

# The GROWER

June 2017

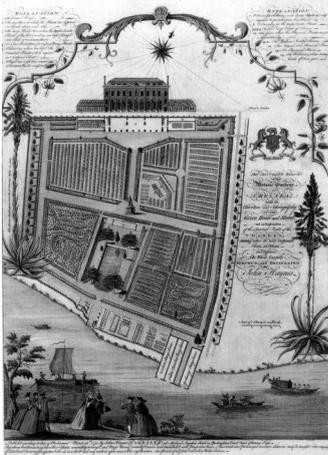
[www.cheshamallotments.org.uk](http://www.cheshamallotments.org.uk)

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## *A Haven In SW3*

Longer ago than I care to think about, I was at college in Chelsea taking a degree in botany and zoology as part of my training to become a teacher.

Botany in those days still included a fair bit of 'systematics', or classification, the study of the range of the types of plants that exist and their organising into groups with shared characteristics. In some ways it is a kind of sophisticated cataloguing; in the early days of the study of plants, an appreciation of the variety of living things on the earth and assembling then into some sort of order was a very important pre-cursor to our understanding of things like evolution and the relationship of plants to their environment. But, I confess, it was not the most exciting part of the course to me. I was more interested in how living things worked: the relationship between structure and function, ecology, genetics and the like.



There was, however, a bonus to the study of systematics at my college: the Chelsea Physic Garden provided some of our material for study and, if you had the free time and grovelled to the technician effectively, she might take you with her when she went to collect specimens.

The Physic Garden was established in the 17th century by the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries (hence the 'Physic'), and was not open to the public when I was at college. It has always been a scientific garden, with its core purpose the growing and researching of medicinal plants, which it still does. Historically, it has played a significant role in the establishment of the rubber industry in Malaysia, the cotton industry in the USA and the tea industry in India; its major original benefactor, Hans Sloane, made at least part of his fortune by adding milk to what he regarded as the 'nauseous' drink made from cocoa and having his recipe taken up by the Cadbury family. The garden's international reputation was

established in the early 1700s as a result of the international seed exchange scheme, which continues to this day.



Sir Hans Sloane

*Cont'd on page 2*

## *Summer Social!*

Get to know your neighbours at the  
***Summer Social Evening on Saturday 8th July***  
to be held at the  
**Focal Point, Cameron Road Allotments from  
7pm.** Please bring food and drink to share.



## CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP CALENDAR

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Coffee Mornings	Saturday mornings from 22nd April to 14th October 10am—12pm (except 24th June and 19th August)	Focal Point Hut, Cameron Road
Coffee Mornings at Asheridge Road	24th June & 19th August	Asheridge Road Allotments
Summer Social	Saturday 8th July at 7pm	Focal Point, Cameron Road
Open Day	Saturday 12th August 10am to 1.30pm	Cameron Road Allotments

## CHESHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Plant Sale	Saturday 20th May from 9.30am	United Reform Church, The Broadway

**Discount card:** don't forget to pick up your free discount card from the Focal Point. It entitles you to a 10% discount at JPS Stationers in Chesham and 10% discount on many items at South Heath Garden Centre. If you know of a business that would like to be added to our scheme please get in touch.

*Cont'd from page 1*

So it has never been a 'display' garden like those attached to great houses. But it is a beautiful oasis full of horticultural interest, as it was in the late 1960s when I was at college. In 1983, it became a charity and opened its doors to the public. If you've never been, you've missed a treat: a four acre walled garden in the middle of London where you can potter, sit on one of the many benches and ponder while you admire the view or explore a particular botanical interest. There's a lovely café where lunch with friends comes at prices that are very reasonable, especially for London.

They have themed events at relevant times of year – for example the snowdrop event in January – and a range of courses, both scientific and artistic; the current offer includes plant propagation and macro photography.

The garden depends to a degree on volunteers for its maintenance and to keep it open, so check opening hours and days before you visit, currently 11am-6pm Monday to Fridays and Sundays; it is closed on Saturdays ([www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk](http://www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk)). It is only 10 to 15 minutes walk from Sloane Square, a little further away than the Royal Hospital, where the RHS holds the Chelsea Flower Show.

And instead of being jostled and crowded and straining to see things through a forest of people, I can promise you peace, quiet and a lovely old garden that is still scientifically important. Last time I visited, I even found the answer to the damned pigeons that force me to net my brassicas on the allotment: they solve their pigeon problem by flying a Harris's Hawk. Now, I'm sure one of my neighbours on the allotments has kept hawks . . . .

*By Tim Andrew*



If you would like to read more about the garden why not try *The Apothecaries' Garden A History of the Chelsea Physic Garden* by Sue Minter.



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## *From The Chairman*

These longer spring days have seen a flurry of activity at the allotments and people are starting to get their plants in the ground or greenhouse and visit with one another again. It's great to see everyone! As I write this the weather has been quite dry and cold but then allotmenters are eternal optimists by design.

A welcome to all the new plot holders. There have been quite a few this year. You are cordially invited to coffee mornings at the Focal Point every Saturday 10-12. Please come up and meet your neighbours, get advice, and possibly swap some seeds or plants. And, everyone, please come along to the Summer Social 7pm on 8th July, held rain or shine at the Focal Point, always a good evening.

Allotment inspections have just been completed for the spring and I'm happy that the number of letters has gone down notably. Inspections will happen again in mid-june and the first part of august.

The Chesham Horticultural Society plant sale on 20th May is at a new venue. It will be at The United Reform Church in the centre of Chesham, so if you need some extra plants please stop by.

And finally, The Allotments Group also welcomes the Chesham In Bloom organisation who have recently taken a plot and erected a new polytunnel to raise flowers in support of their efforts.

Regards,  
Marshall

## *If you go down to Asheridge Road Allotments, you're sure of....a nice piece of cake...*

At least you will be if you go down on Saturday 24th June between 10am and 12pm, when the first of our two coffee mornings there this year will be held. The second will be on 19th August. As well as being a good social event and a chance to catch your allotment representatives, the coffee mornings help raise funds for the allotments. And only £1 for a hot drink and a piece of homemade cake!

### *Earthworms—Citizen Science*

National Allotment Society members are invited to count earthworms and categorise soils across Britain to help scientists reveal relationships between earthworms, carbon and health. All that's needed are two squares of soil 50cm x 50cm at least 3m apart, a few handfuls of vegetable peelings and half an hour to record your findings. To find out more and to sign up go to [www.earthwormwatch.org/science-experiment](http://www.earthwormwatch.org/science-experiment)

### *Best Allotment Judging*

If you see three strangers wandering around looking at the plots on Wednesday 14th June - don't panic! It will be the judges from the Chesham Horticultural Society making their first assessment for the Best Large and Small Plots, and New Tenant Allotment awards, that are presented every year at our AGM. For an in depth idea what they are looking for go to our website [www.cheshamallotments.org.uk](http://www.cheshamallotments.org.uk) and read Mike Allenby's very useful article on the marking system, Judging The Allotments, in the March 16 edition of The Grower.

### *A Plea from Dick Turner*

Being a fairly recent member of the pensioner community, I have realised, what all other pensioners declare, I do not have enough time for things I need or want to do. Finding inspiration from recent election campaigning, I thought we should perhaps campaign for more time. Think how much easier it would be if we had an extra day for weeding, planting out and just anything required in the garden. How do we do this?

Easy, just create an extra day of the week.

So start lobbying now, for an eight day week. Just think how handy that would be.

But what about those poor people who still have to work? you say. No problem, they are even better off, they get a three day weekend, every week, great, everyone's a winner.

So get on to your MP straight away. Hang on a minute, is eight days enough? Maybe we should go for nine or ten, yes definitely ten, get on to it straightaway.

Summer's coming, more time for everyone, It's got to be good.



**We have a new email address: [cheshamallotments@gmail.com](mailto:cheshamallotments@gmail.com). Send us a quick hello with your plot number to be added to our email list for occasional reminders of allotment events. Your details will not be shared with anyone else.**



## Spring Preservation

Generally, I think we are much more inclined to think about preserving in the late summer and autumn months. It's when we can see winter looming, or possibly when the runner bean harvest has gone on a little too long, that we start to think of jams and chutneys, jellies and pickles. It may be true also that there is simply too much to do on the plot earlier in the year to think of doing anything much with our produce other than greedily eating it (that may be just me). However, bottling (or jarring) a little of that spring joie de vivre for the winter months is a good idea, even if (again, like me) the reality is you end up drinking all your elderflower cordial straightaway...

### Elderflower Cordial

**I have tried many recipes for elderflower cordial but this one is the best.**

Heat **2 pints of water** with **3lbs granulated sugar**, stirring until completely dissolved. Leave to cool. Put in a large bowl with another **pint of water, 4 sliced oranges, 1 sliced lemon, 2oz citric acid** and **25 elderflower heads**. Cover and leave for 24hrs before straining through fine cloth and pour into sterilised bottles. Make sure they are properly sealed and keep somewhere cool and dark or in the fridge.

### Rhubarb Lemon Marmalade

**This recipe is adapted from a lovely book called Let's Preserve It by Beryl Wood, containing 579 recipes for preserving. I love that they didn't try to round it up to 580.**

Peel **6 lemons**. Put the finely sliced peel in a bowl with **1pt water**. Then squeeze the lemons and add the **juice**. Slice the remaining **pith** and put in muslin bag with **pips**. Add to bowl, cover, and stand overnight. Then put into pan with **3 lbs sliced rhubarb** and simmer for 20 minutes. Check peel is soft; remove bag, add **3lbs sugar**, stirring till dissolved. Bring to boil and cook steadily to set. Pot in sterilized jars.

### Pickled Garlic

Plunge **150g fresh garlic** into a pan of boiling water for one min. Drain and pat dry. Peel the cloves and pack into a warm sterilised jar adding **half a tsp of fennel seeds, 4 peppercorns** and **2 bay leaves**.

In a small pan put **80ml cider vinegar** and **20g granulated sugar**. Boil for 2 mins then pour over garlic and seal with a vinegar proof lid.

### Easy Rhubarb and Gooseberry Jam Recipe (using Microwave)

**This great jam recipe is from Angela Moore via Jean Nettleton and uses 800g of prepared Rhubarb and Gooseberries** (any combo of weight).

Place the **rhubarb** into a large glass bowl, uncovered, and cook in a microwave on high for 4 mins - it should start to soften. Add the **gooseberries** and cook for a further 3 minutes. Carefully crush fruit with a potato masher. Add **1kg sugar, 1 sachet of pectin** and a knob of **butter** and stir. Cook on high, uncovered, for a further 14 minutes, stirring halfway. The jam should boil vigorously for 4 minutes during this time. Pot in sterilised jam jars.

## CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

MARSHALL HALL (Chairman) Plot 47A/47B CR	TIM ANDREW (Vice Chair) Plot 48A CR	RAY WILLIAMS (Treasurer) Plots 215/216 CR	BEVERLY MACKAY (Representative) Plot 3B AR
ANDREW SINCLAIR (Correspondence Secretary) Plot 45B CR	JIM ABBOTT (Representative) Plot 31/32 CR	DAVE HALL (Representative) Plot 12 CR	TONY MUIR (Representative) Plot 28 AR
VINCENT LUCAS (Representative) Plot 227D CR	KATE HUTCHINSON (Editor—The Grower) Plot 58D/80A CR	COLIN WILSON (Representative) Plot 220B CR	Email: cheshamallot- ments@gmail.com
JANE MACBEAN Town Council Representative	CR = CAMERON ROAD AR = ASHERIDGE ROAD		The representatives are here for you. Please do come and talk to us about any issues!