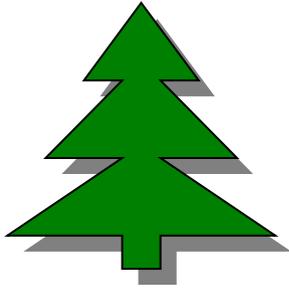


## WAHGA NEWSLETTER WINTER 2014



We are approaching the end of another year, but as gardeners we are already planning next year's growing season. Let's hope we don't have a repeat of this year's floods and we can look forward to being back on the soil in spring, planting the new crops without wading through mud! In preparation for next year you can order your seed potatoes now and the new seeds from Dobies will be arriving in the new year.

Please contact me if you have suggestions or copy for future editions.

Good gardening, Happy Christmas and all the best for 2015!

*Lesley Spence, Editor*

### ALLOTMENT SECRETARY'S REPORT

Another allotment year is under way. There has been an increase in the number of plots changing tenants. Unfortunately, since the weather changed, the ground has become very wet and difficult to work. It is important however, to take advantage of opportunities during the winter months to dig and prepare the plot to be ready to plant in the spring. A further aid is to use black plastic which is available in the trading sheds, to suppress the weeds in areas you are not ready to cultivate. A further benefit is that the soil beneath the plastic is invariably drier and therefore easier to dig when you are ready.

Tenants are reminded that permission is required if there is a wish to plant trees. Small trees can become large trees and can create a problem both for the planter and also surrounding plot holders. In later years, large trees can be a very expensive problem for the Association. When considering fruit trees, always look for those on a dwarf root stock or minarets which do not grow tall or spread if properly pruned. There is no good reason to grow ornamental trees on an allotment plot and permission would not normally be given to do so. On occasions self set trees will take root. Early notification to your Association will be appreciated. Early removal is easy and cost free. Established trees require the agreement of the relevant Council Department. In the past this has been very difficult to obtain.

Finally, a note to new tenants: weeds will always grow faster and more prolifically than the crops you wish to nurture. Consequently, it is important that you work your plot on a regular basis to maintain it in a weed free condition. This will give your crops the best conditions in which to prosper. Remember, you get out what you put in. I wish you all a rewarding season in the months to come

*Don Hartridge*

### OPENING TIMES - TRADING SHEDS

You may have noticed on your new membership card that there is a change to the opening times at the Maidenhead Road trading shed; it will be open at the following times: Thursdays: 9 to 11am; Sundays: 9am to 12 noon. Fairground opening times are unchanged. For Christmas and New Year both trading sheds will be closed on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup>, reopening on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January.

Please note that we are reliant on volunteers to give up their time to run the sheds, so please make it worth their while to be there and support this service. If you would like to be part of our team we always welcome new helpers and you will be amazed how much (gardening!) knowledge you can pick up at the same time.

Contact Lesley Spence for more information: [membership@wahga.org.uk](mailto:membership@wahga.org.uk) 01753 831863.

## NEWS FROM THE TRADING SHEDS

The Maidenhead Road trading shed was closed during much of August and September for a major reorganisation.

The leaky old storeroom at the back was demolished and replaced by a prefabricated building. This is now a walk-in area where stock can be seen from the front of shop.

New doors have been fitted, coats of paint applied, draughts sealed, lighting replaced, and new shelving installed.

Much of this was achieved through the volunteer efforts of Ginger Blackmun and Alan Dommett, aided by Bobby and Richard Baldwin to whom the association is very grateful. Volunteers to help serve in the sheds are always welcome 😊.

The table and chairs in the reception area are already proving very popular.

We are now taking orders for the 2015 seed potatoes to be delivered in February. Place your orders now to be certain of securing your desired variety. We will as usual have onion and shallot sets for spring planting, and a range of discounted seeds from Dobies of Devon including Sweet Peas, Sweet Williams, Sunflowers and Wallflowers which we haven't stocked before.



## ANNUAL SHOW AND FETE

In recent years the number of members taking part in the annual show in August has reduced dramatically. In 2014 despite having around 700 members there were only 63 entries and nearly half of these came from committee members and their families. There may be various reasons for this trend but given the significant time and effort involved in the organisation of the event the committee is considering if it is worth running a show for the small number of people who enter. However, we are aware that this is a very important decision which should not be taken lightly as it will be difficult to reverse. We would therefore like to know what the members think. Do you want the show to continue in its current form? If so would you be prepared to commit to entering the show and/or helping with the running of the show and fete? If not would you enter if the format was changed ie more informal, different date and so on.

Please let us know what you think, either by email to [secretary@wahga.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wahga.org.uk) or by phoning either of the numbers on the reverse of your membership card or by attending the AGM on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

## BURNS NIGHT DANCE

We are planning to hold a Burns Night Dance on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January. So polish up your dancing shoes, get your kilts out of mothballs and join us for a fun evening of Scottish dancing with an experienced caller.

Tickets are £5.00 each to include a welcome glass of wine or fruit juice (the bar will be open for subsequent drinks). Please bring a plate of finger food for the buffet for all to share.

Space and therefore ticket are limited so tickets must be booked in advance.

For more information or to book your tickets: e-mail: [membership@wahga.org.uk](mailto:membership@wahga.org.uk) phone: 01753 831863.

## RECIPES

We have two cookery contributions in this edition, both with heart-warming dishes for the coming winter months; using mostly produce you can grow on your plot or in your garden (if we continue with the wet weather we may even be growing the rice soon!).

### **Spinach and Tomato Risotto**

1 onion chopped  
1 garlic clove crushed  
Sunflower oil or butter  
150g (5oz) Risotto rice  
300ml (1/2 pint) vegetable stock, hot  
85g (3oz) ricotta cheese  
A good handful of spinach, chopped  
1 tomato, chopped

Fry the onion and garlic in a little sunflower oil or butter for about 5 minutes. Add the rice and stir. Add the stock gradually, stirring occasionally, until rice is cooked. Gently stir in the ricotta, spinach and tomato and cook for a further minute. Season to taste and serve.

***Barbara Hovell***

### **Leeks Glorious Leeks**

If like us you planted leeks earlier in the year and have begun harvesting them (if the rust hasn't got them) here are some of my favourite ways to use them.

#### **Leek and Potato Soup:**

This soup becomes Vichyssoise served cold with cream and snipped chives which are added before serving, but that is for summer time.

The simple winter warmer is my preferred option. Equal amounts of leeks and potatoes some chicken stock, a little milk, seasoning and the end result is a warming, filling soup; don't forget to cook the leeks in a little butter first before adding the other ingredients. After cooking for about 20 minutes blitz in a blender or sieve to a fine puree and reheat, then check the seasoning and eat with some crusty bread. Who could want for more?

It can be given an extra something by topping with a little cream before serving.

**Vegetable Soup** is always a good standby to which your leeks will add something extra.

**Pies** are a favourite in my household with either a mash or a pastry topping.

Chicken, ham and leek is a simple and quick dish especially if you wish to use up leftovers. Just mix some cold cooked chicken with some pieces of chunky ham into a white sauce. As sauces are readily available in the supermarkets the dish can be even easier if time is short.

Gently soften the leeks in a little butter on a medium heat, then combine all the ingredients, pour into a suitable dish and top with puff pastry (ready-made of course). Bake in the oven. See pastry wrappings for guidance. I think of this as food maths. Add together one or two ingredients, some ready prepared pastry, sauce and hey presto a tasty and simple but satisfying meal whichever you choose.

You can vary the contents as well as the toppings; for example try sausage and leek without the white sauce, but perhaps meat gravy instead.

Turkey and leek especially good after Christmas and whatever takes your fancy.

If you like quiche then leeks work well combined with some cheese and cream. Savoury pastry cases are also available from the supermarkets so can speed the process. However you use them enjoy lovely leeks.

***Fran Hartridge***

## POEMS

Here are some thoughts on experiences in the modern world by **Joan Jones**.

### **Dignity and the Modern World**

To phone today is tiresome,  
You do with bated breath;  
To speak to the operator  
Is a thing of the past.  
Press One, or Two, or Three  
Whilst the money lasts  
Or the operator so quiet  
One can hardly hear,  
Even holding the instrument  
Right near the ear.  
The answering machine is worse,  
Pick up the receiver and it starts,  
No use speaking for it just goes on,  
Then suddenly, the voice is gone  
You are no nearer knowing  
What it meant and care less.  
So once again you are left in doubt  
And wonder what it's all about.  
If this is now what has to be,  
Please don't forget our dignity.

### **Still Young at Heart**

Yes, I am 92  
Still many things to do,  
But legs are weary  
And often won't walk well  
Have used a stick and  
Badly fell;  
The shock it gave me  
Stopped me in my tracks.  
So I have a three-legged wheeler  
To take me there and back.  
I still belong to the BRC  
And help with medical loan,  
But this is mainly sitting  
And answering the phone.  
It gets me out to meet people  
And helping others too.  
So, come on ladies of my age  
Don't sit indoors and stew,  
Assert yourselves and find  
Some charity work to do,  
You won't regret it!!

## JOE RIGG

Sadly, Joe Rigg, a long-term allotment holder on Fairground, passed away in November. Many will be familiar with Joe from when he used to run the bar at Gardeners Hall, also he and his wife, Jayne, used to organise Sunday lunches in the hall. A full tribute to him will appear in our next edition.

**WAHGA is Windsor Allotments and Home Gardens Association Ltd.**

**[Visit our website: www.wahga.org.uk](http://www.wahga.org.uk)**