

KING HENRY'S WALK GARDEN newsletter

news@khwgarden.org.uk

ISSUE 3 AUTUMN 2009

*Welcome.....to the third edition
of the King Henry's Walk Garden Newsletter*



Well, that was the much vaunted 'Barbecue Summer'. Did you notice? That wet bit between Spring and now? It may have been a wash out weather-wise, but the Garden has been – quite literally – abuzz with activity. The main event has been the installation of the beehives, but there's been much more besides; the Spoon Making workshops have caused a stir and carved a niche into weekends, thanks to Ros and the wonderful Nic Webb; Art Club with Becky and Faye, and Food Illustration workshops with Emma Dibben drew big crowds; and a glass needs to be raised to David Gething for his excellent Wine Club evenings.

Digging deeper: *where do we go from here?*

The Garden has had a good second year so far and the permanent features are establishing well, thanks to the hard work that everyone has put in. Take a closer look at things, however, and you'll notice that the fruit trees and hedges need pruning; the lawn looks patchy; the communal beds are a little unkempt. As the garden pushes toward its second winter we need to organise ourselves into groups that can continue the general management of the various aspects of the garden. Don't expect the committee to do it; they're too busy fundraising and organising rotas! Angi and Steve have led the way with the composting, but they can't manage it all - take a look at the interview with them to see what you can get from joining in and learning new skills. Caroline has been keeping the lawn in trim but needs help

with pricking and feeding it. They have taken the trouble to learn the skills they need to be able to get on with these jobs independently, fitting it in with their own busy lives. There are several areas that need similar input; the communal planting (flower beds), bike lock planters and hanging baskets; the fruit trees and hedges; the woodland; keeping the bees; the pond area. A small group is already organising the propagation for the spring and summer sales but the more the merrier.

If you're looking to increase your gardening skills in one or more of the above areas, meet more folk and get the confidence to be able to come in and get on with something, sign up to a working group. Contact news@khwgarden.org.uk or leave a note in my postbox at Flat 8, 11B King Henry's Walk.

Becky Tabram



Britain in Bloom
judging at KHWG

Islington Council

News from the committee

King Henry's Walk Garden has been thanked by Islington Council for our role in helping to achieve the Borough's Silver Gilt Award in Britain in Bloom 2009, and their shortlisting as a finalist in the Community Award. KHWG was named in the judges' report as an "excellent centre of learning".

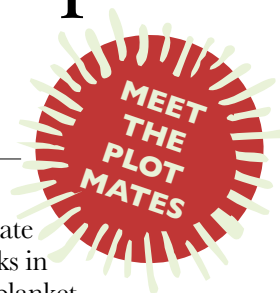
Good news also from the Charity Commission who have agreed to offer us charitable objectives. We have to amend the constitution to meet the Commission's requirements, and when we've come up with a format that meets with their approval we will put this to the membership at a special general meeting. Please can all garden members make an effort to attend the meeting as the move to becoming a charity is one that is crucial to the long-term development and success of the garden, and we want everyone to be involved in this process.

We have just agreed the terms of the 50-year lease for the garden (excluding the woodland whose ownership is still unclear) and hope to get this signed shortly. The woodland will be added into the lease once the legal issues have been sorted out. The business rates appeal is still ongoing and we're waiting for a new date for the hearing. So far we have letters of support from Jeremy Corbyn MP, the leader of Islington Council, and our local councillors, all saying they think it's crazy that KHWG should have to pay business rates!



The newtkeepers of Narnia

By Paul Tabram



A warm August morning and *The Newsletter* wanders through the gate and finds Angela and Steve, sticks in hand, craning over the fence gathering blanket weed. ‘You have to be extremely careful,’ Angela points out unravelling strands of lurid green macramé ‘Sometimes we find baby newts in here.’

Nearly every weekend Angela and Steve are around, tinkering away tidying here, sweeping there, shredding, watering the beds, fixing stuff.

‘If something’s broke, I’ll fix it,’ says Steve ‘I’ll stop the car to straighten traffic lights – it’s just the way I am. If you can do something useful, do it.’

Not that they don’t tend to their own plot; ‘Getting it felt like winning the lottery,’ Angela says before reeling off a veritable Market Garden’s worth of stuff they’re growing. ‘The whole fun of it is learning from other people and swapping plants – leaving messages in a bottle, swapping recipes – everyone gets pleasure from it.’



They’ve lived in the area about 20 years and say the Garden has transformed their lives. ‘Living round the Ball’s Pond Road, there was never anywhere to walk and feel comfortable,’ says Angela. ‘but now getting out here, away from the noise, is fantastic. Opening the gate is like coming into Narnia.’

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Angela is a retired actress (with a ready supply of colourful showbiz anecdotes) and Steve is Chief Electrician at the Theatre Royal on the Haymarket.

‘I’m on 24 hour emergency call and never know what’s coming up, so can’t commit to Work Days. But it’s great to get down here when I can and make a small contribution.’

Angela can put in a bit more time and says she’s really felt the benefits of getting involved. ‘I’ve learned a lot of new skills like composting, shredding, working the water – even how to use a computer!’

‘It would be great for more people to get involved,’ they say. ‘People seem to think there’s a core of people who do everything or they feel shy, but if you find out what needs doing you can really achieve something – just picking up the litter or watering your neighbour’s plot if it needs it – it all helps.’*

As they start to outline all the stuff they want to get on with that afternoon, *The Newsletter* gets the feeling this would be a good time to withdraw and let them get on with what they clearly love doing. The baby newts are in safe hands.

* *To this end, The Newsletter is handing over the Plotmate reins. From now on it will work on a chain. Angela and Steve will find the next Plotmates, then they in turn will find the next, etc etc. Good luck all, and enjoy!*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday October 15th,
November 19th, December 10th**

Wine Club

Learn about wines in a relaxed and friendly environment, 7.30pm. Tickets £10, pre-booking essential. Email wineclub@khwgarden.org.uk or call David on 07876 345198.

**Tuesday October 13th & 27th,
November 10th & 24th, December 8th**

Art Club

All abilities welcome, just turn up. Some materials provided, 6–9pm.

Saturday, October 24

Working with Willow, workshop with Geoff Sinclair

Email rsvp@khwgarden.org.uk or call Marnie on 07974 353148 for details.

Wednesday, November 25

A Year on My Allotment, talk by Joe Swift

7pm. Tickets £10. held at the Chorley Mission, King Henry’s Walk. Light refreshments provided. Email rsvp@khwgarden.org.uk or call Marnie on 07974 353148 for details.

Saturday, December 5

Winter crafts

Details to be announced.

Saturday, February 13

Make a bird hide out of growing willow, with willow artist, Joanne Hammond

Email rsvp@khwgarden.org.uk or call Marnie on 07974 353148 for details.

COMING UP NEXT YEAR

In February... a full day workshop - An introduction to gardening skills...

For more information about any of our events visit our website, www.khwgarden.org.uk or visit the garden Saturday and Sunday 12.00 - 4.00pm, May to September; Saturday 12.00 - 4.00pm October to April.



NOT SO SWIFT JUDGEMENT ON BEST PLOT

A sunny September morning in the garden and Joe Swift pacing back and forth, clutching his brow and muttering, 'Its so hard...' can only be the judging of the hotly contested KHWG Best Plot awards. The garden looked beautiful, and Joe was visibly impressed with the intensity of planting on our small plots, and the obvious pride we all took in our shared spaces. The winner was Faye in plot 37, with a 'stunning combination of veg, flowers and herbs in raised planters; really healthy plants and neat, tidy plot.' The winner of the best flower plot was St Jude & St Paul's Flower arrangers plot 65, which Joe said was 'very pretty, lovely impact as you enter the garden, nice selection of self-seeding flowers; very colourful'. Finally, the best container, after much humming and ahing, went to Amy in plot 73, for the variety of produce and good use of a very small space. The presentation was made at the horticultural fair at the garden by Lucy Dichmont, producer of Radio 4's Gardeners Question Time. Well done everyone! *Leonie Johnson*

Horticultural Show heaven

The Horticultural Show organised by Islington Organic Growers Network reaped the harvest of the success of our other Open Days – and again was served up blue ribbon bound in a beautiful



late summer's (NOT, so the Today Programme informed us that morning, an Indian Summer's) day.* Everyone, as ever, worked their green fingers to the bone. The organisers, the setter-uppers, the stall holders, the cake makers, bean growers, Ugliers (you know of what we speak), speakers, taker-downers – even a ubiquitous, and all-too-literal Mr Bean put in a full day's toiling of the fund raising turf. To say nothing of the tough judging of the Victoria sponges required of Councillor Terry Stacy. Much fun was had in the garden on a sapphire blue Saturday. Kids played, parents lolled, and visitors old and new marvelled at what has been achieved throughout the year. As our venerable speaker, Jeremy Corbyn MP, said – Give It Up For King Henry's Walk Garden!!!!



Getting the measure of some prize-winning runner beans, left, and information at the ready, above, at the Horticultural Show last month

** An Indian Summer, according to the Beeb, can only occur in October, and is to do with American rather than Indian Indians' late wheat harvest.*

Runner Bean Chutney

This month's recipe comes from Angi, who remembers her grandmother making something similar in Wales. Angi tracked the recipe down at www.celt.net.org.uk.

INGREDIENTS:

900ml vinegar
450g brown sugar
70g flour
70g mustard powder
1 tbsp celery salt
1 tbsp turmeric
675g runner beans

Combine 775 ml of the vinegar with the brown sugar in a saucepan and bring to boil before taking off the heat. Meanwhile, mix the flour, mustard powder and

turmeric in a bowl. Add the remainder of the vinegar to this and mix to a smooth paste.

Trim the runner bean pods and cut into 1cm diagonal pieces. Place these in a saucepan with some lightly salted water and boil for about 5 minutes, or until just tender. Drain the beans then add to the pan with the vinegar along with the celery salt and mustard paste. Bring the mixture to a boil and cook for 10 minutes then set aside to cool before bottling in jars that have been sterilised and baked in an oven pre-heated to 120°C for 10 minutes. Seal with vinegar-proof lids then store in a cool, dark cupboard for at least 3 weeks to mature before using.

GARDEN GALLERY



Yes, he's probably responsible for the rubbish strewn all over the garden, but isn't he a fantastic Mr Fox?

If you have photos of the garden you'd like to share, email them to news@khwgarden.org.uk



KHWG Secretary, Amanda Hall, was invited to the Chancellor's Big Lunch at 10 Downing Street in July

If you have ideas, thoughts, comments or suggestions about the direction of the Garden, we want to hear from you. We are a community garden and a community of gardeners. Whether it's workday volunteering, a bit of know-how or a vision of what you want to see happen, we would all appreciate your involvement.

Would you like to see more King Henry's Walk Garden...?

Some of us in the garden have an idea to build more King Henry's Walk Garden, 3 acres more, in fact. It is an ambitious plan, and would have an incredible impact on Mildmay if it ever happened. Obviously there is little spare land left to cultivate, which is why we have come up with the crazy idea to persuade the local Council, or someone else with about £30 million to spare, to let us build over the railway cutting next to the garden, (the north London Line) between King Henry's Walk in the East and Newington Green Road in the West. By spanning the railway line for a 500m stretch between Mildmay Grove North and South we could potentially build enough KHWG-style growing plots to demolish the Council's allotment waiting list, plus provide over an acre of community-run open space and an urban fruit & veg farm. We have called this idea 'Mildmay Fields.' Postgraduate architecture students from Oxford Brookes University, under the guidance of their tutor, Bruno, one of our plot holders, are working in groups to develop five alternative conceptual schemes for Mildmay Fields as part of their studies. The students will be presenting their ideas, and would love to get your feedback on what you think could enhance Mildmay, on **TUESDAY 20th OCTOBER** at the garden. There will be two drop-in sessions, 10.30-12.00 and 6pm-8pm, with coffee & refreshments in the morning & a glass of wine & nibbles in the evening. In the morning there will be hands on creative opportunities for younger children to express their architectural ambitions, (run by the students!) and maybe a bit of junk modelling in both sessions for young & old alike....

If you would like to come along please RSVP to Leonie on leonie.johnson@blueyonder.co.uk. If you can't come but would like to get involved in a small team pushing the

KING HENRY'S WALK
garden

green pennant  award

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