

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS SPRING NEWSLETTER 2013

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Chairman's Report

A Happy New Year to you all and welcome to a new gardening year. 2012 was a busy year for the committee and all the volunteers whom I should like to thank, for all their hard work and support in their various roles.

I hope that 2012 has been a reasonable gardening year for you despite all the wet weather. Like a lot of gardeners I have had some good and bad results despite the overload of rain. In some cases plants have rotted and in others they have flourished.

The plot at the side of the hut has been used to trial various vegetables with some interesting results, which can be viewed on the website. The paths round the raised beds are now completed thanks to donations of flags from various members.

Our annual show at Penkford School was a success with a good standard of exhibits. The show in 2013 will be on 21st September, so start to think about what you can exhibit. We need more people to exhibit in order to ensure the show is a success.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM on 24th January 2013 and also during the year at the hut and the talks. Thank you for your continued support.

Good gardening in 2013.

Tony Addison

WHATS COMING UP

TALKS & DEMONSTRATIONS + AGM at the Newton Cricket Club, Crow Lane East. Always Thursdays at 7.30

24 th January	A.G.M
28 th February	David Metcalfe – Vegetables: My Way.
21 st March	Ken Green – Ponds, Bog Gardens & Wet Areas.
25 th April	Tim Moorhouse – Herbal Home Remedies.

WEDNESDAY 26th June Kenyon Farm Tour & Cafe talk – Tod Bulmer (small charge for refreshments & booking required due to number restrictions.) N.B. The transport included to travel round the farm is unsuitable for those with limited mobility.

31st October Winter Flowering Pots.

SHOWS 27 th May	Willow Park Rural Craft Display
21 st September	NLWGA Flower, & Vegetable Show, Penkford School Wharf Road

HUT OPENINGS Saturdays 5th January – 26th October 10.30 -12.00 (Except show day)
Sundays 6th January – 27th October 10.30 – 12.00
Wednesdays 3rd April – 19th June 19.00 – 20.00

TRIPS 2013

12th May.

A 3 day trip to Northumberland, staying at the Marriott Hotel in Gateshead. We will visit Wallington house and gardens on Sunday, Holy Island on Monday, and on Tuesday, Howarth Hall and gardens. Cost is £159 each for 2 people sharing and £219 for a single, including dinner, bed and breakfast. Entrance costs will be additional.

12th June is a trip to Holehird gardens near Windermere, then onto Hayes Garden World, maybe a spot of lunch and then into Bowness for the afternoon. Cost is £11 each

10th August is a trip to Chirk Castle near Wrexham Cost is £16.50 each. For National Trust members £9

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Our Chairman Tony Addison and I have had opportunity of examining Committee Minutes and other documents that go back to the early 1920s. We thought that present members might be interested in these bygone days, so in this Newsletter we begin with the dark days of 1939-45.

DIG FOR VICTORY! On 2nd October 1939 the Committee were concerned that many allotments in the town were vacant, so they asked the Council to waive rent on these for six months so that they could be brought into cultivation. Lime, fertilisers and good old muck were essential to produce good crops. In September 1941, each member was allowed only one 14lb bag of Basic Slag at a price of 9d; but 2 tons of Hydrated Lime had also been purchased. By 1942 the Association was selling 5 tons of lime to members that had been bought through the MAFF's Land Fertility Scheme. Manure was bought from Earlestown Co-op Ltd at 11/6 per ton. Where did the Co-op get it? From its cart horses, of course! Something called M-O-M was popular; some sort of bagged manure? It sold at 4/6 per 56lbs bag. But what was M-O-M?

WHAT WAS GROWN? Lots of potatoes: In 1941 the Association sold 2½ tons of seed potatoes to members, and in 1942 4 tons of 12 varieties. Most varieties are not heard of today, but some are (e.g. Arran Pilot, Sharpe's Express, King Edwards). In 1944 there was a big "debt caused by the over ordering of Potatoes," so members were asked what they wanted for the 1945 season before ordering. The order fell to 18cwts (a ton has 20 cwts!). Of course, spuds are a staple, and to encourage their growth, in 1939, a "Potato Competition" took place. Each entrant was charged "6d as an entrance fee, which included the potato sets...Each entrant would receive one pound of sets," and the participant was not allowed to cut these sets into more than twelve. The potatoes were dug and weighed, with Committee present, on October 7th, which meant a long day of traipsing around allotments and gardens in the town. First prize was 5/-, second 2/6. Lots of peas and beans were grown: In 1940 14lbs of each of four pea varieties were purchased (Rentpayer, Progress, Kelvedon Wonder, The Lincoln), together with lots of Dwarf French Beans (Canadian Wonder and Masterpiece), Runner Beans (Scarlet Runner) and Broad Beans (Long Pod). In 1943 56lbs of shallots were purchased at 9d per pound, and sold to members at 1/-, and seeds from two varieties of onions (Ailsa Craig and Bedfordshire Champion) were sold by the half ounce. Beetroot, carrot and swede completes the seeds sold by the Association. Nowhere are brassicas (cabbages, sprouts etc) mentioned! Didn't they like their greens? Each year from 1942 the MAAF distributed free vegetable seed collections from the USA (no nylons, though) in Newton through our Association. They went to schools (Earlestown Manor, Wargrave C of E, and Newton Council Junior and Senior), local hospitals and OAPs (note that some Lancashire schools and hospitals still had veg plots well into the 1960s). In 1940 12 unemployed members in the town each received a free collection of veg seeds. Peas need pea sticks: In March 1940 the Secretary wrote "to the Foreman of Haydock Park asking if it would be possible to let us have 50 Bundles of Pea sticks..." They cost £2.10.0. "Pea sticks over from last year be 3d per bundle," records the Minutes.

THE SALES HUT gets a first mention in 1943, when a new one was purchased. A rota for sales began in 1941, the hut being open 1.30-4.30pm Saturday, 10-12 noon, Sunday and every evening from 6-8. In May 1945 there were plans to have a shop window on one side of the hut, "so that we can display any goods we have for sale." Can you imagine having such a window in our present hut!

SHOWS AND FUNDING THE WAR EFFORT

In 1939 the annual Show was cancelled, but it returned in 1940 as "strictly a Vegetable Show." In 1941 a hamper of vegetables was raffled at 3d per ticket and £8 went to the Red Cross. In 1942 a full Show took place, which ended with the "Sale of Vegetables at 6.30pm followed by a Whist Drive and Dance...till 11.45pm". 1942 also saw our first Rose Show, again raising money for the Red Cross. That May saw the first money raised (£4.14.0) for the Memorial Cottage Hospital. In August 1943 the annual Show was in aid of the Red Cross Agricultural Fund, raising £30.10.0. Hot Pot Suppers were also held, in the Pied Bull, the first on 12 November 1943.

BUT RAISING FUNDS IS NOT WITHOUT ITS FINANCIAL RISKS...On 4 June 1945 the Committee cancelled that year's Show because of the "possibility of plunging into debt." Two years earlier, as recorded in the Minutes of a meeting on 5 July 1943, "the Secretary wrote to the Co-op Bank telling them that the Association did not appreciate the two letters sent in reference to the Association being overdrawn at the Bank."

Did they not know that there was a war on?!

Malcolm Greenhalgh

RECIPE

CABBAGE, BACON AND POTATOES.

Serves 6 as a side dish, 3-4 as a main dish

750g waxy potatoes, cut into small pieces,	1 onion, finely chopped
100g smoked streaky bacon, sliced finely	1 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp butter,	100ml white wine
100ml single cream,	½ savoy cabbage, cored and shredded
200g gruyere or any melting cheese,	1 tbsp chives, chopped

Parboil the potatoes in boiling salted water for 10 minutes. Drain. Cook the onion and bacon in the oil and butter for 10 minutes. Add the wine and potatoes and cook until tender (about 10 minutes) stirring all the time. Add the cream and cabbage, cook for another minute then season and set aside. In an ovenproof dish, spread out half the potato mix and sprinkle with half of the grated cheese. Then do the same again with the rest of the mixture. Bake in a medium oven (190C) for about 20 minutes. Sprinkle with chives before serving. Serve with grilled chicken or any other meat. Or as a main course with crusty bread and salad.

POEM

January brings the snow, makes our feet and fingers glow.
February brings the rain, thaws the frozen lakes again.
March brings breezes, loud and shrill, stills the dancing daffodil.
April brings the primrose sweet, scatters daisies at our feet.
May brings flocks of pretty lambs, skipping by their fleecy dams.
June brings tulips, lillies, roses, fills the childrens hands with posies.
Hot July brings cooling showers, apricots and gilly flowers.
August brings the sheaves of corn, then the harvest home is borne.
Warm September brings the fruit, sportsmen then begin to shoot.
Fresh October brings the pheasant, then to gather nuts is pleasant.
Dull November brings the blast, then the leaves are falling fast.
Chill December brings the sleet, blazing fires and Christmas treat.

SAVE OUR BEES

Bees are responsible for about a third of what we eat and are amazing creatures, their numbers are also falling dramatically and gardeners are being encouraged to help save these vital insects.

Bees aren't just busy little insects that buzz around our gardens, but also provide a vital role in the production of our staple foods. As they collect nectar and transfer the pollen from flower to flower, they pollinate garden plants and wild flowers, such as Bluebells and Foxgloves, as well as essentail crops like cereals, nuts, fruit and vegetables.

HOW WE CAN HELP :- Bees have lost many of flower-rich meadow habitats, but we still have lots of garden space in which to grow plants that the bees love such as Lavender, Sage, Aquiliagias and Lupins. They also love Alliums, Gladioli and open flowered single Dahlias. Look out for the labels in the garden centres saying "Bee friendly"

SPRING

Flowering Quinces
Wallflowers
Flowering Cherries

SUMMER

Lavender
Hebes
Scabious
Fuchsias

AUTUMN

Japanese Anemones
Plumbago
Sedums

WINTER

Hellebores
Mahonia
Sarcococca

All of these in the seasons will help to feed the bees, and they will thank you for it.

"It's not getting what you want that makes you happy, but wanting what you've got."

Thought for the day

Live for today, as yesterday is already a dream and tomorrow is only a vision. But today well-lived makes every yesterday a new dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope.

TIP TIME

1. If you badly burn a pan, refill it with water, pop in an unpeeled onion and bring to the boil. Your pan will come up as good as new.
 2. A denture cleaning tablet left to dissolve in the lavatory basin overnight will help to remove stubborn stains.
 3. Add a spoonful of porridge oats to a casserole – they will instantly thicken it and add extra flavour.
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REFLECTIONS ON THE 2012 SHOW...

I wondered if my first show as Show Secretary would be lacking in entries, but despite the weather how the exhibitors triumphed!! The only category I would have won this year would have been a 'biggest weed' one. Where did all those wonderful vegetables and flowers come from... certainly from more able and tenacious gardeners than I proved to be. What a wonderful show to be involved with!

What did I enjoy most? The modesty of gardeners who arrived with their exhibits 'to make up the numbers', and then won? The children whose entries were outstanding, the pride they had in taking part and in winning? The real hard work and dedication of those involved in setting the show up, so that when we opened to the public it looked effortless and organised? It's hard to choose, but I am sure that you will join me in congratulating our gardening community because in the end the slugs and endless rain didn't defeat all of us...

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the sponsors and exhibitors who supported us this year. While some other local shows have struggled to keep going or to attract sponsorships and exhibitors, ours has been a great success. If you were able to visit the show you will know how marvellous it was, if you didn't (or you just want to enjoy the day again) have a look at our website for photos and the list of winners.

I am already looking forward to 2013!

Chantelle Seaborn (Show Secretary)

Next year's categories for the show are as follows :-

Art,	In the woods
Floral art	An arrangement in an unusual container
Cookery	Chocolate Cake, Shortbread.
Childrens cookery	Melting moments
Photography	Comedy, Places I have visited, New and old

It is with some regret that I have to inform you all that next year's fees will be increased to £4, this is mainly due to rising costs of postage and printing, plus lots of other factors, too numerous to mention. We hope that this increase will be maintained for many years to come and that everyone understands why it has had to be done.

Don't forget to visit our website regularly as there are new things being placed on there all the time.

David Hemingway does a fantastic job and there is always something interesting to read about.

The site is www.nwlgardeners.co.uk

See you all in the Spring