

Glasgow Allotments Forum Newsletter

Issue 2010 - 2011.

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Glasgow Allotments Forum (GAF) was set up by and is run by ploholders. The meetings are held six times each year and provide the opportunity for ploholders from the different sites across the city to meet, share information and discuss issues related to Allotments. The Glasgow City Council (GCC) Allotments Officer usually attends. The meetings are open to all ploholders and to anyone else with an interest in allotment gardening.

For dates and times of GAF Talks and Meetings, 2011 see overleaf.

ALLOTMENTS' COMPETITIONS 2010

The St Mungo Trophy for the best plot in Glasgow was won by Stephen Malcolm of Berridale Allotments. This trophy has an almost permanent place on Stephen's sideboard as this is his third win in succession. Placed second was Max Hartman of Merrylee, who can be proud of the number of times his name has featured in one of the top places. Graham Brown of Kelvinside (Julian) was placed third – a new name to welcome. 18 ploholders from 7 sites took part.

Two new competitions were run by GAF this year. One for new ploholders and one for individual sites. From comments and number of entries received both are very welcome GAF innovations.

The New Ploholder Awards attracted 14 entries from 8 sites. This competition highlights both the commitment and the hard work which are needed to clear and start to cultivate an often overgrown and much neglected plot. The top award went to a trio: Paul Barham, Jan Nimmo & Anne Elliot from Hamiltonhill and the second to Evelyn Deas of New Victoria Gardens. In addition, five other new ploholders from four different sites were highly commended. All received a certificate and gardening vouchers from the sponsors of this competition: The Incorporation of Gardeners of Glasgow to whom GAF is very grateful.

The third competition was for a whole site which was assessed for *sustainability* over a range of activities and practices. The overall winner of the Sustainable Site Trophy was Holmlea Allotment Gardens, with merit awards going to Mansewood and to Kelvinside (Julian). This time GAF is grateful to an anonymous donor for the trophy, which is a beautiful pottery piece.

The Trophies and Awards were presented to the proud winners at the Glasgow Show, Glasgow Green, on 31st July.

DOORS OPEN DAY (OPEN GATES)

This year with GAF, Glasgow Building Preservation Trust arranged that allotment sites would be included in their popular annual opportunity for members of the public to see behind normally closed doors and gates.

Twelve allotment sites participated in this very successful venture by opening their gates at arranged times and providing guides for the many interested visitors. Some sites even managed teas and home baking!. Beechwood, Hamiltonhill, High Carntyne, Holmlea Gardens, Kirklee, Julian Av., Mansewood, Oatlands, Queens Park, Reidvale, Trinley Brae and Westthorn were the pioneers and we hope that Open Gates will be repeated next year with even more sites included.

HERITAGE LOTTERY PROJECT

The Heritage Lottery Fund has given SAGS a grant for a joint project with GAF to support ploholders in researching the heritage and recording the stories of their sites. There is a steering group of 12 people with diverse skills to advise - ploholders with many years experience, historians, archivists, web designer, film maker and photographer. Events will be held in the spring and autumn 2011, to share the history and the culture of community growing in Glasgow. Leaflets and a booklet will be published and material about Allotments in Glasgow will be put on the web – an exciting prospect.

Contact Judy 0141 357 0204 or Rona on rona_w@yahoo.com

GAF TALKS 2010

Many people, concerned about the decrease in the honeybee population would like to see hives on Allotment sites. In response to the interest in this, GAF invited Suzanne Ullman who has looked after bees on an Allotment for a number of years, to lead what was a most interesting discussion with ploholders, many of whom had already done a lot of homework on the topic.

The GAF Talk on *Composting* which will be led by Jan McDonald, has been rescheduled for Wed. 7,00pm, 10th November, 2010.

GAF TALKS 2011

Venue: Woodside Hall

Dates: Wed. January 26th

7.00pm Thurs February 24th

NEWS FROM SITES

Balornock Allotments - A new section of fence was erected on part of the boundary.

Beechwood Allotments - A new section of fence was erected on part of the boundary.

Mansewood Allotments - New fence panels erected to complete site boundary.

High Carntyne Allotments – Water pump system replaced.

Hamiltonhill – Treatment to Japanese Knotweed was carried out over the summer, however, further treatment will be required as there is still some fresh growth.

Oatlands Leisure Gardens – The site was completed earlier this year and handed over to LES on 5th March 2010. The official opening took place on 18th September to coincide with Doors Open Day (Open Gates).

Bellahouston Walled Garden – LES completed the garden in June and an official opening was held on 22nd September 2010. The project will be used as an educational tool to promote allotment gardening and to encourage those with an interest in vegetable growing and promote both healthy activity and improved diet. It is also aimed at improving the quality of life and environment for all and to promote the beneficial links between gardening and bio-diversity. Schools and other partners have started working on their plots in preparation for next season. A second phase for this project is now being considered, where a small number of allotment plots will be created on a grass area adjacent to the walled garden. LES are currently working with the user groups to form a steering group to expand the project.

STARTER PLOTS

Waiting lists for plots are becoming longer and longer. In an attempt to reduce waiting time, a number of sites are now offering half plots to new plotters and many new gardeners find these are quite big and demanding enough. One site starts their new plotters in quarter-sized plots i.e. *Starter Plots* and finds that these have another advantage: new plotters are given the

opportunity to show what they can do and also find out if allotment gardening is for them.

SAGS. (Scottish Allotments & Gardens Society)

www.sags.org.uk

SAGS reports almost a 50% rise from last year to over 120 new groups across Scotland looking for land to start growing. SAGS are members of the Scottish Government 'Grow Your Own' working group, which was set up to fulfil the recommendations in the Food and Drink Policy 'To advise the Scottish Government on the most effective way to provide strategic support for allotments and 'grow your own' initiatives' It will report in January 2011 with results and an action plan which we hope will help these new groups.

The first day Annual Scottish Allotments Conference in June was hosted by Glasgow City Council with keynote addresses on 'How the public sector can use community cultivation to fight inequality, tackle deprivation and cut costs' with other keynote addresses from senior officers in Health and Local Government.

The second day at Dunblane was on 'Sustainable Gardening for Allotments'. The morning session was chaired by Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP with a variety of speakers. Jim Tolson MSP chaired the afternoon session with reports from associations across Scotland.

In September our five MSP sponsors spoke at our Holyrood Event which was attended by 18 MSPs and 4 Ministers – an all time record ! We were strongly supported by Glasgow MSPs from all parties with Robert Brown, Patricia Ferguson attending, and apologies from Bill Aitken and Pauline McNeill. The Event was to highlight SAGS new publication – '**A Scottish Plot-holders Guide**' A document for new plot-holders and groups starting up a new site. Copies are available on the web or from Judy.

A.R.I. (Regeneration Initiative)

www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari Ian Welsh is the local representative and can be contacted via the website.

GAF MEETINGS 2011

Wednesdays, 7pm start. Woodside Hall, Glenfarg Street off St Georges Road.

1. **January 12th**
2. **March 16th**
3. **May 4th**
4. **July 6th**
5. **Sept 7th**
6. **Nov. 2nd (AGM).**