

Cripley Meadow Allotments November Newsletter 2013

Next working party is Sunday November 10th 10.30 to 12.30. Meet at the shed as usual. We have lots of plot clearance and some shed building to do so wheelbarrows and rakes will be useful and. Please wear strong clothing and footwear suitable for heavy, often dirty work

The committee have a holiday in December. We had our November meeting on the 6th so the next committee meeting for permissions is January 12. All dates are on the web site.

Trading times for November

- Sunday 10th Nov 10 - 10.30
 - 12.30 - 1pm
(before/after Working Party)
- Saturday 16th Nov 2 - 3pm
- Saturday 30th Nov 10.30 - 11.30
- Closed in December
- Sunday 12th January 10 - 10.30
 - 12.30 - 1pm
(before/after Working Party)

We may close in bad weather.

If you cannot make any of these times, Sarah is happy to do sales when she is on her plot (120) which is just next to the trading shed.

If all else fails, you could email to see if she can manage another time - sarahjehome@aol.com

Tom Wilson's composted horse manure is now only available from the association's trading shed. Bags are £4.50 each. As we now have a supply on site, Tom does not plan to deliver to individual members

We also have some second hand tools for sale.

HERAS fencing clearance

We are clearing some damaged HERAS fencing from plots and storing it by the green. Please do not take this as the scrap price will be used to help pay for the plot clearance. Also it is now dangerous as the wires are loose and if they fall in the grass they will damage the mower. **If you have taken some please return it.**

Water butts and new planting are planned for the west of the site. We are working with OU to establish the water butts properly (sadly Longcross put them in very badly so they will be done again) and as you know the AGM agreed some clearance and fruit planting on this stretch. WE have had another letter from John Copley of OCC environmental development with more reassuring information about our water supply.

[Click to read.](#) Please make sure all wells are safely raised and securely covered.

Second Audit

Numbers and adjacent fences need attention. We did this on the 27 so letters will be out soon. We were amazed at how much produce was still being picked. We do not send a letter to all for this second one as we do for the first audit. Lots of numbers have faded this summer so please replace. Also make sure you keep adjacent fences and paths maintained in accordance with our rules. This is an area of growing concern in the spread of invasive plants and weeds. [Click here to remind yourself of our agreed rules about plot boundaries and cultivation](#)

Cripley Meadow, (like 31 of the 35 working associations in the city) is a member of the **Oxford and District Federation of Allotment Associations.** O&DFAA is the main way allotment sites across the city work together. It now has an open **web site** where anyone can catch up with city allotment information. Go to www.ODFAA.com

If you would like to meet other plot holders and have your allotment /gardening questions answered join us for

A Gardeners' Question Time

For all allotment holders in Oxford

Tuesday 26th November

7pm to 9pm

Oxford Town Hall

Bring a question for our ODFAA panel

Johann Guschtscha and Bill Whaley 2012 and 2013 winners of the 2013 Challenge Trophy, will be on the panel as will other City Allotment Competition award holders, to pass on their award winning tips for growing local food, composting & fruit growing

Meet other city allotment holders

We hope new and experienced gardeners will contribute to Q&as

Admission FREE

[Click here for a poster for your window](#)

2013 City Allotment Competition

Cripley Meadow came second in the Alderman Knight Award for the best site

gaining marks for our overall plots and management of communal areas like the orchard, the green, compost, burning, skip and developing trading. We are one of the largest sites in Oxford city so many thanks to all our members who help with the very necessary working parties and donations.



Richard and Jean Haigh of Cripsey Meadow won the trophy for the over 70s class. Against all the odds as their plot was under water from

October to March. They have spent since then raising their raised beds. This was obviously successful which gives hope to all those other plot holders in the flood plain.

Richard and Jean were not able to attend the evening but we picked up their trophy and cheques... more than one as they also came third in the polytunnel section.



The competition award evening was held in the Town Hall on October 31st. The allotment award evening means plot holders from across the city can meet, share, celebrate and encourage each other. Many appreciate being able to share their experiences and knowledge. The participants pass on good practice to their associations.

Photos of all the awards are on the web site. As usual all entrants are invited and a committee member from every association. We have a slide show of all the participating members' plots and sites. These are on the web site.

The competition's 'main man' **Tim Treacher**, from Spraggelsea Mead allotments exhorted us to improve our composting and grow more autumn raspberries. We had talks from the judges, **John Alcock** and **Mike Kent** and our invited presenter **Martin Stott**, who is Vice Chair of Garden Organic.

John Alcock was impressed at how we had survived the weather last year and the cold spring. We had been rewarded with bumper harvests this year. He encouraged all the entrants to work at making more use winter planting whilst recognising some sites flooded which made this more difficult. Mike Kent focussed on companion planting and flowers as a means of encouraging biodiversity and healthy vegetables. Martin Stott, a master composter

encouraged us all to consider the green side of allotments and talked of healthy exercise, local food, less travel miles and homemade compost as a means of helping to save money and the planet.

Johann Guschtscha of Elder Stubbs



Allotment Association won the highly coveted Challenge Trophy. Johann has won many other categories over the years but the Challenge trophy shield was the one he wanted. Johann

grows an impressive range of fruit veg and flowers and is one of the best compost makers.



What to do now

Do check the web site for what to do over the next few months, weather permitting! [The Gardeners Year November December](#) or you could try this link to John Harrison's [Newsletter](#)

Island We shall be doing our usual willow pollarding soon. We keep the island willows low so that the light levels on the island remain high for the fruit trees. Let Jeremy know if you want some willow poles. Once the leaves have dropped is the best time to harvest hazel poles if you have them. Do cut right to the ground to make the best of their capacity to encourage biodiversity.

Sadly someone recently built a pallet bridge across Fiddlers stream!! Not sure if this was for 2 or 4 legs but either way it compromises all our security. Please let us know if you see such stupid activity.

I am not doing as much as usual whilst I recover from a small operation. I am well and soon hope to be back on my bike. I have had to watch while Rodney earthed up and covered celeriac, beetroot, carrots and chicory so they are ok for the winter. We also checked the stored potatoes and onions to ensure there is no rot. Still picking grapes, raspberries, tomatoes, papers and grapes! Good gardeningWendy