

I took on my first allotment in May 2002 which was on part of the site with lots of open space around and not much demand for plots, so much so, that I was soon persuaded to take on a second plot and then a further half plot. I was younger and fitter in those days and happy to bring some of the abandoned plots into production.



Early days found me spending long hours - especially over weekends and most evenings after work in building a model plot. The effort did pay off because I was awarded Best Full Plot with glass in the City Allotment Competition in 2006, then again in 2007 together with the Champion City Gardener Award - the first, and only time ever that my plot was *completely* weed free until after the judging!

I decided that 3 in a row was too much - especially as I had been appointed assistant secretary on the site which took away some of the time for my plot. In 2012 I became Secretary following the sudden death Peter Horrocks, the then secretary. I have to say that having cut my teeth in allotment management alongside Peter, (who was also the secretary of the National Association) afforded me an understanding of allotment dynamics second to none. At that time demand for allotments exploded to an extent that we decided only to offer a half plot to newcomers to cope with that demand - a decision that has stood to the present.

Two of my favourite major undertakings on the site were to encourage members to agree to provide access for disabled gardeners which was achieved by successful grant applications and major hard work from volunteers allowing us to build 4 small plots with a greenhouse and shed alongside new wheelchair access and gate.





Secondly, to undertake a major rebuild of the drainage system on the north side which involved installing 350m. of new drainage pipe in an average 1m deep trench soon filled with many tons of stone chips. The work was completed by a gang of plot holders who worked tirelessly for 9 days in May 2013. (We did have the help of a mechanical trench digger driven by one of our members!) The project delivered a great result in improving the drainage on

that half of the site.

Finally, in May 2016, I decided it was time to hang up my secretary's coat, reduce my plots to a single half which then afforded me time to enjoy allotmenting with time to spare to chat with friends and compare notes about what was good and not so good in the year's crops and to plan for the next season.

