

WHALEY BRIDGE
Allotment & Gardeners'
Society

newsletter

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2001

Dear Member,

I always feel that the agm brings to a close not only another year in the life of the society but the end of yet another gardening year although there are still a hundred and one things to do – getting leaves off the lawn at the moment just one of them! Those who are 'hands-on' gardeners are ordering seeds and planning ahead to make next year even better than this. Well, we can dream can't we? The recent few days of mild, dry weather (it's changed as I write, of course) have meant that a lot of autumnal digging has been done on the allotment for a change and we're all feeling pleased with ourselves!

Thirtyfour members made it quite a lively and convivial agm and enjoyed hot snacks this year in addition to the usual goodies. Our raffle provided two free seats on the trip of his choice next year for Geoff Howe and for Jane Bennett a box of chocolates.

Oh yes, I nearly forgot, the meeting decided it wanted to keep its sitting officers for a further twelve months and voted unanimously for a change in the rules to elect an additional committee member to more accurately reflect the considerable increase in membership since the society's formation when there were seven of us! So, we're delighted to welcome an extremely good gardener in Ron Macbeth and keen allotmenteer Roy Jennings who replaces the late Bill Wright.

Treasurer Bob Kellock reported another successful year financially – so much so that he asked for suggestions for ways we could usefully use some of our surplus funds! That's not something you often hear! Several suggestions were made which the committee will look at during the year with a view to putting them to the members at the next agm. One idea was to hold a garden party, on the lines of the one we held for the millennium, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the society which was formed in 1983. Another was to create a video/book library on various gardening subjects.

An idea that shows promise is a 'tool loan scheme' whereby the society purchases a selection of tools that are not worth investing in yourself as you perhaps only need them once or twice a year. As the title suggests members, on payment of a modest deposit, could borrow them for a few days to get the odd job done in the garden. There are possible complications with things like public liability insurance which are being looked at and we'll report back in due course.

If you have any thoughts regarding any of the above or other suggestions we'd be pleased to hear from you. It's your money after all, so give any of the committee a ring on the numbers below and if you weren't at the agm and would like a copy of the report and accounts give Bob a ring on 733393 and he'll be only too pleased to get a copy to you.

One or two other facts to emerge from the meeting :- We were pleased to welcome eleven new members last year but sadly we had to assume that the twelve who failed to respond to my plea in the June newsletter to pay their subs did not wish to remain with us so membership is slightly down. Thirtyone took advantage of the seed scheme – five up on the previous year - and seventythree bought supplies from the store. That was three down but thankfully they spent more! Mention of the store reminds me to remind you that we have Levington and John Innes composts, peat and bark in stock AT LAST YEAR'S PRICES so ring me if you can't wait to get started. Any day now we'll be putting in an order so if there is anything in particular you need that's not on your price list let me know by December 7th.

Welcome to three brand new members to start the year:- Mrs Carr of Hill Drive, Mrs McBurney of Linglongs Avenue and Mrs Ralphs of Manchester Road, Chapel but you will be sorry to hear of the death of one of our former members, Ron Johnson, of Macclesfield Road. Ron was one of the original seven members referred to above and an allotment holder until ill health caused him give it up.

Thanks to those who have ordered seeds through the society this year. These should be with us in a couple of weeks although it will be early next year for potatoes.

PTO

As I now have lots of space to fill and you didn't get a newsletter last month, some nature notes – or, more precisely, ramblings – that there hasn't been room for before. Ever since I read somewhere how poisonous ragwort is I seem to have seen it everywhere during the summer – in gardens, any bit of wasteland, fields full of it and practically every grass verge. I've just read that ragwort is "mildly poisonous and is avoided by cattle but sheep appear to be unharmed by it". However, I noticed in the Advertiser a few months ago that a horse had died a particularly painful death apparently after eating it and found it a bit worrying that two horses were kept in a field behind us on Rock Bank that was full of the stuff. Oddly, the two horses were blindfolded. Was it anything to do with the ragwort or did they just not like the look of each other? Being basically a 'townie' I don't understand these 'country ways' but I'm sure there's a perfectly good reason. I'd be interested to know.

Nature ramblings continued. Readers may recall my mention of the dreaded lesser celandine some months ago, dreaded that is if you've got it and don't want it, and what problems the greater variety must pose. Well, I was introduced to a specimen of it in the garden of our member, Gordon Plant, who is very knowledgeable about these things. It seems they are not even of the same family - the lesser being a buttercup while the greater is a relation of the poppy the sap of which, while poisonous, is said to be "good for warts" – I assume that means curing them rather than encouraging them. I experienced a nasty shock to the system just the other day when clearing out some frost-killed plants to find a whole new crop of lesser Celandine just breaking the surface. So, it's on the move again folks - and I bet the frost won't kill it!

We'll be asking members for a couple of gardens to visit next summer, so if you'd like to share yours with us give me ring. On the same subject Ron Macbeth tells me that following the disastrous afternoon, weatherwise, when he and Joan opened their garden in the summer quite a few members who would have visited had the weather been more agreeable sent in donations for Blythe House raising in total a splendid £60.

I realise that you may not yet have your new diaries yet but I must give you dates for next year's two coffee mornings. We've managed to book the same Saturday as the Whaley Water Weekend again on June 22 which as you'll recall was a great success and, thanks to Ethel turning up at the Mechanics at some unearthly hour (which you have to do these days if you want a particular date), we've got the Saturday before Christmas which is 21 December. The Christmas coffee mornings we've had in the past have always been really enjoyable what with the old festive atmosphere – and hot mince pies of course!

Your committee is already working on a programme of exciting events for next year but if you have any ideas don't hesitate to get in touch. We're always on the look out for things to do, places to go, people to meet etc.

And, finally, I know it's far too early to start spreading seasonal greetings about but as this is the last opportunity I'll have may I wish you, on behalf of your chairman, John Pressman, and all of us on the committee a very happy Christmas and our best wishes for 2002 and thanks for all your support during the past year – especially to the member who brought you this!



John Howes, Secretary
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