

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



2011 looks set to be a challenging year for us, as for all voluntary organisations. For the past three years, we have put on a programme of regular workshops and talks, open to all, supported by grant funding that has enabled us to ask for only a minimal contribution from those attending. We fully intend to carry on doing this, as it is an important principle of the Friends of King Henry's Walk Garden that we should provide a resource for everyone in the

local community, not just those who can afford to pay for it. Rosey Lyall is working hard to source the funding to make this possible, but there is less money out there and so the task is a difficult one.

We're always interested to hear suggestions of funding sources. Perhaps you work for a company that might be interested in supporting a charity like KHWG. If so, let us know!

Nicola Freshwater, Chair

A warm welcome at the Winter Fair

The Winter Fair on 4th December was really exciting. We had over 350 visitors and the fair spanned, for the first time, three sites: KHWG, the Adventure Playground and the Chorley Mission hall.

Amongst a back drop of busy wreath making, children's craft activities and candle-making was the sale of the amazing homemade soup and mulled wine, the Robin Grey band, a craft fair and a special visit by Father Christmas in Docwra's Wood! 100 presents were given out to children from the local community - some children



for the first time received chocolate from the suppliers of chocolate to the royal family. A big thank you to all the volunteers who made the day a success. KHWG delivers 4 seasonal events per year; if you'd like to volunteer to help at one of these events please email rsvp@khwgarden.org.uk

Above: waiting for a special visitor in the magical grotto in Docwra's Wood. Left: the Robin Grey Band accommodates some new young talent!

Sloping off to a tranquil plot

Today I shared my garden duty with the delightful Jessy Kaner. Remembering that it was my turn to introduce a plot holder, I thought this was an excellent opportunity for me, and the readers, to get to know Jessie better:

I have always liked Jessy's warmth, wonderfully English sense of humour and slightly mocking, self-deprecatory outlook on life and the garden. She arrived at the allotment in a rather roundabout way through her friend Gina and her husband Derek. She laughingly describes how she applied a little late after the initial applications and ended up firstly helping someone with their plot, then sharing a flower plot and then finally having her own.

Jessy describes herself as a 'chaotic' gardener and I suggested 'spontaneous' might be a kinder description. However, she is making efforts to improve her skills by incorporating crop rotation, companion planting and planning, planning, planning! She mentioned Caroline Foley's talk on having a successful plot as influencing her methods.

Her very pretty flower plot is dotted with vegetables: tomatoes, beans, beetroot, lettuces and onions. Gina her friend and fellow plot holder has a 'strong sense of design' and struggles with Jessy's untidy approach. Nevertheless, theirs is a strong friendship and their shared work ethic and desire to make the most of the garden carries them through!

I really empathised with Jessy's description of the garden as being a place of tranquillity and friendly solitude. She says she always complained to her husband that she didn't have a green space and while she would like him to be involved she accepts that this is something she does alone, separate to her family. Her son Jonah, who has just achieved 3 A* in his A levels and is off to Oxford, says the garden is a place for 'middle-aged, middle-class women' and is not interested in being involved. We laugh conspiratorially, knowing that we fit this demography to a 'T'.

We talk on for what seems like hours (are we fulfilling our duty?) about life and gardening. It's late August and there's been lots of rain during the last few days, but the sun is still shining hot and strong. Only a couple of visitors today and the moment seems sweet so we continue chatting. She says that the two recommended hours a week to manage a plot, are not enough to keep everything in order and growing strongly. She laments her lack of time and skill again.

Finally Jessy confides that she was offered a more standard vegetable plot without a slope next to mine, but turned it down. Was it my proximity? No, she likes her 'sloping plot' and feels an affinity for it. I know how she feels and I know others feel the same. Isn't it funny how we get attached to bits of land even with their defects?

Jenny Morgan

MEET
THE
PLOT
MATES

Bee update

You may be interested to know that bees do not hibernate in winter like for instance wasps, but cluster together to keep warm. The bees are sensitive to light and the rhythm of the year – they start preparing for winter after the longest day in June; fewer drone cells are produced and the workers will collect less pollen which is needed for new brood, and concentrate on collecting nectar to turn into honey needed for food stores to see them through the cold winter months when they are unable to get out of the hive.

We have been unable to harvest any honey this year as the colony swarmed twice and did not then have enough time to build up sufficient honey stocks to feed themselves through the winter. A hive needs 20-30lb of honey to survive the average winter. We have therefore had to supplement their food with syrup made by Andy and Louw from refined white sugar and water.

When temperatures outside the hive drop to about 18°C the colony will form a 'cluster'; that is a ball of bees that pack together in the centre of the hive in order to preserve



the temperature within the hive. If this drops below 8°C or the colony will not survive.

On sunny winter days the bees can be seen taking the opportunity to stretch their wings and get a breath of fresh air. They will also take the chance to defecate and clear out any dead bees.

Brood that emerges in the summer months lives only a short time, perhaps 40 days as their wings wear out with flight. However those

emerging in the autumn need to last through the winter and can therefore live for up to 6 months.

When the weather starts warming up we will inspect the inside of the hive to see how the colony has coped with this year's harsh winter. We will keep you posted in the next newsletter.

More bee courses will be run at the garden next year for anyone interested in finding out about these fascinating insects.



The Garden Classroom wins education award

Quick choc chip cookies

Thanks to Angi Macguire for this month's recipe.

INGREDIENTS:

Makes 32

8oz (200g) **butter**

6oz (150g) **light brown sugar**

12oz (300g) **self-raising flour**

7oz (175g) **milk choc chips**

2-3 tablespoons **milk**

1 Set oven to 190degreesc/375F/gasmark 5

2 In a large bowl beat sugar and butter until light and fluffy

3 Mix in eggs, then sift in flour. Add coc chips and milk. Stir so all is mixed gently

4 Place heaped teaspoonfuls of mix, spread apart, between 3 baking trays lined with non-stick parchment

5 Flatten the bicuits a little and bake for approx 15 mins, until firm to the touch. Cool on a wire rack.



The Garden Classroom won its first award at the London Tree and Woodland Awards 2010. A hand carved bowl and certificate signed by the Mayor of London was given to Finn Roweth, a local resident, at the ceremony at City Hall on 2nd December. Isabella Rose, a Yr 5 pupil from Hanover Primary school, read out her poem on Autumn Trees to an audience of over 100.

The award was for given for the most successful (education) project,

which was delivered at Docwra's Wood at KHWG in 2010. The project was funded by The Forestry Commission and the Ernest Cook Trust. The Garden Classroom is a non-profit organisation which has been in operation since 2008 and works in partnership with King Henry's Walk Garden. It is the only organisation in Islington with the Learning Outside the Classroom Accreditation.

For more information see www.thegardenclassroom.org.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

WINE CLUB

20th JAN & 17th FEB, 7.30PM

VOLUNTEER WORK SESSIONS

22nd JAN & 12th FEB, 9AM - 12PM



KING HENRY'S WALK
garden

11c King Henry's Walk,
London N1 4NX

www.khwgarden.org.uk
Tel: 020 7923 9035
e: info@khwgarden.org.uk

