

ROEHAMPTON GARDEN SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1873

MONTHLY BULLETIN

January 2020

www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk

Chair's Report

Happy New Year to you all.

Since the last Bulletin the allotments and the RGS in general have been fairly quiet but with the new growing season about to start we will all be getting teed up ready to get growing.

One change I have to report is that Liz Smart has decided to step down as site secretary on site 2. She has been a valiant committee member for many years and has taken on significant roles in the past. She was treasurer for about 4 years then organised the Kings Seeds for the store before taking on helping Mariangela Renshaw as site secretary. Many thanks to her for her commitment to the running of the RGS and its allotments over many years.

Over the forthcoming year we hope to have the water supply upgraded on site 3. Patrick Crawford is working with the Council on this project. Nothing is quite certain at the moment, but we live in hope. An issue that was raised at the AGM was the need to have some kind of a social meeting shed particularly on site 3. We have plans to make progress on this project and I will keep you informed on how we are getting on both with this project and the water upgrade as it emerges.

Talking of the AGM, the Minutes in draft form are on the RGS website at

<http://www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk/2019-agm-minutes-and-reports/>

Please take a look at them and send any comments to the RGS email address:
rgs.sw15@gmail.com

With the days beginning to lengthen we can start to feel that the winter is waning and anticipate the start of the 2020 growing season – what a comforting thought.

Helen Finch, Chair

In Memory of Paolo Sidoli



It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden death of Paolo Sidoli, aged 51, at home on 19 December. Paolo leaves behind his wife, Antonella and daughter, Audrey.

Paolo was a partner in a local firm of solicitors and took on plot 40C in 2011. Although a busy man, Paolo was an enthusiastic plot holder, often seen on summer evenings, arriving by scooter still dressed in his suit, keen to tend his plot. Those who were fortunate enough to know Paolo, found him to be a genial and friendly man who was always generous in his time and kindness.

For several years Paolo was the plot neighbour to Vicky and Peter who have given the following tribute:

“We remember him as a good friend and we would spend much time talking, laughing and philosophising about life. He would always look after our greenhouse when we were away. Paolo saw the allotment as a peaceful, stress-free environment which he loved, and we were always happy to see his smiling face arriving through the allotment gates on his scooter. Paolo grew tomatoes to make sauce for the year using various seeds he brought back from Italy. He would always give some as a gift and we will definitely be growing some of these for him now. We would be happy to share Paolo's Italian seeds with anyone who would like to try them.”

Paolo will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

A funeral mass will be held on Thursday 23rd January 14.30 at St Simon's Catholic church, Hazelwell Road. All welcome.

Store Report



The potatoes, onions, shallots and garlic arrived from Scotland in good time for the re-opening of the Store on 5 January. There are 5 varieties of potatoes to choose from, mainly the varieties that have proved popular in the past, with a different variety first early – Casablanca. The potatoes cost £2.00 per kilo and you can pick and mix. Potatoes are organised into groups according to their season of harvesting. Early potatoes should be planted in late March/early April for harvesting in June/July. Second Earlies should be planted in early-mid April for harvesting in July/August. Maincrop should be planted in mid-late April and lifted in August for immediate use or in September/October for storing. Early and Second Early potatoes should be chitted to break their dormant state. It is not so critical to chit Maincrop potatoes as these can be planted directly into warm soil.

CASABLANCA - First Early with a great skin finish so good for the show bench! It has a delicious taste and a floury texture. Suitable for boiling, baking, chips and salads.

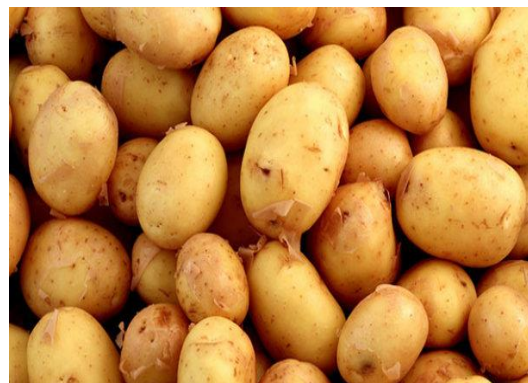
CHARLOTTE - Always popular, this Second Early salad potato is slightly waxy with yellow-cream flesh.



KESTRAL - Second Early with white skins and purple eyes. Tends to be resistant to slugs.

PICASSO - Maincrop with smooth white skin and pink eyes. Good resistance to disease.

MARIS PIPER - Maincrop, a good resistance to eelworm and stores well.



The ONION SETS we have this year are our favourites, costing £1.20 for 250gms

STUTTGARD - These produce firm, semi-flat shaped golden yellow skinned onions. They are crisp with a mild flavour, are slow to bolt and store well.

RED BARRON - With flattish-round bulbs of dark red, these are an excellent cropper which produce firm, well-flavoured bulbs which keep well.

We have 2 varieties of SHALLOT SETS at a cost of £2.00 for 15 sets:

GOLDEN GOURMET - A very high yielding Dutch variety with a golden-brown skin and stores well.

RED SUN - This red-skinned variety produces bumper yields of crisp, white fleshed bulbs with a good flavour.

GARLIC - We also have a garlic for Spring-sowing – **Christo** at £2.50 per bulb. There are also a few **Red Duke** at £1.50 per bulb.

Remember that we sell onion and potato fertiliser loose and also now sell hessian potato sacks for storing potatoes at £1.50 each.

Gill Tamsett: Trading Secretary

Keep busy in January / February

There are plenty of things that can be done in January and February in preparation for the new growing year.

Potatoes need chitting and seeds such as tomatoes, aubergines and peppers can be started on sunny window sills.

Plot Jobs advice for January / February can be found on our website at;

<http://www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk/category/plotjobsbymonth/>

Seed Swap

The Seed Swap event will take place on Sunday 19th January, in the store on site 2 after it has closed for shopping and will run for about an hour.

Bring your own harvested seeds to share or you can bring some surplus seeds that you have bought in the store or elsewhere and you just have too many of them.

- Seeds must be in envelopes or packets
- They must be clearly labelled with some information as to variety and date collected (or sow by date)
- Some details of height, spread, colour, spacing (the sort of info you find on a seed packet)
- They must be dry

We look forward to seeing you there!

Seed envelopes are on sale in the store for 5p each.

Welcome to new plot-holders:

Site 2

Alexander and Graham Turton

Laura and Freddie Giffard

Florian Risso

Rent Update

Wandsworth, as expected, have increased the rent for allotments for 2020 so your next invoice payable by 31st March this year will be at the new rate:

Plot-holders: £25.00 per rod.

Senior citizens (over 65) and disabled persons: £20.00 per rod.

We are also increasing the annual Full RGS membership from £5 to £6 and from £2.50 to £3 for Associate RGS members.

Your invoice for 2020/21 will be sent to you by email in February so watch out for it. Those not on email will be sent a paper copy.

Show Update

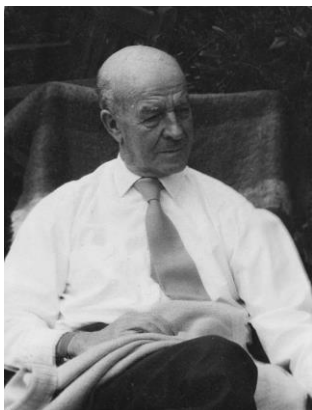
As a result of the replies to the show survey which many of you filled in, the show committee have decided to go ahead with the **Summer Show** as a community event on site 2 on **Sunday 14th June**. We have taken on board the suggestions about the timings, the exhibits and the staging of the show.

We are also responding to the feeling that many of you have about not knowing enough about exhibiting – with a workshop **How to show in the show** - the Sunday beforehand - **7th June**. This will be run by experienced exhibitors and judges.

The much bigger **Autumn Show** will be held as usual in St Margaret's Church and we are hoping for **Saturday 12th September**, but this date is still to be confirmed.

RICHARD SUDELL (1892- 1968)

Founder of the Roehampton Garden Society in 1922. A famous, but often forgotten landscape gardener, architect of Dolphin Square Gardens in 1937 and Garden Author and Journalist from late 1920's to 1958.



A year or so ago we were contacted by Michael Gilson who was researching Richard Sudell for his dissertation for an MA in Garden and Landscape History. He told us that we had an important connection with Sudell, who he described as “the

forgotten man of twentieth-century garden and landscape history”. We were able to show him the old RGS Committee Minutes Books that are now in the Wandsworth Archives (Battersea Library) and now Mr. Gilson's full article/journal has been published. The following are extracts which I hope will be of interest to RGS members.

“The end of the war brought considerable social upheaval and a challenge to the old order of which the way people lived and their relationship with the landscape was a significant part. Released from prison (Sudell had been a conscientious objector), he was both a part of this clamour for change and a willing disciple of an ill-defined but powerful movement to reconnect people with the soil. From here it was a short step to membership of the National Allotments Society and a constant interest.

After the war his move to a modest home on one of London County Council's (LCC) new housing estates at Roehampton was a chance for him to put his ideas into practice. This was where he could, literally and metaphorically, get the garden soil under his fingernails. Roehampton, now called the Dover House Estate, was the perfect place for Sudell to move to with his first wife Emily. As all were new tenants there was an element of an anonymous fresh start and Sudell was in the right place at the beginnings of a suburban gardening culture he was eminently qualified to encourage.

It is not known when Sudell moved to Roehampton, but he was certainly there for **the inaugural meeting of the estate's**

garden society in January 1922 at which he was elected chairman and by which time there were six hundred and seven houses on the estate. In total, double that number were built by the time the estate was completed in 1927. Roehampton was to become the LCC's showpiece. Started in 1919 when the council bought a hundred and forty-seven acres of parkland from the private estates of Dover House and Putney Park House, the 'cottage estate' was one of the first as the government moved to respond to social upheaval after the war and the demand that those who fought in it should return to better living conditions than those they had left. Fuelled both by commitment to honour the sacrifice of those who fought but also fears of a repeat of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, promised 'Homes Fit For Heroes'. It is perhaps ironic that one of the beneficiaries of this policy, which saw at least four million council and private houses built in the 1920s and 1930s, was Sudell. The mechanisms for this vast change in social policy were to be Acts of Parliament driven by those inspired by the Garden City Movement.

For Sudell the right to have a decent living environment and access to gardens and fresh air was crucial. For a growing number of critics, the growth of suburbia was a cause of concern and even ridicule, but for Sudell there was practical work to do encouraging his neighbours to throw themselves into self-improving work on their gardens. The estate on which he began his mission had a remarkable variety of Arts and Crafts-inspired house designs built in clusters with side gardens, three allotment sites and trees preserved from the old estates.

From the start, the adherence to garden-city thinking was, initially at least, total: 'Houses were termed as cottages. The pavements were very wide and planted with almond and laburnum trees, as were the front gardens, which were edged with privet.' When Sudell moved in most of the gardens were simply plots of earth, perhaps with a bit of turf, left the required size by the builders. There was much to do. **Documents unearthed for this research show he seized his chance, throwing himself into organizing the Roehampton Garden Society. Minutes from the garden society meetings he chaired show him immediately offering garden instruction to his new neighbours, organizing competitions and**

flower shows, lecturing on allotment growing, writing letters to the LCC urging it to deliver on its promise to plant more trees and organizing the purchase of communal gardening tools. Members of the society who paid their two-shilling-a-year fees would gain access, 'at very low charge', to a shared lawn mower and roller.

For Sudell, then, it was the perfect combination, his practical skills as organizer and horticulturalist combined with service on a new housing estate built to an ethos in which he believed – a decent living environment for the working classes. Here he was getting his hands dirty for the cause, the degree to which he did so, according to the minutes, quite remarkable. **Having stepped down as chairman after a year to concentrate on building his own garden practice he returned in August 1923 during a financial crisis caused by the treasurer's suspect book-keeping: 'Since there were no funds, the committee thankfully accepted the offer of Mr. Sudell to type out 600 notices concerning the [AGM] meeting.'**

Between leaving prison and moving on to Roehampton, Sudell had wasted no time in combining his politics with his horticultural expertise to join the National Gardens Guild to encourage flower growing in deprived areas of the inner city. Even as Sudell was trying to convince the new residents of Roehampton to take up gardening in their new, enlarged living spaces he was still concerned with where many of his new neighbours had come from, convinced of the self-improving, uplifting nature of a garden, no matter how small. As in deeds so in words Sudell gives us insight into the landscape and wider cultural debate of the times. *The Roehampton Estate Gazette* was a monthly newsletter produced by the Roehampton Estate Tenants' Association (RETA), full of the activities of a typical community. From its second edition Sudell wrote a gardening column that in many ways set the tone – unadorned in style, practical in the extreme but gently encouraging – for his garden journalism and authorship over the next three decades: 'The first consideration in planning the garden is its aspects. Wherever possible paths should be made to run North and South.'

Sudell left Roehampton in 1924 but he continued to write for the *Estate Gazette* for another two years. Evidence, it could be argued, of an almost evangelical zeal to

inspire his former neighbours to improve their environment. With the explosion of the suburbs came the demand for advice on what many new tenants and homeowners should do with their newly acquired land. Sudell had started to feed this appetite and with funding from the London Gardens Guild had published his first book in 1924, *Town Gardeners' Handbook*, which, **the secretary of the Roehampton Garden Society told *Gazette* readers, had been written by 'a resident on the estate and undoubtedly an authority on gardening questions. The word practical should be written on every page'.**

Dolphin Square: Sudell's biggest project and only surviving example of his work wholly intact.



The decision last year by Historic England to register Sudell's courtyard garden at Dolphin Square as a Grade II landscape of historic interest represents a significant enhancement of his legacy.

The garden is a perfect summation of the philosophy that he articulated to his neighbours on Roehampton, his colleagues at the ILA and the millions of readers of his books, magazine and newspaper articles.

Extracts from "CONFLUENCE OF THE TIMES: RICHARD SUDELL (1892– 1968), THE FORGOTTEN MAN OF EARLY TWENTIETH- CENTURY GARDEN AND LANDSCAPE HISTORY" has been published. The full article can be obtained at the following address and telephone number: Garden History Back Issues, 47 Water Street, Lavenham, Sudbury CO10 9RN, England. or phone: 01787 249 286.

Jackie Savage with permission of Michael Gilson, January 2020.

January RECIPE – Celeriac, mushroom and potato gratin



Ingredients

- . 300g fresh mushrooms, mix of shitake, porcini, chestnut,
- . 15g dried porcini
- . 2 garlic cloves
- . Olive oil
- . 250g celeriac
- . 250g potatoes
- . 250g mozzarella
- . 50g parmesan
- . 8 sprigs of thyme

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C/ gas 3.
2. Soak the dried porcini and leave for 20 minutes. Chop the other mushrooms and mix with crushed garlic, olive oil, salt and pepper and most of the thyme. Mix with the dried mushrooms after 20 minutes.
3. Peel and slice the celeriac and potatoes as thinly as possible. Mix together with olive oil and salt and pepper.
4. Drizzle a high-sided cooking dish with olive oil and start with a layer of potato and celeriac, cover with mushrooms and one third of the mozzarella. Continue with layers until all used up.
5. Finish with the parmesan, 3 tbsp of water and the rest of the thyme.
6. Loosely cover with foil or paper and bake for 45 minutes, removing the cover for the last 10 minutes so that it is bubbling and golden.

The winner of the Christmas cake in the raffle started at the autumn show and drawn at the AGM was Jenny Gorle from Site 2.



Jenny said it was the best Christmas cake she has ever tasted. So, Laura – if you would like to share the recipe in a bulletin later in the year – we would love to see it.

NOTICES DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Seed Swap – 12.00-13.00 on Sunday 19th January in the store on site 2

How to show in the show – Sunday 7th June, site 2

Summer Show – Sunday 14th June on Site 2, 12.00

Autumn Show – Saturday 12th September -St Margaret's Church Hall, 15.00, date tbc

Kitchen Garden Cornucopia

A talk by Sarah Wain, Former Gardens Supervisor at West Dean Gardens. Come and learn some valuable guidelines on how to grow the perfect fruit and vegetables.

Monday 27th January 2020, 7.30pm
Community Church Putney Werter Road, SW15 2LL

Non-members £3 donation



Winter Fruit Pruning

Find out about pruning fruit trees in the winter months.

Learn how to:

- Prune spur and tip bearing apples and pears
- Regenerate old trees
- Improve tree health
- Encourage fruiting
- Use and maintain pruning tools

Led by RHS qualified, experienced fruit grower and tutor

One day workshop

Saturday 1st February 2020 10am-1pm
at The Lodge Victorian Walled Garden,
Carshalton Just £35



RHS CONTACTS

Committee Chair: Helen Finch.

Site 2 Allotment Secretary: Catherine Maunsell-Bower.

Site 3 Joint Allotment Secretaries:
Vivian Fowler & Alison Linton

Site Manager: Charles Gilbe

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

rgs.sw15@gmail.com

All policies and procedures are on our website.

www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk

RGS ADDRESS AND POST BOX

Fixed to the gate at site 2,
Roehampton Garden Society
The Pleasance Allotments
The Pleasance
London SW15 5HF

The store is open on Sunday mornings between 10 -12.00 noon.

Café, serving teas, coffee and homemade cake.

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, Helen Finch, rather than confront another plot holder. Helen.finch2@btinternet.com 07736 422373

SECURITY

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

CONSERVATION FOUNDATION TOOL SHED

Mend and re-furbish old garden tools
www.conservationfoundation.co.uk

WORKAID for old tools, equipment, haberdashery, wool.

Workaid collect old tools, sewing machines etc, repair/service them and send out containers to various developing countries.

They have various collection points around the country. You can find out more about what they do here - www.workaid.org and what items they are interested in here - <https://workaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Accepted-Refused-Items-List-August-2019-accepted.pdf>

DISCOUNTS

Your RGS membership card will be updated once your rent has been received in March. Collect it in store.

Adrian Hall, East Sheen

On presentation of your RGS membership card you will receive 10% discount on horticultural goods that you take away with you, not on delivered items.

Neal's, Heathfield Road, SW18 3HR (opposite Wandsworth Prison)

Register for their loyalty card, as an RGS member by showing your membership card, giving your name, email address and post-code. A 7% retrospective discount on goods purchased is applied and can be redeemed at the time of the next purchase (like a Nectar card). The amount of discount is recorded as 'points' on the card and shown on each till receipt. £5.00 worth of points is put on your card as a thank you when you register.

If you are over 50, and a loyalty card member, you will receive 10% discount on Wednesdays.

AUSTIN MOWERS

Repairs and sells reconditioned mowers and sharpens shears.
300 Garrett Lane, SW18 4EH
020 8874 4206 www.austinmowers.com

NEW DAWN GARDENS

Artan Deliallisi, one of our plot holders, offers regular or casual maintenance for gardens. He will repair or build fences, gates, sheds, paving, walls and arches.
07411 288485 artandeliallisi@gmail.com

NEXT BULLETIN

March 2020. Editor Carol Martinez.
Email stories and photos to carolmartinez@hotmail.co.uk by 2nd March 2020.

Recipe suggestions always welcome.