



**BOG**  
**Newsletter**  
**October**  
**2007**

*Affiliated to  
Garden Organic (formerly HDRA),  
Ryton Organic Gardens, Coventry CV8 3LG  
and  
The Soil Association, Bristol House, 40-56 Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6BY*

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

**Peter 'the Pritstick' Andrews  
Temporary Acting Chair – but not for much  
longer (see below)**

Dear BOGgers

As summer yields up the last of its luscious harvest and the organic gardener sadly stares at a raised bed of pigeon-chewed brassicas our thoughts naturally turn to the AGM. A ray of sunshine in a dark, cold world. A chance to meet friends and show off that special recipe kept only for special occasions; to sit with like-minded people and discuss how to keep the badgers out of one's sweet corn; to bid for and buy a pot of bottled summer to give to that special person in your life.

Last year was splendid this year I hope is even better. It would be great to see even more members this year. The AGM is on Saturday November 24<sup>th</sup>. It starts with a feast, (bring food, drink and pudding to share), when we are all sated we sashay through the AGM and finish an afternoon's delight with an auction of produce - bring your best jam to raise funds for BOG. The perfect antidote to a world gone mad with Christmas excess.

I would publicly like to thank all the people of who sat on the committee this year; have volunteered to person the Trading Hut, the market stall, Brewery house sale Growing Green or have been the Saturday monitor down on the BOGplot. You're wonderful people, the glue that holds society together. And don't forget is always room for more glue in Bath Organic Group. We love glue. Just let anyone on the committee know if you have any time – even an hour - and we will help fill it for you.

**THE Elections**

After years of pussyfooting about I intend to stand for election to the post of chair. If elected I promise:

- to make sure that at least half the BOGgarden is built on
- that subs are raised to £50 a month
- that chemical spraying is introduced
- that GM terminator seeds are mandatory
- and finally that women are referred to as ladies.

It is time that Bath Organic Group moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If anyone wishes to stand against this platform of reform as chair it is their democratic right - but you will all be sorry. Goodbye jam auctions - hello sharp suits, concrete, French cheese and blackberries from Mexico

So comrades, until the AGM and a new dawn. I hope I can count on you to elect me to lead you into this new and exciting period of our development.

Thank you

Peter Andrews



*Illustration by  
Holly Ambrose*

**BOG contact numbers**

Peter Andrews  
(Acting Chair)

Tim Baines  
(re Trading Hut)

Sheila's Blethyn  
(membership)

## COMMUNITY GARDEN COMES OF AGE

### New Opportunity for BOG to Build on its Success

The BOG plot, as it soon became known, was set up in 1990 to provide a demonstration of organic gardening to help promote the aims of Bath Organic Group. Over the years, as organic food has become increasingly popular, the garden has developed into a community project where volunteers grow fruit and vegetables for their own consumption with the surplus being sold at the farmers' market. Regular volunteer support over the years has ensured a continuity of the upkeep and maintenance of the garden.

The potential benefits of our garden to the broader community, in terms of food, education, training and social inclusion, have yet to be addressed. As the Western Riverside Development becomes a reality in the next decade, with maybe 2,500 new homes within easy walking distance, the opportunity to broaden the aims of the garden has never been greater. Over the last year or so the BOG management committee has started to look at ways this could be achieved.

BOG's community garden and especially it's members are together such a wonderful resource, it seems a terrible waste not to invite others to share it with us and with careful planning, help us build BOG into something that can make a valuable contribution to many more people's lives.

The catalyst for this may be just around the corner. In January 2008 BOG will be eligible to bid for a grant\* from the Big Lottery to fund a project(s) focused on promoting **locally produced food** and enhancing **local green spaces**, (like our community garden) to improve the quality of life for people in the community (that's us). Successful projects might contribute to: improved health and well being, (exercise and nutrition); efficient use of resources, (eg. composting); strengthened local economies (social enterprises); education & building social networks etc.

## **Obituary**

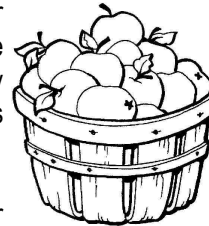
We were very sorry to hear of the passing of BOG member and former newsletter editor, Howard Goorney. While many of us will have enjoyed Howard's company at various BOG events over the years, we may not have been aware of his erudite 'daytime job' as an actor on both stage and screen. Among other things, he was a founder member the pioneering Joan Littlewood company 'Theatre Workshop' which gained worldwide fame, particularly well known for its creation, through ensemble work, of 'Oh what a Lovely War'. Our thoughts go out to Howard's family, and to Stella, his wife, whom many of us know through BOG.



## ***Great! Now what?***

What we need now from all BOG members and any other interested parties are project ideas!

So put down that tin of extra-strength lager, sharpen your pencil and get your thinking cap on. It seems only reasonable that we should consider making our garden available every day of the week, with daily operations / activities and perhaps an eco-friendly building to host indoor activities?



Below are some questions it might be helpful to consider when thinking about possible projects.

- ◆ Exactly who and what would the project involve?
- ◆ What would be the projects stated aims?
- ◆ How many people?
- ◆ Which location(s)
- ◆ Duration /frequency of project?
- ◆ Costs; equipment and manpower involved?
- ◆ Commitment from paid / voluntary workers? Incentives?
- ◆ Health and safety issues?
- ◆ Why would people want to be involved in the project or participate in the activity that your project provides?
- ◆ What problems could you envisage and how could these be overcome?
- ◆ What role would you play in bringing your idea from the drawing board to reality?

Each idea should be on one side of A4, presentation is not important, it's the idea that counts.

Please send all ideas to Tim Baines by 23 November or bring them to the AGM on 24 November 2007. No idea, No cake!

Once everybody has had an opportunity to put forward their project ideas and their views at the AGM, it is anticipated that the intense heat of our collective wisdom and analysis will distil them into one overall coherent, focused and inspiring project that will benefit and have the support of the majority of BOG members, and this will form the basis of our funding application in January.

*\*This funding may be the last of it's kind in the foreseeable future and with this in mind it would be great if we could develop project ideas that after a short time became self-sustaining i.e. self-funding. If the funding bid is unsuccessful it would be good to have projects that could be initiated anyway from very low start up costs that BOG could fund.*

Tim Baines and Matt Lewis

## **BROADLANDS ORCHARDSHARE**

After the abundance of apples in 2006 this year's harvest has been rather disappointing. However, new woody growth has been encouraging, particularly on the trees pruned during the winter, so we have great expectations for next year.

There are over 100 sponsored trees already and more volunteers are coming forward. The orchard is, at long last, beginning to look cared for after many years of neglect. This project has now become an inspiring community endeavour which is attracting support from sponsors, volunteers and funders.

You can sponsor an apple tree for £10 for the year. You will be kept informed about news and events at Broadlands during the year by newsletter and email as well as receiving a share of the harvest.

For further info contact Tim

## **Pease pudding hot, pease pudding cold?**

Deborah's eye was caught a few months ago by a review of a book by Barbara Kingsolver called "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle" – an account of an American family's year of living only on what was produced in their State (much of it on their smallholding). Whilst I thought the book unremarkable (it reminded me a bit of John Seymour books from the 1970s) it did make us wonder – what would it be like to do something similar here?

We (i.e. Deborah and me but not our sons, who simplified things by being away) decided to try it for a month. Rather than "State" we used UK-produced only as the target, with the more local produced the better. We allowed ourselves four imported honourable exceptions/luxuries: tea, coffee, chocolate (this being an experiment not a lifestyle change) and bananas (aka the runner's favourite fruit).

Early autumn may be a relatively easy time to do this, but the experiment has been easier to live with than we anticipated. The biggest shock was having to stand and read the labels of each item in the shops. Two discoveries illustrate what we found: organic barley flakes that come from Finland (does no-one in this country grow them?) and organic haricot beans that come from China (ditto – or France at the furthest). Often the choice has been either local or organic – but not both, which we found very disappointing. I also found (courtesy of The Guardian) that this neatly opted us out of the some of the more absurd import/export trade in food that sees, for example, 11,000 tonnes of ice cream exported to Germany each year, not quite matching the 19,000 tonnes we import from there.

The adaptations have been pretty painless: rape seed oil from Somerset rather than olive oil from Italy; no rice or pasta but plenty of bread, potatoes and barley; apple juice not orange juice; no nuts or dried fruit for Deborah's muesli. No wine (I'm not convinced English wine is worth the cost) so local beer and Somerset cider instead. We concentrated on what we could eat rather than what we couldn't eat – and have eaten very well indeed.

There are plenty of choices of local fruit and veg in early autumn – we'll repeat the experiment again in February to see how agreeable it is then. I haven't thought through what a "never" approach to pasta, rice, oranges or winter tomatoes would mean in terms of variety and nutrition. Would it mean a return to war-

time cuisine? Out with Nigella Lawson, back in with Marguerite Patten?

Based on our experience, buying UK-only need not be like a trip in a time machine to pre-Elizabeth David days (ie the childhood memories of pease pudding - a hangover from 1950s cooking). It could be something which builds on the passion for local/regional ingredients that is characteristic of, say, Italian cookery (without simply importing all of those ingredients), and uses imported rice, pasta, nuts, dried fruits, citrus fruits etc as once-in-a-while foods rather than staples.

Food for thought?

Malcolm Dodds



### **Pumpkin Seeds**

Don't throw out the pumpkin seeds when you use pumpkins, save them, don't wash them as this can remove some of the flavour. Place a single layer on a baking sheet, sprinkle with salt and bake at 250° until dry, stirring occasionally. Bake for 15-30 minutes or until they turn a very light gold.

Variations : Sweet & spicy : mix together 2 tbsp sugar, ½ tsp salt, ½ tsp ground cumin, ½ tsp ground cinnamon, 1 ½ tsp ground ginger, pinch cayenne pepper

After baking seeds heat 1 ½ tbsp peanut oil over high heat in non-stick frying pan and add seeds and 2 tbsp sugar. Cook until sugar melts and seeds begin to caramelize [about 45-60 seconds]. Transfer to bowl and mix with above mixture. Let them cool

Sheila

### **I needed a new shed!**

When I got a new shed I thought I would finally solve the problem of storing tools and brown bags and plastic garden bags, and pieces of string, and firewood, and netting and...and...and... I'm sure you can fill it out for me. I inherited an old shed from a neighbour nine years ago, and this venerable shed has some sentimental connotations attached to it. It had been moved across two gardens several times. It now has a skewiff door, a rotting floor, plastic across the window space, and a pronounced list across the old bed frame on which it rests.

My new shiplap shed came from Home Base, was delivered by an independent outfit, and stood awaiting erection for several weeks, while I worried about rain on it before it saw any paint. When I finally succumbed to a professional to put it up for me, in one day flat...it was a thrilling moment. It was also gloriously spring! I set to with the Woodland Green and painted two coats in happy stages. My neighbours were invited to inspect. I then cadged some floor sealer and thought myself very wise to give the woodchip three coats. By now it was becoming a work of pride and a labour of love. In the resting times I sat in front of it, surveying my garden from a new perspective -- the bottom of the garden angle. Together with the rough pile for hedgehogs, the rescued stone from skips, the recycled water barrel, and the trees' shade in that distant hot April weather.

The interior stayed unsullied by such intrusions as a bike or dirty tools. After a week or so I found an old carpet square in the loft. Then a sort of low bookshelf was declared redundant in the house. My new camping 'director's' chair was just right next to it. With the right fold-out shelf for a tea cup, and a pencil, and a sharpener and an eraser. My feet rest from time to time on a pumpkin given me by Pauline! The pad rests on a cushion that also keeps my lap warm.

I try to rise early enough every day in order to obey a new writing regime...in the shed, with the doors wide open on the cool morning air. And the breeze, and the rustle of insects, and the birdsong. When it rains I quite like the patter on the roof, and the way small twigs drop. This basic shed has proved to be the



## **In Praise of Parsnips**

All hail the humble parsnip! OK that's taking it a bit far but I'd like to raise the profile of this lovely vegetable.

Until the introduction of potatoes parsnips were the main winter staple, surviving happily in the ground through the cold weather (a frost is reckoned to improve their flavour too) and providing much needed calories. They are also a good source of potassium and fibre and high in vitamins C, B3 & E. Parsnips can be used many ways in the kitchen - roasted, boiled, mashed, fried (mmm parsnip crisps), souped, stewed and used as a banana substitute. But none of these are quite so much fun as parsnip wine (also known as 'Tanglefoot' for obvious reasons) or so tea-break friendly as parsnip cake, recipes below.

### **Parsnip Wine**

Take 3kg (7 lbs) parsnips and scrub well (but don't peel) and slice and boil in 11 litres (2 1/2 gallons) water until tender - but not mushy. Strain the liquor and add 1.5kg (3 lbs) of sugar per 4.5 litres (gallon) - unrefined gives a more sherry like colour. Add 2 tablespoons of citric acid. Bring back to boil and simmer for 3/4 of an hour. Turn into fermenting container and when cooled add yeast, nutrient and pectic enzyme. Ferment out, racking as necessary, ready in about a year. This quantity should be enough to incapacitate a small army so scale for your own needs. Based on C J J Berry's 'First Steps in Winemaking'.

### **Parsnip Cake**

Sift 250g (9 oz) of self-raising flour into a bowl with 1 tbsp baking powder and 1 tsp cinnamon or mixed spice. Melt 130g (4 1/2 oz) butter and stir in 130g (4 1/2 oz) sugar until dissolved. Pour into bowl with flour and add 250g (9 oz) grated parsnip, 1 mashed banana and half a small glass of orange juice. Mix well and turn into a lined loaf tin and bake at 180 degrees C (gas mark 4) for 45-50 mins. Best eaten in a polytunnel during rain. From the Bebington Road Allotment Society 'Celebrity Recipes' booklet.

I hope that's encouraged you to re-acquaint yourself with our 'tender and true' friend the parsnip.

Dan Smith