

SPUD & SLUG - SEPTEMBER 2021

**DON'T FORGET - RIPON HORTICULTURAL SHOW - 5th SEPTEMBER
WAKEMAN'S BAR, RIPON RACECOURSE. FULL DETAILS ON WEBSITE**

NEWS ROUND-UP

Market Stall. We must pass on a huge vote of thanks to all those ploholders who made the effort to support the Society's annual market stall on 14th August. A total of £88.60 was raised for the Improvement Fund (a little down on the 2019 figure of £102.20) but much of this was due to stricter market rules and a list of items we were unable to sell. In particular, not being able to sell jams and jellies certainly had an adverse impact on receipts. However, there was a good amount of donated vegetables and as Roger reported, there were compliments galore about what was for sale. By the end of the morning there was very little left for Stuart to take to the HDAF show the following day.

Potatoes, Onions, Shallots. No doubt many ploholders are still lifting potatoes and onions, but we must turn our thoughts to next season and plan ahead for spring planting of seed potatoes and onion sets. Members will have seen Roger's recent email which contained full details, as well as an order form. We must place our order before the end of November so we can be sure of having the varieties we want in January. **Therefore the absolute deadline for submission of your order is 28th November (but the earlier the better!).** Payment is not required until you collect your order in late January. See page 2 for a few more comments on potatoes.

Seed Scheme. Members will also have seen reference in Roger's recent email to the Society's seed scheme. Our suppliers, Marshall's, have apologised for what they accept has been a less than satisfactory service over the past 12 months. They have assured us that the problems they experienced are a thing of the past and we can expect much better in 2022. Their offer will remain unchanged, i.e. 50% discount on packet seed and 20% on plants, sets, etc. They have promised to let us know when their new catalogue is to be released; members will then be advised of further details.

Waiting List / New Tenants

At the time of writing (25th August), the waiting list stands at a total of 56 names, with a breakdown by site as follows:

Kirkby Road:	32
Fishergreen:	16
Bondgate:	18
Quarry Moor:	11
Gallows Hill:	12
Riverview:	20

We are very pleased to welcome the following new ploholders:

Fishergreen:	Christine & Alan McCormack Christine Jugg Pete Howell-Jones Haley Wallace
---------------------	--

Quarry Moor Lane:	Jin Wang
--------------------------	----------

All waiting list enquiries should be addressed to Gary Tulip: garytulip@gmail.com

HDAF SHOW

Raffle. Thanks to everyone who so generously supported the event by buying raffle tickets, although, alas, RCAS members had little luck this year. Rob Hutchinson was our only winner, taking 4th prize.

RCAS Entries. Four Ripon members entered, but unfortunately Ron & Chrissie Smith were unable to stage their exhibits following an accident which saw Chrissie spend most of Saturday night and Sunday morning in Harrogate hospital. Roger was the winner of the Simpson Cup which is awarded to the Ripon member with most points (Firsts for Dahlias, Chrysanthemums, Tomatoes and French Beans]. Dave Barrett, who entered the show for the first time, also won a couple of prizes. Well done to Roger and Dave, and get well soon, Chrissie.

Diamond Jubilee Challenge. Regular readers may well recall references to the competition organised by HDAF to mark their Diamond Jubilee (held over after last year's show was cancelled). The idea was to grow Diamond Jubilee Sweet Peas, Jubilee Tomatoes and Jubilee Boy Dahlias.

The good news is that, expertly coordinated by Roger and Malcolm, the RCAS entry won!! The display (pictured) beat those entered by all the other societies which make up the Federation.

The picture does not really do justice to the quality of the tomatoes and flowers, but does give an idea of the entry we submitted.



POTATOES

Recent stories in the mainstream media suggest there could be a shortage of potatoes this year, due to a combination of poor growing conditions, floods in key European growing areas, supply-chain issues, staffing issues, and high demand from Europe. However, industry experts say some of this is simply due to catering suppliers simply advising pubs and restaurants to order early for Christmas. Processed products such as crisps and chips seem to be worst affected.

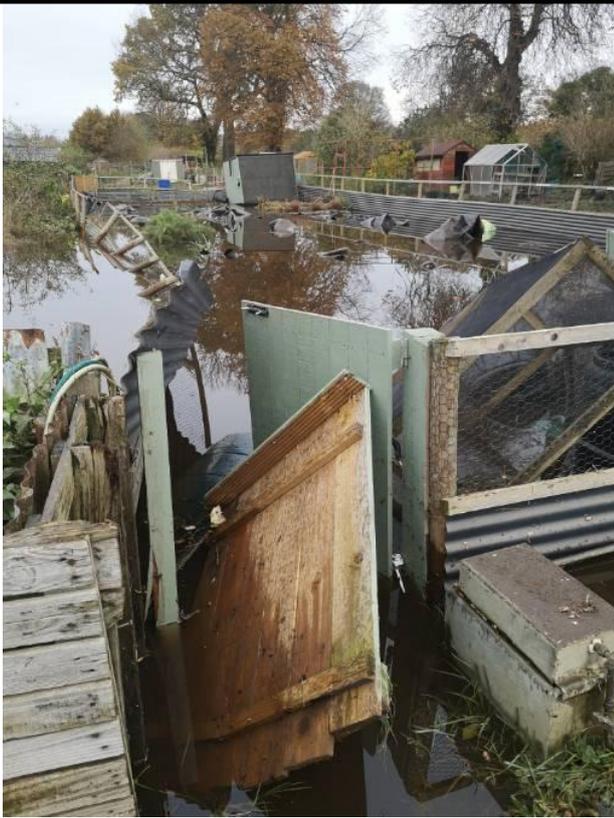
Europe's potato crops have been badly affected this year, with farmers expecting a smaller and lower quality yield. UK crop forecasts for this year are still awaited and although yields are likely to be down, it is too early to talk about significant shortages just yet. It has also been a fluctuating year in the market for consumption of potatoes, exacerbated by the repeated shut-down of the hospitality sector.

In 2020, a total of 55.3mn tons of potatoes were harvested in the European Union, most ending up as crisps or frozen chips. Germany was the largest producer and accounted for 21.2% of EU production, followed by Poland (16.4%), France (15.7%), the Netherlands (12.7%) and Belgium (7.2%).

The moral of this tale? Grow your own! Our suppliers have advised that some well-loved varieties, notably Arran Pilot and Lady Christl, will be unavailable next year, but there are more than 20 excellent varieties to choose from. Get your orders in ASAP!

**DON'T FORGET - RIPON HORTICULTURAL SHOW 5th SEPTEMBER
WAKEMAN'S BAR, RIPON RACECOURSE FULL DETAILS ON WEBSITE**

TOP PLOT 2021



A key part of the Ripon Horticultural Show is the awarding of trophies. Of course, judging for the Top Plot Competition took place in June, and the recipients of the six available trophies have already been decided (top score at each of the large sites, plus best plot across the small sites, as well as best site overall and best plot overall). The August Spud & Slug published the leading scores. You may remember that the standard was particularly high and competition at the top was very tight.

The overall winners (and winners of the Mawson and Hardisty Cup) were Simon and Jane Richardson who achieved a mighty impressive score of 99 points. This was made all the more noteworthy when one considers the impact of the flooding at Fishergreen earlier this year. As these pictures show, the transformation has been remarkable and testament to the huge effort they have put in..... many congratulations!



**DON'T FORGET - RIPON HORTICULTURAL SHOW 5th SEPTEMBER
WAKEMAN'S BAR, RIPON RACECOURSE FULL DETAILS ON WEBSITE**

DID YOU KNOW? ASTERS

Asters are also known as *Michaelmas daisies*. Michaelmas, or the Feast of Michael and All Angels, is celebrated each year on the 29th of September. Falling close to the autumnal equinox, the day is associated with the onset of autumn.

The name was applied to Asters as they are in flower at the time of Michaelmas.

The word *daisy* is apparently derived from an Old English phrase *,dægesege*, which translates as *day's eye*.

The name reflects the flower's behaviour with its petals opening at dawn and closing at dusk, like an eye that wakes and sleeps.



SEPTEMBER SEED SOWING

As we head into autumn, it's not too late to think about a few crops that may be suitable for taking us into the winter. Here are a few suggestions, but as always, do take account of the weather and also check the instructions on individual seed packets. A greenhouse, cold-frame or cloche protection will certainly help.

In the cold frame / greenhouse / under cloches: Direct sow **spinach** ('Turaco F1' or 'Trombone F1' are later varieties) but provide cloche protection as the weather cools. This should give harvests into the autumn and winter. There is probably still time to sow **spring cabbages**, such as 'April' and 'Durham Early' into modules in the greenhouse.

Direct sow outdoors: Weather permitting, there may still be time to make a final direct sowing of **summer radishes** (radishes generally cope well with the cooler autumn conditions). Sow winter-hardy **spring onions** ('White Lisbon' or 'Performer') for an early harvest next spring. Sow **onions** into a well-prepared seedbed. 'Hi Keeper' is a good choice of **onion** for autumn sowing, but only thin seedlings in the spring.

Corn salad (lamb's lettuce) may be sown now as it's fully hardy and can be sown outdoors for cropping throughout the autumn and winter. Sow **winter lettuce**, such as 'Arctic King', directly into the ground (but it will benefit from cloche protection during cold weather).

Plant outdoors: Start planting **garlic** bulbs at the end of the month for cropping next year and also plant autumn **onion** sets in September / October.

**DON'T FORGET - RIPON HORTICULTURAL SHOW 5th SEPTEMBER
WAKEMAN'S BAR, RIPON RACECOURSE FULL DETAILS ON WEBSITE**

JOBS FOR SEPTEMBER

Whilst much of the attention this month is focused on harvesting and enjoying the rewards of hard work earlier in the season, as always, there are still other jobs to be getting on with:

- On a dry day, lift any potatoes remaining in the ground and store in paper or hessian sacks in a cool dry place.
- Keep picking crops such as beans, courgettes and sweetcorn as they mature.
- Remove the remains of summer cauliflowers and cabbages and any yellowing leaves from your winter brassicas. Add this soft material to your compost bin.
- Alternatively dig a trench and place the leaves, etc. in it. A handful of sulphate of ammonia will accelerate the rotting process. When full cover with soil, mark and use for growing runner beans or sweet peas next year.
- Onions should be lifted and dried in a greenhouse or on a frame before storing in an airy, cool place for use during the winter months.
- Marrows, pumpkins and winter squashes should be cut from the vine as they mature. Some time spent on the greenhouse staging will help harden the skins and increase the length of time they will store.
- Clear any weeds and dig the land as crops are removed. Green manures can be sown here..
- Primocane (autumn fruiting) raspberries continue setting fruit right through the month. Pick the fruit whilst it is in prime condition and if you have a heavy crop, freeze in order to use later in the year. Leave pruning of autumn fruiting varieties until late winter.
- Prune summer fruiting raspberries, removing the canes that produced fruit during the summer and tying in the strongest new canes which will produce next year's fruit. Also remove any spindly or crowded canes to allow a maximum of six to eight canes per stool.
- Apple picking is now under way for many varieties. Earlier apples do not tend to store well, but apples that ripen later in the year will store for longer.
- Support the branches of heavily-laden fruit trees to prevent them from snapping.
- Check fruit on trees regularly and remove and destroy any that show signs of brown rot, a fungal disease that quickly spreads over the surface of fruit causing it to rot.
- Apply insect barrier glue, the modern alternative to grease banding, to your trees over the next few weeks. This will help prevent insects, such as the female Winter Moth from climbing up your trees and laying its eggs.
- Remove netting from soft fruit bushes that have fruited and been harvested, allowing birds to pick off any harmful insects.
- Cut asparagus ferns once they have turned brown, usually late September or October.
- Buy some daffodils and tulips to provide spring colour. Plant daffodils straight away but delay planting tulips until November.