

# WAHGA NEWSLETTER      WINTER 2010

*Editor: David Hickman*



Welcome to the Winter edition. We were going to call this “the Autumn edition” but we’ve been upstaged by the cold weather! Curl up in front of the fire and have a good read.

## **DATES FOR THE DIARY**

### **Annual General Meeting**

This will be at 7.45pm on **Friday, 14 January 2011** at the Gardeners Hall. Please make every effort to attend: it’s your chance to hear what’s going on, have your say on issues which affect you or your allotment and to meet the Committee. The bar at the Hall will be open at 7pm on that evening.

### **WAHGA Show & Fete**

This is our big flagship event each year. The horticultural produce show takes place inside the Hall and the Fete is outside with music, children’s activities and entertainment for all. This will be on **Saturday, 20 August 2011**. Please put it in next year’s diary and let’s hope we have another sunny day!

Talking of which, it is pleasing to be able to report that the 2010 show was a great success. We attracted a lot more entries in many categories and the overall turnout was very good. See the back page for a report and photos.

## **Supper Dance at the Hall**

**On New Year’s Eve** there will be a supper dance featuring a buffet supper and the Golden Oldies Disco. Tickets are just £17.50 each, which includes the buffet. It starts at 7.30pm and will run through right into next year, finishing at 12.30am. Telephone Lesley on 01753 831863 or email [membership@wahga.org.uk](mailto:membership@wahga.org.uk) for further information or to book tickets.

## **Message from the Editor**

Why not have your say? Would you like to contribute something to the next edition? We’ll consider anything from poems, recipes and musings to articles about gardening (yes, we do this too!) so please let me know if you have a suggestion. This edition includes a feature on the Vansittart Road allotment site as seen through the eyes of Brian Atkinson. I’m planning to cover another of our sites in the next newsletter: why not make a bid for yours to be the one? Do you have something interesting to say in terms of the history, the people and that sort of material? This is how you contact me:

**Email:** [davidhickman@waitrose.com](mailto:davidhickman@waitrose.com)  
**Phone:** 07768 254686

Happy Christmas and Happy New Year!

## ONE OF WINDSOR'S FINEST



**Brian Atkinson** (pictured, above) has been the Steward at our Vansittart Road allotment site for many years and he has shared with us some of his fascinating memories and family history. It all started back before the last war when Brian's father rented a small holding on what is now the allotment site. The owner then was the Imperial Service College. The family kept 300 hens, 60 ducks and 20 geese. Brian's job, as a four year old, was to crawl under the chicken houses to collect goose eggs. He remembers that his father sold the goose eggs for 4 old pence each - a lot of money in those days! As well as keeping poultry, Brian's family and some other neighbours grew vegetables. This was an allotment site in the making. The site was much bigger than the current allotment site as Goslar Way wasn't built at that time: it extended right across to Green Lane which was on the edge of Windsor. There used to be a 40-foot-long lake on the site which appeared after spring rains. Brian also recalls that he used to dig down deep below the clay topsoil to a six-inch seam of golden sand!

War intervened. Brian's father was posted up to Falkirk, Scotland, with his company, the Prudential, and Brian moved there too. All the poultry had to be sold off cheaply. Crucially, from WAHGA's point of view, the land was made available to the Council to be used as allotments as part of Windsor's contribution to "Dig for Victory". During the war, Clarence Road was bombed with a line of bombs. None of these exploded but one left a huge crater in Clarence Gardens. Also Hitler ordered his forces not to bomb the Castle because he wanted it for himself! A platform on which a Bofors gun was mounted was placed on "the Rec.", the area of open space next to the allotment site.

As a teenager Brian attended Windsor Boys' School. He started his extensive experience of horticulture by helping to dig the masters' gardens, one of which was so hard set that Brian had to resort to using a pickaxe. Showing great commercial acumen, he played one master off against another: when one paid him 10 pence an hour, he got the master to up his pay as the other one was paying a full shilling! The school also had vegetable plots overseen by the Maths master, "Basher" Blow.

When Brian reached the age of 50 his father gave him a motor mower to allow him to look after the pathways on the allotment site. These days Brian's son, Nigel, although not an allotment holder, is the chief mower of the paths. Brian, now approaching 80 years of age, is one of the treasures of our allotment sites in Windsor. I am very grateful to him and to **Helen Vick**, another allotment holder at the site, both of whom have helped me hugely with this article.

*David Hickman*

## News from the Trading Sheds

The potato season is with us again and the requirements have been ordered. The only problem is a possible shortage of "Foremost". To avoid disappointment, please get your orders in as soon as possible. The order forms are available in the Trading Sheds\* or can be printed from the 'Trading Shed' page of the website: [www.wahga.org.uk](http://www.wahga.org.uk)

The new season seed order is in hand. Should you require alternative or particular cultivars let us know and we will do what we can to oblige.

Unfortunately, we will need to increase our prices for the new season. We have yet to determine the amount but be assured we will do our best to keep the increase as small as possible

**\* Our Trading Sheds are at 213 St Leonards Road, Windsor (next to the Gardeners Hall) and at the Maidenhead Road allotment site. Opening hours: Fairground, Thursdays 2.30-3.30pm, Sundays 10.15-12.15; Maidenhead Road, Thursdays 8am-11am, Sundays 8am-12 noon.**

*John Filmer, Purchasing Officer*

## Report on Allotment Sites

As we approach the end of the year, it is a time for tidying up our plots both physically and financially. Those allotment holders who have not paid their rents which were due on the 1<sup>st</sup> October need to do so now please. Tenancies will be terminated where payment is not forthcoming.

We continue to receive regular complaints on bonfires, water abuse and dog fouling. These matters have been raised on numerous occasions but in many cases the message does not get through. In summary:-

- a) Bonfires: Short duration, dry matter only, no green stuff, no rubber, plastic etc, have regard for neighbouring residents and allotment holders.
- b) Water: No hose pipes on sites with self-filling tanks. No siphoning of water other than to replenish water butts. This is only acceptable in extreme conditions as allotment holders on the end of the line are starved of water when siphoning occurs.
- c) Dogs: They must be kept on a leash at all times and owners are required to clear up after them. This also applies to members visiting Gardeners Hall. Dogs must not be allowed to roam free.

Virtually all of our plots and land is now under cultivation. I am greatly indebted to site supervisors and their helpers for the considerable effort they have made to achieve this. For the future, I shall be greatly obliged if plot holders give early notice of intentions to give up plots as it will enable us to prepare plots for new tenants more quickly.

Finally, may I remind everyone that now is the time to place your potato order at the trading shed. Black plastic, also on sale, is a good weed suppressant but a few sessions of autumn digging may be best for both you and your plot.

*Don Hartridge, Allotment Secretary*

## SHOW & FETE 2010

I am delighted to report that we had yet another successful Show this Summer. There was an increase in the number of entrants over last year and we had a significant increase in the number of entries in the Children's classes and photographic classes. There was lots of interest to see in the Hall. It was chock-a-block with vegetables, flowers, fruits, home-baking and preserves and displays of crafts and photographs. As is traditional the produce which exhibitors had over from preparing their entries for the Show was donated to the Produce Stall at the Fete, which proved really popular with visitors who made a beeline to the stall, buying-up all the vegetables.

**Below (Left)** frantic buying of freshly harvested vegetables by visitors at the Produce Stall; **(Right)** the winning entry in Class 3 - selection of vegetables - by Mike Kellow.

*Pamela Bailey, Show Secretary*



## RECIPE CORNER: LUXURY FRUIT CRUMBLE

### Ingredients

400g rhubarb, apple or other suitable fruit: you choose  
200g Demerara sugar  
100g porridge oats  
125g self-raising flour  
150g butter  
2 tablespoons of golden syrup  
75ml double cream

**Method:** Heat your oven to 180C/gas mark 4. Put the fruit in an oven-proof dish (22cm square). Sprinkle on 3 tablespoons of the sugar and add 1 tablespoon of water. In a bowl mix the oats, sugar and flour. Melt the butter in a pan. Add the golden syrup and cream and mix well. Tip this on to the oat mixture and stir it all together. Spoon this on top of the fruit. Level it out then bake for 45 minutes until it's set and golden on the top. Leave for 10 minutes and then serve the dish with cream, custard or ice cream.

**NEED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WAHGA?**

Please visit our Website: [www.wahga.org.uk](http://www.wahga.org.uk)