

Many of you know Bill and have probably had help, advice and assistance from him. Sadly, this year he has now decided to give up his last plot on the site and we will all miss him enormously.

MAA would like to organise a farewell card for him, along with any special messages from those that cared and appreciated him, however, the logistics of getting a card to everyone so they add a message is challenging, therefore, we suggest a card with the messages on an attached typed sheet, which will also make it easier to read – this could be more than one sheet!!

Please let Sylvia have any message or anecdote to send to Bill & Elizabeth, to be passed on to them.

There are so many stories and anecdotes of him that many can recall, below are a few.

Bill came to Marlow from Eton where he was a schoolmaster at Eton College, while there he had experimented with the use of **beds separated by permanent paths** and he introduced the system on his plot at Hanging Hill. Variations on this system are now common on both of the sites.

Bill has always been an avid and energetic **Supporter of the Association** and has been a member for many years. He first had a plot at Foxes Piece Site, some of the long-standing tenants will remember his arrival. He then moved to Hanging Hill, possibly this was due to so many vacant plots there at that time – hopefully someone can clarify this?

When Bill arrived at Hanging Hill the initial threat to sell off the site, which had led to the establishment of the Association, had cooled, but Bill was acutely aware of the ongoing threat should either site be seen to be poorly cultivated. He was one of those that initiated the move for tenants to take on **Additional Plots** to ensure there were no vacant plots that contractors could use as a reason to apply to build in these areas. This is why some of the long-standing tenants on both sites have more than one ten pole plot, some even took on as many as 5 x 10 pole plots, at their personal expense, to support this action and help protect both of the Allotment Sites. Since then, the Association has been committed to ensure a healthy waiting list and carry out the viewings of vacant plots as soon as possible, thankfully there is increasing interest from local residents to apply for an allotment plot.

The large polytunnel was where he prepared, painted and stored all the **White Marker Posts** for many years, which were used on every plot on both sites, one in each corner each post with the number which he added prior to installing. They always needed replacing because so many seemed to disappear, it was a never-ending task when a plot was vacated!!

The areas at the top of Hanging Hill, all along the back and down towards the Berwick Road entrance, were uncultivated and abandoned, having previously been used for horses and before that, pigsties – during the war these were used as air raid shelters. Again, under the ever-present threat of loss to Construction Companies, over 25 years ago Bill and Peter England started up the **Winter Work Party**, with volunteers from both sites, clearing this area & creating 9 x 10 pole plots & 32 x 5 pole plots over several winter periods and ensuring that the whole site was in a state of adequate cultivation.

As a result of constant invasion at Hanging Hill from deer, Bill planned and organised the construction of a **Deer Barrier**, carefully designing this with strength in the lower section to prevent them pushing it and above several lines of thin wire cabling up to 8 or 9 feet in height, which he felt would be an adequate height to prevent them from jumping over it. This worked very effectively for many years. Sadly, some tenants have felt the need to break some of the fence line for the purpose of dumping their rubbish, creating gaps which the deer have soon found - it is now in need of repair.

Bill's idea for re-using old plant pots has proved very popular, we now have **Pot-swap Areas** on both sites where tenants can drop off any surplus pots and others can collect and re-use these.

One of the extra plots that Bill took on was at the very highest point of the site, he created The **Orchard**, planting a selection of fruit trees ensuring that it was well tended at all times. When he felt the need to give up this plot, he requested that the Council donate it to the Association to be used as a Communal area for MAA functions and to enable all tenants to help themselves to the bountiful fruit. Now John H. tends this area on Bill's behalf. Since giving this up Bill would often nostalgically walk up to the top to sit on his 'special bench' to view the world and gather some of the fruit.