

A.W.S.L.G. ALLOTMENT NEWS
ADDISCOMBE, WOODSIDE & SHIRLEY LEISURE GARDENS LTD
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**What's the oldest
thing found on your
plot?**

If it is more than 4400 years old, then it is older than the flint arrowhead I found while preparing a seed drill, in May last year. The artefact verified by the Museum of London is dated from 2400 to 1000BC. This means people were obtaining food from this site over 3000 years ago!

I am collating finds for an exhibition, planned for the Society's 100th Anniversary celebration in 2021. If you have found anything old or unusual why not lend or donate it to the Society for a display during the celebratory year? If the find has been lost, spent or discarded but you know what it was, when found and which plot, a map of finds can be plotted.

Why not save all non-plant items for a month and see what you collect! I started and have nails, broken glass, the marbles out of 1930's fizzy drink bottles and a 1921 penny, guess which I have kept and which I have thrown away?

So far, I have seen unidentified objects which will I hope be on display for you to identify. I have had reports of unexploded bombs at the end of road 3 but not which plot was dug out by POWs during WWII and bomb shrapnel dug out elsewhere. Do you know where?

Reports of a gold half sovereign found 30 or 40 years ago probably relates to the old race course which occupied the north side of the Chaffinch brook to Long Lane woods.

If you want to use a metal detector please obtain written permission of the committee and wait until you have harvested your crops and only investigate your own plot. Any treasure trove must be shared with the Society!

To look for worked flint you will not need any equipment except a sharp pair of eyes. Good hunting and let me know what you find by emailing me hilary.waterhouse@virginmedia.com or see me on a rent collecting Saturday in October or in the Trading centre on a Saturday afternoon. Check the rota for days I am in.
Hilary Waterhouse.

Newsletter

June 2019

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Big Tidy-up

Saturday 15th June. Join in any time from 9:00am to 12.00pm. Jobs to do: painting inside and out, ditch clearing and other seasonal tasks. All are welcome, lunch is provided.

Bring and Share Family Picnic

Sunday 7th July an informal lunch in and around the Hall and Wildlife Field, with some games and activities for children. Bring the family and a dish to share - the theme is food from around the world, so why not contribute a favourite dish from your country or one that you've enjoyed on holiday abroad or at home?

We will provide drinks and extras, and there will also be a BBQ. Tickets will be on sale from the middle of June, and there will be more details in an email before the event. We will need a rota of helpers to set up, serve and wash up, so if you can give us an hour during the day, please email Nesli and Penny on awslg.ltd@gmail.com - please email us with any suggestions for games too!

ANNUAL SHOW

Sunday 18th August Tend your precious veg and fruit, and feed those giant marrows in preparation for our favourite annual event.

REGULATION 16

Every so often it is necessary to remind plot holders of the rules and regulations that they agreed to when they were given their plot. In this instance it is concerning the proper use of hosepipes. All hose-pipes must be held in the hand when watering. Sprinklers, irrigation hoses and the practice of leaving hoses running on the surface of the ground are prohibited. Where possible every plot holder should have water butts to harvest any rain that does fall. If you do decide to water your allotment, the best time of day is during the cool of the morning or evening. Water the roots of the plant and concentrate the watering to once or twice a week, rather than frequent light showers, otherwise you'll encourage the roots of the plant to seek water near the surface of the soil, as opposed to deep down in the earth.

The Trading Centre will open on every Wednesday afternoon at 2.30pm to 4pm until the end of September.

The canteen is open Saturday and Sunday mornings 9.30am - 11.30am

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JOBS TO DO IN JUNE

VEGETABLE CARE:

Stake tall or floppy plants to prevent wind damage, we have a good choice of different **canes, sticks and ties**.

Early peas may be ready for harvest, you can also eat the pretty clover-like leaves and tendrils that come away with the pod. When the crop is finished cut off the plants at ground level leaving the roots to conserve valuable nutrients in the soil.

Keep carrot fly off carrots by covering them with a fine woven plastic mesh like **Enviromesh**, making sure the corners are well tucked in or buried to prevent any attack.

Plant out tomatoes if this has not already been done. Train them up canes or string and pinch out side shoots unless you are growing a bush variety. When 4 flower trusses have formed, pinch out the growing point just above the highest truss.

Continue with successional sowing of salad crops such as Beetroot, Chinese Cabbage, Pak Choi and Radish to ensure an even harvest. Leafy salad crops may do better when sown in partial shade.

Courgettes, Marrows and Pumpkins can still be sown outside in early June. Encourage good fruit set by hand pollinating. Push the male flowers lightly into the female ones.

Continue to earth-up potatoes not ready for harvest, this is even more important now as we are not allowed to use sprays to prevent blight.

FRUIT CARE:

If you have not already done so, hang **pheromone traps** in apple trees to help reduce codling moth numbers, a similar trap is available for red plum maggot on plums. You will need 1 trap for every 3 to 5 trees.

Wait to thin out apples until after the 'June drop'. Pears only need thinning if fruit set is heavy. Thinning can help improve the size and quality of the crop, and prevent a cycle of a good year and then a bad year. Gooseberries can also be thinned, using the unripe fruit for cooking.

Hoe off or pull out raspberry suckers that appear between the rows.

Put straw around strawberry plants to prevent soil splashing onto the fruit. Alternatively use strawberry mats as this will stop the fruits from touching the soil and getting too damp. Remove any mouldy fruit and leaves promptly to prevent the spread of infection. Cover the whole bed with **netting** to prevent bird damage.

NEWS FROM THE WILDLIFE FIELD

Spring is giving way to early summer in the wildlife area and the early show of primroses, cowslips and fritillaries is standing down and being followed by spires of white and blue camassias and stands of cow parsley with meadow foxtail grass being the first grass to flower. There are some twenty or so species of grasses in the meadow and some will not flower until mid-summer.

The pond is alive with fat tadpoles who are now coming to the surface for air on their transition to young frogs – too many to count but several hundred. The first damsel flies have been about for some time and the first dragon, a Broad-bodied Chaser, was seen drying her wings in the sunshine on 1st May.

Whilst cutting some nettles in the coppice woodland area one clump was spared because it was dotted with the larval webs of Small Tortoiseshell caterpillars, happily quite conspicuous. These feed gregariously and protect themselves by attaching silk to the leaf edges, crisscrossing the leaf. As the silk dries it contracts the leaf into a protective tube around the small caterpillars within which they feed. As they grow the "family" will spread out and feed individually, their appetite being larger as they grow. The tiny, spiny black caterpillars will, by their third skin change, adopt a different livery with yellow stripes running the length of the body. They will become chrysalises by early June and butterflies by late June when the females will lay large groups of eggs on the leaves of soft, young nettle.

To prepare for this about 50% of the best nettle – growing in good sunlight rather than shade – will be cut to the ground at the end of May. It will regrow into a carpet of soft young nettle by the end of June, just in time to feed a new army of tiny, black caterpillars producing butterflies in late summer. These will hibernate during the winter and emerge in March 2020 and resume the business of mating and egg laying – for another butterfly season.

HOURS OF OPENING

**Saturday 10.30am -12.15pm. 2.30pm - 4.15pm. Sunday 10.30am - 12.15pm.
Wednesday 2.30pm - 4.00pm April—September only**