1919-1929: THE EARLY YEARS

THE IMPORTANCE OF POTATOES

1919 Potato Competition winners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Witch Hall Early</td>
<td>H Hatton</td>
<td>W Blows</td>
<td>W J Dear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majestic</td>
<td>H Hatton</td>
<td>Mr Gray</td>
<td>W J Dear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerr’s Pink</td>
<td>H Hatton</td>
<td>W J Dear</td>
<td>J Blows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Society provided Scotch seed potatoes to encourage plot-holders to grow good disease-free crops. Without a trading centre, seed-potato storage had to be found. In 1922 the Cowper Road stables of Mr Flack the builder were used.

Potato trials were held annually, which “caused an education to creep into the allotment movement” according to Mr Newman. In 1924 Mr Flack’s King Edwards were the heaviest croppers.

1920 An underlease between the Society and the Town Council let 29 acres of land to the Society for seven years.
1922 Allotments Act meant tenancies were “better protected under six months’ notice and compensation” (Cllr John Conder).
1925 Formation of the Cambridge Central Council of Allotment Societies – “the backbone of the allotment movement in Cambridge” (S Braine).
1928 Death of Mr William Hawkins, one of the first Councillors for Cambridge Without Ward and an early RAS committee member.

1926: ALLOTMENTS v HOUSES

The Town Council’s action in allocating 16½ acres of the Glebe Estate for allotments, after promising 20 acres, was criticised at a special meeting of the Rock Allotment Society.

Mr Dear told “a crowded attendance” that “The Council purchased the land [44 acres] with the specific object of 20 acres for allotments and the remainder for housing. There was, however, only about 16½ acres, including hedges, ditches and roadways.”

Nevertheless, in 1928 the Society agreed to take over the 16½ acres as permanent allotments, giving RAS security of tenure.