



# Grass Cuttings



## Newsletter of **S**ale **H**orticultural & **A**llotment **S**ociety –August 2007

### Chairman's Report

Well this is our summer edition of Grass Cuttings. As we are all aware summer so far was on last Friday morning!! The almost continual rain on saturated gardens and allotments cannot drain away quickly. We need hot sun and significant wind.

Our allotment drainage ultimately joins the Mersey via low lying fields and through Ashton Golf course. When the water table is high our drainage system water cannot flow. We need to raise the land level on our lowest plots by adding at least 150 tonnes of reasonable top soil and by adding additional drains. Trucking top soil to each plot can only be done when the ground is hard or frozen to avoid excessive damage to the grass pathways plus we have insufficient funds to buy the soil. I am continually asking Trafford for compost from our green bins and the autumn leaves from their large dump at Bradley Lane. I remain hopeful. Additional drainage is planned for later this year. We can buy the materials and hire some equipment, but we will require help from a plot holders' working party.

Your committee are very concerned with the amount of flooding that has occurred this year. Alas it is beyond our control – we are going through a weather change which has been happening for many centuries, nothing to do with carbon footprints cow flatulence, smoking in pubs or the latest guess.

Back to the present, not all flowers, fruit and vegetables are being ruined. Reasonable crops are being harvested. I hope our pumpkin growers are adding their particular concoctions in readiness for our Awards and Pumpkin Party on Wednesday 31 October to be judged by Jacqui Brocklehurst, plot holder, Tatton Park 2006/7 medal winner and TV personality. Did you happen to see her on the RHS Flower Show review on Friday 20 July? I could not find any Pumpkin seeds to grow so my entry hopefully will be a large Marrow.

As you can see from this edition of Grass Cuttings your SHAS committee continues to work in the rain. Linda has been re-letting odd half plots which had not been cultivated by the previous plot holders. Alf and our helpers have been keeping the Trading hut operational on Sundays but it will not be open now until 2<sup>nd</sup> September, when we will be having a discount sale so please pop in to buy additional bargains. Our "Main Pathway" grass cutting committee members are still active between showers. Hopefully more of our plot holders will be either cutting the pathways next to their plots or arranging to pay Kevin to cut them??

On the down side several plot holders have again had their sheds vandalised and produce stolen so please be diligent and report any wrong doings to any committee member.

Finally let us hope we have a little summer soon.

Don Jackson  
SHAS Chairman

### Committee Contact details

Don Jackson Chairman 973 5256  
Email: [chairman@shas.org](mailto:chairman@shas.org)

Sylvia Steer Secretary 282 8664  
Email: [secretary@shas.org](mailto:secretary@shas.org)  
Plot 13

Ken Bostock Membership  
Email: [memberships@shas.org](mailto:memberships@shas.org)  
Plot 46

Jonathan Richards Treasurer 286 2681  
Email: [treasurer@shas.org](mailto:treasurer@shas.org)  
Plot 62a

Linda McLachlan Allotments 962 2920  
Plot 60a

David Taylor Equipment 973 0867  
Plot 27

Kevin Brooks Grass cutting 962 3218  
Plot 38

Alf Edwards Trading 282 0048  
Plot 41

Tony Turnbull  
Plot 21

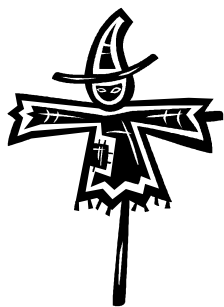
Website [www.shas.org.uk](http://www.shas.org.uk)

What a wash-out!



See inside for the pictures of the paddy fields of Grosvenor Rd!

## Scarecrow Competition April 1<sup>st</sup>



Thank you to all the children who took part in our competition. **Daisy and Poppy Brocklehurst** were awarded the Easter Egg for this pretty scary entry.



Well done also to Katie, Matthew and Alexander Leicester, Rosie and Joseph Gorman and Thomas and Victoria Schofield who all received a certificate and Easter eggs for their splendid entries. By special request there will be another competition next year for the adults too.



Sam didn't win a prize!

## Pumpkin Party



### Wednesday October 31<sup>st</sup>

We will be having a pumpkin party outside The Hoe Down on October 31<sup>st</sup>, from 6.30pm onwards with soup and sausages. Yummy! Bring along your pumpkins, and Jack o' Lanterns. There will be prizes for the best efforts.

Why not bring along any surplus squashes or marrows or indeed any other surplus produce for exchange or sale for society funds. We will put up gazebos just in case it might possibly rain. The barbecue will be lit and soup and sausages and baked potatoes will be available at a small cost. Soft drinks will be available, but you may wish to bring your own beer/wine.

Also at this event,

### Plot awards

will be presented to plot holders achieving year round merit for their plots or great improvement in the opinion of the committee. All members welcome.

### Plant Sale

Thanks to all who helped, the plant sale went very smoothly with all plants sold by Sunday resulting in a profit of approximately £250.

### April Talk

The Hoe Down was full to capacity for the talk by Jacqui Brocklehurst on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April. Members found the insight into how her, 'Eat my Garden' entry for the RHS Tatton Show was brought to life, fascinating. Undertaken in response to a bet from a fellow gardener, the garden was completed despite all manner of setbacks. Jacqui's first hurdle on site was finding an enormous buried rock left by somebody last year which had to be removed before anything else could go ahead. In a race against time,

bricks from a skip on Grosvenor Rd were laid down for a path, globe artichokes, which had died were replaced by those dug up from Nicola's allotment, and, although it seems difficult to imagine as I write this, drought was making all the plants wilt last year. The hosepipe was strictly rationed between gardens and umbrellas were erected to shield the plants from...the sun!!

Jacqui had no sponsors and made great use of recycled materials begging and borrowing from friends. Her metal Allium made from forks with bent prongs and sprayed was really imaginative.

Jacqui richly deserved the Silver Gilt.

We look forward to hearing more of her exploits from this year's show.

### Members' Outing



### Dorothy Clive Garden

We would like to organise an outing for members on **Thursday 13th September**.

The **Dorothy Clive Garden** is near Stoke-on-Trent. Described as 'intimate and informal', it includes a superb woodland garden, an alpine scree, gravel garden and many fine mixed borders

The plant enthusiast will find many unusual species

Visitors can rest on the garden seats provided throughout the grounds and enjoy the tearoom's home-baking on the terrace lawn, while taking pleasure from the lovely views of the Staffordshire countryside.'

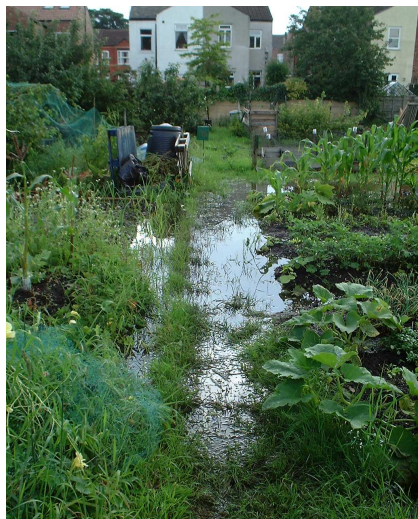
The day will be concluded with a visit to Bridgemere Garden Centre which has display gardens as well as a wide stock of plants and merchandise.

We envisage going by private cars rather than a coach unless we are overwhelmed with requests, so please **contact Sylvia on 282**

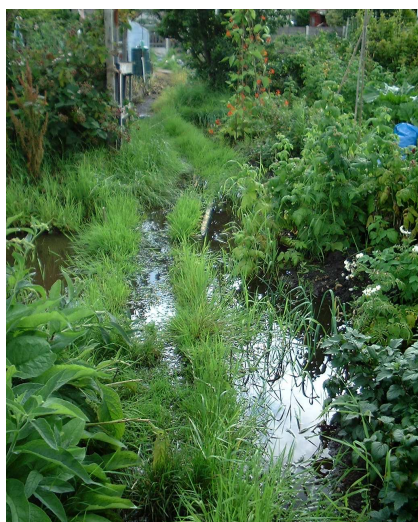


**8664** to register your interest either as a car driver or passenger.

## Water



## Water



## Water



## and more Water!

To try to alleviate the flooding, and save future crops, it will be helpful to dig deep trenches around the affected plots. Some plots have already been built up considerably by their owners with some success by adding great quantities of manure and compost. Why not take advantage of our frequent

## Please act now!

manure deliveries to build up your plot if it is badly drained.

## Manure

The horse manure from Little Ees Lane continues to be delivered to the bays. If you are around when the van comes, PLEASE lend Kay a hand unloading the bags. It is an arduous job made lighter by many hands so PLEASE HELP! It is also an ideal opportunity to get it to your plot already bagged so you don't need to shovel it. Just return the bags to the bay for return to the stables.

## Watch out there's a thief about!



If you suffer a theft from your shed or plot, please report it to a committee member as soon as possible. We should not tolerate theft. Plot holders have had various hand tools, a mallet, and believe it or not, a hat and a pair of wellies taken from sheds so far.

Sometimes items have been found in Ashton Park and are returned to us. These will be locked in the Trading Hut until claimed.

Did anyone spot the thief who stole the entire crop of gooseberries from plot 29?



## Who? Me??

Seriously, please be ready to challenge, politely of course, any one you don't recognise on your neighbour's plot. If you are going to be away let your neighbour know if any one else is to be allowed to pick your crops.

## Capital Projects

The treasurer has some funds available and is inviting suggestions or ideas for capital spending next year. The committee would very much like to improve the drainage, but this may prove impossible due to circumstances beyond our control. If you have an idea for the benefit of the whole society, and not just plot holders do let us know.

## Memorial Hedge

Mrs Jean Robertson had plot 24b for many years, tending it and loving it before, sadly she had to relinquish it because of poor health. It was a measure of how much she cared about her plot that she gave it up in excellent condition ready for the next tenant to carry on immediately. On receiving a request from her husband to donate some sort of memorial to be seen in the place she spent so many enjoyable hours, the committee, with his agreement, would like to plant a 'Jean Robertson Memorial Hedge'. This will be along the Grosvenor Rd boundary next to the existing fence which will be retained. We envisage a hedge of mixed native species which will be wildlife friendly and also fairly

## Trafford Gardeners Evening

Wednesday 5th September  
7.00-10.30pm

George H Carnall Urmston

Free entry

Light buffet £4

Guest speaker

Ian Greenhalgh

'Growing Dahlias for showing'  
Also

impenetrable. To this end we will be asking for a working party in the autumn to prepare the area. We will then have a planting ceremony in memory of Jean. Please watch the notice boards for dates.

## Trading Hut Sunday Opening Times

September 2nd, 16th, 30th

October 7th, 21st

November 5th

## What to do now

### Lawns

With the rain washing away all goodness from the roots, I hope you have been feeding your lawn with spring and summer fertiliser. After September the growth of grass slows down and it will benefit from the autumn and winter fertiliser which is lower in nitrogen but promotes strong root growth. Get some from the Trading Hut!

### Legume roots

The broad beans seem to have done well this year. When they've all been picked cut the tops down but leave the roots in the earth for now as they have nitrogen fixing nodules which feed the soil and any plants nearby. The same applies to peas. Let some pods dry on the plant if you wish to save your own seeds.

### Strawberries

Clean up strawberry plants by cutting off all old leaves now. They are of no use to the plant. Put them on the compost! You will see new leaves at the centre. Allow one or two plants to send out runners and peg these down into the soil or into pots to make new plants. Cut off all other runners or you will be inundated with an untidy mass of small plants with no space to grow. Strawberry beds should be re-planted every three years.

### Paths

There is no doubt that a well maintained path is becoming a major factor in the individual plot inspection record. Yes we do record every inspection of every plot! A few weeds on the plot will go unnoticed if we have to wade through wet grass, trip over uneven edges, and duck under, or push past low growing fruit branches. Several paths need major attention to restore them to their one metre width. They must be cut!! If necessary with hand shears!

### Sheds / Greenhouses



On a visit to an allotment site outside Trafford, we were very concerned by the collection of old wooden structures, greenhouses and even an old conservatory that had been erected on the site. The whole effect was of a shanty town and the room for actually growing crops was seriously compromised. At one time apparently, it was forbidden to have a shed on our site. Now we allow them but ask that you think seriously about whether you really need one. They certainly attract break-ins and you are advised not to keep anything you really can't replace. Now, as half-plots are becoming more common, we have decided to limit the size of any new shed to 6' by 4' as shown here.



If you really can't do without a shed, please forward your request to erect a shed to the committee in writing. It will be considered as soon as possible and provided that

it is erected away from the paths and is not detrimental to your neighbour's plot there should be no problem. Of course it must be maintained to an acceptable state along with other wooden structures.

## Health & Safety

The committee has noticed, with increasing concern, the number of potentially unsafe structures on the site at present. These include fences, compost holders and storage areas, usually made of wood, which have deteriorated to the point where they overhang paths and are a danger to everyone. Some of this wood has exposed nails and screws which increase the risk of injury. Wooden boards used round the edges of plots should be securely fixed. Many are loose and falling over and again pose risk to people using the paths.

Please bear in mind these plots, and the structures on them, are your responsibility and no one wants to see people hurt. You are therefore expected to remove any unsound structure from your plot within the next four weeks and ensure boards around the plot are properly fixed and do not overhang paths. It is appreciated that removing and disposing of some items may be difficult. If you need assistance please contact me or any member of the committee, and we will try to help.

In accordance with Trafford Council's Health and Safety Policy the September plot inspection will cover these issues as well as the general cultivation of the site.

Linda McLachlan

### Glass: Hazard!

All glass is a potential killer. It must not be placed next to paths. Please remove any unused pieces from your plot and take them to the tip yourself. You must not leave glass any where on the site for someone else to remove.

## Stop press: Trafford Awards

Highly commended

Plot 7 P Baggaley

Plot 37a P Howarth

Plot 41 A Edwards

Letters of commendation for plots  
13 S & M Steer

## Grosvenor Rd Allotments

'Best Site in Sale'  
2007

27 D Taylor  
29 L Enstone  
58 PJ Webster

And finally: