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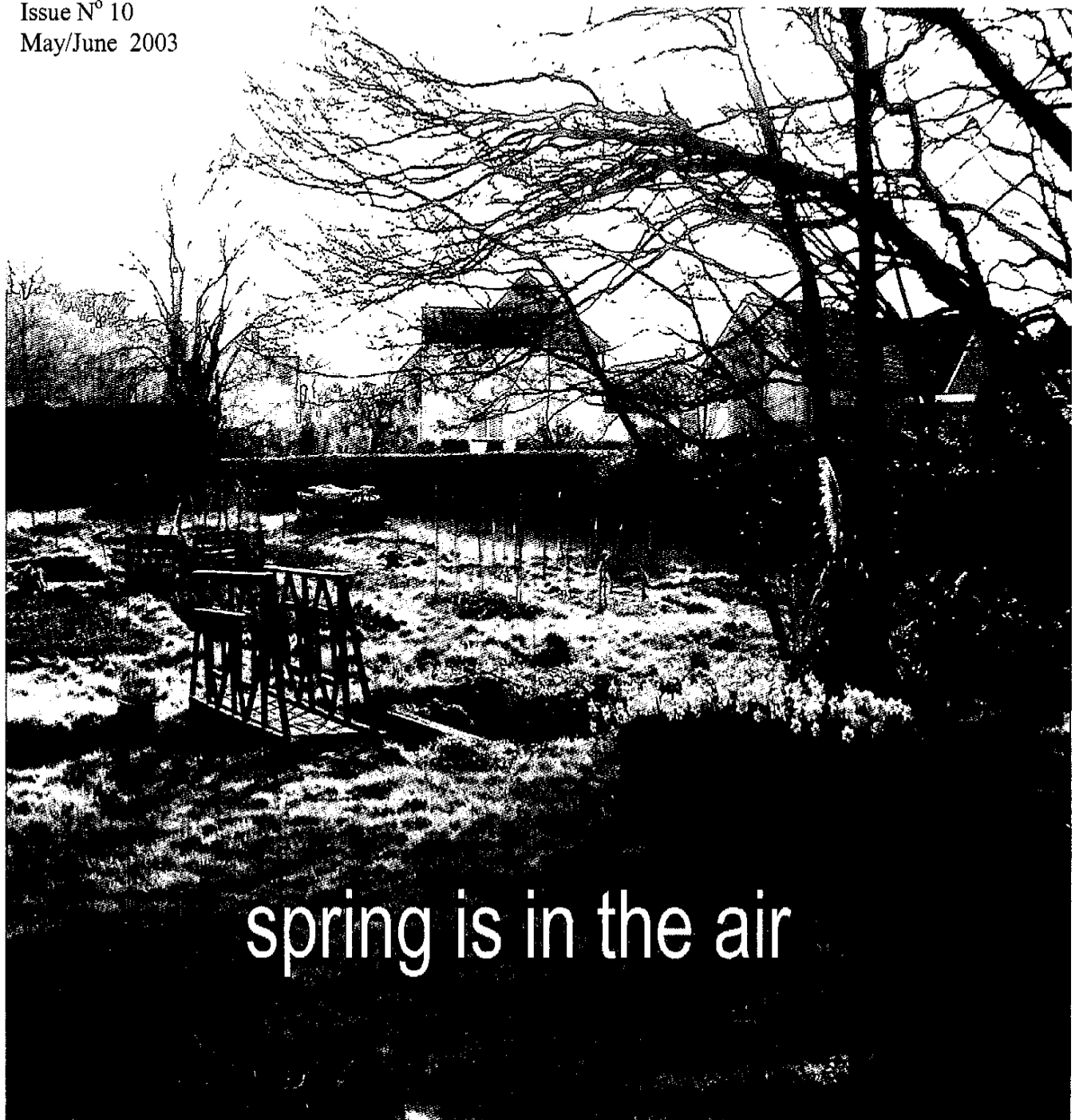


# *The Allotment Gardener*

**The Journal Of The Allotments &  
Gardens Council (U.K.)**



Issue N° 10  
May/June 2003



spring is in the air

## **Allotments & Gardens Council (U.K.)**

### **Officers of the Council**

Chairman	Mr. R.B. Knowles	7 Mattingly Road Hemphill Vale Nottingham NG6 7BD Tel/Fax 0115 927 581 Email <a href="mailto:rknowles@ndac.freemove.co.uk">rknowles@ndac.freemove.co.uk</a>
Vice-Chairman	Mr. W. Maher	4 Barbrook Close Wollaton Nottingham NG8 1JG Tel 0115 9163327
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Treasurer	Miss. K. Knowles	95 Apollo Drive Nottingham NG6 7AE Tel 0115 9276803
Publicity Officer	Mr. C. Muscutt	59 Smercote Close Bedworth Warwicks. CV12 0EB Tel/Fax 02376 363746

### **Management Committee**

Mr. D. Campbell Burgess (Editor)	60 South Rise Llanishen Cardiff CF14 0RG Tel/Fax 02920 751321 Email <a href="mailto:campbellburgess@btinternet.com">campbellburgess@btinternet.com</a>
Mr. T. Cooper	74 Barbridge Road Bulkington Bedworth Warks. CV12 9PD Tel 02476 318220
Mr. A. P. Weston-Webb	149 Southbank Road Southport Merseyside PR8 6LZ Tel 01704 547385 Email <a href="mailto:anthonyweston@tiscali.co.uk">anthonyweston@tiscali.co.uk</a>
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Mr. H. Grant	45 Manstey Crescent Clifton Nottingham NG11 9DT Tel 0115 9215611

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# Nottingham Organic Gardeners

Nottingham Organic Gardeners meet on the second Tuesday of each month.

**February – May** we meet at the Gladstone Pub, Loscoe Road, Carrington, Nottingham.

We have a full programme of talks by speakers on a variety of topics related to organic gardening.

**June to September** we organise a series of visits. Visits are usually held on a Saturday or Sunday near the second Tuesday. Transport is usually arranged on a shared car basis.

If you can help with transport or need transport please let us know on 0115 8409288

Below are some of the places we plan to visit this Summer 2003.

## SUMMER VISITS

### Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June Mill Hill Plants

Evening visit to Mill Hill Plants a half acre site with a range of hardy and half hardy plants. They have a wide range of bearded iris and hold the National Collection of berberis with over 90 different forms.

### Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July Audley End Gardens

Visit by coach to Audley End Gardens, Essex. 9 acres of managed organic gardens.

If interested please contact Beverley Ward on 0115 9602324

### Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> August Heeley City Farm, Sheffield

**Heeley City Farm, Sheffield** – an acre of unusual vegetables, herb garden, conservation and wildflower area, soft fruit patch, community composting, poly tunnels and animals.

### Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September

#### **Visit to HDRA Ryton Gardens**

(Henry Doubleday Research Association- organic gardening/farming research)

Ryton Organic Gardens is situated on the road to Wolston, just off the A45, between Rugby and Coventry.

## AUTUMN AND WINTER TALKS

### Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October

**Sally Smith** (HDRA) Pests and Diseases, Organic Control. The latest from HDRA

### Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November

**Tony Barton** – biodiversity, Woodland Product Management – Hurdles.

### Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December

Our traditional **Fuddle** – come along and enjoy convivial company and bring food to share – discuss this years successes and failures – swap ideas etc.

Best Wishes for a productive, organic gardening year.

## Whitemoor Allotments

There are currently vacant plots at Whitemoor Allotments, Wilkinson Street, Nottingham. For information or to look round, please call Mr Dunne on 0115 9787004

## Secretary's Report

Firstly I would like to thank all the people that came from far and wide to the Annual General Meeting on 8th March which was held in Nottingham. It was really great being able to put names to faces. Thank you to the delegates that have contacted me and the chairman informing us that you enjoyed the meeting and how informative it was, and that the atmosphere was so relaxed, but I would like to thank you all for making me feel relaxed as this is the first meeting that I have had to speak to where I did not know most of the people. If anybody has any comments whether it be criticism about the meeting, please let us know. Again I mentioned the problem with the Newsletter, please all of you plot holders, when you are sitting in your potting sheds having a cup of tea think about what you can send to me, so that I can put it in the Newsletter, any information that you would like to be passed on, any tips

**Doreen Dinsdale**

**Secretary**

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## MUST BE MAD

How many times have we all said that. Last week it made me really think about it, as for the past 2 weeks I have been spending nearly all day catching up in my garden, walking back home just about on my hands and knees I met another allotment holder, we just looked at each other and said we must be mad, to have a hobby like this. I gets into the bath and lays there for a length of time soaking my pains away. The next day off I toddles down to my garden, again at night just about on my hands and knees on my way home, meets up with another comrade gardener, he looked at me and said we must be mad having a hobby like this, this went on for a week. Then last week the sun was shining I sat on my bench with a cup of tea, along came a robin took a worm from my garden, then it sat on my spade handle, then came the fox from the bottom hedge, I sat there listening to all the birds, but I kept my eyes on the big wood pigeons getting ready to dive to my spring cabbage. Well I don't care if I am mad having an allotment as a hobby, I get the best of both worlds. Wonderful wild life, healthy food and keeping fit. I wonder how many hobbies have all of this.



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## A Day Out With A Difference.

What have Model Railways and Allotments got in common with each other you may ask? I was asked to write an article for our magazine on the recent "East Midlands Model Railway Exhibition" which was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>. March.

We were there on Friday afternoon delivering our favourite model shop's stand in readiness for setting up. A lot of old names and regulars were turning up ready to do the same, Mike of "Fox Tansfers", Colin Ashby, Parkside Dunas Models to mention but a few. Now these names will not ring a bell with any body not associated with model railways, but these are trades people with bits and bobs, kits and accessories we model builders all need to complete our exclusive models. After leaving our favourite model shop, to do their setting up we made our way home in readiness for Saturday.

Saturday arrived and we made our way into the main hall where masses of trade stands line the perimeter, stacks of carefully crafted, meticulously built lifelike model railway layouts adorned the centre aisles. From the humble GWR branch line to a modern up to date 2003 mainline.

After wandering around for 3 or 4 hours buying parts, bits and pieces Joe and myself made our way to the bar for refreshment and to catch up on the day so far. We were joined by our old friends from Oxford who asked us how the allotment is coming on and what plants we have sown so far. (That's the Model Railway & Allotment connection number 1). We had quite a discussion on model railways and plants then it was time to retire back to the main hall and do some buying and viewing of model railways. We got talking to one or two layout proprietors whose creations had been previously published in the model railway press "Railway Modeller", "Model Rail" magazines. It was nice to put a face to their work after reading about them.

More parts were purchased, you see we need these things to super detail our own models as we do quite a bit of modelling ourselves.

It was late afternoon and after talking to the owners and operators of a very good representation of "Mostyn" on the Chester to Holyhead line. The layout based in the 70's, which incidentally won the cup at this years show, we were again off to the bar for round two in the fight against beer.

When the exhibition closed to the public a lot of layout "Staff" and traders venture into the bar and discussions take place, some at a serious level re railways. The Mostyn crew arrived who are ardent "real ale" drinkers only to find "there ain't no real ale", so plan B drink lager.

Now these lads write for "Rail Express" magazine and each month they inform readers of improvements and achievements concerning their layout "Mostyn". In the May issue apologies were given to Pat and his mates for having to witness the "Mostyn gang" drinking lager and orange juice.

On Sunday, very much the same as Saturday, layouts, too much drinking and generally having a good look around at the show. Dinner time arrived and after meeting one of our model railway club members Gavin, arms were twisted and he took us to the bar. Here's railway and allotment connection number 2, Gavin works an allotment in Lowdham, so talks took place featuring cucumbers, tomatoes, peas, beans and anything else that we all grow.

After what must have been our umpteenth visit to the bar, incidentally railway and allotment connection number 3 ...the barman works an allotment on our site. We went to pay our last visit to the main hall and say our goodbyes to one or two people, some are old friends, but before the show had closed Pat was asked by the Mostyn crew if he would like to have a go at operating their superb layout. He was duly taken around the back of their creation and was instructed how to use the new digital state of the art, complicated control unit and in no time at all Pat was in charge of a class 47 hauling freightliners, what a sight! We apologised to the Mostyn crew as Pat could have caused chaos.

Joking apart all in all the whole exhibition was fantastic, it costs a lot of money and dedication to put on such a huge event and thanks must go to Bulwell Model Railway Club for putting on such an event. This show is staged each year in March at the Harvey Hadden sports hall Bilborough.

If you would like a day out with a difference why not visit our own model railway exhibition put on by Beechdale Model Railway Group on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>. September at the Sheila Russell Centre. Come along and say hello, you never know you might become hooked! Maybe you would like to join, if so contact the secretary on Nottingham 9297289.

Happy Gardening

Mr. S. Waterfall

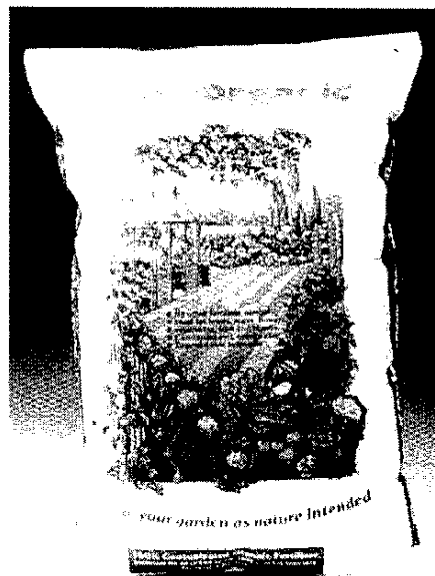
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## Farnborough Road's Renaissance

It was a chilly but bright spring morning when our motley bunch of gardeners assembled on our allotments car park back in 2000. There had been rumblings of closure and things seemed uncertain and there was disquiet about the way things were being run. I sensed mixed feelings of anxiety and frustration and yet there was a somewhat rebellious mood that morning and I could smell a change in the air.

Several plots on our site that had been vacant for years were completely overgrown with brambles and the six foot high flower heads shed their seeds like a shower of snow on to adjacent cultivated plots.

Rarely did the gardeners enjoy the fellowship that should be inherent in association membership. It was "eh! up, looks like rain" or "wish the water was on". Yes there were severe water restrictions that we could never really understand. Social events were non-existent and it was just a matter of a few die-hards paying their rent and getting on with the job of growing their vegetables.

It transpired that the meeting we had amongst the brambles that fine spring morning really was our turning point. Our site had been managed along with two other sites in Clifton known as Clifton Leaseholders. I offered to make enquiries about breaking away and said that I would report back on my findings.

In a nutshell we formed our own association, Farnborough Road Allotments, in March 2001 with a new 25 years lease from the City Council. It was quite daunting because we had a formidable task ahead of us as the site was quite run down. But at least people were talking now and things were being run democratically. We had elected officers and committee members and we had meetings to discuss our strategy.

In 2002 we were awarded two trophies; one for the best kept site in Nottingham under eight acres and one for the overall winner, and three of our plot holders came in the frame for the seven best kept plots. Needless to say we felt rather pleased with ourselves because we had achieved this in only one year.

Well how did we do it you might ask. To be philosophical we could say that we thought positive, visualised our ambition and put our plans into action. In actual fact we did just that but not without a lot of blood, sweat and tears. And nettle stung arms and thorn pricked hands. We formed groups to tackle the overgrown plots and slowly but surely they became cultivable and more attractive to prospective tenants.

We have an environmentally friendly site that helps being surrounded by countryside. Lots of our gardeners grow organically and tons of leaves and compost are delivered to our gardens by the parks team.

The diversity of wild life here is amazing. We encourage this by putting in place bird nesting boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog boxes. And ponds and piles of stones for toads and frogs (they help see off the slugs).

Several of us have a few brown hens at the bottom of our plots but they need to be housed securely because our site is a regular haunt of foxes. Some of us have a few bee hives too (which help with the pollination) and our local honey is available in our trading hut.

Goldfinch, mistle thrush, dunnock, wren, robin, blackbird, hedgesparrow and long tailed, great, blue and coal tits are just a few of the many birds that visit us.

It has been said that some of our sheds that we have on our plots would not look out of place at a holiday camp with double glazing and tea and coffee making facilities. Quite often early in the morning you can detect cooking bacon wafting down the avenue.

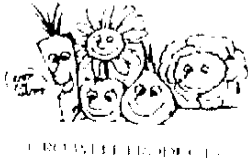
Yes it's a great friendly atmosphere now but we seem to spend most of our time drinking tea and chatting in each other's huts instead of doing our gardening. Our association had a lovely outing to the Harrogate show last year and we are looking forward to having many more trips.

So if you would like some wild bird food, a jar of local honey, half a dozen new laid eggs, and some nice spring cabbage Farnborough Road at Clifton is the place and all served with a smile. And if you are known you might even get a cuppa too! See you.

Don Padley, Secretary

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## DELICIOUS NEW STRAWBERRIES

### IN MARSHALLS AUTUMN OFFER

By Richard Massey

Two new strawberries feature in the new Autumn Gardening Catalogue from S E Marshall of Wisbech. One is still in trial and does not yet have a name. Offered as "EM884", it was bred at HRI East Malling and has cropped up to 14 days earlier than the popular Elsanta. Under cloches, it becomes ready in mid May while without protection it is still ready by late May. It gives excellent yields for such an early variety; the fruits have a good colour and are delicious. I believe it makes a great partner to our later cropping Marshmello. EM884's price starts at £7.95 for 12 plants.

The second new strawberry is Flamenco, an everbearer which is larger fruited and tastier than Bolero, which it replaces. Its sweet, attractive berries are the equal of those from June croppers, and are produced in good quantities through the summer. Flamenco shows freedom from powdery mildew and verticillium wilt. Twelve plants cost from £10.95. Both Flamenco and EM884 are delivered in October and November and will produce their first crop in 2004.

Also new for this autumn is raspberry Octavia, a variety which fills the gap left by the last of the mid-season varieties and the first of the autumn croppers. This late summer fruiter yields an abundance of large, firm, juicy, deep red berries from mid July to early August. Twelve canes cost from £14.95.

Our offer of second cropping potato tubers, which give a crop of delicious new potatoes in autumn and early winter, is improved by the addition to the range of a new variety called Monet. It produces creamy oval to round tubers which are clean, attractive and usually free from scab. Its "new potato" flavour is retained even after it has been lifted for weeks, and it is delicious simply boiled and eaten hot or in salads.

In addition to soft fruit and seed potatoes, the Marshalls catalogue also features an excellent range of tree fruit (top fruit). Our introduction of apple Gala Regal Prince can claim to be "the best of the best" according to Richard Massey. Gala is Britain's most popular apple and British-grown Gala are regarded as the best due to warm autumn days and cold nights. I have no hesitation in saying Regal Prince is the best clone of Gala as it has the most intensely sweet flavour, the reddest skin and will keep until Christmas.

Like it or not, the world's best pear breeding programme is based not in Britain, but in France! It is from this that our new variety Gourmande comes. A large oval "butter" pear, with no trace of gritty flesh, Gourmande is smooth and extra juicy. It has a balance of flavours between the tartness of pear drops and sweeter tones. It becomes ready from mid to late September, and can be ripened in a cool outhouse to store till after Christmas.

Great advances in cherry breeding have taken place recently, and Earlise is exceptionally early and delicious. It is usually ready for picking by the middle of June and the large fruits are borne in bunches rather than singly. The fruits are very sweet and juicy, and the tree is semi-vigorous and has an upright habit.

If you love the flavour of old fashioned English greengages (not those tasteless imported ones we see on the markets), take a look at our Manning's greengage. Gages were once grown extensively in the Cambridgeshire Fens, close to our Wisbech base, but Ray Manning of Willingham is one of the few remaining growers. His property is bounded by a greengage hedge which has been there for 150 years. It is from this hedge that we take our bud wood to ensure these trees really do have that uniquely sweet and aromatic flavour greengages should have.

Any customer ordering any four trees from the catalogue may choose a fifth **absolutely free of charge – a saving of up to £35.95!** All Marshalls fruit trees are delivered in February, the ideal time for planting and rapid establishment. They are despatched in specially designed protective packaging to ensure they are received in perfect condition.

Late summer and early autumn is a good time to sow many vegetables, either for autumn cropping or harvesting next spring and summer, and Marshalls offer a good range. Beetroot Boston is an autumn cropper, ideal for pulling young as baby beets. Spinach Koto is fast growing, producing an abundance of delicious baby leaves for autumn salads. Pea Oregon Giant is a tasty and early "mange-tout" which yields plenty of flat, dark green pods from early summer onwards. All three varieties are new for 2003.

We also offer a very good range of vegetable plants for those gardeners who prefer not to grow from seed. This includes a selection of fast growing oriental brassicas which you will be able to crop this autumn and more traditional winter vegetables such as kales and sprouting broccolis. Marshalls send them out at just the right time for planting out, and they really do give impressive results!

Anyone placing an order from the Marshalls Autumn Gardening Catalogue may claim a free packet of seed of a new onion variety, suitable either for cropping this autumn as a spring onion or leaving to mature over-winter.

## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**This was held on Saturday, 8th March, at the White Horse Public House** On Ilkeston Road, Nottingham, at 1 o' clock. It was a pleasure to see the new members who had joined us in the last year. Many of them had travelled many miles to be present for the occasion. Reg. Knowles, the Chairman, in his opening remarks welcomed all the members to the meeting, and saying, that since the last A.G.M. when it was decided to co-opt U.C.H.A. members many had now joined us. It had been a very busy year and apart from the extra work of the expanding organization we had been in attendance at shows around the country including Tatton Park and the Malvern Shows plus Locko Park and Thrumpton Hall.

The Secretary, Mrs. Doreen Dinsdale, said that the insurance scheme and seed schemes had been very popular with all the allotment associations and they all represented good value for money.

Three weeks before the meeting, John Sheeran, the Treasurer took ill, and was unable to be present. Everyone who knows John will agree that he must have been very disappointed that he could not attend the meeting to give his report. Bill Maher, the Vice chairman, and Reg with the help of John, prepared the report which Bill Maher put to the meeting. We all hope that John makes a full and speedy recovery.

At the end of the normal business of the meeting during a break for refreshments it gave us all the chance to exchange views to chat to each other over a beer and a sandwich before we had a talk from Geoff. Wheatley who put us in the picture about what was happening with regard to pesticides and insecticides later this year.

Many will be withdrawn from use altogether and nothing to replace them. The list that Geoff gave to us seemed endless and included many names that were familiar to everyone, many of us having the odd bottle or so on our shelves in our sheds. Unfortunately because many had a long way to travel to get home, the meeting had to be closed before many of the questions could be answered but it gave us all food for thought about what the future held for us in the war against pests and diseases.

The Chairman then thanked Geoff for presenting such an informative account of the banned use of pesticides and insecticides and the meeting closed at 4.30 p.m.

If any members have anything to sell, then why not advertise it in the Allotment Journal. The cost will be £3.00 for anything over £10.00, anything you have for sale under £10.00 is free.

Please contact Mr. C. Muscutt or Mrs. D. Dinsdale for any further information.

If anybody out there has any secret information on how to grow good crops, why not let others share your knowledge. So please ring Colin Muscutt or Doreen Dinsdale. Our phone numbers are in this Journal.



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## Thrumpton Show April 20<sup>th</sup>. & 21<sup>st</sup>.

The weather was surprisingly good for the Thrumpton Show on Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. We had had wall to wall sunshine for many days before the Easter weekend and it was not expected to last. The isobars were getting narrower indicating strong winds and the forecasters were saying that some rain was on the way. We had been without rain for almost five weeks but although the gardens were crying out for some rain to get things started the thought of rain falling on the marquee at the show was not wanted. We arrived at the show just after nine on the Sunday morning, there was a fresh cool wind blowing and we were still setting our stall up when the first of many punters started to arrive. We did a good steady trade selling seeds and other bits and bobs that we had on the stall so much so that stocks had to be replenished for the following day. It was much warmer and sunnier on the Monday and we had a never ending stream of customers and enquirers. Cats appear to be the number one pest this year and we did have two questioners who wanted to know if we had anything that would deter foxes. I kept well clear when the question was raised for the second time when there were several people at the stall all with different opinions about what should be done with these animals. The other traders in the marquee were kept busy and judging by the number of people leaving with plastic bags bulging with plants and bulbs and flowers the two days had been worthwhile for them also.

One of the major attractions at the show this year was the re-enactment of the Battle of Waterloo, the sound of cannons echoing over the showground suggested that it was being portrayed in a very realistic way. Other attractions were many and varied and nobody should have gone away disappointed.

The public started to drift away at about five o' clock and we then began the task of loading the car with all our gear. This is usually a work of art to get everything stacked in the boot and often it is a tight squeeze. It is then that we wish we had sold more so that there would not have been so much to take back home. When this is done and all the trestle tables have been stacked and the marquee left clean a pint of beer goes down very well, giving us a chance to reflect on the two days, hoping that the new members we have signed up feel that their investment will be rewarding and that the many more who enquired about membership will also join us to get the benefits we have to offer.

*Horace Grant.*

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## **The Malvern Spring Show - 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> May 2003**

This was the Allotments and Gardens Council (UK) stand at the Malvern Spring Show. We didn't win a Gold Medal but the show organizers thanked us for being there and presented us with £25.

It also put our association in front of the record 93,000 visitors during the 3 days of the show.

With the BBC Gardeners' World programme being broadcast from the showground the first day we were there, we all rushed home to see if we had made it bigtime. It shows that this has become a major fore-runner of the gardening year.

As Monty Don said on the TV, "It has grown hugely but kept its friendly atmosphere".

Although it was the middle of May, there were enough April showers left around to bring people indoors from time to time and a good deal of interest was shown in our display.

The effectiveness of Garlic spray as a pest deterrent was discussed almost hourly! Quite a lot of people decided to give it a try - if only we'd have had something to deal as efficiently with slugs...

The backdrop stand and seed displays were most effective and gave a most professional appearance to the stand. This equipment is available for use throughout the regions.

All enquiries for its use should be addressed to Reg Knowles Tel & Fax: 0115 927 6860 or, for those technically minded, E-mail: [rknowles@ndac.freemove.co.uk](mailto:rknowles@ndac.freemove.co.uk)

## **Real Life on an Allotment**

How many of us have said that being on the allotment is a different life and so are the people. It is a community on its own. A truer word has never been said on the Windmill Site in Nottingham. Our ex-treasurer and also a good friend has asked that it been known. Since his illness he has been unable to do much on his allotment, but Karl Humphrey has dug and planted his garden for him, if this is not comradeship between allotment holders, then I don't know what is. I have always said it's a different life having an allotment, one minute we are having our disagreement with each other, then the next thing we are have a laugh. On behalf of John we would like to thank Karl Humphrey for what he has done.

Doreen



## Welcome Spring!

Down at Windmill Allotments in Bobbersmill, the 2003 gardening season has already begun. All the time, we are welcoming new gardeners who are keen to sample the delicious taste of fresh fruit, vegetables and salads which they have grown themselves. Our gardeners are from all age groups and backgrounds. Many gardeners prefer organic methods of growing and we support each other's efforts by sharing experiences.

There is plenty of wildlife to be seen and enjoyed here, since Windmill is a long-established site with extensive hedges. BTCV have provided training to gardeners in how to look after our hedges. We will be shredding the clippings as an environmentally friendly alternative to having bonfires. The shredding make good surfacing for footpaths on people's allotments.

Our on-site shop is now open, supplying our garden-holders with everything from seeds and canes to bags of quality organic manure. We have extended the car parking area to make life easier for gardeners.

In recent years, Windmill has won 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, places in the annual Allotments Competition and has been praised by a judge for its "fascinating diversity of produce".

Alison Ratner.



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### Top Ten Tasks for June

1. Earth up potatoes
2. Plant out summer bedding
3. Harvest asparagus
4. Support tall or floppy plants before they break
5. Pinch out side shoots on tomatoes
6. Ensure newly planted trees and shrubs do not dry out
7. Straw down strawberries for nice clean fruit
8. Keep ponds and water features topped up
9. Remove flower stems on rhubarb
10. Lower greenhouse temperatures and glare with shading

### INDIVIDUAL/LIFE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

To The Allotments And Gardens Council (UK)  
7 Mattingly Road, Hempshill Vale, Nottingham NG6 7BD.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (Capitals Please)  
the undersigned, hereby apply for INDIVIDUAL/LIFE membership of NDAC.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose my remittance for:

☐ £10.00 for 1 YEAR MEMBERSHIP ☐ £100.00 for LIFE MEMBERSHIP Please tick as applicable



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