

MAIDSTONE ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER



A QUIRKY SHED

ONE OF THE COMPETITION ENTRIES

COMPETITIONS!

Some really great entries in *Scarecrow and Photo* sections, the first two competitions of the year. We have really chuckled over them, particularly the photos, and such imaginative/creative scarecrows - some photos of both here. Judging of *Most Attractive plot, Best Produce plot, Best Newcomer - the serious competitions + Quirky Shed* took place over the hottest two days of the year but we did it. There were so many plots to look at, and such really high standards, deciding has been tough for us. We judges did have to retire to the local hostelry in the evenings to recover! It was such a delight to see how folk enjoy their growing and experiment with crops. Hard work, challenging weather, as always, but so rewarding, and nothing beats eating veggies and fruit straight from your plot.

Sunflowers – measurements just in as this is being printed, some huge flower heads, 20" best so far.

Pumpkins - we thought not a good year for them, but we have a 60" one noted so far – now you know why we don't judge by weight!

Winners will be advised soon and there will be a visual presentation of all entries at our Open/Awards Meeting on Thursday 4 December - details in separate item.

Do come, to see the splendid plots nominated – and the fun entries too. And applaud the deserving winners as they receive cups/vouchers and certificates.

Enjoy growing. Hope to see you on 4th December.

Judith - Chairman

Sheds

We have had reports of thefts from sheds in the last few months. Our advice [from Police & PCSOs too] is to leave nothing of real value in them. Metal items are the main attraction for opportunists. Please keep these at home and security mark them – postcode, pink, anything to make them recognisable and difficult to sell on.

Your Details

The form attached is for you to please update your details. Email is our free contact to you, but very many bounce back as you change email addresses and don't advise us. [We know not all have email contact].

And you may have changed landline and mobile number since you took over your plot, making it impossible for us to contact you in this way.

Please complete the form and return to the office; details on the form. Even if there is no change, please still do this to ensure we are up-to-date.

Thanks in advance for this. It is vital and will help us so much.



HISTORY OF OUR SITES

Memories/information from plotholders.

From Lester Lawrence – his memories are from when he was a young child. He is now 92 years old and helps his son on his plot at Sandling Road, telling me he has a comfortable chair in his cold greenhouse, seed planting and pricking out for his son to plant on.

He says that in 1925 the Bath and West Show came to Maidstone – in those days it visited various towns in turn. He thinks it was held on the site that became South Borough School.

His father was a dedicated allotment gardener, with two 10 rod plots close to the river – other plots on that site were later lost to the Brass Foundry – and another plot at Tovil. Three loads of stable manure were delivered each year, 10/- [50p] a load. He would patrol the streets of Tovil with barrow and shovel collecting horse manure – plenty about in those days!

He recalls his father's selection and preparation of vegetables for Exhibition, storage of runner beans/potatoes in newspaper, [more of this next time]. His father would borrow the hand-cart from the Paper Mill to transport vegetables to the Corn Exchange for judging.

Tovil also staged shows and he has some fascinating details of exhibits there, including a wild flower class which his mother encouraged him to enter as a child, it wouldn't be allowed today he says!

His father was challenged about his ridge cucumbers [challenge cost 10/-!] but all was shown to be correct.

More from Lester next time.

And we have an exciting discovery at Buckland Hill to share, and some history of Sandling Road. We will put all of these on our website too.

Please let us have your memories/photos to pass on.

We have some 'old' equipment too - pictures in next edition.



Another Competition Entry

PLEAS(E)

* **Invoices** are with this Newsletter and we ask you to please pay promptly to save us cost in chasing up.

* **Can you help** maintain your site? It is so good to be involved in helping on your site and much needed and appreciated. It can be done in many ways, as little or as much as you want. Please ask your rep/manager or email the office. It keeps our rents low, but we need new folk to become involved – this is the heart of our allotmenting in Maidstone.

* **Number** your plot please.

Open/Awards Evening

This will be held on Thursday 4th December at Maidstone Hockey Club at 7 30pm. Brief reports on the year on Maidstone Allotments, [full reports are at AGM in June]. We have a speaker as always with tips/advice on aspects of growing, with pictures - humour too! But mainly it's a great evening to enjoy a visual presentation of all competitions, followed by awards to the winners – it could be you! The Chairman says it will never be her! And the evening ends around the bar. always good!

Plots

Sadly, we have had to send letters as we do every year to plotholders whose plots fall into a bad state. We don't do this lightly - a plot has to be neglected for some time. The opportunity is given to bring the plot back into 75% cultivation as required in the Tenancy Agreement. You may have seen some neglected plots on your site. So please, if you are struggling with your plot, the time may just not be right for various reasons - an allotment does take a huge amount of time and commitment, let us know before we have to send the letter. And with the start of the new allotment year on 1st October, we need to know now, to save admin time/cost. Clearing the plots to re-rent can cost too and takes a lot of time. You can always let us know when/if timing is better for you and we can put you back on the list for a plot. We currently have waiting lists for all sites.