

BRIDPORT and DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY

Newsletter

Autumn 2015

Annual General Meeting

The next meeting of the Bridport and District Allotments Society will be the Annual General Meeting, to which all members are cordially invited. The meeting will be at 7 pm on Thursday 24 September at the usual venue, the Bridport Town Council offices at Mountfield.

Officers and committee for the coming year will be elected at the meeting – there are three committee places vacant, and we would welcome volunteers for these places to bring new ideas to the committee which works hard to support the interests of local allotment holders. (Please contact Lynne Atkinson lynne@follymill.plus.com.)

Bob Driscoll has written an obituary of Mary Keens, a committee member for several years, who very sadly died in June (page 3).



BADAS News

The BADAS outdoor summer meeting was held in fine weather at the West Allington allotments on 18 June (see page 3), and the Society had a stand in the town council tent at the Bridport Food Festival on 13 June.

The Society has sponsored a top bar bee hive which has been installed on Asker Meadow (see page 4).

Meanwhile it has been a busy year as always for Bridport and District allotment gardeners. Many have

had a successful growing season, though some may feel that the summer of 2015 was slow to arrive and also left again too soon.

The Society is grateful, as always, for the support for allotments provided by Bridport Town Council. Daryl Chambers, the town surveyor, reports (page 4) on plans to tighten up on allotment holders who do not maintain their plots in good condition. There are still a good number of people on the waiting list for plots.

What's in your shed?

Last year woodcare company Cuprinol, as part of its annual "Shed of the Year" competition, released the results of a national survey on how people use their garden sheds, with some revealing findings about our shed habits and their contents. Some 21 million people in Britain now own a garden shed.

In terms of contents the survey identified some clear trends – 77% of respondents admitted to keeping old tools in their sheds, 39% rusty bikes, and 34% broken deck chairs.

More unusual items included false teeth, mannequins, old bird food, a stuffed owl, punctured paddling pools, hamster cages, broken toilet seats, relatives' ashes, school memorabilia, old breast implants, a stuffed alligator, and ex-husbands' old possessions.

The survey also found that some shed owners retreat to their shed to get away from their partners or loved ones, with Londoners the most antisocial at 19%, compared with just 2% of shed owners in Yorkshire.

There were a number of regional findings. The Welsh have the messiest sheds, with 39% of owners admitting they can hardly get through the door. The Northern Irish have the most expensive sheds, and 18% of them admit to using their sheds to make secret phone calls. Shed owners in the North West appear to be the friskiest, with 9% admitting to having used their shed for sexual activities.

Next Allotments Society Meeting

**Annual General Meeting —Thursday 24 September 2015, 7.00 pm, in the
Bridport Town Council offices at Mountfield, Rax Lane. All members welcome..**



News from the Community Allotment

(next to the Community Orchard behind St Mary's Church)

The Community Allotment has been doing well this year despite a slow start due to the chilly weather early on. Things seem to have caught up now though and the polytunnel tomatoes are, at last, starting to ripen.

As usual we had a splendid crop of blackcurrants which always do well and we should have a bumper grape harvest in the autumn, weather permitting. Our polytunnel cucumbers have been very productive and even if they are a little bent, they certainly taste nice.



We have also been attempting melons this year, a Charentais type with orange flesh, and we're delighted that we have six perfect fruits. Unfortunately we lost one plant earlier in the year but the second one has done really well - when it comes to sharing them out the allotmenters will have to have half a melon each!

The membership has increased again this year and it has been lovely to welcome people from the Hughes Unit and the Alzheimers group.

On 13 August we held our third Open Afternoon to coincide with National Allotment Week. This year we were joined by Foodfutures Bridport who gave out valuable information regarding food sustainability.



As usual our members displayed their culinary skills and the tea table was groaning under the weight of all the cakes - Bake Off would have been proud!! We always try to include an ingredient from the allotment so this year we had cakes containing beetroot, courgette, rhubarb and blackcurrants and lovely herby biscuits.

There was lashings of tea and coffee to wash it all down and, despite the (incorrect) weather forecast keeping visitor numbers down, we didn't have much food left at the end. We find that our visitors are interested in the concept of a community allotment and like to be shown round and hear how it all works.

Jenn Baker
Bridport Community Allotment





The Society's Summer Meeting at West Allington

The summer meeting of the Bridport and District Allotments Society traditionally takes the form of a visit to one of the local allotment sites.

This year was our second attempt to visit the relatively recently established site at West Allington, behind the Bridport Medical Centre, the first visit in 2012 having been a virtual washout.

No such problem this year as the meeting held on Thursday 18 June came in the middle of an extended period of dry weather. So much so that one of the stars of the evening was the water supply recently installed by the town council, which was in constant use during the visit and clearly well appreciated by plottolders.

The fine weather meant there was a good turnout, with a good number of plottolders and interested members from other sites in the town. It was clear that the plots at the West Allington site are now well established and yielding a good quality and range of produce.



Photos by Mandy Rathbone



Mary Keens

Bob Driscoll writes: I was very sorry to learn that Mary Keens has died, at the age of 73, on 20 June – an e-mail from our secretary, Lynne, alerted me.

Mary was a strong supporter of BADAS; she and her husband John joined in 2009 when they took on a plot at Skilling. Two years later, she joined the committee of the society and relieved me of the task of hand delivering newsletters etc. to members in the Skilling area.

Always a bright and cheerful person, Mary kept a spotless allotment and had plenty of friendly advice for those of us less competent! That advice also translated into occasional articles for the BADAS newsletter.

Mary was also a member of the Bridport and District Gardening Club and regularly won prizes in their shows – including being the overall winner in their 2015 Spring Show (see picture above).

I'm sure I speak for everyone who knew her when I say she will be sorely missed.

Bob Driscoll

Bees at the Boot

Earlier this year Jim Binning gave the society an excellent talk on natural bee keeping. In return the Allotments Society sponsored the manufacture of a top bar hive.

We got the call from Jim Binning on the morning of 16 July to say that he had acquired a swarm of bees at Litton Cheney and that he would install a top bar hive and introduce the swarm to it a little later that day.

Sure enough at 8 am Jim was there at the 'Boot Field' (Asker Meadow) where Daryl Chambers (Town Surveyor) had arranged a fenced off area for the hive, and had already put the hive together; and we stayed to see the introduction of the bees.

It all went absolutely according to plan – Jim very obviously knows what he's doing and the bees seemed to be in a good mood as I got fairly close to take the pictures. Apparently bees do vary in how aggressively they react – but these seemed very well behaved! It is worth noting that Jim did not use any smoke to keep them calm, preferring a more natural approach.

Brian Atkinson



Jim Binning introduces the bees to the new hive

Why plastic pots?

Although clay pots may be more aesthetically pleasing, research seems to indicate that plastic pots encourage better plant growth. Plastic pots drain more effectively because the drain holes are raised clear of the ground. There is also less evaporation than happens through the sides of clay pots (which also leads to a concentration of salts in the walls and the leaching of the soil in the centre). White pots might be an improvement on black or terracotta, because light reflecting off the inside of the pot would encourage stronger plant growth.

(article by Rob Foster (www.thelazygardener.org) in the 2015 Issue 2 of the NSALG's *Allotment and Leisure Gardener* magazine).



News from Bridport Town Council

Bridport Town Council report that there is a waiting list of 30 Bridport residents for council allotments, with a further 41 from neighbouring parishes.

Daryl Chambers, the Bridport town surveyor, has requested that we report the following items:

The Town Council will be reviewing the Terms and Conditions for next year 2015–2016 with a view to tightening up the system for removing allotment holders who do not work on their plots.

This will involve a 3-strike system used by other Local Authorities and the details will be discussed with the Allotment Society.

Any communal compost areas that are not looked after or misused by allotment holders will be removed, this has already happened at the West Allington Medical Centre site.

Bridport and District Allotments Society

Membership of the Bridport & District Allotments Society costs £2 per annum. Our Membership Secretary/Treasurer Mandy Rathbone will be pleased to receive your subscriptions. Please contact Mandy on [redacted] or send her an email at [redacted]

Receiving the newsletter by email: If any member who currently receives the newsletter/minutes of meetings through the letterbox could receive them by email (and save us delivery cost/time), please contact Lynne Atkinson - [redacted]

Newsletter contributions welcome: if you have any items you would like to see included in future issues of our Newsletter (which comes out quarterly) or if there are subjects you would like us to cover, please contact the Editor, Charles Wild, [redacted]

[redacted] or email entries to [redacted] Contributions to the next edition (articles, news items and/or photographs) are welcome at any time, but by **10 November 2015** please. Many thanks for contributions this time - please keep them coming.