

ROEHAMPTON GARDEN SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1873

MONTHLY BULLETIN

MARCH 2015

www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk

Wounded Men on Duppas Hill (1919). Watercolour by Dorothy Coke, a Slade School of Art student.



The above painting is in the Imperial War Museum, part of their splendid collection of war paintings. Dorothy was only 17 at the outset of the war and was encouraged to paint a series of paintings with the theme of the 'Home Front'.

This painting shows war allotments in a London suburb. In the background is the County Council School at Norbury, used as a military hospital. Coke was a modern young woman and shows fashionably dressed women confidently overseeing their male charges, in their blue uniforms.

CONTENTS:

- Chair's report P.2
- New padlocks P.2
- Store report P.2
- Onions and shallots in Store: P.3
- Rents: P.4
- Plot Inspections: P.5
- Recipe P.5
- Visits: P.7
- Also Monster parsnips and a' Fedge'!

CHAIR'S REPORT

I hope you have all had a good winter and are raring to go on your plots and in your gardens!

LOCKS: We have almost completed the task of replacing the padlocks on the allotment gates with fixed locks that also use our existing keys. The last gate to be changed over will be the main gate for Site 3 (Dover House Road); this is proving a bit more complicated as the construction of the gate is different to the other three gates and will need some metal welding to accommodate the lock. The main reasons for changing the locking system are because the padlocks were falling apart and they were extremely costly both to repair and to replace. We have also been getting complaints from neighbours about the heavy clanging of padlocks when the gates were used. Of course the additional benefit to us is that the gates are now so much easier to open and close. PLEASE REMEMBER TO ALWAYS LOCK THE GATE BEHIND YOU AND TO PUSH THE BAR ACROSS THE GATES AS WELL.

TREES: We have also responded to the request at the AGM to look at the overshadowing trees on the eastern border of Site 2. Most of those trees are in neighbouring gardens. Thanks to Georgina's efforts one of the trees has already been removed and we are waiting for permission from the Council to have the others pruned.

CHARITY: A draft version of the proposed Constitution and Application Form to become a Charity has now been circulated to all committee and sub committee

members who have made their valuable contributions. Next sub committee meeting in early March.

EVENTS AND TRIPS: We have several events and trips planned for this year, so please don't forget to let Pat Dark or me know if you would like to join in. Details are in this Bulletin and on our website. www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk/2015-diary-dates/

Jackie Savage

Jackiesavage29@gmail.com

We are currently changing the locks on both allotment sites because the padlocks keep falling apart. Please be assured that your existing key will work in the new locks.

Any problems should be reported to your site secretary as soon as possible.

Georgina (Site 2)
georgoreilly@yahoo.co.uk or
Helen (Site 3)
helen.finch2@btinternet.com

STORE REPORT

The start of the growing season! Don't get over excited and rush into direct sowings on your allotment plot. The main job for March is soil preparation. Wait for a couple of days of sunshine and that, combined with drying winds, will ensure the soil is perfect for sowing. You will soon see the weeds starting to germinate and you'll know the time has come!

Plant seeds in pots or in Deep Root Trainers (**only £4 in store for 32 with lid**) and using **John Innes Seed Compost (£4 for 20 Litre bag)** and some **Vermiculite (sold loose in store only £2 per kilo)**. Keep them in the greenhouse or on your windowsill. **TO ENSURE SUCCESS USE FRESH SEED AND FRESH WATER - AVOID STALE WATER FROM YOUR WATER BUTT!** The first seeds to go direct into the ground will be parsnips, carrots, peas, beetroot, lettuce, round seeded spinach and broad beans. Read the packs for the ones to sow in March. **Kings Seeds are on sale in store with a 20% discount.**

Avoid rushing to put potatoes and onions (**some still available in store at time of writing**) into cold soil, as this will check their growth and, in the case of onions, cause them to bolt in the summer. Keep the potatoes chitting in a cool, dry and light place until there are 3 consecutive warm, sunny days. In the meantime put a 5cms / 2" layer of organic matter over the area where you plan to plant your potatoes – **Country Natural (still only £3 a bag in Store) is ideal.** Add some **Rock Dust (£1 per kilo)** too. Both these products can be used all over your plot now and will increase water retention and resistance to pests and diseases.

Also in March you can prepare your trench ready for Runner beans, if you haven't already. Dig a trench a couple of spades deep and add a layer of compost (and newspaper) then cover it with soil. You can use this area to grow a quick catch crop like lettuce or chard before you plant the beans in May. **New in stock, an outstanding variety of Runner Bean, recommended in**

RHS trials – Firestorm. Stringless, sweet and tender that sets well even in poor weather.

Watch for aphids on warm sunny days! They will be looking for soft fleshy places to pay their eggs. Fresh growth on fruit trees and bushes is particularly vulnerable. We find **Organic Bug Spray £4 is excellent** and **Wisley recommend PB Plant Invigorator spray £5.50, both available in our store.**

See you on Sunday mornings!

ONIONS AND SHALLOTS AVAILABLE IN STORE



Now that the soil is warming up it is the time to start thinking about planting your onions and especially shallots.

The store is now selling Red Baron and Sturon onion sets for £2.50 per kilo – so buy as many or as little as you want. Golden Gourmet shallots are £3.50 a kilo.

Lots of people have asked for shallots so as we expand our store repertoire we decided to try and see how they go.

It is a good idea to start them off in a shallow seed tray so that they develop a root system before putting them in the ground. The ones shown are ready to plant out.

Shallots will need to be planted out by the end of March but onions can wait a little longer.

Prepare the patch on your plot where they are to grow where organic matter such as Country Natural composted stable manure has already been dug in over the winter. Add lime if you think it needs it and you can also add some fertiliser such as fish, blood and bone (organic, slow release) or Growmore (inorganic). Flatten the soil and water before planting.

Plant them in a hole rather than pushing through the soil. Keep the 'neck' of the onion just visible above the ground; leave about 4" to 6" between each one. Firm the soil around each one and cover them if you can to stop birds pulling them up. If you cannot cover them keep a look out for stray uprooted ones and replant.

Onions don't like to be over watered but need to be kept moist and can be fed through the summer with a light top dressing of fish blood and bone or seaweed extract. Weed regularly as they can easily become swamped. If your shallots or onions produce any flower spikes cut them off.

Stop feeding and cut down on watering when they have swelled to a good size and the foliage has started to yellow and die back. Shallots will be ready to harvest from July, onions a little later.



RENT COLLECTION IN APRIL

Rents are due from 1 April 2015 and, as usual, will be collected in the Store on Site 2 during April on Sunday mornings from 10-12 and Wednesday evenings 6-7pm. If you cannot come to the Store please email

root@roehamptonallotments.co.uk for an invoice and instructions on how to pay by post or bank transfer.

Rent is calculated on the basis of the size of your plot (number of rods x rate per rod) + water (£1 per rod) + £1 insurance + RGS membership fees (£3 or £1.50 if over 60 on 1 April 2015) in respect of those working the plot.

The rents per rod for 2015/16 are £21.10 - full rate, £17 - senior rate for those over 65 on 1 April 2015 and £16.20 - rate for disabled plot holders.

VACATING YOUR PLOT?

It's that time of year again already! If you have decided you **are not able to continue with** your plot so want to discontinue your tenancy, it is important to **tell either** *Helen Finch for Site 3 or *Georgina O'Reilly for Site 2 as soon as possible and at least two weeks before rents are due. This is to ensure we do not have a shortfall on rent as it does take time to let a plot. It will also ensure an unwanted plot does not become overrun with weeds and difficult for the incoming tenant to get back under control. The **sooner** you tell us the **better**.

Contact preferably by text or email:

*Helen Finch: mobile: 07736 422 373 or email:
helen.finch2@btinternet.com

*Georgina O'Reilly: mobile: 07468 539 476 or email:
georgoreilly@yahoo.co.uk

Shirley Gillbe, Site Manager

PLOT INSPECTIONS

The next plot inspections will be carried out on Thursday 5th and Friday 6th March. At this time of year the team is looking for a start of cultivation, before the rents are due on 1 April. Weeds should have been removed and at least 60 % of the plot area should either be ready for planting, have been planted with the first crops of the year or have viable crops left over from the winter. Soft fruit should have been pruned. The team expect to see plenty of clear bare ground although broad beans and peas might be visible. Paths around a plot should have been tamed and made safe for "pedestrians". Please have your plot correctly numbered. Replacement plot numbers and labels are available free of charge at the store

If your plot has been badly neglected, we may not accept your rent and you risk losing your plot. With many people on our waiting list it is vital that allotment plots are not being wasted.

We will contact you individually after the inspection if essential work needs to be done.

Shirley Gillbe, Site Manager

Welcome to new members and plot-holders

Members

Alison Sutherland
Florence Terry
Graham Scott
Mrs Grania Windsor-Olive

Plot-holders

Site 2

Brendon Howell

Site 3

Avril Horsford

MARCH RECIPE

Recipe from Liz Crominska. The recipe is based around a handful of **borlotto beans**, either picked when they are still fresh or left to dry on the bean plants and whatever other vegetables you have in the fridge!

WINTER BEAN SOUP

A handful of borlotto beans
A bayleaf
1 onion
1 tablespoon oil
Celery/carrot/courgette/parsnip/
potato etc
1/2 litre stock

1. Unpod the beans, just cover with water, add a **bay leaf** and boil them until they are almost soft.
2. Chop the **onion** and cook in the oil until softened, add chopped **leek**, stick **celery**, **diced carrot** and **garlic**, etc. Stir from time to time.
3. Any stray vegetables can be added – **courgettes** that won't reach maturity, the odd **green bean**, soft

tomatoes, damaged
potatoes that won't store.

4. Sweat for 5 minutes, add the **beans** together with some of their cooking liquid, and cover with vegetable stock.
5. Cook until the vegetables are soft.
6. Serve with grated Parmesan and chopped parsley.

Variations:

Serve with pesto and Parmesan mixed together.

Add soaked dried porcini to the stock.

Add chopped bacon when onion is being sautéed.

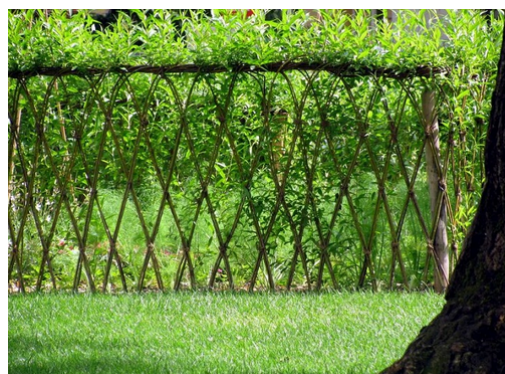
Add dried pasta shapes 5 minutes before the soup is ready to make a more substantial soup.

LESLIE'S MONSTER PARSNIPS!



The parsnips weighed 3lbs 9ozs and 2lbs 9ozs. The whole row produced heavy weights but all forked, Leslie put this down to the fact he applied gro-char to the soil when they were sown.

A 'FEDGE'?



Cliff Pope, an allotmenteer and bee-keeper on Site 3 sent me the following information about building a 'fedge' to protect your bees.

They are a simple and immediate solution to visual cover, wind breaks, flight deflecting and protection, as well as being a good source of pollen and nectar.

The willow plantation by the Thames at Shepperton grows and harvests willow, which is a major source of pollen for bees early in the spring when not much else is in flower.

For a small donation (£20-£50 a bundle) you can collect some willow or get help in building a 'fedge'.

Contact me Sally Fletcher
Pemberton, in the next month.
sallyfp@beedance.co.uk

M.07778 370571

VISITS

RHS WISLEY WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL

The RGS is an affiliated association so we can take up to 50 members free of charge.

Generally, we travel by car, either your own car or a car-share, as a number of us are very happy to offer lifts.

We can also book a garden tour. The tour is an optional extra at £3 per person. The last two years the tours have been excellent.

Please let me know if you are interested to do the visit and the tour.

Pat Dark
Patdark13@yahoo.co.uk
020 8789 7568

WANDSWORTH RECYCLING CENTRE WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE AT 10.00 AM.

The visit will last about 2 hours, but there will be stairs to climb. There is no cost but there are only 12 places. Please let me know if you are interested in this visit.

Pat Dark (as above)

PLANT HERITAGE LONDON TRIP TO ARUNDEL CASTLE ON FRIDAY 5TH JUNE,

Sui Kee Searle,
Communications Secretary
Plant Heritage London
Group, sent the following invitation to the RGS, about a trip being organised to Arundel Castle.

It is a garden that has had a lot of media coverage recently.

Information about the trip and a booking form can be accessed through the link below.

Spaces are limited and are allocated on a first come, first served basis.

<https://plantheritagelondon.wordpress.com>

The cost is £35 per person, which includes the coach travel. If you are interested and do not have access to the web, please contact me and I will get the details to you.

AUTUMN VISIT TO WAKEHURST PLACE BEING PLANNED – SEE NEXT BULLETIN

NOTICES

RGS ADDRESS AND POST BOX,

fixed to the gate at site 2, The Pleasance. The address is:

Roehampton Garden Society
The Pleasance Allotments
The Pleasance
London SW15 5HF

Comments, questions for Chair and/or Committee via website:

root@roehamptonallotments.co.uk

RHS CONTACTS

Committee Chair: Jackie Savage,
Site Manager: Shirley Gillbe;
Site 2 Allotment Secretary:
Georgina O'Reilly;
Site 3 Allotment Secretary: Helen Finch.

SECURITY

If you see someone trespassing or causing damage on Sites or in an emergency phone 999 or text phone 18000.

Dates for You Diary

*Wisley trip: 22 April
Recycling Trip: 3 June
Arundel Castle: 5 June
Summer Show: 20 June
Autumn Show: 12 September
AGM: 18 November*

BASIC RULES FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL COHESION ON OUR ALLOTMENT SITES

- Respect the rights and belongings of other plot holders.
- No dogs without leads.
- No unsupervised children.
- Lock the gate behind you.
- Dispose of your own rubbish.
- No structures to be erected or trees to be planted without permission of your Site Secretary.

If you think someone is breaking the rules contact a committee member or me, rather than confront another plot holder.
jackiesavage29@gmail.com or 07508 559134

DISCOUNTS

10% discount when you show your RGS membership card at: Adrian Hall Garden Centre in Sheen; Capital Gardens, opposite Wandsworth Prison

THE CARTRIDGE PEOPLE,
Give 10% of the cost of your order back to the Society when you buy from:
www.cartridgepeople.com/RaisingMoneyFor/Roehampton-GS

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CAPITAL GROWTH

Capital Growth is the largest food growing network in London. It was set up initially as a partnership initiative between London Food Link, the Mayor of London, and the Local Food Fund and helped create 2012 new community food-growing spaces across London by the end of 2012.

You may be interested in their courses and voluntary work opportunities. See what they are doing and sign up for their newsletter at www.capitalgrowth.org

www.vegetableseeds.com

FREE HORSE MANURE

Ridgway Stables in Wimbledon (next to Swan Pub on the corner of Hillside and Ridgway) have a constant supply of free horse manure available.

The manure is already bagged and gardeners are welcome to collect between 8am -5pm, 7 days a week.

They can also deliver manure in larger loads (approx 60 bags) to allotments in the area. This is done on Saturdays.

Please call Julia on 020 8946 7400 if you are interested.

THE STORE

*Open on Sunday mornings
between 10 -12.00 noon,
also the café serving tea,
coffee and homemade cake.*

*New volunteers to help are
always welcome. Please
contact Carol Martinez at
the Store or leave a
message at:*

root@roehamptonallotments.co.uk

**NEXT BULLETIN: April
edition: 29 March 2015,**
By email, in store and on both
sites.

Copy for next edition to Pat Dark
(020 8789 7568, 27 St Margarets
Crescent, Putney, London SW15
6HL or by email:
Patdark13@yahoo.co.uk by 23
March 2015