



Harrowing Times

November - December 2016

**THIS IS THE FIRST EDITION OF THE
HARROWING TIMES FOR THE 2017 MEMBERSHIP
YEAR!**

If you have been sent this edition through the post or by email then NSTG records show that you **HAVE** renewed your membership until 30th September 2017.

For those who have not yet renewed please see Page 5 for details on how to do so.

In This Christmas Issue:

- Reminder: AGM at Bergh Apton, 06 Nov 2016. See p4 for details.
- "You dirty rat!" - the use of rodenticides and HSE regulations.
- A Hobby Farmer's Tale - Follow Up item with photographs.
- Another sheep husbandry course at end of January - book early!
- Course Review - Carding & Spinning.
- Make an Advent "Sweet Tree" and a Christmas Tree Card!
- Party food recipe for Christmas time.
- Smallholder Sid & the Deluge....
- Remember NSTG is on the net and in Social Media.
- A Big Thank You to everyone who contributed Articles, Classified Adverts, Paid Adverts, Sponsorship to Harrowing Times in 2016.
- Photographs from our Annual Show & the Pink Ladies Tractor Run!

Next Print Deadline is: 16th December 2016

Visit our website at: WWW.NSTG.ORG.UK

Smallholder Sid And

By Richard Barr

Allotment holder Alice and Farmer Fred were well into their second pint of Old Fart in the snug of the Cowpat and Fly public house. Fred looked at his watch. Already Smallholder Sid was an hour late. That did not trouble Alice and Fred. A romance of a sort was developing between them. That might be a slight exaggeration. Fred had been developing romantic ideas ever since he drove Alice and her broken bicycle home in his old pickup and found himself in somewhat intimate contact with her after going over a large bump in the road.

All the same Alice (who generally had thoughts of nothing more romantic than the size of her courgettes or the plumpness of her Brussels sprouts) seemed to be enjoying his company.

"I wonder what Sid is up to now" said Alice dreamily (she was thinking of a strange shaped potato as she looked at Fred's head).

"Dunno" came the reply. Fred thought Alice reminded him of a daisy. "He's certainly up to something. Looks like he has been building a giant paddling pool. He bought that job lot roll of pond liner and he has been busy ever since. Do you think he knows what he is doing?"

"If he doesn't he won't be told" murmured Alice, thinking of parsnips.

And right on cue Sid burst into the snug soaked to the skin and smelling strongly of fish. He did not look happy. In fact he looked so miserable that Fred bought him a pint of Old Fart (even though he well knew that Sid would never return the compliment).

"Well you see it was like this" moaned Sid. "I'd seen all these places that sell outsized goldfish for a fortune and I thought I would try my hand at breeding them. Even quite small ones sell for more than £25 and it didn't seem difficult to breed fish. You just put them in some water, feed them and let them get on with it. I was beginning to count my chickens....."

"I thought you were breeding carp....." interrupted Alice (by this time Fred was beginning to nod off. He had a happy lopsided smile on his face).

"It's a saying" resumed Sid sourly – he was not in the mood to be teased "Anyway it's Koi not carp. You can't charge much for a carp but call it a Koi and you are motoring. I thought I was in for a small fortune. The fish were doing well. In fact they seemed to be as frisky with each other as you and old Fred over there: they were producing plenty of youngsters."

Alice thought briefly of a beetroot and tried to imitate one by turning bright red.

.... The Deluge.

“Anyways this evening the side of the pool suddenly split open and hundreds of gallons of water have now poured onto Greenhouse Gladys’s land. She’s now threatening to sue me, and she wouldn’t even let me try to rescue my poor fish.”

“Perhaps the fish were being too frisky and they burst the tank by themselves” suggested Alice.

“Not funny” grumbled Sid. “Now what do I do?”

For once Alice and Fred felt sorry for Sid. “C’mon” she tugged at Fred’s coat. “Let’s see what we can do. Pop my bike in your pick up and we’ll go over to Sid’s and rescue his fish.”

And so they did. Many were still alive and were flapping around in little pools of water in Gladys’s garden. She was none too pleased. “If you want your fish back you’ll have to pay me £500 for the right to come on my land and you will also have to compensate me for the damage you have done. My green house is flooded and half my plants have been damaged”

But none of the gang of three was in any mood to do a deal with Gladys and they waded in and continued to round up the carp (sorry – *Koi*). Gladys, standing on the edge of the watery field was getting more and more agitated. “I’ll have you arrested and thrown in gaol” she warned but they continued to scoop up the fish into buckets and carry them to an old bath that Sid used to catch rainwater.

“Right” said Greenhouse Gladys. “That’s it I am calling the police”.

And she did, but by then the last quivering *Koi* had been rounded up.

Vaguely serious legal point.

Gladys did ring the police, but the police did not come, because trespass by itself is not a criminal offence. It only becomes a crime if you commit “aggravated trespass”, like intimidating or obstructing people carrying out lawful activity on their land. Rescuing *Koi* would not amount to a crime.

However, in 1868 the House of Lords decided that *if you bring onto your land and keep there anything which is likely to do mischief if it escapes you do so at your peril*. Sid had brought several thousand gallons of water and several hundred *koi* onto his land and they escaped onto Greenhouse Gladys’s land. Sid was therefore liable to compensate Gladys for the damage done. If you ever talk to a solicitor (people do occasionally) ask her what she knows about the case of Rylands v Fletcher. You will find that her eyes light up, because this was the second most famous case under

Smallholder Sid And The Deluge

English law and I doubt if there is any solicitor in the country who has not heard of it – as Sid found out when he took advice. He was firmly told to pay Gladys and not run up any more costs.

So next time you can learn about **the** most famous case when you hear about Smallholder Sid and the snail in the bottle.

By Richard Barr

For more of what he writes log onto www.richardbarr.org

So....

Watch out for “*Smallholder Sid and the Snail in the Bottle.....*” in the next January February 2017 edition of The Harrowing Times!

Thank you to Contributors to HT.

The Editor

Thank you also to authors of articles, course reviews and letters in the magazine this year namely:

Richard Barr, Avis Judd, Tom Kemp, Dick Roe, Kim Austin, Mary Keasley, Paul Chapman, Pauline Daisley-Brown, Elin Massey, Robert Stokes, Kirsty & Brenda (from Wood Norton), Neil Ashford and Jan Scott.

Write something for Harrowing Times.

Email the editor, or other member of the Committee, with an article on a subject you think might inform, entertain or amuse—short or long.

Harrowing Times

Harrowing Times comes out 6 times per year. Editors aim for 2 months intervals but sometimes delays occur.

We issue HT by post knowing that the Royal Mail will not necessarily deliver them in accordance with their stated aims and there is nothing NSTG can do about it.

Not many members receive HT as a PDF file by email so if you would like to be added to the list please let me know by email (so that I get your email address correct): editor@nstg.org.uk