

Cripley Meadow Allotments Newsletter September 2010

Badger Proof fence

As a result of recent discussions between the committee, Oxford University and Natural England, the university have offered to badger proof our boundary fence...from the Castle Mill Bridge to Fiddlers Stream. We hope the rest of the site will remain largely protected by our boundary streams but please be vigilant and report any badger activity.

Our Lottery bid to complete reclaiming our disused land is progressing well. We will be reporting back on this ASAP

Allotment competition

Second judging is Monday September 5th

The site and 4 members entered again this year and this is the second and final judging. **All members who entered the competition are invited to the allotment evening in the Town Hall on Thursday 13th October**

Next working party is. Sunday Sept 11 10.30 to 12.30

We meet at the shed as usual. Please bring spades, forks, rakes and wheelbarrows... and loppers if you have them. We shall be cutting and stripping willow whips.



Cripley Island Orchard

We took most of the blossom off the new trees this year. The new planting had to put up with a dreadful start with the drought of April and May. We have not lost any trees but they have struggled and not put on as much growth as expected. We left an apple on the Anyo Scarlet and it has grown very well. Jeremy is trialling suppressing weeds with cardboard and leaf mould and we hope more hurdles will be built on Sunday. If you want to learn to make them do come along and of course you can come and cut and strip your own willow whips for hurdles and stakes. A number of members made sweet pea frames from stripped willow this year and we hope to continue to use sustainable wood from the island for members. Do remember never to put unstripped willow in the ground! We do not want more willow to manage.



Jo Davies, a member since 2007 is moving to Devon. She hopes eventually to have more space to grow her own. Her wonderful plot was celebrated as the Under 35s best plot in Oxford City last year. It

is a wonderfully stocked and varied plot. We wish her the very best. She sent us this poem as a thank you.

Gratitude for Lotty

Our friendship started a few years ago,
With Wendy's advice of what we might sow,
Through rain and shine we dug your earth,
Made beds and supports to prepare for the birth
Of Worms, insects, veggies and birds
Each telling their story just not with words.

The bees buzz and birds sing,
Butterflies dance and the growth does bring
Such beauty, colour and essence,
And I, deeply nourished by your presence.
The more I'm with you the more I feel,
And to my delight your teachings reveal.
They are simple, gentle and filled with wonder for life
That can prevail through hard times and strife.

Dearest Lotty you are such a dear friend,
Although this is goodbye it's not the end.
For you are with me always and planted seeds in my heart,
For love, for life, for nature – we are united and never apart.

Jo Davies August 2011

Lunch on the Green celebrating 120 years of Cripley Meadow.. Sunday September 25th

Bring along your own allotment food and drink. The association will contribute to the food for barbecue (provided) and some drinks (wine, beer and juice etc) to celebrate the year. Do bring along family and friends. The thank you is to all as we are all dependent on one another. We have booked music from the community band 'Horns of Plenty' who came last year.



Additional work

This year the committee and working parties have had to spend some 100 hours **re-clearing** 3 plots. All have needed ongoing extensive work to remove rubbish, pernicious weeds and brambled boundaries. It is always disappointing when plots that have already been cleared need to be cleared again. We presently have a waiting list of 16, some of whom are already members on communal plots.

The next Audit is now October 2nd-

It was on the calendar for 12th September but it has had to be reallocated to October 2 from 9.30am to 12.30. The audit criteria are on the web site and notice board as usual. This is one of the most difficult jobs in managing the site but with waiting lists it is an important part of reclamation and sustainability. Since reclamation we have always given members time to adjust and worked hard to accommodate temporary problems and offer support. However temporary accommodations cannot be used in the longer term to sustain working a plot outside of our terms of membership. It is not always possible to please all of the people all of the time but we do our best.

Is Voluntary work for you?

Managing the site is generally a rewarding and positive contribution in what is a very green activity. We are always looking for more willing helpers as Cripsey Meadow is one of the largest sites in the city. If members wish to influence the management of the site more directly please let us know and /or come to the AGM and /or stand for the committee. Our primary concern is that the land is used as well as possible by as many people for growing vegetables, fruit and flowers.

Open day

We had good weather and 47 visitors. Most commented how lucky we were to be on such a beautiful site. We raised £30. Thanks to

- Liam for making us new signpost stands
- Alison for providing the drinks
- Alison, Rodney, Claire and Jeremy for gate duty
- Wendy for doing sign posting and tours
- Wendy, Rodney Sheila, Alison and John for putting up the gazebo
- All the members who opened their plots.

New MSOG catalogue

Andy Howard has sent us his new catalogue. Andy comes to AGMs and sells fruit and is happy to advise members any time. His new catalogue is attached.

Leek Moth

Remember you can lessen problems with this by covering leeks with environmesh. The second generation comes in August to October!

Walton Well Road Car Park

Alison and Richard went to the meeting in the town hall. Colin Cook was the single member making the decision. It was decided that parking charges would apply and timing limitations removed. Please note the following notice from the parking manager

‘Charging will commence in the Walton Well Road car park sometime tomorrow (it will depend on when the signage goes up and when the machines get reconfigured with the tariff). Clearly there will be no enforcement on the first day and we have taken the decision not to carry out any enforcement until Monday 5th September.

The signs will give details of how/where to obtain permits from. For Walton Well Road you will be

aware that we have previously agreed that any allotment holder would qualify for a permit at the rate of £20 a year. We will need of course proof that they have an allotment. I am hopeful that permits can be applied for by post/email and that we will be in a position to accept credit/debit card payments. They would then be sent out to people by post. We still need to get together at some point in order to look in more depth at the issues regarding signage etc.’

Andrew Bradfield-Barnes/Jason Munro
Parking Manager

Oxford City Council

Members of the committee will meet with Parking Manager next Thursday re. signage and access and visibility.

Be a scientist..Take part in The Big Biochar Experiment.

“Biochar, a novel soil amender which could help offset global warming, is being tested on UK allotments for the first time. The Big Biochar Experiment is the largest study on the use of biochar on British allotments: www.bigbiocharexperiment.co.uk. It aims to gather data to assess the effects of this organic soil improver on plant productivity and soil health of widely used fruit and vegetable varieties in the UK.

The experiment, run by Oxford Biochar and Earthwatch, is launching this autumn. Participants are being asked to establish biochar and control plots, measure crop production by weight at harvest, and record information by answering a questionnaire. The project will rely heavily on public participation, drawing on the concepts of ‘citizen science’: the involvement of members of the public in real science”.

"Biochar holds great potential for addressing some of our greatest challenges, including climate change and food security. This novel experiment will provide important insights on biochar's applicability to the UK farming industry, and allow people to get involved in real science." Dr. Dan Bebber, Earthwatch.

Oxford Biochar **is giving 500 bags of biochar for free, so contact us and get involved.** Contact Details: Dr. Cécile Girardin Tel: 07980 011 347 Mail: Cecile@oxfordbiochar.com
www.bigbiocharexperiment.co.uk

Phew! This has been a busy year!
Wendy