

April 2016

MAGA

MARTIN WAY ALLOTMENT NEWS



Message from the Chair



Welcome to Spring and I have to say I'm glad to be welcoming in the new season. With all new things comes change of course and I'm writing this ahead of our Annual General Meeting on 10th April.

We are looking forward to welcoming all of our tenant members back to the MAGA marquee. We need your support – not just to turn up on the day, but to volunteer to be a part of the Committee for the next 12 months. We've had the benefit of a strong committee of 10 for

this past year and there is certainly an advantage to greater numbers to sharing the workload. So I would encourage you to please consider whether you could spare an hour a week or a fortnight to help and have your say.

When I look back at what we have achieved as an Association in the 5 years that I have been Chairperson of MAGA, I am humbled and in awe of what we have accomplished. Throughout all this time, I have been surprised and delighted to serve alongside a growing number of really dedicated people that have freely given up their time for the improvement of the site and the social side of our hobby. I feel honoured to have been a part of it these past 5 years. It has taught me a very great deal about the character and soul of allotmenting and the allotment community. We are all part of a very special, dear group of friends that share common interests and we are unafraid to speak out about the things that are really important.



It is time for me to pass along the mantle of leading this great group of people to someone new. I'm confident that you will choose a good leader and then give them your support so that they can continue the great work we have started.

Thank you for letting me be a part of Martin Way Allotments for so long. My family and I are leaving London for pastures new in Hampshire and we will definitely look back on our time at Martin Way with warmth and deep fondness.

Best wishes and good growing

Caroline Trumper

(Chairperson on behalf of MAGA Committee)

MAGA Martin Way Allotment News is produced 3-4 times per year by Committee members and volunteers.

The MAGA committee accept no liability for any errors or views expressed in this publication.

The views of contributors do not necessarily match the views or policies of the MAGA committee.

To provide a submission for the next issue, please email ivorstocker@sky.com

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1. MAGA Annual General Meeting, **Sunday 10th April 2-3.30pm**



Come along and hear what's been happening, what will happen, elect your new Committee and find out who will win this year's Margie Mulder Award for Most Improved Plot and Chairperson's Cup for Best Plot. Stay on for refreshments afterwards and a chance to meet with your new Committee members.

2. Joining the MAGA Committee - **MAGA Needs YOU!**

Certain of the Committee will be stepping down this year so we are looking for members to step up and be new Committee Officers. Are you able to give up an hour of your week to help us? No experience is needed, just an interest in helping to keep our site running smoothly and for the greater benefit of all members. This could mean putting up a poster, ordering stock for the shop, showing a prospective tenant to a plot or just making sure you have a voice in committee decision making. Please email committee@maga.org.uk if you have any questions or would like to volunteer to be an Officer prior to the AGM.

3. Parking **at the Allotments**

We're very aware that parking has been tricky again this winter with much of the main parking area west-side being under water/mud! This year we plan to increase the available parking by moving the marquee onto the grass. We would also remind members that there are designated parking areas near plot 60 and plot 129. Please note that parking is not permitted anywhere else on the site including on member's plots.



4. Closing **Gates**

Members are reminded that the entry gates on both sides of the allotments should be closed behind you at all times. This is for the greater security and safety of all our members and your equipment & harvests.

5. Distribution of **Committee Minutes**

We are making copies of committee minutes available to all members to read. Copies will be put in a folder marked Committee Minutes to read whilst in the shop, on the Shop Notice Board and paper copies available for you to take away to read at your leisure from the collection box on the outside door of the shop.

6. Help Needed for **Working Party**



We need help to reinstate boundary paths on some recently recovered and overgrown plots west-side ahead of them being re-let. Please turn up with shears, secateurs and gloves on April 16th at 10am if you are available to help.

7. Keeping Chickens **at Martin Way**

We are delighted that Peter Slater has had chickens on his plot now for nearly a half a year and that they seem to be thriving! We wanted to remind all members that prior permission from the Committee must be sought before keeping chickens on your plot. We have the welfare of the birds to consider and need to report accordingly to London Borough of Merton. Thanks in advance.



Formal Announcement

MAGA Annual General Meeting, Sunday 10th April 2016, 2-3.30pm

We invite you to join us at the 2016 MAGA Annual General Meeting in the marquee, Martin Way Allotments West, on Sunday 10th April 2016, from 2-3.30pm and then join us for refreshments at the end of the meeting.

Agenda

1. Minutes of 2015 AGM
2. Chairperson's report for 2015-16
3. Treasurer's report for 2015-16
4. For consideration by membership
 - a. Request opinion regarding purchase of shredder by MAGA
 - b. Discussion of what is "good neighbourliness" at Martin Way Allotments
5. General Business
 - a. Margie Mulder Trophy Award for most improved plot
 - b. Chairperson's Cup Award for best plot
6. Election of Committee Officers
 - a. Chairperson
 - b. Treasurer
 - c. Secretary
 - d. Vice-Chairperson
 - e. Up to 9 additional Committee Officers
7. Any other business

Meeting will close at 3.30pm followed by drinks and refreshments.

Minutes of the 2015 AGM will be sent separately, together with details on voting by proxy.

We look forward to welcoming you on the 10th April.

best wishes

Caroline Trumper

(Chairperson on behalf of MAGA Committee)



A GARDEN BENCH for sale

Hi Guys, I've an old garden bench that I'd happily trade for either some good will, excess plants or a charitable donation to a charity of your choice. So if somebody fancies a bench and would like to collect it, have a coffee and a chat I'm certain we could find an amicable solution. Please let me know. David

MAGA Martin Way Allotment Gardens Association Ltd

David Bamford

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The **APIARY** at Martin Way

As you will have experienced yourselves, the weather over the last few months has been strange and changeable, and that impacts on our hives on the allotment. Usually, our Honeybees will gradually stop the Queen from laying eggs (which turn into new "winter" bees) after about late October/early November, and the bees will begin to form their winter cluster in order to keep both their Queen and themselves warm. Because the Queen has stopped laying, there is no need for the bees to go out and forage (the term used to describe the collecting of nectar and pollen by worker bees) as there will not be any young larvae to feed by December. The Queen will restart laying eggs towards the end of January, to coincide with early flowers that produce pollen such as snowdrops and crocus. However, last Autumn and early winter were very mild, the Queen continued (we think!) to lay eggs, which in turn means that there is a greater need for foraging to feed the young larvae, but with many of our Spring flowers already partially



over, things are difficult if you are a bee. It may also mean a higher incidence of pests and diseases inside the hives as there has not been enough of a cold spell to reduce numbers of say, the Varroa mite. The Varroa mite is a tiny parasitic mite (so not an insect!) which made it's way over here from South East Asia in the 1990's, and it lives on the backs of the adult



bees, where they cannot reach to groom them off, and also it reproduces within the cells of the growing larvae.....so you can now see the potential problem: with no gap in laying, the Varroa mite has a much greater chance to reproduce and pass on it's associated diseases to the bees. We will only really know the condition of each hive once it is warm enough to open up and check each frame of bees, then we can treat for problems if needed. So, how warm is warm enough? Generally, we only open up hives to inspect if it is at least 15 degrees outside, anything less will risk chilling the young brood (the term for young larvae).



How else can we find out what is happening inside the hive? My favourite activity is to stand quietly beside my hives and watch any bee activity at the entrance. Bees may fly even at 5 degrees sometimes. I watch for returning female worker bees bringing back pollen on their hind legs, in their pollen baskets. I try to match the colour of the pollen with my pollen chart, matching it also with what I know will be in flower at that time. So, anyone with the wonderful magical dandelion please do leave some as both honey and bumble bees love them, and they are one of the few really good sources of nectar and pollen at the moment! A few weeks ago I saw 9 yes 9 Honeybees at one time on one dandelion, they were actually on top of each other queuing up for a slurp. Personally I think that is far more important than keeping your plot too neat and tidy! Well at least as far as the dandelion goes....



Wishing you a good growing season, and with thanks as ever for all the interest and support you give our bees, best wishes from Alison.

Weekend **BREAD** Club – progressive baking with a purpose!



The Weekend Bread Club is now in its fifth month – plotholder Members have been coming together to bake since December 2015. They say that sessions are easy going, fun and useful - and add that the Weekend Bread Club gets them baking with other people. They feel it gives them the encouragement to experiment, share tips and tricks and improve their bakes.

The programme for the spring through to winter covers UK and international traditions as well as technologies and baking paraphernalia. The emphasis is on working together in a friendly, relaxed and supportive way using organic ingredients – and baking with a purpose. We cover healthy and savoury through to sweet teatime baking and incorporate seasonal and festive themes as we work our way through the year.

We're planning on making traditional farmhouse loaves, pizza and Turkish pide, yeast empanadas and calzones as well as examining gluten free baking. We'll be looking at



Challah - fresh out of the oven

using a variety of flours including rye, spelt and barley as well as dough forming techniques including bannetons. And of course we'll be making baguettes. In the late autumn we'll be taking on North American baking, Moroccan, Indian and Pakistani bread. In December we'll be turning our hands to Christmas and new year specialities.

We currently have nine members whose bread making experience ranges from limited through to intermediate. There is no charge for membership and there are no fees associated with the sessions. Our monthly meets, which last for a few hours starting late on Saturday mornings, are hosted by Members who have room in their kitchens. Weekend Bread Club membership is restricted to MAGA plotholders.

Each session includes a 'show and tell' element where Members can, if they want to, bring test bakes for discussion as well as demonstrations and practical hands on work and testing. Our informal discussions are lively, thought provoking and wide ranging - from the merits of various flours to hot topics of the moment such as industrial bread-making processes and flour additives, from good bakeries we have come across to using woodfired and outdoor ovens. Each time we meet we actively look to improve the quality of our bakes and expand our repertoires, expertise and skills. Although we have an outline plan to follow, this is not set in stone and we're open to new ideas and suggestions as we move forward.

To date we've been busy making: scones, soda bread, bread rolls, challah, hot cross buns, fougasse, Chinese steamed buns, Japanese buns as well as sourdough. If you have breadmaking experience and might be interested in joining this lively and friendly Weekend Bread Club we have room for two new Members.



Cheese scones and soda bread



Our sourdough

Email me on the following address and I will get right back to you with further information: mikegleeson@archangelcomms.com



Garden MEMBERSHIP

A reminder that Garden Memberships are due for renewal. If you haven't done so already, do look in at the shop during **opening hours (10.30am-12.30pm Saturdays and Sundays)**, complete a renewal form and collect your 2016 membership card. Garden Membership costs just £5 a year and allows you to make purchases in Ken's Shop and to attend all MAGA social events.

Ken's SHOP



on special offer at 10 pence off the retail price, making them cheaper than in the shops.

This offer ends on 17th April so buy your new seeds soon to take advantage.

Ken's Shop re-opened on 6th February for the 2016 season after a refurbishment which saw a complete redecoration and improved lighting, making it a much brighter place both to shop and to work. New season stock includes five varieties of seed potatoes, onion and shallot sets and spring-planting garlic. New season seeds are

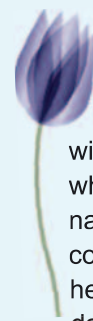


WATERLOGGED!!! March 30th



IN HEAVY

when she after some months rather cruelly insisted that he actually come and help dig and wheelbarrow on their allotment she then thought it a tad overdone for him to arrive in front of all the other plot holders limping dressed as a slave in heavy chains dragging a wagon singing sad heart rending pitiful spirituals and rather loudly weeping and wailing



It is with much sadness that we report the death of Pat Entwistle widow of Ken after whom our shop is named. Our sincere condolences go to her son Chris and daughter Karen at this unhappy time.

*pmcmanus
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