

# Byelaw Men's Field newsletter

Summer 2010

## ALLOTMENT COMPETITION

Judging will be during week commencing **19th July** therefore it is suggested that we have two 'working party days'. The first on Saturday morning **10th July** when hopefully a skip will be on site and we can 'bottom' the work with a continuation on Saturday morning **17th July** for a general tidy around to be followed by a barbeque; funds will be made available for the food but please bring your own drinks. Meanwhile it would help considerably if you could work your plots with the competition in mind by taking home any rubbish you are not composting and keeping paths neat and tidy. With luck, and some work we will be among the prize winners again this year. If you have any spare bedding plants these would be much appreciated.



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## MASS EVICTION OF UNRULY TENANTS FROM THE ALLOTMENT!

On the 28th May an 'eviction order' was served on about 100,000 tenants, the majority being females, who were evicted from the site. It was goodbye to our bees' but not good riddance but goodbye with some regret.

It was almost a year to the day that a swarm of bees flew over the allotment and colonised one of our empty hives. These bees were joined two weeks later by two nucleus colonies which we had ordered, earlier in the year from the Leeds Bee Keeping Association. All these colonies grew stronger during the summer; we even got a very small amount from the hive containing the bees which had swarmed. All three colonies came through the winter and got off to a good start foraging in early April on the plum trees at the corner of the allotment which provided nectar and the willow tree which provided pollen.

It is the nature of healthy bees to swarm. Bee keepers monitor the progress of their hives and, when the time is right, create an artificial swarm situation. This is done when the bees start to make queen cells to create a new queen and the old queen gets ready to swarm with half the hive. At this point the old queen is removed along with half the brood and honey frames to another hive and these bees believe they have swarmed. In the old hive the new queen hatches goes on mating flights and starts laying eggs. The two halves are then reunited into the hive with the new queen and the old queen destroyed. They then get on with the business of producing honey. It is estimated that a colony will consume during the summer 120lb of honey so it needs a strong

colony to produce, on average, the 30lbs of honey which can only be taken at the end of the summer but only if the bees have stored a further 40lb to take them through the winter. Managing this artificial swarm requires a level of skill. Julie and Tony were able to identify the queen cells but were unable to find the queens, they subsequently found out the hive is not smoked when searching for a queen because it causes her to run about erratically making it impossible to find her.

Two colonies swarmed but were captured and placed in empty hives to start new colonies with the intention of reuniting them with the colony they had left. Unfortunately an enormous colony was present on the 24th of May which was captured and taken away by another bee keeper but not before several people were stung. We have not yet established whether this colony either originated from our hives or was attracted to our allotments because we had two relatively small colonies and they intended to overpower one of these. By this time it had become apparent that it was no longer viable to keep bees on site. Robin an experienced beekeeper from LBKA came to our aid to remove our bees to his apiary near Swillington. Julie and Tony will continue to look after the bees who will continue to wear their 'Byelawmensfield tee shirts' but will be generously mentored by Robin who has 40 years experience.

On the positive side the bees had made honey which went with them, apart for one box, to feed them but hopefully contribute to a surplus which can be collected in August.



## SITE MACHINES!

Considering the amount of use of our machines we have managed to keep them going with help from Reg and Harvey. Inevitably through the amount of use they are subject to machines can get broken. If this happens all that is asked is that you inform Reg, Harvey or Tony. If they are not around then please leave a note on the machine. This year

Reg said that he would not continue with repairing the machines so we are fortunate that he has continued to do so. A time will come in the future when we have to take the machines elsewhere for repair and be charged accordingly. Petrol is now provided for the grass cutting machines and the strimmers but not the cultivators.



## VISIT BY AUSTHORPE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following last year's successful visit we have been asked if a class of six year olds can visit our allotment again this year.

The visit this year will be on Thursday 1st July around 9.45am and lasting about an hour.

## Allotment barbeque

Allotment barbeque will be held **Saturday 17th July 12.30pm** following a general tidy around of site in preparation of allotment competition.

Food will be supplied but please bring your own drinks.



## SOCIAL EVENING FRIDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER.

Each year the Leeds and District Gardeners Association hold a social evening when prizes are presented to winners of the competition. Apparently this is a very enjoyable social evening and includes an excellent buffet at the reasonable cost of £5.00, the venue this year will be at East Ardsley General W.M.C. It would be an opportunity for us to get together socially and let our hair down. If enough are interested and that includes partners/friends we could hire a mini bus to take us. At this stage could you let Tony know whether you would like to come on this night out?