

Issue Number 9

The Newsletter of the Felixstowe Allotment Association
www.felixstoweallotments.co.uk
Edited and designed by Peter Constable

I started the last article for the newsletter in August and it was raining. Today, early November, guess what? Yes it's raining. Trying to clear the plots ahead of the winter has therefore been a slow process. Each Autumn we see new arrivals on the plots and say farewell to others. At Cowpasture where I have my plot we have seen a considerable turnover with the council clearing some larger well established plots now back in circulation and able to be split down into smaller plots.

The shop and hut at Cowpasture has seen a busy few months finishing with a BBQ in early September. The photographs show members enjoying their own food cooked for them using a barbecue kindly donated by Dave Clayden with most of us hiding under a large canopy keeping out of the full sun. Additionally, we took the opportunity to mark the earlier planting of a Whitebeam tree in memory of the late Jeremy Pratt. Angela and her family including the dog gathered around it having enjoyed the food.

I must make brief mention of the former chair, Maurice Barber who in October celebrated his 90th birthday, again with a hot drink or similar at the hut at Cowpasture. Is Maurice the oldest member we have? He works 10 rod at Cowpasture and has

kept many of us in raspberries let alone plums during 2023.

The shop will be closed for December until mid January when we recommence sales and distribution of seed potatoes and onions for those who ordered them. That said, we should have a few spares of most for those who didn't place an order.

NEV'S NEWS



As regard general purpose compost, we have negotiated a discount at Gosling's nursery at Trimley. They will give you a 15% discount on Humax general purpose compost, 60L bags. One bag is £5.35. Three bags £15.30. This compost does still contain peat.

You must collect it from Gosling's, you must show your FAA membership card, if you don't have one or have lost it please contact Claire (membership) and a card or introduction letter can be provided. We are still seeking a source of compost that can deliver direct to the shop but road/track access for large vehicles is problematic.

The Kings seed order using their website has already been used by some members. The 50% discount is applied at time of purchase and delivery is within five days. If members wish, then either I or Claire can process their order once the Kings' blue form has been completed. We can buy on multiple occasions

using the discount.

The link is <https://www.kingsseeds.com/secure/register?ur=KA1183>

As I have mentioned road ways, please do read the article from Guy, as the pathways etc are becoming a problem due to rain and usage. We don't wish to see Felixstowe council ban the use of motor vehicles. We strive to maintain them, but need your help to achieve it. There is soon to

DOWN TO EARTH



Felixstowe
ALLOTMENT
ASSOCIATION

be a working party, shovel and wheelbarrows at the ready.

A few members again grew pumpkins for family and friends to enjoy at Halloween, the pictures show the monsters, the largest at 182cm grown by Chris Adamek at Cowpasture, the second being grown at Ferry Road by Liv Heeroma at 124cm. Chris's daughter also entered into the fun measuring 152cm. Two of mine finished up on a door step in South Yorkshire.

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Nev's News

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To close, can I point you towards the Events and Speakers list for the Winter Meetings, the AGM Cheese and Wine on March 28, we are also seeking to hold a Christmas Coffee and Mince Pie morning in December and then start the Cake/Coffee mornings on April 24. May I and the Committee wish you and your families a healthy New Year and let's hope we can get growing in drier conditions than this year.

Happy Christmas to you all!
Neville



The family of Jeremy Pratt pictured around the Whitebeam tree planted at Cowpasture in his memory.

NEW MEMBERS
Cowpasture
Annamarie Webster
Stella Burgess
Harry Lewis
Mark Barrett
Trevor Rowe
Jill Morris
Sarah Blows
Christine Stevenson

60L of Compost from Goslings at £5.35 a bag for members.



A delighted youngster with his pumpkins on a South Yorkshire doorstep.



by Chris Adamek at Cowpasture.



by Liv Heeroma at Ferry Road.

Kingsfleet and Fairfield School Visits

For the past few years, Covid permitting, we have introduced about 30 five-six year olds from the Year 1 class at Kingsfleet School, to the joys and skills of allotment gardening. Robin and Anita Farrow have told half the class how they grow and use their fruit and veg. The other half had storytelling and quizzes from Rosemary Pearse in the Ferry Road orchard about various aspects of vegetable gardening before swapping the groups over. This year September 20th turned wet but the children's interest was high and their level of knowledge variable! Robin and Anita gave them a selection of

vegetables to take back to school to taste, cook and to use for printing.

On October 4th, the visits to Cowpasture from Fairfield School's three Year 1 classes resumed after a few years' gap. Each of the three classes split into groups of about 15 each and visited the allotments of Claire Smith, Nev Farthing and Guy Pearse, while Rosemary Pearse repeated the storytelling and quizzes that she had done at Ferry Road with the other half groups. The morning became a bit chaotic when one child needed to use the Portaloo; this proved very infectious and there



Fairfield pupils feel the weight of a butternut squash.

was very quickly a large queue! They were also interested in the scarecrows around the site and the blonde one in the purple dress was christened Barbie Scarecrow! On being asked what a Dutch hoe was for, one suggested 'Potato Peeling'!

The children identified vegetables with varying degrees of success but are now aware that they do not start their lives in a plastic bag on a supermarket shelf! It is also good that we expose youngsters to the interest and satisfaction of gardening both as a hobby and an economical means of growing produce with a known history. Perhaps some will be the next generation of allotment holders!



Anita Farrow with a captive audience, even in the rain!



Rosemary Pearse tells vegetable stories to an attentive audience.



Guy Pearse with his potato peeler.

Damage to Roadways

The roadways at Cowpasture and Ferry Road are being damaged by being used when very wet and sometimes by allotment holders driving too fast.

This is causing the tracks to sink thereby collecting further water leading to bigger puddles, which take longer to dry out. Vehicular use in these conditions inevitably leads to the formation of potholes.

These can damage vehicles and are expensive to fill. Your Committee has negotiated with the Town Council for more asphalt road planings to be delivered to Cowpasture.

A working party is planned for November 24th (weather permitting!) to repair the tracks at Cowpasture.

A date has yet to be fixed for the Ferry Road site. We need volunteers to help the Town Council staff fill the potholes.

Can you help? Please contact Nev Farthing (nevfurthing@gmail.com or Tel. 07732 317883).

Please respect our fragile roads by keeping your driving on them to a minimum when they are wet, and when you must use them, drive slowly.

Both site's speed limits are **5 miles per hour.**



Insurance and Subscription Renewal

Our Subscription year runs from 1st January to 31st December. Our insurance cover is for paid up members. So, if you want to have the full benefits of your Association, please ensure that you have paid by 31st December at the very latest. It is only £7.50 for a Single membership or £11 for Joint members living at the same address. Payments can be made by cash, cheque or BACS to FAA or Felixall (we are phasing out our former name of Felixstowe Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners or FSALG). There is also a card facility at the Hut 39 shop when it is open.

Membership forms are available from the website, the shop or from Claire Smith, our Membership Secretary, who can be contacted on faamembershipsecretary@gmail.com

Please return completed forms and subscriptions to our Treasurer, Guy Pearse, at 14 Links Avenue, IP11 9HD or treasurerfsalg@gmail.com

There is also a letterbox on the side of the container at Plot 39. Our Bank Account is Sort Code 20-98-07 and Account Number 70732567.

Lastly, does anyone know PM Kemble? We have received a subscription but have no contact or Plot details. Please let Guy or Claire know if you can help.

*Above left:
Claire and Clare sorting out the barbecue at Cowpasture in September.*

*Lower left:
Gill and Neville relaxing with members at the barbecue.*



Well, the plot is looking very sorry for itself after the onslaughts of recent storms. I'm not a "winter gardener" so I don't grow brassicas or leeks, (for reasons later) and seem to be incapable of succeeding with traditional staples such as parsnips and swedes, so the allotment resembles a blank canvas, waiting inertly for the artistry of Spring. An exception at the moment are the raspberries (neatly tied in on a newly constructed frame, the like of which hasn't been seen since the days when Percy Thrower and Arthur Billitt shared a casual pipe whilst extolling the virtues of Derris Dust for Flea Beetle and Bordeaux Mixture for potato blight ... ah, those waves of nostalgia, for the days when Gardeners were Gardeners and hard landscaping was something that only the local Council men did with 15 hundredweight flagstones). Somewhat unnervingly, the asparagus are still battling to throw up new shoots with all the joy and vigour of Spring. They were cut down at the end of September in the expectation that they'd keep their heads sensibly down until April. but this new-fangled thing called Global Warming seems to be confusing them, as much as it is us.

Right, back to brassicas. Two good reasons why I stopped growing the winter varieties.

Reason Number One: three years ago I had a superb bed of Spring Greens, setting themselves up nicely to be ready for cutting. All netted to avoid inadvertently sharing with pigeons. Then, one suddenly keeled over. On inspection the stem had been completely nibbled through. And then, within a couple of weeks, the entire crop had done exactly the same. The netting had clearly worked in keeping the birds away, but in doing so had created perfect conditions for voles, who have a well-documented appetite for cabbages, especially those they find served up on a plate, so to speak.

Reason Number Two: two years ago, I had a row of Tundra, with heads (though I say it myself) easily as large as beach balls. They had been watered, fed, pampered like reality TV stars, and had rewarded me with becoming the largest cabbages I had ever grown. Just before Christmas I went to cut the first one, only

to find a hole the size of a snooker ball just below the base. There were no signs on the outside – other than the hole – that there was anything amiss. However, the entire inside had been hollowed out, leaving just the globe of the cabbage, resembling an over-sized, over-green Christmas tree bauble. There were eight Tundra in the row and every single one had received exactly the same treatment, so our rodent friends had clearly perfected their tactics - the SAS of the rat world.

With enthusiasm crushed by these two abject crop failures, I decided in future that if Mrs Monty expressed any desire for a nice cabbage or bag of sprouts, I'd head post-haste to see Jo and John at Phoenix Fruiterers (other greengrocers are, of course, available) instead.

Discretion, as they say, is the better part of valour!

My travails with leeks are equally a tale of woe. For years I've had to watch with envy whilst every other allotmenteer has routinely produced leeks that rival an Apollo space rocket in terms of size, yet my feeble efforts, like a 1970's Alfa Romeo, seem to be more rust than bodywork. It didn't matter how much love and care I lavished on them, my leeks were a magnet for rust. I even, one year, tried spraying them weekly with a mixture of seaweed concentrate and Epsom Salts, something that one of the speakers at FAA's Winter Meetings had recommended a while back. To no avail. According to the textbooks, if you've got leek rust you need to leave at least seven years before re-planting, as the spores remain viable in the soil for years (for the same reason, it's best not to put leek waste on the compost heap, even if it appears to be healthy and uninfected). So, I'm ticking the days, months and seasons off on the calendar, waiting for 2028 to tick round and the packet of Blue Solaise in the shed to be finally opened and sowed.

If any readers know of a good treatment for leek rust, there's a bundle of fresh asparagus ready as a reward! In the meantime, Monty and Mrs Monty wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year. After the last two years, we could all do with some Peace in the World.

Happy allotmenteeing!!

MONTY SAYS
Oh, for the days of yesteryear!



Above: A young student making his choice of runner beans.

Left: Our former Chairman Maurice Barber celebrating his 90th birthday.

Below: Neville making his point to a group of interested youngsters at Cowpasture.





Just relaxing at the Barbecue - and who can blame them?



The Three Wise Men or the three Musketeers?

Dates for your Diary 2023-24

Winter meetings at OFCA Hall, Ferry Road, at 7.30pm

Thursday 23rd November 2023

The Royal Observer Corp
by Catherine Buchanan.

Thursday 25th January 2024

To be confirmed

Thursday 22nd February

Whartons Roses, Diss

Thursday 28th March

AGM, Cheese & Wine and Quiz

Saturday 16th December 2023

**CHRISTMAS COFFEE
AND MINCE PIE
MORNING**

**Plot 39, Cowpasture
at 10.30am-12.30pm**

