Discovering the stories of Glasgow’s Allotments

Glasgow Allotments Heritage Project

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What Are Allotments?

Allotments are more than just a place to grow vegetables. Allotments have always contributed to the social, economic and environmental agenda, and to the wellbeing of the plotholders and local community. Plotholders all share a passion for the land, the plants and the other inhabitants – the birds, bees, foxes… Allotments are the story that has never been fully told. Old plotholders die without their memories being recorded, and with that, future generations miss out on this legacy.

Past – How the land has changed, the historical surroundings, the names on the trophies, old photos of people on their plots, and newspaper cuttings. The history of the world can be seen in allotments.

Present - Stories of why the plotholders garden, events that occur on their site, memories from the older generation, the shows and open days, as well as the flowers, fruit and vegetables we grow, are a rich part of our culture. The political environment where many allotment sites were lost, why some survived, and the cycle of interest in plots, are all relevant to what is happening today.

Future - Children relate to the natural world present in allotments. They learn from the plots about the changes to climate, food and the natural environment. Through helping in the plot, playing, and eating the crops, they start to understand the significance of allotments.

‘A modern common space where all manner of creatures, all kinds of eccentricities and obsessions can find refuge and flourish’
Richard Mabey

Settle down with your packed lunch and flask of tea, and discover your local allotment’s past
THE HERITAGE PROJECT

In September 2010, the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS), together with Glasgow Allotments Forum (GAF), were awarded a grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The aims of the project were to collect information about the history and stories of allotment sites, to research the historical records, (about which very little was known), to celebrate allotments with the local community, to understand the history, culture and impact of allotments, and to inspire future plotholders.

The untold story

We started the project because allotments are full of untold stories - Jean sheltered with her family on their plot during the war, and still keeps a kettle on the stove; Gerd who campaigned to save Kenyhill from the 1970 motorway construction and in acknowledgement received a medal from the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society; Willy who collected elephant dung from the circus in Queens park and many others.

Paper, print and the ubiquitous web

Plotholders captured their stories through recordings and writings. They were saved and disseminated, with leaflets for every site participating. A display with portraits of the plotholders and a new web site were also produced.

Records, maps, photos and people

Some sites have kept minute books and records for over fifty years, but many have been lost. Information about when sites were founded can be sited in Council minutes; estate papers such as those from Sir John Stirling Maxwell and Sir Archibald Campbell give information about the land and why they allowed it to be used for allotments.

SHARING and TALKING

The Spring Event, ‘Our sites, Our Plots, Our Heritage’, brought together plotholders so that they could show what had been done, share information and enthuse them to do more. Children also performed a play and gave a presentation. The Autumn Event was a professionally organised dissemination with displays from all 12 sites, video shows, talks, and presentations. Both events were very lively, bringing together many different ages, families, and interests, all united in a love of their plots. Plotholders have (or soon acquire) gardening skills, but they also brought their personal and professional skills to the project. Amateur and professional web designers, computer geeks, mapmakers, photographers, archivists, writers, artists and storytellers joined together to tell the allotment story.

INSPIRING PLACES

The project enabled people to express their love of their site and the land.

‘On a clear day you can actually see Goat Fell mountain... Although surrounded by buildings, the feeling is of a piece of the country in the city, qualitively different from the city’s many parks and other open spaces.

- Beechwood Allotments

Alastair McIntosh at our Autumn Culmination event

Playbusters at our Autumn Culmination event

An old map of Mansewood Allotments

Sir John Stirling Maxwell

New Victoria Gardens, 1928
OUR HISTORY

....and so the story begins

The first known allotment site in Glasgow (shown on a 1858 map) is at Cowlairs Works in Springburn for the workers at the Edinburgh Glasgow Railway. This remained until the 1970s. The first site still remaining was New Victoria Gardens in Pollokshields in 1885.

WW1 and after
- Acts, land and petitions

The Cultivation of Land (Scotland) Order 1917 (made by the Board of Agriculture for Scotland, under regulation 26 Defence of the Realm (consolidations) 1914) was submitted to the Council by the Town Clerk. The Council acted to provide more allotments. At the end of 1917 there were 33 Council sites with 4054 plots; by 1920 there were 5280 plots with 440 plots unlet. However, the land was being reclaimed for football, play and housing, Glasgow Green had 159 plots all of which were worked in 1921, but then 77 were removed for a children’s playground. There were many petitions to save the sites or find other land, but this was to no avail. By 1928, only 1111 remained.

Surviving the thirties

Then the depression and unemployment of the thirties arrived, and more than 500 new allotments were added by 1935. Most of the land was leased and some of the new land was apparently not very good. At Germiston, the amount of work that had to be done to put the land into cultivation in the first year was so great that the plotholders were excused rent for that year. This was following the same pattern as the land that had been acquired during the First World War, and slowly the leases were not renewed, and the number of allotments fell steadily over the rest of the 1930s. The Secretary of the National Union of Allotments Holders, anticipating this problem, wrote in July 1936 asking for more permanent allotments, but to little avail.

DIG for VICTORY

In 1939, Glasgow Corporation moved quickly to set up war-time allotments. These were of the standard size, 200 sq. yds. (30 by 60 inches). Only a box seat capable of holding tools was allowed, and huts and greenhouses were forbidden. No water or toilet facilities were to be provided on war-time allotment sites. By May of 1940, there were 1050 war-time, as well as around 1000 permanent, allotment plots in use, together with the private sites that had existed before the beginning of the War. However, there were problems with the land. In 1942, the Federation of Plot Holders asked that ‘new ground chosen for allotments be examined by experts to secure only land fit for cultivation’. In May 1946, the Director of Parks advised the Allotments Committee ‘the remaining 855 un-let would, in his opinion, never be let on account of the difficult nature of the ground and lack of fencing’.
**Losing the plot - Moves and Threats**

The fall in the number of war-time allotments in the two years after the cessation of the war had two main causes - the recovery of land by private land-lords who had leased the land for the 'duration', and the land taken back by Housing (starting in mid 1945) for the re-building of homes. Motorway construction also proved a threat. Kennyhill mounted a successful campaign in the 1970s, and in 2008, High Carnytna was relocated because of the East End Regeneration Route.

**New Dawn**

However, the number of permanent allotments increased in 1949 and 1950 as areas of war-time plots were made permanent (Trinley Brae, Littlehill, Auchinairn Road) - there had been steady pressure from the Glasgow and District Federation for this action. Julian Ave had been a private site, sold to the Mormon church in 1970, but half of the site was reopened after the site was bought by Glasgow City Council in 1974.

There are cycles - while some sites are lost, others are set up, and between 2009 and 2012 the Council provided 180 new plots in new allotments, with growing spaces being established at Germiston, Mansewood, Bellahouston, Oatlands, Scotstoun, Tollcross Park and Yoker.

**Where We Are Now**

*Construction of the M8 motorway had put Kennyhill under threat in the 1970s*
**Union of Allotments**

The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders (SNUAH) was founded in 1919 by James Scott, and the secretary during the 1930s and 1940s was Archibald Fischer, a plotholder and a solicitor in Edinburgh. It turned into the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS) in 1947.

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**Government Acts**

The principal statute is the Allotments (Scotland) Act 1892. It was amended by the Land Settlement (Scotland) Act 1919 and the Allotment (Scotland) Acts of 1922 and 1950.

Local authorities are obliged to provide allotments if there is a proven need for them. They can be provided through land it owns, or they can also acquire land for purposes of the Allotments Acts by purchase agreement or compulsory purchase, lease or temporary use.

**Leases**

Under the 1892 Allotments (Scotland) Act, the local authority can make, alter and revoke regulations regarding the letting terms of the allotments. Such regulations require the confirmation of the Scottish Ministers. The regulations cover such matters as who can have a plot, the size of a plot and the conditions as to cultivation and rent.

**Council Response**

In 1892, during the industrial revolution, the first Allotments (Scotland) Act was passed. It reflected the poverty at the time and the need for ordinary people to have a plot of land to grow food. The Act placed responsibility on the Council to provide and manage this, and also on the tenants to look after the land. It provided the framework for the Councils to set up allotments.

The Council has never fully embraced their legal responsibilities under this or the following Acts.

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The committee, while in favour of security of tenure, agreed, in view of arrangements made for accommodating plotholders during the ensuing season, to express the opinion and reaffirm their previous decision that meantime it be inexpedient in the interests of plotholders to adopt the Allotment (Scotland) Act 1892 and Land settlement (Scotland) Act 1919.

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In Glasgow, there is now an allotments officer to whom issues can be addressed.

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**The Scottish Allotment Scheme for the Unemployed**

In 1931, the Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Act and the Scottish Allotment Scheme for the Unemployed (SASU) was set up to enable unemployed or seriously impoverished men and women to obtain and cultivate Gardens or Allotments Gardens. Seeds and fertiliser were provided at low cost, as well as tools, and help for fencing and equipment. The scheme continued until 2007.

An immediate response to the 1931 Act was the formation of the South Western Association ‘to take advantage of the scheme for the unemployed’. South Western Allotments benefitted from this and are thriving to this day.
SOURCING OUR STORIES

Records
As well as the official Council minutes, the allotment association minute books throw a fascinating light on the culture and social organisation of the allotments. For example, the records of Kelvinside Allotments Association (KAA) date from 1923 and include both rent books and minutes. These records reveal that the people who took up the allotments at Kirklee (part of KAA) came from across the west end, and while the vast majority of those recorded are men, there were also women. One such plot, number 29, illustrates how, in the years leading up to World War II, having an allotment was a family affair. Over 20 years, the plot was rented by father, followed by son, and then daughter.

People and plants
A plotholder in New Victoria Gardens kept a planting schedule for many years. Max Hartman in Merrylee kept an account of all he grew in 1999/2000 with figures such as 32.12 lbs of broad beans which would have cost £15.10 to buy in Safeways. He also lost his entire sprouting broccoli to pigeons that year!

1954: It was agreed that clause 7 of the ‘Regulations as to Allotments Plots’ be deleted. This had stated that the plots would be used for the production of vegetables only).

JEAN’S KETTLE
Jean remembers that in the 1930s, the family spent days on end at the allotment, with dinners of tatties, turnip and cabbage cooked on the wood-burning stove: this saved having to use a precious penny for the gas-meter at home. Even now, nearly every day, smoke still rises from Jean’s hut and her kettle is on.

MANURE and the CIRCUS
Manure is an important item for the gardener. Victoria Park was next to the Scotstoun Showground where the Corporation used to stable their horses. When they left, plotholders used farm manure, but now that source has mainly disappeared. We have to buy dried chicken, cow and mushroom manure or grow green manures such as mustard. Lots of us regret the passing of the days when, as Willie Frew from Mansewood said, ‘the circus was at Queen’s Park recreation Ground for a week – a load of elephant dung went into that plot’.

Celebrations and Competitions
Kennyhill used to have a social dance after each AGM. In 1919, the hire of a piano cost 15 shillings and the men delivering it were given 2 shillings as a tip.
New Victoria Gardens’ trophies date from 1922 and bear the names of the prize winners since then.

“The annual flower show and promenade in connection with the New Victoria Gardens, Maxwell Street, Pollokshields, was held on Saturday. Fortunately, the weather was of the most favourable description, and the visitors saw everything under the best conditions... last year it was almost impossible to bring out flowers so as to attract the attention and deserve prizes, whereas this year the fine summer has enabled owners of the plants to bring out many of the flowers in almost perfect condition...”

Article from Pollokshaws News, 3rd September 1887.

New Victoria Gardens’ flower show and prize winning
Big estates to housing estates

In order to maintain the food supply in 1917, the Board of Agriculture obtained powers ‘to enter on land for the purpose of cultivating it or using it for the keeping and breeding of livestock, poultry or bees, or arranging for its cultivation.’ The Cultivation of Lands Order delegated these powers to the Glasgow Corporation. The big land owners either offered land or it was commandeered. This was the origin of several sites, including Kirklee and Merryilee.

In July 1931, the National Labour Government provided, under the Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Act, allotments and small holdings for the unemployed, by acquiring land, (including by compulsory purchase if necessary), and making grants for assisting the provision. This resulted in the establishment of several other sites, among them South Western, Julian Ave, Yoker and Germiston.

Mansewood and Trinley Brae were created as part of the new housing developments in the fifties.

Parks

During World War I several allotment sites were created in the Parks, including Victoria Park, Queens Park, Glasgow Green and Tollcross. There was a big discussion about this, and in the 1920s, most sites were taken back for play parks and football pitches. Only Queens Park now remains.

POLICEMEN’S PLOTS

Budhill & Springboig Allotments have been around for over 90 years. The association was started in the 1920s, by a group of gardeners on land that was owned by a local farmer, with a hen run on adjacent disused tennis courts. Many of the plots were occupied by local policemen since the site was near the Courthouse.

In the early 1950s, the farmer sold his land, but a field, known locally as the ‘tattie field’, was allotted to the association by Lanark County Council, providing about 30 plots. As the allotments were in Lanarkshire, they were offered to local Lanarkshire residents from Baillieston, Garrowhill and East Kilbride. After the changes in local government, which brought Budhill & Springboig Allotments into the Greater Glasgow District Council area, the allocation of allotments was opened up to many more people in the local area. In the late 1970s, the demand for plots resulted in the Council’s Parks Department expanding the site with an adjoining area of waste land. The site is still flourishing with 50 plots.

Sewage works, quarries and brickworks

The land for allotments has often been used for many other purposes over the years.

In 1919, Victoria Park had 225 plots of 200 square yards. The total rental was £48 and they had been granted for the duration of the war. After reduction in the number of plots and several petitions against removal, plots were opened in 1925 on the ground at Scotstoun beside the railway that belonged to the Sewage Department. There is a sewage pipe running the length of the site and man-hole covers in several plots.

Kirklee allotments were built on the site of an old quarry.

Linthouse Allotments

“Another war-time activity at Linthouse was the spare-time cultivation of allotments on the twelve acres of ground specially set aside for that purpose by the shipbuilders. These allotments, which were situated in front of the main office, provided excellent growing-ground; fine crops were raised and there were keen contests for the prizes offered by the directors for the best produce. The head offices of the shipbuilders, situated in a modern building fronting on to the Holmfauld Road, are convenient to both the shipyard and engineering works.”

From http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/A_Shipbuilding_History._1750-1932_(Alexander_Stephen_and_Sons):_Chapter_6

1933 map shows Linthouse Allotments

Hamiltonhill Allotments

Hamiltonhill Allotments were built next to an old brickworks - Allan & Mann brick manufacturers.

Here are some bricks found on the site.
Grumpy Old Men?

In 1960 on Trinley Brae allotments, 80% of the plotholders were retired men. The first lady plotholder on record is Miss M. Gibbons who had two plots from 1966-1980. Even this was earlier than New Victoria Gardens where the first female to have a plot in her own right was in 1987 – before this females were asked to get their husbands to be the named plotholder.

In 1918, Glasgow City Council Parks department were supporting allotments and the Superintendent James Whitton reported to the Council that:

"The value of allotments as a means of healthy recreation, apart from the profit in the production of food stuffs for the household, to men ordinarily engaged in the confined area of a workshop, warehouse or office in a busy city, has long been recognized by the few who have derived much pleasure and enjoyment in practicing the first of all trades. To the many it seems that it required the hard necessities of a cruel war to awaken them to the pleasures and possibilities in the cultivation of such a small piece of land as is contained in a garden plot."

Access for All - Community Plots

Like many sites these days, Hamiltonhill Allotments has a number of plots for community groups, including Emmaus, North Glasgow Community Food Initiative, the Unison’s womens group and the Hamiltonhill Learning Centre, together with children from three local primary schools attending classes on growing fruit and vegetables and learning about the wildlife.

Creative Minds

Across Glasgow, artists and academics have plots and many people show their creativity in the design of their plots and their sheds. The Compass Gallery had an exhibition ‘a patch of their own’ in 1997 which explained the ambience of the sites. In 2012, there was an exhibition in the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh with portraits of plotholders showing the passion for their land.

'Planting the ground is painting the landscape with living things.'
Gertrude Jekyll


**WHAT WE DO**

**Saving the planet**

In an age when most of our problems are social ones, allotments provide social cement. Many sites have a wildlife area, training plots and involvement with the local schools to reach the wider community and the next generation of allotmenteers. Hamiltonhill has an Open Doors policy on Saturday afternoons for anyone who wants to come in and do some gardening, as well as open days in Spring and Summer for members, families and the local community.

“The own allotments association brings together men and women from all age groups, ethnic and national origins, social and educational backgrounds, income groups, and occupations - including retired and unemployed people. The plots are witness daily to countless acts of kindness – gifts of seed, plants and produce, help with watering and heavy work, sharing of equipment, refreshments and experience – that run counter to the prevailing selfish culture outside.”

- Keith Vickerman (Kelvinside plotholder)

**Muck in**

Plotholders learn how to look after the soil, encourage the worms, and compost their waste. Many aspire to a cycle, where the crops are fed from the compost, and the rotation of crops, companion planting and green manure all encourage the growth of plants and enable beneficial insects to flourish.

"We are all candidates for composting so we cannot approach the compost heap without a feeling of connection."

Stanley Kunitz

**EXPRESS YOURSELF**

From makeshift sheds and scarecrows, to elaborate decoration, allotments often reflect individual and collective personalities.

**Garden to feed ourselves**

Plotholders learn ancient skills and use age old tools to grow their produce. Caring for the soil, planting seeds and pruning fruit bushes are an old art which re-connect us to our origins and to the natural world.

With time, through care and perseverance, a plotholder can harvest vegetables and fruit almost all the year round. For many, allotments are an all-year round activity which peaks in the sowing season in the Spring and the harvests in late summer and autumn, but there is work to be done, crops to sow and produce to pick throughout the year.

**Show, tell, swap**

The joy of an allotment site is that plotholders can see and learn from those who garden well. It is amazing how quickly a new variety of vegetable, a different kind of plant protection, or a fast growing green manure, spreads across a site. Many sites have seed swap days, and even when this is not formal, plotholders will share seeds, plants and produce. Open days enable the wider community to buy plants and to see what kinds of vegetables and flowers can be grown in Glasgow.

**RECYCLING and REUSE**

Recycling is one of the high arts for many plotholders. Sheds, compost bins, greenhouses, seats, edges for paths and beds are all saved materials. Bath tubs can be used for potatoes, sinks for small ponds and bus shelters for greenhouses. Pallets make wonderful compost bins and old doors, windows and skirting can be used for huts. The pride in a homemade compost bin is far greater than in one purchased from DIY stores. Calor gas stoves can be cut and fed with waste, wood can provide the heating for a glasshouse and enable the plotholder to enjoy grapes, nectarines and figs. In the hidden parts of the city these can be a solace and delight for many.

Some sites have specific areas for timber, slabs, plant pots and other material that a plotholder can make use of.
**Changing face of our plots**

*It’s no just tatties... it’s asparagus, sweetcorn, calabrese and grapes*

**TATTIE PRODUCTION IN 1917**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Area</th>
<th>Tons of Spuds Grown</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>800</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<td>Tollcross Park</td>
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Tonnage of spuds grown on Glasgow’s plots (based on 7.5 kg spuds per metre)

In 2000, Max Hartman recorded the produce from his plot at Merrylee. As you can see, nowadays we relish the variety:

- Aubergine
- Broad Bean
- Celery Victoria
- Chive
- Courgettes
- Cucumber
- Dwarf French
- Florence Fennel
- Garlic
- Kohl Rabi
- Onions Paris Silver Skin
- Pea
- Pea Sugar Snap
- Pumpkin
- Runner Bean
- Sweet Corn
- Sweet Pepper
- Tomato
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Blackcurrant
- Tayberry
- Blackberry

**FRUIT TREES and BIODIVERSITY**

Dwarf fruit trees are becoming increasingly popular, with apples, pears and plums in the autumn. Espaliered trees can form the edge to a plot. Hamiltonhill have a communal orchard and other sites are considering how to manage this. Sites have always been good for wildlife, but with the increased awareness of the need to conserve biodiversity, many sites have specific wildlife areas with woodpiles and nettles, and are planting hedges along their fences, and also putting in ponds.

**RAISED BEDS**

Julian Avenue has installed three wheelchair accessible raised beds so wheelchair users can tend them from their wheelchairs. They have also built another four plots on an area that is riddled with tree roots, and so not suitable for direct cultivation. These are used as ‘starter plots’ for those with little or no growing experience, and have proved very popular.

**COMPOST TOILETS**

In 1923, the Corporation records note that a subcommittee considered putting in a lavatory at Kelvinside and water at Kirklee. The Director reported at a later date that while a lavatory had been provided, the water was found to be too expensive. Plotholders at Kirklee would have to wait until the 1990s when a compost toilet was installed courtesy of Rab C Nesbitt (after the show donated funds for this when filming on the site). Several sites are now acquiring compost toilets and many have mains connected toilets.

**1952:** The Council removed the protection to keepers of pigs, hens and rabbits that had been granted in the war. However, today, bees are being kept on selected sites and chickens are also making an appearance.

**1955:** Mansewood Allotments get toilet facilities.

**Barbeques and community areas**

Parties for plotholders are nothing new, with dances, social outings and get togethers being a regular occurrence. Now, with awareness of sustainability, sites are doing more to keep their plotholders informed and engage with the local people.

**Sharing food and banter at Hamiltonhill Allotments**

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**Sharing food and banter at Hamiltonhill Allotments**
Twelve Glasgow allotment sites took part in the heritage project, and here follows information found in the leaflets describing their findings for each site. More information about these sites and several others can be found on the History of Glasgow’s Allotments website: www.gah.org.uk.

The sites who took part show the diversity of the allotment community in Glasgow and the sustainability of the movement. The oldest site dates from before 1885 and the newest from 1974 with several established in World War I, in the thirties as part of the Scottish Allotment Scheme for the Unemployed, and part of the new housing developments after World War II.

The sites vary in area, with the smallest containing 29 plots, to and the largest with 80 plots on one site. The locations show how allotments are tucked into the city landscape, between tenements, along the side of the railway, in a park, wherever there is good land for gardening.

The activities reflect the interests and concerns of the plotholders. Some are very active, with several community plots, open days and strong ties with the local community, others are quieter and more secluded. All are oases of quiet activity in an urban setting.

This project is just a beginning, and we hope the history of all the sites in Glasgow will be recorded and serve as a record of the people and times.
Site History

In the 1932 Ordnance survey map, allotments appear throughout Broomhill and Thornwood including the existing Beechwood Drive site and the area along Woodcroft Avenue (now occupied by Broomhill primary School). Other allotment sites were on Winston Pleasure Ground (now Naseby Open Space), alongside Rowallan Road (on a section of what is now Edgehill Road), down the east side of what is now Churchill Drive, following the line of the railway. Beechwood Allotment Association’s tomahawk shaped site sat alongside that of the Woodcroft Allotment Association. Woodcroft was a separate organisation occupying, until 1958, the ground now taken by Broomhill Primary School.

Where We Are

The Beechwood Allotment site is on the south facing slope of one of Glasgow’s drumlins, sharing it with Jordanhill Bowling Green and Broomhill Primary School. On a clear day you can actually see Goatfell mountain on the Isle of Arran from the top of the site. Although surrounded by buildings, the feeling is of a piece of the country in the city and qualitatively different from the city’s many parks and other open spaces.

Who We Are

We are a small site (29 plots) but with a big mix of people. The plots are on the side of the hill with wonderful views over Glasgow so there is a sense of place that encourages relaxation. The site enables people to have their own space but to enjoy socializing on their own terms. All plot holders are very helpful to one another, amenable and forth-comeing with advice and practical assistance.
What We Do

Beechwood is a traditional small allotment site. The main community event is participation in Open Gates. We do not have space for a communal hut nor do we have toilets so the plotholders come because they enjoy the opportunity to garden. Many do not have a garden so the allotment is their garden. Plotholders said, ‘I love the feeling of being really close to nature up here, I love the views and the quiet, the other plotholders, having fresh flowers in my house all year round.’

How We Are Changing

Allotments are a lot more popular, so there’s more pressure on the waiting list and everything is a lot more organized. Plots are tidier than they were 3 years ago. There are now more women, more compost bins and less old codgers.

Contact

For more information about the Beechwood Allotments, including waiting list information, please email:

paula@finlaggan.co.uk

'I grew up with allotments from a young child. I was taken to allotments by my parents and grandparents. It’s in my blood...'

At a meeting in May 1978, Mr Drury suggested that we hold a social dance in the future. The committee greeted this idea with great enthusiasm and the date set for the second week in August.
Site History

Possil Farm previously used the area until the allotments were opened in 1920s. Since then the area has seen a lot of changes, and in the last 20 years the area of the allotments has been reduced. In the last decade the allotments were closed for 4 years due to possible fears over soil contamination, and during that time suffered badly from vandalism. However, in 2006 they were reopened and after a lot of hard work are once again a thriving part of the local community.

Where We Are

Hamiltonhill allotments are located in the North of Glasgow in Possilpark above the Firhill canal basin. They are south facing and the high elevation provides excellent views over the city centre and the west end. And on a clear day you can even see Arran! Running along the allotments is the Clay pits site, previously the site of an iron foundry at the canal, but which has long since been a haven for wildlife.

Who We Are

The biodiversity at Hamiltonhill allotments does not just extend to the wildlife! Our members all live locally and range from 8-80 years old. We have a number of groups that have plots including Emmaus, North Glasgow Community Food Initiative, the Unison women's group as well as Hamiltonhill Learning Centre. In addition to this we also have 3 local primary schools attending weekly classes on growing fruit and vegetables as well as learning about the wildlife.

The fees for one year in 1977 were £3 per plot although the committee decided that pensioners should be able to garden rent free!
What We Do

The focus at Hamiltonhill is to produce home grown organic produce, as well as creating a beautiful outdoor place to work, learn and relax. We have a communal orchard and a wildlife garden to encourage beneficial beasties and have recently reinstalled a large pond, much to the delight of the newts. During the summer we have an open doors policy on Saturday afternoons to anyone who wants to come in to do some gardening, as well as a spring and summer open day for members, families and the local community.

How We Are Changing

In the past, members were predominantly men and the focus was on winning a bottle of whisky for the best plot! Now members consist of families, local primary schools and other community groups, which have allowed many more people to grow fruit and vegetables.

Contact

For more information about the Hamiltonhill Allotments, including waiting list information, please email:

hamiltonhillallotment@googlemail.com

Alan Edmundson is the site’s celebrity. A photo of his hands taken by a local photographer, Carlo D’Alessandro, has been used by the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh to promote their ‘Edible Garden Project’.
Site History

High Carntyne Allotments, originally located in Corston Street in Carntyne, opened over 80 years ago. A few years ago Glasgow City Council advised that the site had to be relocated due to the building of the East End Regeneration Route. None of the plotholders were keen to move but we had no choice. After much deliberation with Glasgow City Council a new site was identified. In May 2008, we moved into this brand new site on Duchray Park in Riddrie, just a few minutes walk from our old site.

Where We Are

Our site is in Duchray Street, Riddrie, next to Duchray Park. A slip road from the busy M80 passes above on the north boundary. Provan Road is to the west of the site and Kennyhill Allotments is on the south boundary. The noise from the motorway is constant but the trees which surround part of the site help soften its drone.

Who We Are

The site has 31 plots which are worked and enjoyed by an assortment of people. We have 23 men and 8 women on our register with ages ranging from early 20s to over 70s. Family members and friends regularly help out.

What We Do

We grow a wide variety of fruit, vegetables and flowers. We are also fortunate enough to have a large greenhouse on every plot. They are 8ft by 10ft which allows us to grow many tender crops such as tomatoes, sweet peppers, chilli peppers, aubergines and grapes. We are also able to start off many of our plants from seed indoors.

Ernie Krebbs, previous winner of the St Mungo Trophy, at his plot on the old site in 2007. Ernie chose not to move to the new site.
How We Are Changing

At the old site, over the years, some plotholders showed their produce at local amateur flower shows and various trophies were won. Others successfully entered their plots into competitions such as the St Mungo Trophy. Sadly, since our move to the new site no one seems to be competitively minded. However, one major change is that now for the first time in the site’s history, we have invited the public in to visit High Carntyne Allotments. Last year and this year as part of the Open Doors Event, we opened our gates and welcomed visitors in. We hope that this will be a regular annual event.

Contact

For more information about the High Carntyne Allotments, including waiting list information, please email:

joycegibson1@yahoo.co.uk
hamiltonhillallotment@googlemail.com

’Some people love custard on their rhubarb...personally I prefer a thick layer of well rotted manure...’

‘The social life for many of us is just as important as the vegetables.’

In the early 1950s William Good brought his children to help out in his allotment. ‘He made us whistle while we picked the peas’ remembers his daughter Annie, ‘so we would not eat them.’
Site History

The history of Kelvinside Allotments dates back to the 19th Century and parallels the ups and downs of allotments in Scotland generally. In the last century, several sites in Kelvinside were lost - Kelvindale (100 plots) which closed in 1947, Bellshaugh (73 plots) which closed in 1953, and Kirklee South (16 plots) which closed in 1990. All closures were for property development. Our heritage has involved great estates, a hospital, a university and a church.

Where We Are

Kelvinside Allotments are located in the West End of Glasgow near the Botanic Gardens. It consists of two sites: Julian Avenue (37 plots) which originated in the private plots of Redlands, and Kirklee North (53 plots) which dates back to 1914.

Who We Are

There have been some demographic changes over the years. We have always had women gardeners but their numbers have increased. Today, there are many more professionals, artists, musicians and academics. Families have long been involved in allotment gardening at Kelvinside.

"I remember in the austere early post war years the prize for best plot was a pair of gentleman’s socks or lady’s stockings. Now the prize is a small cash award."

"Amongst our most distinguished visitors have been Donald Dewar and the Rab C. Nesbit show."

"Less welcome visitors were the advent of the New Zealand flatworm! This horrible alien species predate on earthworms and was first spotted in Scotland at the Julian Allotments."

"We try to grow as organically as we can and sometimes we have too much of a harvest for one household... and donate surplus to friends, families and local charities."

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"We try to grow as organically as we can and sometimes we have too much of a harvest for one household... and donate surplus to friends, families and local charities."
The fees in 1918 were 1 Shilling. There were competitions and the winner awarded a cup. The insurance for this became too expensive: £1 10 Shillings in 1967. The cup was sold in 1969 for £9 10 Shillings.

What We Do

Julian, when redeveloped in 1974, was modelled on the German style of allotment or ‘Schrebergarten’. There are paved paths, piped in water and a portacabin with two toilets, a communal greenhouse and raised accessible beds for disabled or elderly gardeners. Kirklee is more informal, open plan with a communal toolshed, beehives and the first composting toilet on a Glasgow allotment site. We meet for an Annual General Meeting at which prizes are awarded. There is an Open Day in the Spring as part of the West End Festival and in the Autumn we participate in the Open Gates Day.

How We Are Changing

The crops we grow today are not that different from those on William Good’s plot – potatoes, onions, cabbages and a few flowers. But some are more exotic - purple potatoes, sweet corn, blueberries and coriander and some are more disease and pest resistant, i.e. the American gooseberry which is mildew resistant.

Contact

For more information about the Kelvinside Allotments, including waiting list information, please email:

marbetboyd@hotmail.com
Site History

The allotments appear to have been on this site since 1917. The construction of the M8 motorway in the 1970s put the allotments under threat, but the plotholders joined together to challenge this and won the day. Our allotments survived! Indeed, one of our existing plotholders was given an award by SAGS (Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society) in recognition.

Where We Are

We are in the East End of Glasgow just off the M8 at Riddrie, G33. Our allotments are at Duchray and Dinart street. We have 34 plots and also host Riddrie Community Garden, a set of training beds, and a school’s plot.

Who We Are

Most of us live in the East End of the city and Golfhill Primary school has a plot on the site. We have an enthusiastic community who work together to enhance the ‘allotment experience.’

What We Do

We enjoy working on our plots, growing a variety of fruit, vegetables and flowers organically. Twice a year, plotholders come together, tackling site tasks for the common good. Laughter and a communal picnic are always an important part of these events.

How We Are Changing

Climate challenge and biodiversity bring us new opportunities for exploring different approaches. We have managed through our wildlife area, training plots and schools involvement, to reach the wider community and next generation of allotmenteers. There is an active Community Garden which offers a working environment for people with learning disabilities, and we have just built raised beds for those who might find the traditional digging method difficult. We look forward to forging stronger links with the local community.
For more information about the Kennyhill Community Allotments, including waiting list information, please email: info@kennyhillallotments.org.uk

The circus was at Queen's Park Recreation Ground for a week or two... A load of elephant dung went into that plot." - Will Frew

Golfhill Primary School's plot

Gert with his medal for saving the plot

Kennyhill's community polytunnel

© carlodalessandro.com 2011

© Google Maps 2011
Site History

Mansewood Allotments was created as a result of the post World War II housing expansion of Glasgow, following compulsorily purchase of the area known since 1755 as Henry’s Croft Farm, part of Nether Pollok Estates. From 150 plots in 1951, the site steadily reduced in size, relative to demand, reaching a low point in the late 1990s. With possible closure looming, a re-formed committee set about a train of improvements which have injected new life into the site, and in 2011, 20 new plots were added.

Where We Are

Less than one mile south of Pollock Park, and on the GCC/East Renfrewshire border, the site runs parallel to Thornliebank Road, but is hidden by the Barmill Road and Burnfield Road tenement flats. The site is at the top of the hill of Mansewood High Park, itself surrounded by the post war housing that comprises modern Mansewood.

Who We Are

Since Mansewood Allotments was primarily created to service local flats and houses, our typical plotholder in the past would have lived within a 10 min walk of the site and probably male with a family to feed. Nowadays, Mansewood draws its plotholders from a much wider area – from Hillington to Rutherglen, with women, families, groups of friends and a younger age profile much in evidence; still looking to enjoy the outdoors and grow nutritious fruit and veg.

What We Do

In the 1950s, kitchen essentials such as potatoes, leeks, onions, cabbages, lettuce and fruit were popular. Nowadays, you’ll find additions such as garlic, sweet corn, and squashes. Today, most plotholders use a bit less ‘Growmore’ and a lot more organic growing methods. The generation which lost much of it’s gardening skills base is determined to re-learn those skills, increase self-sufficiency, and exercise greater control over the origins of the food they eat.

'I remember when there was horses and sheep and Friesian cows men cutting the hay.' - Terry Parker, 2011

'My Grandson, one of the times he came up there with me on a Saturday to my greenhouse, so I was workin’, he had a wee spade, diggin’. Next thing, I was in the greenhouse and he came up the side of the greenhouse, he never came in the greenhouse, I had the door closed and he locked me in. He was only about 2, I went ‘open that door’ and he went ‘no’ and he ran away’ - Andy Connelly

'Most of the men up there, you’d hear them shouting ‘tea up’. I took my son down there as a wee boy, only 4 .... and he would go up and have a cup of tea with them, then he’d take his wheelbarrow and wheel it up and down.' - Greer Hart

'In the past, I've had so many daffodils at one time, that the old folks home, where my mother-in-law was a resident, used to have a daffodil tea.' - Terry Parker, 2011

'I remember when there was horses and sheep and Friesian cows men cutting the hay.'
**How We Are Changing**

Mansewood originally served the residents of local flats and incorporated other sites, now it serves a wider area on Glasgow’s Southside; it has inspired other groups in East Renfrewshire to lobby for growing space. Whereas many in the past may have had rural connections and empathy with the land, today’s plotholder is often a keen, but novice, gardener wishing to transform the inspiration of TV into the reality of the plot. Encouragement, support for experimentation, and training, are all essential.

**Contact**

For more information about the Mansewood Allotments, including waiting list information, please contact:

www.mansewoodallotments.co.uk

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‘It’s the people that make the plot; make the plot what it is or what it could be. It’s up to the people working the plots.’

- Willie Frew, 2011

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‘When I came on the plots I was by far the youngest (45), now I’m the oldest (76).’

- Terry Parker, 2011

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On choosing a favourite - ‘It has to be a strawberry, the sweetness and the juiciness and a reminder of home as well you can’t beat some strawberries can you?’

- Terry Parker, 2011
Site History

In 1917, eighty 'allotment gardens' were set up in Merrylee Road with every allotment growing mainly potatoes. We have a map dated 1930 showing the extent of the site at that time. A map from 1950 shows the site extended to include an adjacent football ground, and looking much as it does today. The ground was once part of Pollok Estate but is now owned by Glasgow City Council.

Where We Are

We are on the south side of Glasgow at G43 2QY between the houses on Langside Drive and two local primary schools on Friarton Road. The main entrance to the site is on Ardle Road, off Merrylee Road, and there is a side entrance from Langside Drive. We have 83 plots of two different sizes and a total area of 1.7 hectares.

Who We Are

Most of us live in the Merrylee area. When our records began in 1941 the plotholders were all men, but now there is a more even balance of women and men with a wide range of ages. Many bring along family and friends to help. Merrylee Primary School, Our Lady of the Annunciation Primary School and Carr Gomm all have plots on the site.

What We Do

Our focus is on 'leisure gardening' and we grow an ever increasing variety of vegetables, flowers and fruit. Plotholders choose their own gardening approaches and styles, we share ideas and learn from each other. We have a thriving allotment community and organise coffee mornings and plant swaps, a mid summer social evening, 'work parties' to maintain the site and an 'Open Day' for the local community.
How We Are Changing

As in the past, we continue to be interested in the natural environment, in gardening and with all aspects of growing. Old records indicate ‘annual shows’ and ‘competitions’ as highlights of the year and although we still judge our plots and take part in Glasgow competitions, we also focus on developing links with our local community. We look forward to the future and the further development of our Association as a community asset for Merrylee.

Contact

For more information about the Merrylee Plotholders Association, including waiting list information, please email:

merryleeplots@yahoo.co.uk

I have fond memories of my grandfather sitting disbudding chrysanthemums. I just love growing chrysanthemums.'

'As far as I know I was the first female plotholder in her own right - that was 1967.'

'Thirty years ago it was a bit rough and ready...'
Who We Are

Young families, pensioners, professionals, unemployed folk... the only common denominator is a passion for gardening. Most of us live within a mile, but we hail from as far afield as Malaysia and North America. Some have been with us for 30 years or more, but every year sees a small crop of newcomers from a long waiting list. Many friendships have grown here through swapping gardening tips and seedlings.

Site History

Sources conflict, but we can safely say the gardens have been here since the 1870s. The land was part of the Stirling Maxwell estate, probably donated to help workers learn skills and grow vegetables to supplement their incomes. The hall was built in 1919, and the earliest date on the trophies is 1922, although shows were going long before the ‘silver’. Trophies offer a unique glimpse into our history, putting names to the generations who’ve passed through our gates. Today the site is owned by Glasgow City Council.

Where We Are

Surrounded by tenements, New Victoria Gardens occupy 3.31 acres in East Pollokshields. The entrance is in a cul-de-sac off Albert Drive where 71 full- and half-plots are laid out in a grid along two lanes stretching to Maxwell Road. With neat hedges and now-elderly poplars, it’s an oasis of calm in a densely-populated southside neighbourhood.

The New Victoria Gardens show in 1926

In 1999, Beechgrove Gardens took one of our members to see how villagers grow veg in sub-Saharan Mali. Then Siracourry and Yosouf paid a return visit to New Victoria Gardens.

'...Yet another wonderful show and promenade’ - Pollokshields News, 1896

'I'd lived here all my life and never knew it was there, you step through a wee door into a magical green space.'

'A paradise on earth. It was thus that New Victoria Gardens impressed me from first sight. With my painting I have tried to convey something of this ideal; creative toil, harmony and peace amongst verdant abundance.' - Avril Paton

The Allotments - Watercolour by Avril Paton

© Avril Paton 1993

'I saw nothing green except in their little market garden. Their eyes were dazzled when they came here.' - Avril Paton

'The Garden Gate' (2004) by Dorothy Allan

'The Garden Gate' (2004)
by Dorothy Allan

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'I'd lived here all my life and never knew it was there, you step through a wee door into a magical green space.'
**What We Do**

A quirky rule, not rigidly applied, requires us to grow at least 25% flowers and no more than one-eighth potatoes, perhaps explaining why we’re an unusually pretty allotments scheme. Nowadays, as befits our cosmopolitan membership, you’ll find pak choi and artichokes growing alongside the cabbages and carrots. Our plant stalls are popular at local events, and our annual show is a must-see for people in Glasgow and beyond.

**How We Are Changing**

With bee populations dropping and many children not knowing where food comes from, we’re committed to promoting biodiversity. Many gardens are organic and we provide communal composting areas. Our wildlife garden attracts birds and insects as well as allotment kids, and we’re reaching out more to the local community, particularly schools. Even so, our ‘secret’ garden is still a haven of peace and quiet in a busy world. Some things never change.

**Contact**

For more information about the New Victoria Gardens, including waiting list information, please email:

new.victoria.gardens@gmail.com
Site History

In November 1932, Sir John Stirling Maxwell leased a site in Pollok Park to the Society of Friends. At that time unemployed men who wanted allotments to grow vegetables for their families were encouraged to form themselves into allotment associations, and the first tenants of the newly established site came from Kinning Park, Ibrox and Govan, and were the South Western Allotments Association. These original plotholders are likely to have been past employees of the old Glasgow South Western Railway Company.

"...Many of the men were actually unable to work the ground during heavy weather owing to the fact that they had no suitable footwear." (Glasgow Herald, Jan. 7th 1933)

By the early 1960s allotment gardening was less popular and many plots were empty and derelict. In November 1961, plotholders had to relinquish the field which is now part of the Dumbreck Riding Stables.

Past plot member: "...We had Christmas parties, bus runs and the men played dominos and the women knitted."

Where We Are

We are on the south west side of Glasgow, just off Dumbreck Road in Pollok Park which was judged to be the Best Park in Britain in 2007 and the Best Park in Europe in 2008. It is a Country Park within the city, and we are so fortunate to be here. The site lies behind Cartha Queens Park Rugby Club and is opposite Haggs Castle Golf course.

Who We Are

Originally there were 68 full sized plots, but over the years sizes and numbers have varied as plots are split into either established half plots or temporary half plots. Most plotholders live locally and have diverse backgrounds, nationalities and ages. The Wayside Club / Marie Trust and Pollokshaws Integration Network are also plotholders.

What We Do

In addition to vegetables, fruit and flowers, (including wildflowers), some plots increase biodiversity with a small pond for frogs and insects. Few insecticides are now used and there is a growing interest in organic gardening methods.

'I just love being here, it's so quiet and peaceful. All the stresses of life just disappear.'
How We Are Changing

Allotment gardening has become popular again. The many health benefits of gardening, as well as the reported levels of pesticides in some non-organic foods, have all contributed towards increasing the number of people who want an allotment. Ten years ago we just comfortably maintained ‘turnover’ of plotholder numbers; today we have a long waiting list.

Contact

For more information about South Western Allotments, please contact the secretary:

South Western Allotments Association, Pollok Park, off Dumbreck Road, Glasgow G41 4SN
**Site History**

The original part of the site is pre World War II. It was extended from just 10 to 30 plots in April 1982. Our member records go back to 1966. John Wiseman of Turret Road was a long-serving member, and our current Chairman - Tommy - now lives in John’s old house. What a coincidence!

In the 1960s and 1970s, over 80% of members were retired and the vast majority were male. The first lady plotholder we have on record is Miss M Gibbons who had two plots from 1966-1980. The 1990s saw an increase in female members and there are now lots of young people and families too.

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**Where We Are**

Trinley Brae Allotments are on Knightswood Road in Glasgow, enjoying wonderful views of our ‘dear green place’ from the south-facing slopes of Trinley Brae.

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**Who We Are**

We’re a diverse bunch of individuals, families and groups from all walks of life. We each have our own ways of growing the things we like but we share an understanding of the trials and triumphs and learn from each other all the time.

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We have several communal areas at TBA and shared resources such as polytunnel, wildlife pond and community hut. There are regular communal days to maintain these areas and work together as a group.
**What We Do**

Lots can be grown in the Scottish climate. Most of us grow staples like potatoes, beans and onions, as well as soft fruit, flowers, herbs, plus a few experiments. Gardens and wildlife areas are a common sight at TBA, as we respect and support nature. There are lots of ponds, bug habitats and wild flowers. There are also lots of areas to sit back, relax and take in the atmosphere. Stopping for a cup of tea and a natter is an essential part of plot life.

**How We Are Changing**

We held our first open day in 2010 and have been building links with the local community since. We won a Community Planning Partnership grant and improved our communal spaces in 2011, which has been a great benefit to plotholders and visitors.

**Contact**

For more information about the Trinley Brae Allotments, including waiting list information, please email:

**tbasecretary@hotmail.co.uk**

Bert was renowned for his potatoes, John and Marion worked hard to build the community and ‘Nonnie’ was a remarkable woman who didn’t bat an eyelid at carrying a big bag of compost under each arm.

`Manure from the horses in nearby Scotstoun Agricultural Showground was a valuable fertiliser. `
Site History

Victoria Park Allotments were established in Victoria Park in 1917 as part of the war effort to produce more food. They were transferred to the present site in Scotstoun in 1925. The land at Scotstoun had previously belonged to the Scotstoun Sewage Company. There is a sewage pipe running the the length of the site with man hole covers in a few of the plots. There were 70 plots laid out originally in 1925 with the numbering system starting at the Northland Drive side. In 1965, plots 1 to 5 were taken over to form a car park for the new flats in Northland Drive so the first plot on entering at Northland Drive is number 6. There is a communal hut located between plots 16 and 17 and there is a small car park located at the far end.

Where We Are

The site is bounded on the north side by the railway line (between Jordanhill and Scotstounhill stations), on the south side by Scotstoun Leisure Centre, on the west side by Northland Drive and on the east side by Victoria Park nature walk (old railway line). There are two entry gates, one at Northland drive for pedestrian and vehicular access, and one at the nature walk for pedestrian access only.

Who We Are

Most of the plotholders at Victoria Park allotments stay in the west end of the city but we also have some plotholders from the east end and the north of the city. Traditionally it was a male dominated area, but today there is a mix of male and female, old and young, and people from various occupations.

What We Do

We grow vegetables and flowers but there is also a social aspect to the site, and you can hear talk about the weather, sports and politics as well as about gardening.

There are communal efforts to improve the site as well as work on individual plots. We have a plant swap at the beginning of June and an Open Day at the end of August. The site is owned by Glasgow City Council and managed by a plot committee and plot inspections are carried out during the growing season.
How We Are Changing

An example of changing times is how we fertilise the ground. Victoria Park Allotment site is next to the Scotstoun Stadium which was formerly the Scotstoun Agricultural Showground. The Corporation stabled their horses there in the past so horse manure was in plentiful supply. Also, the allotment used to be nearer to the countryside so farmyard manure would have been more available. Later, the site used to get manure from the Vet school but this has stopped amid fears of contamination.

Now, plotters mainly buy dried chicken and cow manure and green manure such as mustard. Comfrey is also grown as a perennial and cut two or three times a year and can be laid in trenches or made into a liquid manure. Not all plotters are organic, so things like growmore are also used.

’Up until the 1980s we used to get wild animal manure from the circus at Kelvin Hall. Recently... tried bringing seaweed up from the coast, but that is a lot of work.’

Contact

For more information about the Victoria Park Allotments, including waiting list information, please email:

catruhm@aol.com
Site History

Westthorn Estate belonged to the Wardrop family, latterly held over to Glasgow Distiller, Thomas Harvey. Harvey began a long running feud with the public by building a dyke along a public footpath. This footpath runs along the Clydeside at Westthorn Allotments. Land was then apparently sold to the Council Water Committee for reservoirs. In the 1930s, 3.3 acres of land (to the South of dis-used reservoirs) was allocated for Westthorn Allotments, with recommendation from the Water Committee that it be let at a rate of 7/6d per annum per plot, on condition that no livestock or poultry was kept. This condition stands today. One of the main reasons for letting this land was the urgent need for allotments for the unemployed.

Where We Are

Westthorn allotments are in the East End of Glasgow. It is situated behind the Celtic Supporters Club in London Road, G31 4QA. Entrance is down a lane at the side of the social club.

Who We Are

At Westthorn, there are different types of people young and old from many areas of Glasgow. The majority of plotholders at the moment are men, however, the numbers of women and children visiting the allotments have steadily increased since Playbusters were allocated a plot.

Playbusters are a community organisation based in the Parkhead area of Glasgow's East End. This diverse project operates many services throughout the East End and wider. They work with all generations, bringing children, families and the community together through various activities.

All previous records have been untraceable, therefore, any information gathered has been from allotment holders past and present. Information has been collated through interviews, stories from plotholders, past and present, photographs, old maps and minutes from meetings of the Water Committee, 1932.

Open Day is really good. It gives you the chance to show off your prize possessions.

One favourite is the allotments, where they can share knowledge and skills with each other. This encourages more families and members of the community to come together, learning together.

'Although there have been achievements in planting and growing, what has been achieved is the growing of relationships.'

'We don't have a garden big enough at home so this is a way of getting fresh air and enjoying something.'
What We Do

We plant and grow a large variety of plants and flowers - everyone has different produce and methods of growing them. Gardening tips are often shared amongst the allotment members and everyone is friendly and happy to help. We also have competitions for adults and young people where plot-holders get the opportunity to show their best crops. This is an annual event where members of the community are encouraged to come along whether they have a plot or not. This gives more of the community the opportunity to see what goes on at the allotments.

How We Are Changing

The range of plot-holders at Westthorn has become much more diverse in recent years. The inclusion of more children and young adults has meant the allotment committee is always looking for new ways to accommodate them in order to ensure that their experience is as enjoyable as possible. The allotments also encourage people to re-cycle on a larger scale. One long standing plot-holder is a key member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and he is very active in sharing his knowledge and skills with other visitors to the allotments.

Contact

For more information about the Westthorn Allotments, including waiting list information, please email:
westthornallotments@hotmail.co.uk

THE FUTURE IS UP TO YOU

Schumacher* said ‘Among material resources, the greatest, unquestionably, is the land. Study how a society uses its land, and you can come to pretty reliable conclusions as to what its future will be’. Most of us who are fortunate enough to have a plot love and cherish our land. It is our relationship with the land and our skills and knowledge that we can pass on to future generations. By preserving our allotment culture, caring for our plots, each other and opening our gates to all who are interested, we can show the powers that be, the value of our sites and the wellbeing they engender.

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR HISTORY

Past - Collect as much information as you can about your site and the land it was built on. There is a wealth of undiscovered information in library archives, books and old newspapers. Write articles for your local newspapers.

Present - Keep a record of the story of your site. Take photographs of the huts (art objects), portraits of the plot-holders (remember to ask permission), wildlife (foxes, butterflies, frogs), your vegetables, and how you reuse and recycle materials on your plot. Collect the stories particularly from the older generation, but also from the young, on how it feels and what they have found out.

Future - Engage with your local schools - allotments can provide material for worksheets, visits and practical involvement, linking with curriculum for excellence and progression from nursery to secondary. Show what you have discovered at all your Open days and allotment events - celebrate your site!

*E.F. Schumacher, 1973 'Small is Beautiful'
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RESOURCES

Websites

Glasgow Allotments Heritage Project - www.gah.org.uk

Further reading

Archives, Mitchell Library, Glasgow - Maps, Council minutes, estate papers
University of Glasgow - Victor Web archive, estate papers
National Archives of Scotland - Government documents, other papers
National Library of Scotland - Scottish screen archive, digital material

FUNDERS AND KEY CONTRIBUTORS