



All's well that end's well. Our optimism was justified; a good summer and all the crops that were a month behind eventually caught up - a shorter growing season but by general agreement a very productive one. The emphasis in this edition is very much on the social side of Ealing Allotments with a profile of life at Framfield together with reports on Acton Gardening Association's Open Day at their Bromyard Site and the Allotment Show organised by Ealing and Hanwell Allotment Association. We also have a report on the Cultivate London Open Day at their base at Brentford Lock and news of recent developments on the Self Management front at the Horsenden sites.

Cultivate London Open Day



Following a presentation by Denis Bowen, their sales and administration manager, at this year's EAP-AGM, Cultivate London and the plants that it produces have become an increasingly common feature at Ealing Allotment Open Days, Plant Sale/Swap Days and other events. The project, funded by the Pathways Charity, provides horticultural training and help in the finding of related longer-term employment to previously unemployed young people. A major feature of its activity is the training it provides in the techniques for the large-scale propagation

of a range of plants. The young plants are then sold at farmers markets and other local outlets to help support the project

The Brentford Lock Open Day, held on 21st September, offered a welcome opportunity to see behind the scenes. There were plants, food and a variety of produce for sale but most welcome to allotmenters was the willingness of the project instructors to show visitors



around the polytunnels where the plants are grown and demonstrate the various techniques that are employed in plant growth and propagation. If you missed it this year, look out for it next year!

Site Profile

A Portrait of Framfield Allotments

It is perhaps somewhat disconcerting that I can no longer recall exactly how it was that my partner convinced me to engage in the very British pastime of tending to an allotment. Mention the word ‘allotment’ and for a lot of us, it probably conjures up images of the stereotype retired male obsessively planting regimented rows of carrots, onions and potatoes... But clearly he succeeded; six years later we’re still very much committed to, and enjoying, the plot. And, as this summer draws to a close, we’re planning our seventh season with just as much enthusiasm and, hopefully, a little bit more wisdom that when we first started out.

Part of me is certain that what has sustained our passion was being able to secure a plot and become a part of the community at Framfield Allotments after we moved to Hanwell. Having come from a small site in northwest London whose only ‘facility’ was running water from a tap, imagine our wonder and amazement when we first set foot in Framfield. I’m sure I nearly squealed with joy when we walked in and saw the fully-fitted kitchen and full-service flushing toilet. Even the small cluster of basic wooden sheds by the toilets, though not in the finest state, filled us with great satisfaction as it provided precious space to keep some of our gardening tools dry and secure.

Our regard for Framfield was sealed when we caught sight of its idyllic wildlife area, complete with a pond and picnic tables. The pond was dug for wildlife by the council in a very wet section of the allotments in February 2000 and was enlarged and landscaped by a



Framfield wild-life pond

The abundance of wildlife and the overall quality of the site means that there are always points of interest to pique the curiosity of young children from neighbouring schools and nurseries when they pay a visit – which happens fairly regularly.

The site was originally part of Hanwell Park Estate, the grounds of a large country house situated on the site of what is now Drayton Manor High School. Hanwell Park House was demolished in 1913, and the streets that exist today were built to the north and south of what would become the allotment site. Just two years later the allotments themselves were laid out. In these early days, the site was simply named North Ward Allotments. By 1918, there



Children from the nearby nurseries



Saying hello to Cecil the pig

small but dedicated team of plot holders in the summer of 2009. Their efforts were deservedly rewarded in 2012 when the site won the Community Garden section of The Big Wildlife Garden Competition (organised by RHS and the Wildlife Trusts, sponsored by DEFRA). The site was subsequently featured in the Guardian Gardens in October of that year. Framfield had previously won third place in the Allotment category of London in Bloom 2009.

were 117 plots on the site, let for 9 shillings for 10 poles per year. Permission to keep pigs on the allotments was granted in the same year; although today, it is mainly chickens that are kept. Last year, however, the site was briefly home to a lovely little pig by the name of Cecil. Sadly, he very quickly outgrew his pen and had to be re-homed. However, all the children were very taken with Cecil while he was in residence.

The site became known as Framfield Allotments in May 1934. It covers around 3 ha (7 acres) of land, approximately the size of 85x10 pole plots. Today, there are around 120 plot holders (the majority have 5 pole plots) of all ages and backgrounds. All plots were taken towards the end of 2009 and there has been a waiting list since then. Some plot holders are 'rookies' battling our solid London clay for just a few months, others have been toiling away for many fruitful years.

Framfield Allotments Association was formally established in November 2007 with the main purpose of organising activities for the benefit of the whole community at the site. Past successes have included Framfield Bonfire parties on Guy Fawkes Night and an outdoor play staged by a small group of talented actors from the Mikron Theatre Company, titled 'Losing The Plot'. The production was fantastic and hilarious and was a delightful way to have spent a sunny Saturday afternoon – a nice change from weeding and digging.

To me, the Association's success is evident at every Summer Social when community members come to support the event, feeding the crowd with truly multicultural food better



*A great turnout at the Summer Social 2013;
with Steve Pound in full flow*

than some so-called street markets that we've been to in London. Equally important is the chance it gives to recognise the great work that community members have put into their plots. Winning Plot of the Year (and other accolades) surely must go a long way in making up for the frustrations of failed crops and the sacrifice of countless weekends – at least to me it would. Every year my partner and I half-jokingly say that we must redouble our efforts in order to win the crown. Perhaps next year... or the year after that... Another great plus at the Social, is the attendance

of local MP Steve Pound - a great show of support for the community; his tongue-in-cheek comments never fail to raise laughs during the drawing of raffle prizes.

There is no doubt that Framfield is a thriving allotment community. The dedication of the Association's committee members to making it an oasis for wildlife and humans alike, and the overall friendliness, generosity and helpfulness of the plot holders we first experienced on our arrival three summers ago, continue to today. And I'm confident it will stay that way for a long time to come.

*Joanne Song,
September 2013*

Around the Associations

Acton Gardening Association

The weather gods were tolerably kind on the day of Bromyard Allotment's Open Day. Sharp showers early and late - but for the most part a warm and sunny afternoon.



Chef Barney Haughton founder of the Bordeaux Quay restaurant in Bristol demonstrated his ability to conjure up tasty dishes from freshly harvested produce that plottolders brought to his table. While, Royal Beekeeper John Chapple with his glass observation hive complete with a colour coded queen, introduced his audience to the joys and mysteries of bee keeping.



All this - together with stalls selling cakes and produce and the musical accompaniment of virtuoso accordion player Paolo Arrigo, the boss of Franchi Seeds of Italy. You missed it! A pity but this is developing into an annual event – make sure that you don't miss it next year!

Framfield Allotments Association

When the weather finally warmed up this summer, Framfield Allotment was a hive of activity. The Summer Social which took place on a sunny July day, garnered healthy support from plottolders who came bearing gifts for the raffle and dishes upon dishes of multicultural deliciousness – a definite culinary feast! The children too were in for a treat this year as face painting and other “crafty” activities were on offer – a fun addition to previous years' colouring/drawing competition. There was, as ever, attendance from members of the local council with Cllr Ray Ward and Cllr Colm Costello giving out the plot awards while Steve Pound, MP for Ealing North was the star of the raffle draw. As well as being a successful event socially, it was also our most profitable Summer Social ever. Many thanks for the hard work of the Committee members and volunteers who helped out! And to add to our delight, results from this year's Ealing in Bloom showed Framfield winning the Large Allotment Site for the second year running, with a number of our plottolders bagging awards in the individual categories. Once again, the end to another successful year will be marked with a bonfire party at the beginning of November. Let's hope 2014 will be another fruitful year!

Horsenden Allotments Association (HAA)

In a new initiative, the three Horsenden Sites (Whitton Drive, Whitton Place and Horsenden) are going over to a limited form of self-management similar to that currently operating at Blondin Allotments. The Horsenden Allotments Association (HAA) has recently been formed to take over responsibility for the management of three sites. A Management Committee with representatives from the three sites is already in place. Louis Ryan is in the chair with Roger Hard as vice-chair and Joe Mangar handling Council liaison. A Constitution, along the lines of that at Blondin, was adopted at the association's inaugural meeting.

HAA will take on responsibility for issuing the annual rent letters and collecting the rents, for the issue of non-cultivation orders, and for reporting breaches of Council Allotment rules. It will also be responsible for minor day-to-day site repairs. Responsibility for the maintenance of the basic infrastructure of the site gates, fences, underground piping etc. remains with the Council. To cover expenses, and in recognition of the managerial responsibility taken on by HAA, it will retain 15% of the rental income. The advantages as far as the Council is concerned, are that it will be relieved of the burden of some routine administration and minor site repairs. As far as HAA and the plot holders at the three sites are concerned, the advantages will be a greater degree of local control of the day-to-day running of the their sites and access to additional funds that can be utilised for site improvements.

The three sites already have a long history of collaboration under the aegis of HAAGA, the Horsenden Allotments and Garden Association. HAAGA's activities as a Trading and Show Organising Association will continue unchanged working in parallel, and in co-operation, with HAA.

Ealing and Hanwell Allotment Association

This year our annual show had a big response. Entries were up on last year and we were keen to get more entries in the flower categories, which we succeeded in doing.

Our overall winner (30 first prizes) and winner of the W A Chapman Memorial Cup, amongst other awards, was the wonderful Hilary Jayne, who never ceases to come up with a fantastic array of produce and glorious entries to the domestic categories - including the magnificent cake topped with a miniature Hilary shown below. Nigel and Lynne Sumner came second in the overall points (18 first prizes) for their beautiful array of produce and winning this year's prestigious Banksian medal.



Our other star this year was Debbie Fogarty, who is a novice to the show and won the Blue Riband for best in show and the President's Trophy for her basket of mixed vegetables – shown above. Our judge Eddie Weston said “This is one of the best entries that I have ever seen in my years of judging, beautifully presented with a card specifying all of the contents – superb”. Eddie also mentioned that he had never given best in show to a novice entry before, Fine words from an experienced and careful judge. A very 'well done' to Debbie, her entries were really inspirational.

Our judges were Trish Evans (domestic), Eddie Weston (fruit and vegetables) and Carl Wallace (flowers). A thank you to them for their time and experience.



Another big thank you to everyone that helped set up the show and keep tally of the points. Especial thanks go to the Regan family who ran the cafe with their amazing home-made cakes and sandwiches in a smooth and professional way. John Regan, taking a minute off to admire the show produce, is shown to the left and Georgina Dodd adding up the points but still managing to laugh is featured below.



Thanks, also to all those who entered and did not win a prize this year but will hopefully be inspired by the range and calibre of produce. It was a great day with all the visitors having a lot of fun looking around admiring the entries, enjoying the cafe and winning in the huge raffle.

Lynne Casey & Elaine Hagan (show secretaries)
Pictures by: Rueben Derrick@SwanOwlUK

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