Shallots	£ / Kilo	Onions	£ / Kilo
Yellow	£1.21p per KG (approx 55p / lb)	Stuttgarter	£1.02p per KG (approx 46p / lb)

### Common Items for Sale

To remind you all of the more usual items we have for sale every week, the following might prove useful!

Growmore	Fish, Blood & Bone	Bonemeal
General-purpose fertiliser. Ensures strong & healthy growth of edible & ornamental plants. Helps produce heavy cropping vegetables	Organic based fertiliser. Use on vegetables, fruit, flowers & salad crops. Apply to seed beds as base dressing, vegetables as spring dressing	Slow release organic fertiliser for everywhere in the garden!. Once applied is a continual supply of nitrogen & phosphate Pre-planting fertiliser for roses, shrub, trees and other woody plants. High phosphate content is good for peas, potatoes, onions and root crops. Invigorates outdoor bulbs and flowers
<i>Use early spring through October</i>	<i>Use spring through early summer</i>	<i>Use all year round</i>

Superphosphate	Sulphate of Potash	Sulphate of Ammonia
Essential fertiliser for strong root growth & healthy crops. Apply when preparing soil for planting. Scatter round base of shrubs and herbaceous plants	Strengthens plants & makes them more disease resistant. Encourages flower formation & colour. The nitrogen/potassium balance has a major effect on the yield of potatoes	Well-established growth promoting fertiliser. Gives rapid boost to established, quick growing vegetables and salad crops, fruits and spring greens.
<i>Use in spring</i>	<i>Use when plants pricked out, springtime</i>	<i>Use April through September</i>

Booster/Rooster Booster	Spring & Summer Lawn Food	Garden Lime
Excellent soil conditioner for vegetables, fruit, flowers, roses and shrubs. Ideal for baskets and pots.	Special fertiliser for use on all grassed areas. Promotes steady growth and good green colour	Reduces the acidity of soil. Improves structure and improves drainage of clay & heavy soils. Adds calcium.
<i>Use on tomatoes at planting time. On lawns in spring</i>	<i>Use during the growing season – spring -summer</i>	<i>Spring tonic for shrubs and brassicas. Helps prevent club root in brassicas. Also use on beet, carrots, leeks, parsnips &amp; spinach</i>

***Please let us know if you can and wish to receive this newsletter via email – many thanks***