

Cripley Meadow Newsletter

July & August 2010

Diary Dates: Working parties

Sun 8th August 10.30 am-12.30

Weds 11th August 6-8pm

To be spent pollarding the willows on the Island to produce canes and poles for members of the working party & more tumping to be ready for autumn tree planting.

A poem sent in by Chloe

Slug **by Devon poet Matt Harvey**
duel with a non-dualist

low-born land mollusc
high-impact intruder
free-loader, sprout-spoiler
meandering marauder
disrespecter of my broad-beans' border
you've a one-track mind
in a one-track body

diligent pillager
soft-horned invisigoth
slow silver-scribbler
paradoxically busy sloth
you're a tithe-taker, hole-maker
indiscriminate direct debtor
bold-as-brass brassica editor

you're a squishetty spoilsport
a glistening drag
the liquorice all-sort
nobody wants to find in the bag

it's time that you were brought to book
you're not as tasty as you look
listen chum, you are disposable
look at my thumb, it is opposable
unwelcome invertebrate
this might just hurt a bit
I pluck you and chuck you
into distant drew-drenched greenery
isn't that mean of me?

slug, when all is said and done
you can hide but you can't run

Jericho Street Fair Saturday 12 June

We had 250 plants, a wheel barrow of organic lettuce, some veg for sale and scrummy beetroot chocolate cupcakes. We took about £230. This will be used to buy more fruit trees for the Island Orchard.

The committee think it is important we participate at this important community event and hope **more** members will be involved in bringing and buying plants in future years. The stall was managed by Aja, Wendy, Micki, Cathy, Tony, John and Patricia from 159 came along to help and of course Alex helped with water from his nearby home.



It is always a busy time talking gardening and food and we had enquires about membership. We used the Street Fair to distribute leaflets. Micki did this and it can be viewed on the notice board and the web site. Thanks Micki. It contains information about progress with the island. which is looking lovelyand also advertises Open Day

National Allotment Week
Cripley Meadow
Allotment Association

Open Day
Sunday 15 August 2010
11:00 – 15:00

**Tour our award winning plots & the
Cripley Island Orchard.**

Put this in your diary now!

This is in National Allotment Week. It would be great to see as many ploholders on their open plots as possible. This is a great opportunity for all members to invite friends and family and visit one another's (open) plots.

By the way: Cripley Island Orchard is a pleasure for all members but it is an orchard and children need supervision when playing there. For example the sticks in the ground were marking the places for this year's trees and should not have been used for a tepee.

May Audit report from Alex

In May members of the Committee toured the whole site for the first of our two Annual Audit Inspections. It was the first hot weekend of the year, and as well as overheating the auditors the sun had finally triggered the first flush of rapid growth that Cripsey Meadow is so well-known for.

The main purpose of the Audit is to make sure that all the plots are being looked after, properly cultivated and managed. This is not just to make sure that they are in accordance with our rules, but because finding yourself next door to a plot covered with weeds that seed your carefully cleared ground is one of the greatest frustrations for the allotment gardener. With people on the waiting list we must make sure that all the plots are put to good use.

It was a real pleasure carrying out the inspection, and being able to look closely at the wide range of ways in which people use their plots. Cripsey Meadow is not a site where every plot looks the same, and the variety of vegetables, fruit, flowers and the range of approaches to gardening is a joy.

It is also a pleasure to be able to say that this year, despite the miserable winter and late start to the growing season, there were fewer problems for the Committee to deal with than ever before. We were concerned about around 20 plots, which out of getting on for 200 is very few indeed, and of those, in only about ten cases were there serious worries, or concerns expressed to us by neighbours.

We wrote to all members, and members of the Committee have made and will continue to make return visits to problem plots to check that things are OK. We have also spoken directly to some of the members concerned. As a Committee we do our best to help members keep their plots if there has been a short-term illness or something similar, but in the interests of fairness to neighbours and to our waiting list we have also asked that plots be given up. As a result of this year's audit we discovered that a number of members needed temporary help because of personal circumstances, and other plots have been given up. We are pleased to say that again this year the former outnumber the latter.

As well as the main issue of cultivation and management, we also focussed on three other issues during the audit: plot numbers, headlands and paths.

As the letters you all received said **plot numbers** seem like a minor thing, but in an emergency situation the speed with which your plot can be located could be critical; please make sure your plot is numbered, and please be as creative and artistic as possible in doing so!

A prize for the best will be presented to Lewis, Plot 89, at Lunch on the Green. Take a look.

Headlands are the area between your plot and the track(s) that run through the site, and as a plot-holder you are responsible for maintaining them; it's particularly important to keep down weeds which could seed not just your but also your neighbours' plot. If you have a communal plot - one of the small beds - this still applies. A few minutes with a pair of shears every week will be very much appreciated.

Paths are proving a tricky issue, but put simply the rules require that each plot has a path running down one side of it to separate it from the neighbouring plot. The accepted practice has been that if you are standing on one of the main tracks facing your plot you are responsible for the path on the RIGHT-hand side of your plot. If you have a plot in the centre of the site with a track at either end then this applies when looking at your plot with the shed at the FAR end. Sometimes this isn't possible because of fences that have built up over the years, in which case agreeing with your neighbours is the best approach.

On a communal plot the paths are already in place, but make sure you keep them clear and don't use them for storage, or for weed piles. Where one plot is behind another (an A and B in other words) then it's essential that there is clear path down the side of the first plot to allow access to the second. If in doubt, please ask a committee member!

Again we wanted to say how much we enjoyed looking round the site on a beautiful sunny morning, and seeing the work everyone has put into their plots. We hope that you will have successful season, free from floods, badgers and deer, and will continue to enjoy gardening on Cripsey Meadow.

What to do In July & August: Is on the web site as usual. The glorious weather is a reminder to ensure next year you have water butts in place and compost bins going so the latter's contents can be dug in and the soil retains as much moisture as possible.

City Allotment Competition

First Judging was on Monday 7th June. Wendy took the judges round who said they had never seen the site looking better. They still wonder why we look so different from some other sites. The fences of course are the major reason but also most other sites did not have our level of neglect. It is difficult to remember that many of the now flourishing plots were carved out of bramble and rubbish. Well done to all those members who worked hard to keep their plots growing during the worst of times. Without their resilience the site would have gone under.

The judges were very complimentary about how much more food is being grown; how much more land is being cultivated and the site management and care. Old and new members work well together here on Cripsey Meadow and many now comment on how friendly a community it is.

Recycling

Please remember: **GENERAL SKIP -**

NO FOOD WASTE IN THE SKIP. ANIMALS TAKE IT OUT AND OTHER MEMBERS THEN HAVE TO CLEAR UP THE MESS. TAKE IT HOME WITH YOU PLEASE.

The general skip should not be used for weeds, soil or wood which must be composted/dried and burnt. No Asbestos or electrical stuff is allowed. We no longer have a separate metal skip.

Thankfully the dumping of clearly external waste in the skips seems to have ceased but nothing should be dumped behind the shed. If it cannot go in the skip please take it to Redbridge Re-cycling Centre.

Water Butt

Thanks to Tony Clear for resourcing the large water butt by the Association Shed. John Langsbury and Tony will be working on completing the installation. The water is for use by members and on the island.

Drought

The rain has arrived thankfully. The site was very dry and wells were getting very low so we had a few queries re water problems. There are paths where members, who are not adjacent to water, can use their own buckets to collect from Castle Mill Stream (between plots 6 and 7) and Fiddlers Stream (between 30 and 31). Obviously new plants and seeds need watering in but our two prize winning plots would like to remind you that even through this dry spell our plots have not been watered ...save for when sowing or once when transplanting. Nothing has died. We do look after our soil with good use of compost but John has not had his that long to build up a good humus. If you must water do soak the plants. Little and often produces surface roots and dependent plants that need watering all the time.

Green Waste Plots

The Green Waste Plots belong to their members i.e. Arcadian Living has 85 and 109 and St John's has 57. Members can use the material on these plots for compost or mulching. Please do not use it to manage your own waste weeds/garden refuse.

Plot 126c was a burning plot but it has now been covered ready for a new member when reclaimed. We have had some complaints from the flats about the fires and it is very near them.

We have made a new communal burning pile by the Association Shed. Do not leave material there: anyone who wants to burn material must supervise their own fire. Please follow the OCC Bonfire code which is on the web site and the notice board. The burning pile is for communal plots and members with no space for a bonfire or garden burner. It is ONLY for burning dried perennial weeds and organic material that cannot be composted.

Tool sharpening session

A couple of members have asked if we could have a tool sharpening session in the winter sometime. This is a great idea and we will look at the costs of this for a working party date in the non busy months. We will let you know what we find.

Lunch on the Green....with music.

The community brass band 'Horns a Plenty' have been talking to us about having music for our Lunch on the Green on 26th September. Please let us know if you think it would be a good idea? They generally charge local groups a small fee and like to help with eating!

Communal plots get more communal!



This is the replacement for the gate from hell that was the Dennehy Plot (106/107) entrance. Thanks to Chris and Sarah and their friend Harry for the makeover. Also the Vickers plot (146) have got themselves organised with a communal push mower, thanks to Sam and Simon is trying to manage getting the well properly covered. Our 7 communal plots have been a great success story. They have sheds, wells and fences. When properly worked they are amongst the most productive on the site! Their paths and headlands have to be managed co-operatively, which can be a problem so we have put this onto our mowing programme. Communal plot members can use Association machinery to cut communal plot paths **BUT ONLY at a working party time** and if trained and dressed appropriately. ..