

# The GROWER

March 2017

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

Email your articles, ideas or news to [cheshamallotments@gmail.com](mailto:cheshamallotments@gmail.com)

## ***ALLOTMENT INSPECTIONS!***

### **Dreaded word - inspection!**

Why is your allotment inspected 4 times a year by representatives from the Town Council and Allotment Committee? Do you feel that Big Brother is watching you?

Firstly, do not fear. If you are regularly visiting your allotment during the growing year, planting some vegetables and/or fruit and showing signs of cultivating the soil, then that is all that is being assessed. We are not grading the weediest plots or looking for the high standard of perfection shown by devoted retirees. We are just looking to see that the Council land you are renting is being used in the way it was intended for: the growing of produce to feed you and your family as stated in the Allotments Act of 1922 "an allotment ...which is mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family". Also, regular inspections highlight the plots which are not being used appropriately or are being under-utilised and mean they can be offered out to prospective new tenants on the waiting list.

Where there are obvious signs of neglect, reminder letters are sent to remind the tenant of their obligations under the tenancy agreement they have signed. If no improvement has been done on the plot at the next inspection, another more serious reminder is sent. If no cultivation is evident at the next inspection, and no communication has been received from the tenant giving reasons for their lack of attendance to their plot, then an eviction notice is issued and the plot can then be offered to the next person on the allotment waiting list. Inspections normally take place at the end of April, June, August and September. On top of these inspections your plot might also be looked at by the judges for the Best Kept Allotment competition who will attend twice and make their recommendations for the Prize Giving at the Allotments Group AGM in September.

Enjoy your allotment, plant the crops you like to eat, and even include some flowers for cutting if you wish. In Chesham the allotments play an increasingly important part in offering physical well-being and outdoor space as housing becomes ever more denser and gardens smaller. They are also great for community gatherings, so please support the coffee mornings the Allotments Group organise and its other events.

*Rachel Watts, Allotments Officer, Chesham Town Council*

***FISH & CHIP SUPPER/QUIZ 8th APRIL  
BOOKING FORM INSIDE!***

***Please note new venue -  
Chesham Town Hall!***



## CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP CALENDAR

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Coffee mornings	On Potato sale days 18th & 25th Feb and 4th March then Saturday mornings from 22nd April to 14th October 10am—12pm.	Focal Point Hut, Cameron Road
Fish & Chips/Quiz Evening	Saturday 8th April 7.00pm	Town Hall, Chesham
Open Day	Saturday 12th August 10am to 1.30pm	Cameron Road Allotments

## CHESHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Potato Sales	Saturday mornings from 9am on 18th & 25th Feb and 4th March 2017	Sales Hut (1st gate Cameron Road)
Plant Sale	Saturday 20th May from 9am	Trinity Baptist Church, Red Lion Street

## Fish & Chip Supper/Quiz Night

### 7pm, 8th April 2017

New venue - Chesham Town Hall

**BOOKING REQUIRED FOR .....PERSONS, COST £8 PER HEAD**

I enclose payment for.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Tel. No.....

Email.....

**Please bring your own drink and nibbles AND a dessert with a view to sharing.**

**There will be a raffle, so bring some extra cash! Contributions for raffle also gratefully received.**

Please Indicate the number of meals required below :
FISH
SAUSAGES
FISH CAKES
VEGETARIAN

**Contact Vincent Lucas on 01494 774198 or email [cheshamallotments@gmail.com](mailto:cheshamallotments@gmail.com) to reserve your places or hand your form / money in at the Coffee Mornings or to any Allotments Group Officer/Representative. Please make any cheques payable to Chesham Allotments Group. Thank you.**

## A HISTORY OF SALAD

My first act of planting out last year was to put in three rows of salad leaves and rocket. As I did, I reflected on how almost exactly three hundred years ago Londoners could buy the first English-language book on how to make a salad. Called *Acetaria: A Discourse of Sallets* (*acetaria* being an old word for salad greens), it instructed that only the freshest leaves from the garden should be used. They should be 'sprinkled', not soaked, in fresh water, drained in a colander, and then they should be swung 'all together gently in clean, coarse napkin. They should be dressed with oil of a pallid olive green . . . such as native *Lucca* olives afford,' with vinegar of the best quality infused with flowers and herbs, and with the finest crystals of sea salt. The author also gave detailed instructions for cultivating thirty five different greens: among them, four varieties of romaine lettuce, spinach, nasturtiums for their leaves and for their flowers, a variety of herbs to be used with discretion, cresses, sorrel, spinach, endive, chicory, celery, fennel, radish, and today's favourites, mache and arugula. Nothing could be more up to date.<sup>1</sup>



Or could it? If you thumb through the book, you have to search out these hints in page after page of wordy prose, liberally sprinkled with Latin, Greek and Hebrew quotations. Not what we expect today in a cook book. Why, we

have to ask, did the author John Evelyn inflict this on his readers? Because not one of his readers was ready to try a salad. Everyone agreed with the wisdom of the ages: civilized people just didn't eat salads.



John Evelyn 1620 - 1706

They ate meat and grains. Raw greens were for animals and savages. For the civilized, they offered no nutrition. Besides, they made you sick to the stomach when they rotted in your gut, just like they rotted on the compost heap. So Evelyn, one of the most learned men of the day, one of the exclusive group of scientists in the Royal Society of London, wheeled out every argument and every ancient authority he could think of to persuade his readers to try salad. Learned doctors had been wrong to think that rotting in the stomach was bad, he explained. Unappealing as it might be, digestion was no more than a kind of rotting. They were wrong that salads offered no nutrition: just think of all those most vigorous animals whose food is only grass. And the clincher; Historians too were wrong in thinking that only savages ate salads. Salads had been the foods of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. It's easy to smile. But it's possible that one day our nutritional stories will also seem quaint. Meanwhile I'm planning to prepare Evelyn's early spring salad of lettuce with sorrel, radish, purslane, cress, garnished with samphire.

*Marshall Hall*

<sup>1</sup>Facts were liberally borrowed, with permission, from an article by R. Laudan on [www.cheftalk.com](http://www.cheftalk.com). It's a pretty good site you may want to visit yourself.



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.



### Coffee, Fruit, Ginger, Madeira .... Fancy a slice of cake??

Once again the Focal Point Hut will be serving beverages and a nice slice of delicious cake for the potato sale mornings and throughout the growing months on Saturdays between 10am and 12pm. 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! If you would be happy to spend an occasional Saturday morning serving at the Focal Point Hut or you would like to provide a cake sometimes, please contact Beverly at [beverlymackay@virginmedia.com](mailto:beverlymackay@virginmedia.com).



**Chesham**  
TOWN COUNCIL

t: 01494 774842  
f: 01494 582908  
e: [admin@chesham.gov.uk](mailto:admin@chesham.gov.uk)  
w: [www.chesham.gov.uk](http://www.chesham.gov.uk)

Chesham Town Council, Town Hall, Chesham, Bucks HP5 1DS

## Dressing for Dinner

If your salad needs more than the finest olive oil, floral vinegar and sea salt - here are a few ideas:

### Tahini Dressing

Mix together half a minced clove of **garlic**, 2 table-spoons **light tahini**, zest and juice of half a **lemon**, juice of half an **orange**, half tsp of clear **honey**. Then stir in 2 tbsps **olive oil** and **salt** and **pepper**.

### Punchy Cider Vinaigrette

Put 6 table-spoons of **good rapeseed** or **olive oil**, 4 tea-spoons of **cider vinegar**, 1 tea-spoon **English mustard** and a pinch of **sugar** in a screw top jar and shake well.

### Lemony Dressing

In a screwtop jar, shake together: 2 tsps **Dijon mustard**, the zest of 1 **lemon**, juice of half a **lemon**, 120ml **olive oil**, pinch of **sugar** and **salt** and **pepper**.

### Crème Fraiche Dressing

Mix 4 tbsp **crème fraiche**, zest and juice 1 **lemon**, 2 tbsps **extra virgin olive oil**. 4 tsp **horseradish** (fresh or jar), handful chopped **parsley** and the same of **chives**. Add **salt** and **pepper** to taste.

### Keralan-ish Dressing

Grate an inch of fresh **ginger** into a bowl, add zest and juice of two **limes** and 4 tbsps of **extra virgin olive oil**. Whisk together and season to taste.

**Thai-ish dressing:** as above plus a finely chopped **red chilli** and a tbsp **soy sauce**.

**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.

## Potato and Onion Sales: 18th, 25th Feb & 4th March from 9am

What we will be selling this year:

Potatoes: First Earlies - Arran Pilot, Foremost, Pentland Javelin  
Second Earlies - Apache\*, Charlotte (salad), Elfe\* (NEW), Kestrel  
Early Maincrop - Desiree, Picasso  
Late Maincrop - Cara, Sarpo Mira\*, Rooster\*  
Onions: Sturon, Red Baron  
Shallots: Golden Gourmet, Red Sun

Potato prices (same as 2016) - £2.70 per 7lb; 50p per lb for quantities less than 7lb.

Except (limited quantities of these)

Apache, Elfe, Sarpo Mira and Rooster which will be £4.60 per 7lb; 80p per lb for quantities less than 7lb.

Onions and shallots—80p per half lb.

## The Trading Hut, Cameron Road

Besides the three potato sale Saturdays, the Trading Hut will be open every Saturday from 11th March, through to at least Saturday 13th May, including Easter Saturday 15th April, 10am to 11.30am. I can also open it at other times by prior appointment with me on 07718609719.

As in previous years we will also be selling 6X manure, growmore, fish blood & bone, bonemeal, sulphate of ammonia, sulphate of potash, superphosphate, sharp sand, silver sand, coarse grit, fine potting grit, perlite, vermiculite and fairtrade string. All at discounted prices. *Adrian Norris*

## 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: cheshamallotments@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!