



NEWSLETTER

SPRING IS HERE!

It has been a hard winter, both in terms of the cold weather, snow and rainfall and also the spike in Covid-19 cases. But the situation is improving, vaccines are being rolled out, numbers of cases are falling and the weather shows some sign of warming up too! So, here's to an improving situation.

The BDAC have been discussing this year's competitions. Last year, all of our competitions were all cancelled but the overwhelming feeling was that we should restart them this year.

Allotment Vegetable Competition

The Show committee has booked Bordesley Green Allotments for an Allotment Competition. On 14th August, this will fall in the National Allotments Week. We have taken a cautious route, not knowing what restrictions, if any that will be in place in August, so the schedule will be slimmed down enabling exhibitors to work alone or in small groups if needed. Details of the Competition and how to enter will be sent to Site Secretaries as early as possible, so get growing and think of exhibiting! They will also be on our website.

Site and Plot Competitions

will also take place; however, we will not be judging the Frank Carter, the restrictions last year limited what Associations could achieve due to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

Details and entry forms are posted in our new website and can be downloaded.

<https://bdacallotments.co.uk>

ALLOTMENTS ARE POPULAR!

Over the past year across, the city, more and more people have applied to take on an Allotment Plot. At the moment many sites have extensive waiting list. This is all very exciting and good for the future of Allotments. If you are a new plot holder, welcome. There are lots of web sites offering help and you will probably now already realise, many plot holders ready to dispense advice! Goodluck.

Dates for your diary

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic all face-to-face meetings have been cancelled.

However, we have now started 'Zoom' monthly meetings for all the Executive members that are able to attend.

If you have any issues that you would like us to discuss each month please get in contact.

bdac.allotments@gmail.com

Plant and Share Month: 19th April to 19th May 2021
National Allotments week
 August 10th to 15th 2021

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Which site is the highest in Brum/Sutton Coldfield?

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The BDAC would like to thank **The National Allotment Society** for all their support and guidance throughout last year

I know that quite a few Associations enjoy the benefits of Association membership including free personal insurance for plot holders.

Their web site is well worth visiting <https://www.nsalg.org.uk>



Show Secretary Report for 2021

After discussion has been confirmed that the BDAC will postpone the 2021 show in favour of a smaller socially distanced **Event**, the revised event will be a version of the Vegetable Competition.

The event is to be a two-day format: - setup on Friday, judging Saturday morning open to plot holders after that, Breakdown Sunday morning. Further discussion will be required on the exact detail of the format.

Date: The event is to be held on the weekend of **14th August 2021**.

Venue: **Bordesley Green Allotments** will be the venue for 2021 Vegetable Competition.

Schedule:

To accommodate the smaller event, a reduced version of the schedule for 2021 has been produced.

Associations/Societies will have 2 classes to enter. Small displays that can be completed with a small team if necessary.

For Plot holders there will be 28 Vegetable classes, 10 Flower classes, 4 fruit classes, 5 heaviest classes, 2 children's classes.

Schedules will be available from the web site <https://www.bdacallotments.co.uk/> or on request by post in March.

Prize monies for 2021 have been reduced, this will only apply to 2021, at present there is no plan to make it permanent.

Trophies: None of the BDAC trophies will be awarded in 2021 because of the alteration to Classes, they will be replaced with 2021 medals (see schedule for details)

Presentation: There will be **NO Official Presentation** because of social distancing requirements, cheques and medals can be collected from Show treasurer at close of competition or sent by post.

We would like to thank Bordesley Green Association for help and cooperation.

Derek Cullen
Show Secretary

Which site is the highest in Altitude?

Phil Zajlic, Chair of Wychbury Allotment in Bartley Green, thinks his site is. He measured the altitude at 689 feet or 209 metres above sea level and wants to know if any other site is higher. He also wondered, as a point of interest, which site is the lowest? Using Google Earth, my site, Lower Tinkers, appears as 169m above sea level.

If you think your site is higher than Phil's or lower than Lower Tinkers Farm let us know by emailing bdac.allotments@gmail.com Results in the next edition!



Food for life Get Togethers

are holding a:-

Plant and Share Month

They want to encourage more of us to get into the growing habit!

For more details go to their web site

Fflgettogethers.org/plantandshare

HARBORNE LANE ALLOTMENTS KEPT COMPETITIONS (SOCIALLY DISTANCED) GOING!

Every year, they hold a Heaviest Pumpkin Competition at their pavilion on the last Sunday of the month (so it's close to Halloween), where members enjoy getting involved. They were not to be stopped by a pandemic. So, the competition went virtual! They held a Virtual Pumpkin Competition in October and included categories of Heaviest Marrow, Prettiest Pumpkin Ugliest Pumpkin and also Funniest Looking Crop. They used 'Google Forms'. By photographing all entries and creating a voting ballot On Google Forms, that was then emailed to all tenants to vote on. The pictures below give a flavour of the competition.

Corey
Harborne Lane



LOCKDOWN SURVIVAL AT WYCHBURY ALLOTMENTS



Having to deal with lockdown in March I was really stressed and I nearly gave up, but having my lovely daughter Lisa gave me a pick up by letting me have half of her allotment. So I had something to think about and it got me out of the house I was a different person, I couldn't get enough, every minute of the day I was at the allotment. I had the opportunity to have a plot that was vacant so I jumped at it. It has required so much work but it's kept me busy !! I felt like a new person, I felt I was no longer isolated, it helped me keep fit and lifted my mood significantly. At 78 years old I'm loving life and it has given me so much enjoyment through a very difficult time, so much so that the plot next to mine became available and I decided to take it on and now



have 2 plots. I'm getting ready for 2021 being the happier, healthier person and thankful for the opportunity, the support from everyone on Wychbury Road Allotments and the love from my family.



LONG SERVICE AT MEADOW ROAD CELEBRATED

Peter Bishop (86) is a prominent figure at Meadow Road Leisure Gardens Association (MRLGA) in Harborne, Birmingham. He has retired from his post as Treasurer after 35 years' service. He first joined as a member 48 years ago! At that time, his main hobbies were fishing and bowling, but his dad 'cajoled him into taking a plot ! He still enjoys bowling after 55 years, and is Treasurer of a local bowling club.

MRLGA is one of the original Allotment Leisure Gardens set up by Birmingham City Council on the recommendations of Professor Thorpe of Birmingham University. His aim was that these sites should be a 'Weekend Garden' . Their purpose was to provide a leisurely garden space away from home, not just for growing fruit and vegetables. There are ornamental shrubs, lawn, flowerbeds and at the centre a Pavilion, with its own office and toilets. MRLGA, also known as Meadow Road Jubilee Allotments, was opened in 1977, amalgamating some existing plots owned by BCC with land rented on a long-term lease from the Calthorpe Estate.

Peter's father was an awarding winning plot holder (Best in Birmingham) and was Treasurer here, ran the Shop and was on the BDAC. Peter's family settled in Birmingham in 1944. Both his parents loved the allotment, his mother still walked some distance from her home in Portland Road to her plot when she was in her 80's.

His favourite crops are sprouts, shallots, runner beans, beetroot, carrots and leeks. Whilst working his plot, his late wife would join him, sitting on a chair under a nearby oak tree. He started off with plot 27, then took over his dad's plot 37 at his death, moving to his mother's plot 38 when she passed. Eventually he took on a smaller plot, 48. His wife died in 2004, and he continued there for a few more years before giving it up and focussing solely on his Treasurer's role .

When he first arrived, MRLGA had been "upgraded and was pristine"; the then Chairman would regularly exhort members to keep their plots immaculate . When Peter joined the Committee (1981), the Saturday morning meetings were a good time to have 'a chat and chin wag.' Eventually he became Treasurer (1985). There was a period when Peter held the three senior posts on the Committee - Treasurer , Secretary and Chairman, so he really kept the Allotment going for several months, until new Officers came on board. Peter is always very supportive of the Committee and gives advice to members and has been an absolute gold mine of information on allotments in Birmingham and our site in particular.

Over the past nearly five decades at MRLGA, Peter has seen many changes; nowadays MRLGA may not be as 'immaculate' as when he first arrived, but it is a thriving and tranquil oasis in the centre of Birmingham, with a long waiting list for plots. Peter found that when he started there were a lot of professional members, now we have folk with a wide range of occupations who come from diverse backgrounds. Plus, we have more young families and many women only members, very different from when his mother had her plot. Nowadays he says, there is a greater variety of fruit, vegetables and more flowers being grown over the years

Prior to the Pandemic the Committee ran numerous social events. His particular role for our annual party is to run his idiosyncratic number machine for picking raffle tickets! Peter has particularly enjoyed meeting different members and making so many friends, MRLGA is a "godsend"! Fortunately Peter will keep on helping with the Shop. So, as we hopefully move into 2021 and see the Covid -19 restrictions ease, we can all look forward to seeing Peter, yet again seated in his favourite chair in the Pavilion, having a cuppa with his newspaper spread on the table, eager to sell us stock from the Shop and ready for a 'chat and a chin wag'! Plus, we can celebrate his dedicated service as retiring Treasurer with a proper party.

Meadow Road Leisure Gardens Association

Heritage Project update!

The Lottery Heritage Fund is once again taking applications, so our bid will shortly be sent in, if successful the work to record the stories from the past on our allotments will begin! We want to thank Chris and General Public for continuing with this project. If you think that you or someone on your site has an interesting story to tell please contact Chris using the contacts below.

email generalpublicprojects@gmail.com or BDAC.
Or phone Chris on 07792 736125.



To contact the BDAC

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For lots of information visit our
Website
www.bdacallotments.co.uk

Join us on our Facebook page-
BDAC Birmingham allotments
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/674161326681373>

Follow us on Twitter
[@BDAC_allotments](https://twitter.com/BDAC_allotments)

The next edition will be out in June. If you have an interesting story that you would like to share send it in to bdac.allotments@gmail.com.

REMEMBER Site and plot competitions will take place this July . Site Secretaries will be sent the forms and invited to enter the best plots on site, both beginners-for the Flo Pickering Trophy and those experienced allotmenters, for the Cliff Jones. Entry criteria and forms will also be posted on our web site.

**Here's wishing all of you a great
and successful growing year!**