



MORE FROM THE SHED – 10

Well, on we go. But do pause in what is becoming a somewhat muddled field as to what we can and can't do, what we should and what we shouldn't do, and escape with some refreshingly light weight problems such as why radishes and asparagus come up in Brompton Cemetery. We wonder if it were really possible for a real- life eccentric gardener to be even more eccentric than a character in a Nancy Mitford book which was based on him and, while we are on him, why he dyed doves with food colour? We ponder why more politicians are not taking the advice of an early 17th century clergyman. William Lawson wrote 'A New Orchard & Garden' in 1618 in which he expressed the view that there is no better place to recover equilibrium than a garden for overworked lawyers, merchants and politicians – 'the gods of the earth' – and that they should withdraw from their hectic life with 'troublesome affayres of their estate, their stomachs cloyed with variety of Banquets, their ears filled and over-burthened with tedious discourses' and repair to their gardens and orchards.



In the early C19 there were 10,000 acres of **market gardens** in London. These were all gradually built over as the land on which they stood was absorbed for housing. **Brompton Cemetery** was built on the site of one such market garden which explains why radishes, asparagus, strawberries and garlic still come up in the grounds of the cemetery.



And thinking of these market gardens and the growing of fruit and vegetables, this week I wonder if you know what these are varieties of:

1. All Year Round, Purple Cape, Snowball
2. Howgate Wonder, Irish Peach Keswick Codling
3. Bull's Blood, Cheltenham Green Top, Egyptian Turnip-Rooted

4. Fat Lazy Blonde, Marvel of the Four Seasons, Balloon
5. Giant Zittau, James' Longkeeping, Southport Red Globe
6. Conqueror, King George, Lemon Apple

Answers to the quiz on garden sheds: the sheds shown were from:

1. Chalke Abbey,



2. Gravetye Manor



3. Jardins de Mezicourt,



4. West Dean



5. Heligan



6. Tyntesfield



7. Harlow Carr





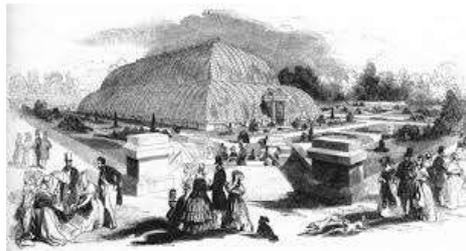
120 years ago...

We are promised some rain later this week but just when gardeners feel it is safe enough to plant out delicate plants be warned that on June 12 in 1900, 3-inch-diameter hailstones destroyed glasshouses and crops in Abingdon.

1900 was also the year Geoffrey Jellicoe was born.

100 years ago.....

At Chatsworth, the Duke of Devonshire ordered Joseph Paxton's Great Stove to be blown up. The plant collection it had housed had declined beyond salvation during WW1 as coal was not available to heat the great building.



90 years ago.....

A great year for gardens with Harold Nicholson and Vita Sackville-West buying Sissinghurst and Lord Fairhaven starting his garden at Anglesey Abbey



60 years ago.....

Beth Chatto starts her garden at White Barn House near Colchester



30 years ago.....

The National trust acquired Stowe



ALLOTMENTS



More and more of us are becoming Allotmenteers, fighting the virus on the ground and that reminded me of another time when allotments were desperately needed.

Although it is thought that there were some forms of allotments in Anglo Saxon times, the system that is recognise today has its roots in the nineteenth century, when land was given over to the labouring poor for the provision of food growing. This measure was desperately needed thanks to the rapid industrialisation of the country and the lack of a welfare state. In 1908 the Small Holdings and Allotments Act came into force, placing a duty on local authorities to provide sufficient allotments, according to demand. During the **First World War**, food was in short supply and the Government created propaganda campaigns to encourage people from all over the country to start growing their own food. Committees were set up throughout the country to secure more plots for allotments in town parks and other public land for the growing of food. Special books and magazines were published to help new growers.

**WYMONDHAM
PARISH COUNCIL.**

**CULTIVATION OF COTTAGE
GARDENS AND ALLOTMENTS.**

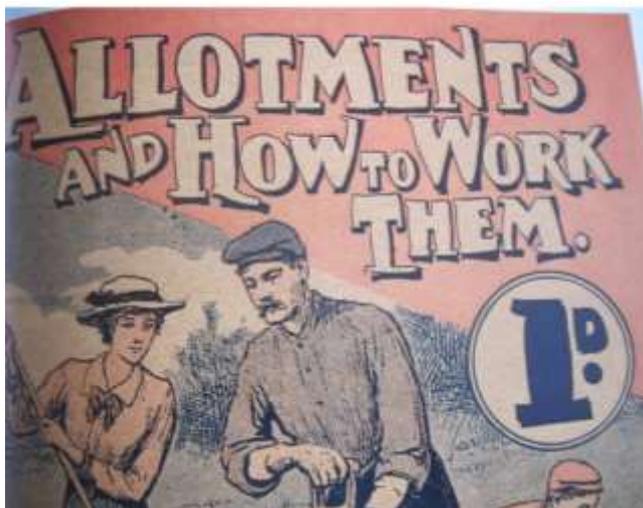
Owners or Occupiers of Cottage Gardens or Allotments in the above Parish, who are unable to cultivate the same, are invited to apply to the Parish Council for advice and help, at the same time giving the reason for non-cultivation.

Persons requiring Plots of land for cultivation should also apply to the above Council.

Applications made under this notice should be sent to the Clerk to the Council at his office in Vicar Street, Wymondham, on or before Monday the 5th March next.

JOHN R. POMEROY,
Clerk to the Council.

WYMONDHAM,
21st February, 1917.



Propaganda cartoon from 1917 – **'The Allotmenteer at Home'** *What Smith's place must look like - unless of course he has been exaggerating a little!*

Herbert Cowley had returned wounded from the front and spent the rest of the war writing books and articles to help those novice growers:



It wasn't only adults were called on to produce food, School children also were encouraged to do their bit:



After WW1, land was made available to all, primarily as a way of assisting returning service men (Land Settlement Facilities Act 1919) instead of just the labouring poor.

The rights of allotment holders in England and Wales were strengthened through the Allotments Acts of 1922, but the most important change can be found in the Allotments Act of 1925 which established statutory allotments which local authorities could not sell off or convert without Ministerial consent, known as Section 8 Orders.



Nowadays The National Allotment Society is a flourishing concern, supplying support and advice for all Allotmenters and would-be Allotmenters, check out their website: <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/>

Their website is a mine of information about allotments with advice from *Water Use* to *Clearing an Overgrown Plot* to *What your plot can do for Wildlife*.



For those of us who are suffering from **green potatoes** because we have been remiss in not earthing up our potatoes and have been left with a few green ones or at least partly green, beware as the greener they are the more poisonous they are. BUT, calloo callay, there is a use you can put these green potatoes to. Boil them up in a saucepan of water and then use the water as a spray to kill insects on your plants and other vegetables.



THE HIGH LINE NEW YORK

In our series of gardens in unusual places, I would like to bring to your attention another railway – linked garden – this time in New York. It is The High Line - a NY Park which is maintained and supported by Friends of the High Line.

The High Line is an elevated rail structure that was built in the 1930s to move rail freight parallel to, and about a block east of, the docks along the western spine of Manhattan Island. A mere 30 years later it was deemed obsolete, due to the trucking industry's domination over rail freight and the removal of the Port of New York to nearby New Jersey. It stood for several decades as a characteristic piece of abandoned industrial infrastructure.



The High Line in 1934

Then, in 1999, the Friends of the High Line, campaigned for the structure to be turned into an elevated public promenade. This idea, at first improbably romantic, began to gain momentum, thanks to its organisers' political acumen and ability to attract A-list supporters, but also to the lack of valid reasons why it shouldn't be done. The structure was sound; it would require a sophisticated new design for pedestrian access and repaving, but not that much overhauling. With a newly-elected mayor, Michael Bloomberg, enthusiastically behind it (New York's previous mayor, Rudy Giuliani, had been all for tearing it down), and the High Line's owner, CSX, amenable to turning over the

facility to public use, it only awaited approval by a Washington railroad oversight bureau (and the settling of a legal challenge by one recalcitrant property-owner) to become a reality.

As it happened, there already existed an extraordinarily successful model for the conversion of an abandoned railroad into an elevated urban walk: the Promenade Plantée in Paris.



A competition was held for the redesign of the High Line, and the winning design team, James Corner Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro, devised clever, cutting-edge solutions for retaining some of the unruly charm of the city-pasture wilderness into which it had fortuitously evolved.

The design has kept the tracks and interwoven them with trees and flowers with a particular use of wild flowers and grasses which had started to be established – wind born – during its decades of disuse.

The planks (sometimes diverging into two smaller paths, sometimes rising up or dipping down) taper and blend into the plantings, and vice versa, so that the effect is of grass coming up through cracks in the pavement. The planned mix of native grasses, flowering meadow and woodland thicket suggests a conscious effort to retain some of the scruffy, weed-like feeling, with emphasis on wildflowers and self-sustaining, low-maintenance plants that can coexist together.



The train tracks are still visible



There is seating with wonderful views over the Hudson River and even shallow pools which the local toddlers adore



Office workers spend their lunch hours escaping the busyness of street level



In Nancy Mitford's book, *The Pursuit of Love*, the character of Lord Merlin was based on Gerald Tyrwhitt, 14th Baron Berners; diplomat, composer, artist, writer and also a prankster. He had a clavicorn fitted into his Rolls Royce, he often enjoyed meals in which all the food was of the same colour and having read that in China doves were dyed with food colouring he followed suit and flocks fluttered through his grounds in the colours of rainbows. He commissioned a folly to be built in 1935, declaring, 'The great point of the tower is that it will be entirely useless'. Dissatisfied with the tower when it was first completed, he insisted on adding mock battlements and gothic decoration plus a notice that read, 'Members of the Public committing suicide from this Tower do so at their own risk.' The garden was designed by the equally eccentric Robert Huber-Percy who filled urns with plastic greenery.

DID YOU KNOW (because I certainly didn't until I read it in *The Times* Nature Notes last Thursday)

The white flowers of the elder tree are in full blossom, ready for making elderflower cordial and even elderflower champagne. BUT the twigs of the elder tree which are grey and hollow and snap easily are filled with a soft pith that is used for cleaning the mechanisms of watches.



KEEP SAFE AND GOOD GARDENING!

THE SHED WILL BE CLOSING ITS DOORS IN TWO WEEKS, IF THERE IS A TOPIC YOU WOULD LIKE ME TO INVESTIGATE BEFORE THAT - JUST LET ME KNOW.