Ground-Breaking: Community Heritage on Glasgow's Allotments

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Abstract

In 1962, Reginald Ashley, the Secretary of the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society, wrote that allotments are ‘the heritage of the tenement dweller’. He was writing at a time of great upheaval in the allotments movement; allotments had come under threat from post-war development and had largely lost their role in food production that had been vital during the Depression and both World Wars. In writing this statement, Ashley connected allotments to the idiosyncratic dwellings of Scottish city life; he made it clear that allotments are a part of, rather than an escape from, Scottish cities. For the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society, allotments are not only there to grow food but they also improve the mental and physical health of tenement dwellers by providing them with their own outside space.

This thesis will explore the role of the allotment within the city, using Glasgow as the location of study. It will use archival research and oral history interviews to answer five core research questions: how has the purpose of an allotment changed and developed from 1930 to the present day; how has the allotment movement advocated for these changing purposes; what has been the role of allotments in sustainable food production; how have allotments developed as places of community; and, what do allotments mean to individual plotholders. Through answering these five questions, this thesis will argue that allotments have developed as places of both individuality and community, a paradox that is needed for the health and well-being of plotholders. It will conclude that allotments are an integral part of Scottish cities that need to be included in long-term urban planning, providing protected green spaces for plotholders, communities, plants and animals in otherwise changing and developing urban environments.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Hannah Victoria Connelly

Abbreviations

CDA – Comprehensive Development Area

GCA – City of Glasgow Archives

FEDAGA – Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and Gardens Association

GAF – Glasgow Allotments Forum

GAHP – Glasgow Allotments Heritage Project

KAA – Kelvinside Allotment Association

NRS – National Records of Scotland

SAGS – Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society

SASU –Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed

UGAS – University of Glasgow Archive Services

The Union – the Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders

Key Organisations and People

Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders

The Union was the fore-runner of SAGS and was established in 1917 to represent plotholders from across Scotland. Following the First World War it worked to protect allotment sites and campaigned for new legislation to protect plotholders, the Allotments (Scotland) Act of 1926. The Union founded a scheme for unemployed plotholders, together with the Society of Friends, during the Depression and in the Second World War it worked with both local and national government to promote allotments for home food production.

Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society

SAGS was established in 1946, a re-constitution of the former Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders. During the Second World War, the Union had become overshadowed by the government organisation the Scottish Gardens and Allotments Committee, and SAGS was formed to continue the work and carry the values of both organisations combined. Today SAGS works to protect allotment sites through campaigning and networking with associations; preserve skills in gardening; and promote allotments for their role in health and well-being as well as for increasing biodiversity.

Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed Joint Committee

The Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed was founded by the Union and the Society of Friends in 1930. These two organisations formed a Joint Committee that ran the scheme until 2005. The Joint Committee helped unemployed men and women during the Depression by providing them with allotments, tools and seeds as a way of improving both their mental and physical health. After the Second World War, the Joint Committee became focused on helping retired people, and especially men, rather than younger unemployed people.

Glasgow Allotments Forum

Glasgow Allotments Forum, formed in 2001, represents allotment sites and plotholders throughout the Glasgow City area. GAF holds regular open meetings for plotholders from different sites to come together; lobbies the council on behalf of sites and plotholders; and holds celebration events including an annual ‘Potato Day’.

Reginald Ashley

Ashley was the second SAGS secretary from 1953 to 1970. He played a major role in SAGS' campaigns to protect allotments during a period of intense re-development of land in Glasgow and Edinburgh following the Second World War. He died in 1972.

Alister McWatt Green

McWatt Green was the secretary and treasurer for the Joint Committee. It is not clear exactly when his role began and ended, however, he was very active during the late 1960s and early1970s.

William McWilliam

McWilliam was the first secretary of SAGS from 1946, having very briefly been a secretary for the Union in 1945, until his death in 1953. Previously he had been involved in the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed as an 'Organiser' and he also represented plotholders on the Glasgow Corporation's Sub-Committee for Allotments.

Harold Sharp

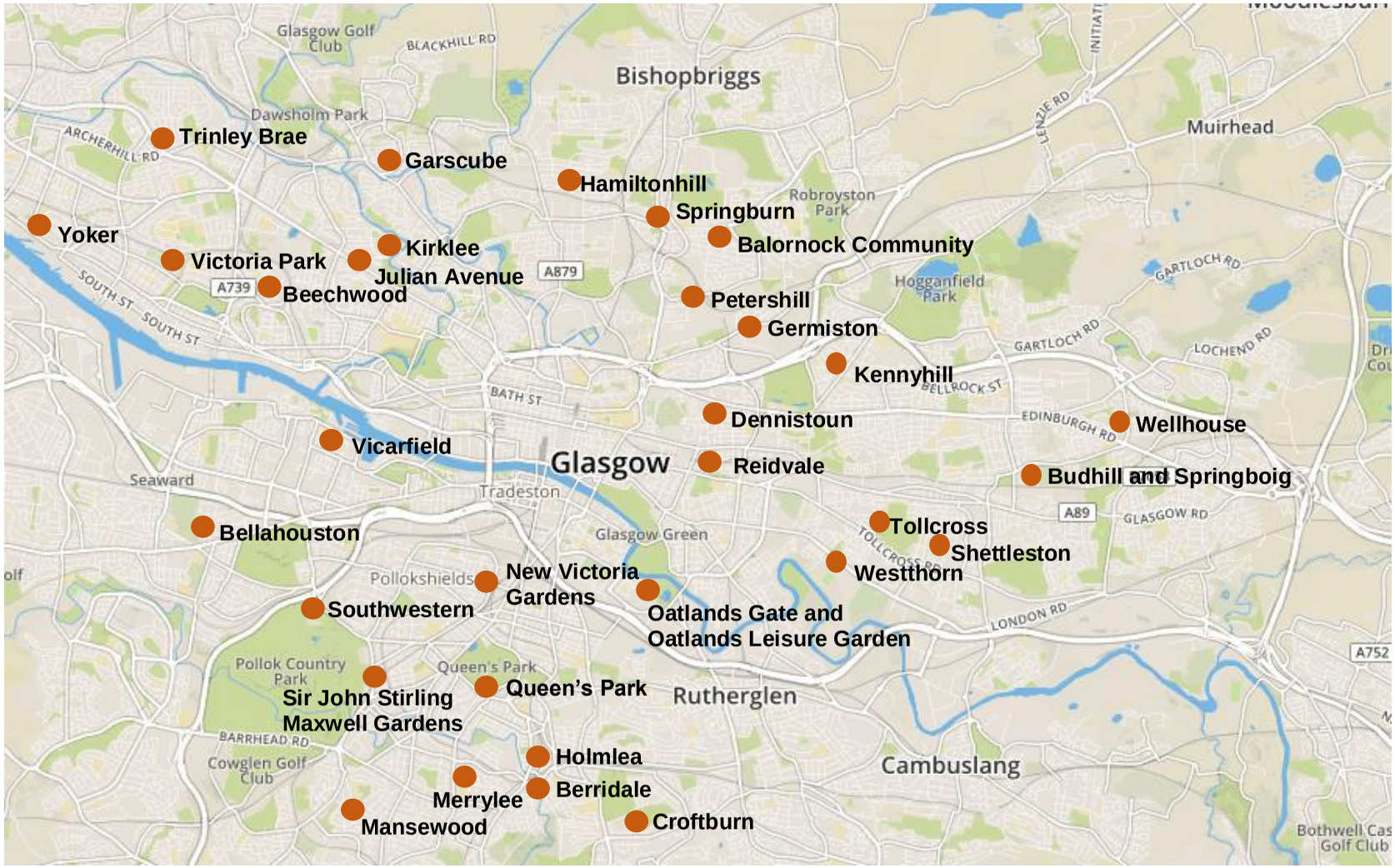
Sharp was Chairman of the Joint Committee from the beginning of the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed in 1931, a role he fulfilled for thirty-seven years. He was a member of the Society of Friends. It is not clear whether he had an allotment himself but he gave financial guidance to the scheme. He died in 1972.

Helen Thompson

Thompson was employed as secretary for the Joint Committee from 1933 and as secretary and treasurer for the Union in 1942. In 1945 she resigned from the Union due to ill health but continued her work for the Joint Committee as it was not full-time. It is not clear when Thompson retired from the Joint Committee but it seems likely that McWatt Green became secretary after her.

Victor Webb

Webb was both a member of the Society of Friends and a plotholder. He first had an allotment in the 1940s and became very active in the Scottish allotment movement in the 1950s when his site was closed by the Edinburgh Corporation. Webb led a campaign to save his site which, although unsuccessful, led him to become a campaigner and advisor to other plotholders facing site closures. He was heavily involved in SAGS and the Joint Committee and carefully saved the records which now form the archive collection *The Papers of Victor Webb.*



Allotments in Glasgow in 2017 (Source: Future City Glasgow Maps)

Introduction

‘Little plots, well tilled’[1]

> *I feel like a custodian of the land, like somebody who’s looking after it in some small way to pass on and looking after it well, and treating it kindly and carefully. And I like that interplay between being here and not being here and magical things happen when I’m not here because I’ve just pushed it on a little bit when I have been here, took out some weeds to allow something to grow. Although it’s not so bad if I haven’t managed to weed a patch of land if something magical’s happened because of it – a beautiful flower’s turned up… I like turning up and seeing what’s happened when I’ve not been, whether it’s a week or a few days or after winter and something’s growing again. So it is a relationship with the land and the place.*[2] *– Emily Chappell.*

Sitting together on a sunny afternoon at the end of September, mugs of tea in hand, Emily Chappell and I discuss what her allotment in Kennyhill, in the East End of Glasgow, is to her. She sounds, perhaps, a little in love as she describes what happens on her plot when she is not there; sometimes it is how we feel in the absence of something that tells us what it really means to us. Earlier in our conversation Emily had explained how she leaves certain patches of her allotment untouched, moving these patches from year to year, because ‘the wildlife appreciates it’. She had been rewarded with a bramble patch – ‘I’m going to reap so many blackberries!’[3] It is also in her absence that foxes appear on Emily’s plot; she’s not seen them but she is witness to their den building skills. ‘I don’t mind them at all,’ she says ‘I think it’s nice that they’re taking over in the winter, it’s like I’ve got a time share with them or something so they can enjoy it as well’.[4] As Emily said herself, she is in a relationship with her plot, the land and the living things on it and in it, whether planned and invited or moving in by themselves. There is a deep connection that repeatedly pulls her back when she’s been away, a connection also felt by Kathryn Venart (pictured in Figure 1) on Budhill and Springboig Allotments, a little further to the east of the city centre than Kennyhill:

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[1] Plotholder Alister Smith’s description of allotments. Interview with Alister Smith, Croftburn, 27th June 2016.

[2] Interview with Emily Chappell, Kennyhill, 25th September 2015.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

> It's sanctuary, I suppose, if I don't get along for a while I feel it. And then sometimes you think 'Oh, I'm so busy with work and everything else, maybe I should give it up.' Especially if you've not been for a while and you come in and you see all the weeds… And then you touch the soil, you just turn over one bit of soil, and you get that smell? And you go 'Oh no, this is not going anywhere'.[5]

Figure 1: Kathryn Venart on her plot in Budhill and Springboig (Image: By author)

The legal definition of an allotment tells us nothing of this relationship. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, passed in 2015 and overhauling all previous allotment legislation, describes an allotment as land that 'is owned or leased by a local authority', 'leased or intended for lease by a person from the authority' and used 'wholly or mainly for the cultivation of vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers' and is not for making a profit.[6] It is a definition that seems both accurate and at the same time very loose; allotments can be 'mainly' for growing our own food but it leaves room for other activities, perhaps letting wild brambles flourish and foxes build their timeshares. A legislative definition cannot

[5] Interview with Kathryn Venart, Budhill and Springboig, 28th June 2015.

[6] UK Legislation, *Community Empowerment (Scotland Act) 2015* <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/section/108/enacted> [Accessed 07/09/2016].

perfectly sum up the meaning of an allotment; indeed, it is going to take this entire thesis to investigate its meaning.

This thesis will be an exploration of what allotments have meant over time, what they do today and what they might be in the future. Using Glasgow as a study, I will begin in the 1930s and work my way through the development of allotments to the present day. First, this introduction will provide context for my research. I will explain how it was instigated, the historiography surrounding it, the methodology used and the questions to be addressed throughout, before setting out a map for the chapters that follow.

Community heritage on Scotland's allotments

There are around 7900 allotments in Scotland today on nearly 300 sites. This is about one plot for every six hundred people, far fewer than what is needed to provide for hopeful gardeners waiting on lists; there are more allotments in the city of Birmingham than in the whole of Scotland.[7] The current popularity of allotments is reflected in recent growth; in 2007 there were 6300 allotments on 211 sites.[8] However, today's number is much smaller than it was following the Second World War; in 1947 it is thought there were around 70,000 plots.[9] Allotment sites were established from the mid-nineteenth century in Scotland so that families could grow their own food. By the 1930s this purpose was reflected in the size of allotments; the Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders regarded a standard plot to be 250 square metres, the size thought necessary for a family of four to feed themselves.[10] Some current plotholders find a half plot or a quarter plot more manageable and these are now commonly found on sites. Throughout this work I will use the term 'allotment site' or just 'site' to describe an area of land divided into allotments, unless I am using the proper name of a site, for example, Budhill and Springboig Allotments or New Victoria Gardens. The words 'allotment' and 'plot' will be used interchangeably to mean the space within an allotment site leased by an individual, or occasionally a group. Those that lease the allotments will be referred to as 'plotholders' as that is what they usually call themselves in Glasgow. Associations will also be mentioned frequently. Most allotment sites have an association that their plotholders have to join, led

[7] Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson and Rona Wilkinson, *Raising Spirits: Allotments, well-being and community* (Edinburgh: Argyll Publishing, 2015), p. 40; SAGS, *Join Us*, <http://www.sags.org.uk/JoinSags.php> [Accessed 09/09/2016].

[8] Mollison et al, p. 40.

[9] Ibid.

[10] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1932, p. 3.

by a voluntary elected committee to manage the site. City wide, associations also form groups to plan events and negotiate with local authorities. In Glasgow this group is the Glasgow Allotments Forum or GAF and in Edinburgh there is the Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and Gardens Association or FEDAGA. Nationally, plotholders are represented by the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS), a voluntary society which aims to protect, preserve and promote allotments, campaigning for new sites to be formed and providing information for existing sites.[11] SAGS has played a very strong role in the allotment movement of Scotland and the history of its development and influence is a major part of this thesis.

In recent years, SAGS has developed a community heritage strategy, using the promotion of local heritage to secure allotments for the future. SAGS is not alone in this and in recent years there have been several community heritage projects on allotments across the United Kingdom, including *From Patch to Plate* in Wolverhampton, *Plotting the Past* in York and *Oliver's Plot* on St. Ann's Allotments in Nottingham.[12] In September 2010, SAGS was awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to work with GAF on the Glasgow Allotment Heritage Project (GAHP). This project worked with volunteers from twelve sites in Glasgow to look at the individual stories of their allotment sites. Plotholders used their own association minute books and interviewed other gardeners as well as carrying out research in the city archives using local authority minutes and estate papers. The project culminated in a celebration of allotments in October 2011 and the creation of leaflets, a booklet and a website. GAHP was very successful in uniting plotholders from different sites in researching and interpreting their own history, as well as encouraging them to think about the future of the allotment movement in Glasgow. One association, Merrylee, has continued by forming a history group to do further research and the Kelvinside Allotment Association has deposited its site records in the city archives, as the project had convinced them of the need to preserve their committee minutes and letters for future researchers. This has allowed me access to the collection and I hope that my research might encourage other associations to follow Kelvinside.

[11] SAGS, <http://www.sags.org.uk> [Accessed 09/09/2016].

[12] HLF, *From Patch to Plate*, <https://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/patch-plate-takes-wolverhampton-back-its-roots> [Accessed 13/09/2016]; York Archaeological Trust, *42nd Annual Report: 2013-14* (York: York Archaeological Trust, 2014), p. 21; St. Ann's Allotments, *Oliver's Heritage Display Garden*, <http://www.staa-allotments.org.uk/heritage/pointandclick/Displayplothome.htm> [Accessed 13/09/2016].

GAHP mainly looked at individual sites and SAGS recognised it was lacking in an understanding of the overall development of the allotment movement in Scotland. To build on their knowledge and take their heritage strategy further, SAGS worked with the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences and the School of Humanities (specifically the history department) at the University of Glasgow to seek further research, leading to a Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. This thesis is the result of the CDA and therefore it is written not only for an academic audience but also for SAGS to use actively in informing their activities and campaigns.

Before joining the project as the holder of the CDA, I was working as a community archaeologist for York Archaeological Trust, which included leading the *Plotting the Past* project. My former role has greatly shaped the way I have worked on my thesis; my belief that research should be used by, not hidden from, the general public led to a collaborative relationship both with SAGS and the Glasgow Allotments Forum, described later in my methodology. My background as an archaeologist also led to a different approach to oral history than a historian might take. In recent years, particularly within community archaeology projects, archaeologists have used interviews not so much to research the past but to record the present, consciously creating collections of sites or communities. So although I call my interviews oral history in my methodology, many of them actually only cover the last ten years and this could be a point of debate between historians and archaeologists. My background as a plotholder has also shaped my work. In many ways it has helped me; as described later in my methodology, plotholders can be reticent to talk to strangers and having an interest in gardening can usefully break down barriers. However, at times it has also been difficult not to become too involved, or even biased, about my research and at times I have had to take a step back and reconsider my arguments.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach to this project, from archaeology, history and geography, has allowed broader parameters to be used in setting research questions; although in the space between the three disciplines the project may not be regarded as fully historical as it extends to the present day, nor may it be regarded as fully geographical as at times it focuses closely on single individuals rather than movements, space or place. Influences from the disciplinary perspectives of both historians and geographers are reflected in the methodology set out below. The thesis will address the following research questions:

- What is the purpose of an allotment? How has this changed and developed from 1930 to the present day?
- What is the role of the allotment in sustainable food production? Is this still relevant today?
- How has the allotment movement advocated for the changing purposes and roles of allotments from 1930 to the present day?
- How have allotments developed as places of community?
- What does an allotment mean to the individual plotholder?

Glasgow has been chosen as the site of exploration to answer these questions for several reasons. Firstly, this research can be viewed as a continuation of the Glasgow Allotments Heritage Project. I have been able to use the volunteers' research and I have been able to share my own research and continue the project by running workshops and creating displays. The importance of this relationship will be explained more fully in the methodology below. Secondly, the headquarters of SAGS was based in Glasgow from its formation in 1946 to the early 1970s when it ceased to employ paid staff and rent an office. Glasgow is therefore central to the allotments movement in Scotland; indeed, one fifth of Scotland's allotments are in Glasgow.[13] Finally, the records of SAGS, as well as the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed, are held by the University of Glasgow Archive Services; this established the working relationship between the University and SAGS. This collection will also be fully introduced in the methodology. However, I will first give a brief review on the green history of Glasgow and research on allotments to show where this thesis is situated amongst wider literature.

The invisibility of allotments in our dear green place

The name Glasgow can be translated in various ways, 'dear church' or 'green hollow', but often it is called the 'dear green place'.[14] The efforts of the Glasgow Corporation and generous donations of wealthy families mean that today Glasgow has ninety parks, more per head of population than any other European city.[15] Histories of Glasgow have focussed on these parks as the 'greening' of the city but it is not only parks that make a place green. There are unrecorded places too, places writer Richard Mabey has described as the

[13] Hayden Lorimer, Marina Moskowitz and Judy Wilkinson, *Proposal for Collaborative Doctoral Award* (Unpublished funding application: Glasgow, 2013), p. 4.

[14] Irene Maver, *Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 5-6.

[15] Steven Purcell, 'Foreword', in *Played in Glasgow: Charting the heritage of a city at play*, ed. by Ged O'Brien (Edinburgh: Historic Scotland, 2010), p. 7.

'unofficial countryside', not intended for wildlife but evolved out of human need.[16] There are playgrounds, car park verges and railway sidings, places for wildflowers, insects and families of mice to thrive. And, there are allotments.

Often hidden by housing or locked away behind fences, allotments are all but invisible in the green history of Glasgow. Indeed, there has been little research on allotments across Scotland with the majority of work based in England.[17] Public parks have been the main focus of historians, such as Irene Maver, in showing how the city has developed its 'lungs'. Glasgow's public parks originated in the nineteenth century, a time of massive change as industry grew and the city's area expanded, from 1864 acres in 1830 to 19,183 acres in 1912.[18] Despite this expansion, there was still overcrowding as new workers arrived, drawn from across Scotland and Ireland to work in factories and shipyards. Housing stock was completely inadequate, dense buildings and pollution blocked out the sunlight and disease often broke out.[19] Parks, such as Kelvingrove Park (1854) and Queen's Park (1862) were regarded by the Corporation of Glasgow as the antidote to the effects of pollution, overcrowding and insanitary conditions. However, these early parks laid out in the middle-class West End and Southside were too far away to be practical for the working classes, largely in the north and East End, to use. This changed with the 1878 Glasgow Public Parks Act, which empowered the Corporation to purchase new land for parks, creating a network of parks and playgrounds in working class areas.[20] The GAHP found that allotments also began to appear in Glasgow at this time; the first can be seen on an 1858 map of Springburn at the Cowlairs Works for the Edinburgh Glasgow Railway.[21] Although this allotment site's origin was aligned with the origins of early parks, to encourage workers into healthy outdoor activities in their spare time, allotments are rarely mentioned in histories of the dear green place.

[16] Richard Mabey, *The Unofficial Countryside* (Toller Fratrum: Little Toller Books, 2010), p. 20.

[17] The exception to this is the work of geographer Caitlin DeSilvey who carried out research on Edinburgh's allotments for her Master dissertation. DeSilvey's work will be discussed later in this introduction. Caitlin DeSilvey, 'When Plotters Meet: Edinburgh's Allotment Movement 1921 – 2001' (Unpublished Masters thesis: University of Edinburgh, 2001).

[18] Nicholas J. Morgan, 'Building the City', in *Glasgow*, II, ed. by Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 9.

[19] Andrzej Jan Leon Zieleniec, 'Park Spaces: Leisure, culture and modernity – a Glasgow case study' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Glasgow, 2002), pp. 137-8, p. 168.

[20] Maver, p. 97; Zieleniec, p. 170, p. 182.

[21] Judy Wilkinson, Rona Wilkinson and Emily Chappell, *Glasgow Allotments Heritage Project: Discovering the stories of Glasgow's allotments* (Unpublished booklet: Glasgow Allotments Forum, 2013), p. 6.

Problems with overcrowding in Glasgow continued into the twentieth century. In 1917, the Royal Commission into the Conditions of the Housing of the Working Classes in Scotland found that some of the worst housing was concentrated in Glasgow. Overcrowded and poorly-maintained tenements were described as the cause of infectious diseases, as well as anti-social behaviour and crime.[22] A wartime population increase and high levels of unemployment in the 1920s led to a housing crisis and, despite the pressure on land for housing, the Housing Acts of 1919, 1923 and 1924 encouraged investment in parks, laid out using unemployed labour.[23]

Following the Second World War, housing conditions became worse. Although the city of Glasgow was little affected by air-raids, shortages of both supplies and labour during the war meant that repairs to existing housing stock were postponed and planned developments were put on hold. Concerned with the overcrowded, even 'slum', conditions that people were living in both local and national government created plans for new social housing. Whilst the UK national government favoured plans to re-house those in overcrowded tenements to new towns beyond the city boundaries, Glasgow Corporation sought to re-house its people in new developments within the city itself.[24] Although rarely mentioned in post-war histories of Glasgow, the Corporation's housing policy had a direct impact on allotments, as demand for land became greater and allotment sites were considered to be taking up valuable space. During the Second World War allotment sites were often established on land already ear-marked for developments, including housing and new schools, which had been delayed, and in the aftermath of the war the Corporation's Housing Committee wanted to claim these back. At the same time the Corporation continued to establish new parks throughout the 1950s, such as Sighthill, Auchinlea, Balarnack and Cranhill.[25] There is a lack of commentary on this priority of one form of urban green space over another, even when allotment history forms an integral part of park

[22] Charles McKean, 'Between the Wars', in *Glasgow: The Forming of the City*, ed. by Peter Reed (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), pp. 130-33.

[23] Maver, p. 192, p. 204; Zieleniec, pp. 190-91.

[24] Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius, *Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland* (London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 158; Andrew Gibb, 'Policy and politics in Scottish housing since 1945',in *Scottish housing in the twentieth century*, ed. Richard Rodger (Leicester University Press, Leicester: 1989), pp. 157-61; Miles Horsey, *Tenements and Towers: Glasgow working-class housing 1890-1990* (Edinburgh: The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 1990), pp. 27-28; Nicholas Burnham Sharrer, 'The impact of social housing on health in Glasgow and Baltimore, 1930-1980' (Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Glasgow, 2016), pp. 126-27.

[25] Zieleniec, p. 193.

history (allotments were established in Victoria Park, Queen's Park and Glasgow Green during the First World War).[26]

In Glasgow today, new forms of urban gardening are appearing. Places such as the North Kelvin Meadow, former playing fields reclaimed by nature, are also reclaimed by the community as a place to meet, to grow food and for children to play.[27] Charities such as South Seeds, established in 2011, work on tenement blocks with residents to improve energy efficiency and living conditions, turning derelict sites into gardens. [28] In the twenty-first century people are making a return to using common or disused land but the emphasis is often on community gardens and not on the network of community gardens and allotments existing together. Like parks, allotments are linked to the city's architecture and planning – both buildings and other green space; this thesis will explore their contribution to the dear green place.

As stated above, the majority of work on allotments has been based in England, although this can be applied to Scottish allotments to a limited extent. The origins of allotments in England are divided into two narratives: rural and urban. The main scholar on early rural allotments is Jeremy Burchardt whose book *The Allotment Movement in England, 1793 – 1873* was published in 2002.[29] This was followed by a joint publication with Jacqueline Cooper in 2010, *Breaking New Ground: Nineteenth century allotments from local sources*, the results of a survey of nineteenth century rural allotments carried out by the Family and Community Historical Research Society.[30] In his work, Burchardt links the creation of rural allotments to the Parliamentary Enclosures, the enclosure of common lands across England, as did David Crouch and Colin Ward before him in their book *The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture*, first published in 1988.[31] Caroline Foley, Steve Poole and Twigs Way have followed the same pattern.[32] However, it is difficult to apply their work to

[26] Wilkinson et al, p. 6.

[27] North Kelvin Meadow, <http://northkelvinmeadow.com> [Accessed 14/11/2013].

[28] Owen Duffy, 'Tackling Glasgow's substandard homes with peas, beetroot and thermal imaging', *The Guardian*, 12th September 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com> [Accessed 15/11/2013].

[29] Jeremy Burchardt, *The Allotment Movement in England, 1793-1873* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002).

[30] Jeremy Burchardt and Jacqueline Cooper, *Breaking new ground: nineteenth century allotments from local sources* (Milton Keynes: FACHRS Publications, 2010).

[31] Burchardt; David Crouch and Colin Ward, *The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture* (Nottingham: Five Leaves Publications, 1997).

[32] Caroline Foley, *Of Cabbages and Kings: The History of Allotments* (London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 2014); Steve Poole, *The Allotment Chronicles: A social history of allotment gardening* (Kettering: Silver Link Publishing, 2006); Twigs Way, *Allotments* (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2010).

Scotland because the history of land use, law and ownership has been so different north of the border. The only assertion that can be tentatively made is that allotments were first established in England and Scottish allotments followed later. Crouch, Ward, Poole and Way are all agreed that the origins of urban allotments are in the 'guinea gardens' of the Midlands, known in Birmingham from 1731. These gardens had higher rents than their rural counterparts (reflected in their name) and rather than being allotted charitably to the poor for growing crops, these plots attracted business owners and shopkeepers to grow flowers and keep lawns, relaxing in their summerhouses when not tending the land.[33] St. Ann's Allotments in Nottingham were founded as guinea gardens, probably before 1835, and their original layout is still in place with plots divided by hedges.[34] It is likely that the New Victoria Gardens in Glasgow's Southside were founded along similar lines. This site too has plots neatly divided by hedges, although it is much smaller, covering just over three acres compared to St. Ann's vast seventy-five acres.[35] New Victoria Gardens is set amongst the tenements of East Pollokshields, on land that was part of the Stirling Maxwell estate, and was founded around 1871. As the tenements were developed in a rigid street pattern between 1855 and 1910 it seems likely that these gardens were planned for the benefit of the tenants.[36] In England, demand for guinea gardens fell following the Industrial Revolution as the middle-classes moved to the suburbs, to houses with attached gardens. Allotments to serve the working-class began to appear in towns and cities from the mid-nineteenth century, either taking over guinea gardens or being established on new sites often connected to railway companies or factories, such as the allotments in Springburn mentioned above.[37] At this time the history of English and Scottish allotments seems to be largely in alignment.

Perhaps the most iconic moment in the history of British allotments was the involvement of the movement in the *Digging for Victory* campaign during the Second World War. However, to put that moment into the overall context of national arable food production an overview of the fluctuating fortunes of British farming from the close of the First World War to the rise of Digging for Victory is required.

[33] Crouch and Ward, p. 66; Poole, p. 15; Way, p. 13.

[34] St. Ann's Allotments, *History*, <http://www.staa-allotments.org.uk/heritage/history.htm> [Accessed 07/09/ 2016].

[35] Wilkinson et al, p. 53.

[36] Pollokshields Heritage, *The History of Pollokshields*, <http://www.pollokshieldsheritage.org/History/Pollokshields.html> [Accessed 08/09/ 2016].

[37] Poole, p. 15; Way, pp. 13-14.

After the First World War, total food production across Europe had fallen by around one third. Although by the late 1920s production in Europe had recovered to pre-war levels, by this time food production in the USA and Canada had come to dominate the market and consequently prices in Europe collapsed.[38] The UK had become overly reliant on imports and the government had ceased investments in farming, so that during the Depression of the 1930s many farmers had turned to pastoral, rather than arable, farming. This left the land in a difficult state for cultivation with many parcels of land returned to pasture, a state exacerbated by overgrown hedges and ditches and blocked drainage systems.[39]

However, by the early 1930s the British government was anticipating another major war in Europe and had begun to make preparations for the nation's food security. The UK needed to become less reliant on imported food, both to free shipping space for other strategic supplies and in anticipation of U-boat blockades, as had been experienced during the First World War.[40] The government took greater control over food production and the Ministry of Food became the only buyer and importer of food and regulated all prices.[41] Through the 1937 Agricultural Act and 1939 Agricultural Development Act, the Ministry of Agriculture provided grants for drainage, subsidies on fertilisers, tractors, machinery and subsidies for growing oats and barley, alongside the existing subsidy for growing wheat. In addition, farmers were paid two pounds for every acre of permanent grassland they ploughed up for cultivation between May and December 1939.[42]

It was not only the state of the land that caused difficulties, there was also a labour shortage. By March 1940 50,000 agricultural workers had been lost, either to military service or industries with better pay and conditions. However, the increased acreage for arable farming meant that in addition to replacing these 50,000 men a further 60,000 full-time workers and 22,000 casual workers were needed.[43] The government encouraged men to stay in farming by increasing their wages and restricting labour movement, in addition a significant part of the farming workforce was filled by women. In 1943 a third of the

[38] JK Bowers and Paul Cheshire, *Agriculture, the Countryside and Land Use: An Economic Critique* (London: Methuen and Co, 1983), pp. 54-5.

[39] Bowers and Cheshire, p. 55; Alun Howkins, *The Death of Rural England: A social history of the countryside since 1900* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 116-7.

[40] Bowers and Cheshire, p. 59

[41] Susan Foreman, *Loaves and Fishes: An illustrated history of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food* (London: HMSO, 1989), p. 33; Howkins, p. 115.

[42] Howkins, p. 116.

[43] Howkins, p. 120.

farming workforce was female, made up of 87,000 full-time workers from the Women's Land Army and 66,000 employed elsewhere. From 1941 Italian prisoners of war were also working on farms and during holidays the general public provided voluntary labour.[44] The government's policies for agriculture during the Second World War were highly successful; by the end of the war farming had become largely mechanised and cultivation had significantly increased.[45] In 1939 there were 8.3 million acres of land under crop in the UK and by 1943 this had increased to 13 million acres. By 1944 there had been a 90% increase in wheat production, 87% in potatoes, 45% in vegetables and 19% in sugar beet.[46]

What these figures highlight, however, is that although the government's farming strategy was highly effective, the focus for farms was on cereals and potatoes – efficient bulk crops in a mechanising arable industry. The *Dig for Victory* campaign was also needed to encourage home production, in home gardens and allotments, to supply vegetables and leafy greens for a wider source of varied nutrients and vitamins, especially with the loss of imported vitamin-rich fruit such as lemons and bananas.[47] Wartime allotments have been covered in wider histories of wartime gardening, by Ursula Buchan in *A Green and Pleasant Land: How England's Gardeners Fought the Second World War* and Daniel Smith in *The Spade as Mighty as the Sword: The Story of the Dig for Victory Campaign*.[48] Buchan and Smith's work mainly covers backyards and private gardens; however they do provide useful material for comparison on how the *Dig for Victory* campaign played out differently in England and Scotland, explored in Chapter Two. For allotments alone this period is covered in depth by Crouch and Ward, as well as by Lesley Acton in *Growing Space: A history of the allotment movement*, published in 2015.[49] However, this work is focused on England and a study of how *Dig for Victory* influenced and expanded the Scottish allotments movement, alongside increased farming, is needed to better understand this picture.

Crouch and Ward aimed to 'present the history and culture' of the allotment in their work. *The Allotment* ranges far and wide geographically, even making small forays into Glasgow,

[44] Foreman, p. 37; Howkins, p. 121.

[45] Foreman, p. 49.

[46] Howkins, p. 124.

[47] Ursula Buchan, *A Green and Pleasant Land: How England's Gardeners Fought the Second World War* (Northampton: Windmill Books, 2014), p. 36.

[48] Buchan; Daniel Smith, *The Spade as Mighty as the Sword: The Story of the Dig for Victory Campaign* (London: Aurum Press, 2011).

[49] Lesley Acton, *Growing Space: A history of the allotment movement* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2015).

and it reads very much like a wander through an allotment, so detailed that you can be pleasantly lost in it. Acton's text complements Crouch and Ward's by covering the history of allotments chronologically rather than thematically, extending the period covered in England from the mid-1990s to the present day. Her work is based on extensive archive research and oral history interviews, mostly covering her PhD case-study of north-east Greater London but taking in examples from across England too.[50] Crouch and Ward claim in their book that 'The diversity of allotments has been shown in the variety of experiences in different parts of the country that we have described'.[51] This too could be said for Acton who has shown this great diversity across different periods of time. What is lacking, then, is an in-depth case-study of one single city. One such study was carried out by geographer Denis Moran in Swindon in the early 1970s. His survey of thirty-seven sites is a snapshot of allotments in a very particular time and place, particularly showing the effects of high-inflation on the popularity of allotment gardening.[52]

Several gaps in allotment research have been shown above. Firstly, the vast majority of work has been based south of the border and mostly in the south of England. Secondly, there has been a lack of in-depth case-studies as research has either covered a very large area or been limited to a very specific period of time. Thirdly, Glasgow has been identified as an appropriate place for a study as although narratives of the city make clear the importance of green space to its planning and design, allotments as a form of urban green space have been largely ignored.

The work of geographer Caitlin DeSilvey has gone some way to filling these identified gaps. DeSilvey researched allotments in Edinburgh for her Master's thesis and disseminated her work through a report written for the Merlin Trust and a paper for *Cultural Geographies* published in 2003.[53] During her research DeSilvey became involved in FEDAGA, she wrote: 'I had begun to attend FEDAGA meetings as an observer but when the committee members discovered that my research in the Edinburgh Council archives seemed to be turning up useful historical evidence, they adopted me as a provisional member'.[54] She became involved in FEDAGA's representation in a Scottish

[50] Crouch and Ward; Acton.

[51] Crouch and Ward, p. 266.

[52] Denis M. Moran, *The Allotment Movement in Britain* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

[53] Caitlin DeSilvey, 'Cultivated histories in a Scottish allotment garden', *Cultural Geographies* 10 (2003), pp. 442-468.

[54] Ibid., p. 446.

Parliamentary Inquiry in 2000 and it was partly this work that encouraged SAGS to make further use of historical research in their campaigns. My work builds on DeSilvey's, continuing the active involvement of researchers with SAGS and using the same archive, as explained in the methodology below. As a Master's thesis, DeSilvey's work was by nature limited; I have had the opportunity to expand on that work. DeSilvey found that allotments are difficult to define because plots can mean so many different things to different people, as explained in her description of FEDAGA and SAGS' petition to Parliament:

> …the collective representation included so many assertions of allotments' benefit to society that it was easy to get disorientated: public health and nutrition; social reform; education; therapy; wildlife habitat; open space; exercise; community-building; urban revitalisation; waste management; heritage; skills training. While I felt slightly dismayed by our apparent disorganisation, the optimistic complexity of our presentation also fascinated me. I started to wonder if it was possible for us to present a unified message, or if, despite our best efforts to condense and clarify, allotments were just too complex to distil, to summarise.[55]

By taking a more detailed survey of the history of allotments in Scotland, I will show how these ideas have developed and whether a unified message is possible, in parallel to Acton's work in England, showing how the allotment movement has aligned and differed north and south of the border.

Methodology and sources

The main source used for this research was the Papers of Victor Webb, a collection held by the University of Glasgow Archives Services (UGAS). Webb gave his papers to SAGS who deposited them with the Archives in November 2000; it is largely through this deposit that SAGS' collaboration with the University began.[56] Victor Douglas Eustace Webb was an extremely active plotholder. He was born in England in 1915 but worked in Edinburgh as a Civil Servant, retiring in 1975, and then starting his own laundrette company with several shops. Webb first worked a plot in the 1940s but became heavily involved in the Scottish allotments movement in the 1950s, during a failed campaign to save his own site which was closed for a housing development. Webb's first battle was lost but he became an active campaigner and advisor for other plotholders threatened with eviction. He was a

[55] Ibid., p. 460.

[56] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/14, SAGS Minutes, 18th November 2000.

member of the SAGS committee in the 1950s and was very closely involved with the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed (SASU), which is the main focus of Chapter One. This scheme was set up by the Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders, subsequently re-constituted as SAGS in 1946, and the Society of Friends (also known as the Quakers), of which Webb was also a member.[57] The Friends are known to be meticulous minute keepers and historically have kept very good records of birth, marriage and death statistics, private letters and diaries, as a result of the Society opting out of many formal institutions.[58] The SASU committee was no exception to this careful tradition of record-keeping and Webb kept incredible care of the scheme's documents, also inheriting the records kept by SASU's first chairman Harold Sharp. Webb's papers cover records from both SAGS and SASU including accounts, annual reports, letters and minutes, as well as papers from FEDAGA and other Edinburgh associations, which were used by DeSilvey in her research. The papers cover a period from the 1930s, when SASU was founded, until the 1990s. This has recently been extended by SAGS who have deposited their minute books with UGAS, bringing the collection to the early 2000s. The *Papers of Victor Webb* have therefore enabled a very thorough investigation of the Scottish allotment movement in the twentieth century; it is highly probable that it is because of the involvement of the Society of Friends in this movement that such a valuable collection exists. During my research, UGAS was awarded a grant from the Wellcome Trust to catalogue the collection, acknowledging the importance of allotments for health and wellbeing and the need for research into their history to inform future development.

Research was also carried out in the Glasgow City Archives. On a local level the *Papers of Victor Webb* are concerned with Edinburgh, so specific work for Glasgow was required. I used the Glasgow Corporation minutes up until 1975 and then City of Glasgow District Council minutes, after the restructuring of Scottish local authorities, from that year onwards. This has allowed me to gather information on allotment sites in Glasgow, as well as looking at the allotment movement from a local authority's point of view. One difficulty with the Corporation minutes was that the location of allotment sites is only mentioned when a problem is being fixed, for example, mending a fence or working on a water supply, or closure of a site is being considered. Even then the address is often rather vague. Allotment sites are also not always included in maps and even existing sites have

[57] UGAS, *Scottish Allotments Collection*, <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/library/collections/medicalhumanities/allotments/scottish%20allotments%20collection_about/> [Accessed 13/09/2016].

[58] James Walvin, *The Quakers: Money and Morals* (London: John Murray, 1997), p. 45-46.

sometimes been relocated and the original site is not known. This has made it difficult to pinpoint where allotment sites were in the past which is why only tables of numbers rather than maps are provided throughout the thesis when discussing the number of allotments that existed at particular times. I also used the Kelvinside Allotment Association's papers, which have been deposited in the City Archives. Unfortunately many other associations have lost, or even destroyed, their records.[59] For Chapters One and Two, I also visited the National Records of Scotland to use government records on unemployment schemes and the *Dig for Victory* campaign during the Second World War.

Until the 1980s women are largely invisible in allotment archives, including association records, Corporation minutes and the Papers of Victor Webb. Until the 1980s it was highly unusual for a woman to have a plot in her own name; even if a woman did most of the work on a plot, it would still usually be in the name of her husband. This makes it extremely difficult to be able to know how many women were actually involved in the allotment movement between 1930 and the 1980s. In Chapter Five I cover how this begins to change in Glasgow from the 1970s and then from the 1980s women begin to have plots in their own name. This does not seem to be a trend isolated to Glasgow; from informal conversations I had with plotholders in York it also seems to have been the case there. Gender is discussed throughout this thesis but it is not covered in great detail and it is an area that has potential for a future project. The Papers of Victor Webb were collected first by Harold Sharp, the Chairman of the unemployment scheme, and then Victor Webb, so it tends to be male-orientated in construction. A change in the material can be noted from the mid-1990s when women become more actively involved in SAGS, especially in the role of secretary. The exception to this is Helen Thompson who worked as secretary for both the unemployment scheme and the Union. Thompson's reports and letters to Sharp are included in the collection and occasionally there are notes in pencil from Sharp for Thompson, which show something of their relationship. It is not clear whether Thompson had an allotment of her own but she is actively involved in shaping the unemployment scheme and campaigning for the protection of allotments towards the end of the Second World War. Thompson is a lone female voice mentioned frequently in the first few chapters of this thesis.

Chapters Five and Six make use of oral history interviews as well as archival research. These interviews were carried out in Glasgow between June 2015 and August 2016 at

[59] In a general discussion about New Victoria Gardens before her oral history interview, Fiona Sutherland mentioned that a former secretary on the site had burnt the records of the allotment association.

Budhill and Springboig, Croftburn, High Carntyne, Kelvinside, Kennyhill, New Victoria Gardens, Queen's Park, Vicarfield and Westthorn, as well as two additional interviews with members of the SAGS committee on the Community Empowerment Act. In a study of domestic London gardens, geographers Russell Hitchings and Verity Jones discovered that gardeners spoke about their plants much more freely in their gardens than in their houses.[60] I followed this method and attempted, whenever possible, to interview plotholders in their allotments so that their surroundings would act as a prompt. Unfortunately the summer of 2015 (when I did most of the interviews) was incredibly wet, even for Glasgow, as Lisa Clifford from High Carntyne explained during her interview:

> And then it hit May and the rain started and now we're in July and the rain hasn't stopped since May. There was a load of stuff I started off in my house and then transported over to the allotment sort of at the beginning of May and it was still just so cold that – lots of things – I came in one day and they were just all dead.[61]

With careful attention to weather forecasts, I was able to carry out the majority of my interviews on the plots and when the weather did defeat us, in communal site huts followed by quick tours of plots in the rain. It does, however, mean that many of the interviews are skewed towards comments on the atrocious weather, lamenting over failed crops and confessing of multiple slug slaughters. I have also made use of interviews carried out at Kelvinside and Mansewood Allotments by Marilyn Boyd and Robert French during the Glasgow Allotments Heritage Project. A collaborative approach was essential to researching Glasgow's allotments. Plotholders can be a reticent bunch; by the end of this thesis it should be apparent why some might be wary of a visitor carrying a camera, recorder and notebook. Attending GAF meetings and events gave me the opportunity to get to know people from various sites who offered to be interviewed or helped me find the plotholders I needed to answer certain questions. In return, I have set up workshops for archive research as well as recording sheds and created displays for GAF's annual allotment celebration. Participation in the GAHP had introduced plotholders to the idea of allotment history and this meant that my project was welcomed as a continuation and I could use the archive information and interviews that had been previously collected. Part of the GAHP was to encourage associations to deposit their records with the City Archives, so my interviews and photographs will also be deposited there for future use.

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[60] Russell Hitchings and Verity Jones, 'Living with Plants and the Exploration of Botanical Encounter within Human Geographic Research Practice', *Ethics, Place and Environment* 7 (2004), pp. 3-18.

[61] Interview with Lisa Clifford, High Carntyne, 27th July 2015.

Research questions

The thesis will address five research questions. I will draw the answers out from these questions in the themes threaded through the chapters, which follow a chronological path through the history of Glasgow's allotments.

What is the purpose of an allotment within the city? How has this changed and developed from 1930 to the present day?

> *…when you come here and you sit of a summer's evening and you're overlooking Glasgow, you sit and this is your piece of heaven. Everything can be in full bloom, everything is growing away, it's quiet, there's not a sound, and you look around and you see the world below you...*[62] *– Denis Barrett.*

Allotments are often described as a place of rural retreat from the city. In one interpretation of Denis Barrett's statement about his plot at Budhill and Springboig Allotments, he could be described as escaping the urban sprawl; he is 'overlooking' Glasgow, somehow remote and above it. On the other hand, why mention Glasgow if it's the very thing you are seeking to avoid? In another interpretation, Glasgow is part of Denis' 'piece of heaven'; it is the connection between the allotment and the city that gives a sense of completeness. Through answering this question I will counter the common conception of the allotment as a place of escape and instead explore the idea that allotments have developed as an integral part of our cities, a place for humans to grow food, but also as a habitat for the plants and animals with which we share our urban ecosystem.

During the inter-war years, cities were considered to be unhealthy places – polluted and unsanitary – and unemployed and working class people were encouraged by the government not only to visit parks but also to go on day-trips or holidays to the countryside. The allotment scheme for the unemployed could be considered as part of this wider movement. Before the 1920s walkers and climbers were predominantly from the upper classes but by the end of that decade there was a proliferation of working class 'tramping clubs' in the west of Scotland. This included the *Glasgow and West of Scotland Ramblers Federation* established in 1927, with twenty-two affiliated clubs and 3000 members.[63]

[62] Interview with Denis Barrett, Budhill and Springboig, 10th June 2015.

[63] Lorimer, ''Happy hostelling in the Highlands': Nationhood, citizenship and the inter-war youth movement', *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 113:1 (1997), pp. 42-4.

This led to pressure on local authorities and government to improve public access to countryside recreations after the First World War and in Glasgow the tramcar network and paddle steamers on the Clyde enabled people to pursue rambling, cycling and ornithology.[64] The west of Scotland was not isolated in this, all across the UK outdoor pursuits became increasingly popular; by the early 1930s half a million people were regularly going walking.[65] Politicians encouraged the movement, arguing that walking was 'a morally beneficial leisure activity taking the working class out of the pub and cinema'.[66] Under the 1937 Physical Training and Recreation Act, the National Fitness Council was set up which made films, organised 'mass physical culture' demonstrations and gave grants to gyms, swimming baths, campsites and youth hostels.[67] There were also schemes to take unemployed men into the countryside for extended periods, encouraging them to interact with nature and work together.[68] Under the Special Areas Act of 1934 public and private initiatives were developed to help the unemployed, including settlement clearances, new build initiatives and work-camps.[69] The largest work-camp scheme in Britain was the Instructional Centre scheme managed by the Ministry of Labour through which unemployed men were voluntarily sent to camps for three months of heavy labour, often on land acquired for afforestation; by 1939 200,000 men had taken part in this scheme.[70]

The allotment movement of the interwar years closely ties with the ideals and value of both the walking movement and the work-camps of the 1930s; being on an allotment, in the open-air, was also promoted as a healthy activity. During the 1930s, allotment schemes for the unemployed were set up by the Society of Friends, or Quakers, working with the national allotment societies of England and Scotland. The committees of these schemes took a similar view to the long-term unemployed as the Ministry of Labour, that the men had become 'soft' and 'demoralised' and hard physical work would improve both their mental and physical health for returning to work.[71] Where the allotment movement differs is that it did not try to remove the working classes or unemployed to the countryside but

[64] Cara Aitchison, Nicola E Macleod and Stephen J Shaw, *Leisure and tourism landscapes: Social and cultural geographies* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 58; Lorimer, pp. 43-4.

[65] Aitchison et al, p. 59; David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016), p. 106.

[66] Matless, p. 106.

[67] Matless, pp. 131-2.

[68] John Field, 'An Anti-Urban Education? Work Camps and Ideals of the Land in Interwar Britain', *Rural History* 23:2 (2012), p. 214.

[69] David Petts, Kayt Armstrong and Ronan O'Donell, *Landscapes of the Depression in Northern England*, <www.slumpscape.org> [Accessed 25/09/2017]

[70] Field, pp. 214-24.

[71] Field, p. 214.

instead tried to improve their urban surroundings. This is perhaps due to the involvement of the Friends who had long 'promoted the concept of the garden as a practical forum for learning and instruction' as well as a place of recreation.[72] Quaker industrialists also had a history of attempting to improve the living conditions of their workers; Northern Irish Quaker John Grubb Richardson founded Bessbrook for his linen mill workers in 1846 and in 1893 George Cadbury built Bournville for his chocolate factory workers.[73] In 1901 Joseph Rowntree bought 123 acres of land adjacent to his chocolate factory in York to develop the village of New Earswick. This was in the same year that his son, Seebohm Rowntree, published his survey *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* in which he stated that a third of the population of York was on or below the poverty line, even when working.[74] The importance that the Friends attached to gardens can be seen in New Earswick; trees and verges were added to roads, all the streets except for Station Avenue are named after trees or plants and although all the houses were provided with gardens, allotments were also included in the village design.[75] During the 1930s Joseph Rowntree's nephew, Arnold Rowntree, became involved in the English and Welsh scheme providing allotments for the unemployed and also sat on the committee for the Scottish scheme.[76] It is likely that those involved in the Scottish allotment movement in the interwar years were aware of the environmental movements, but they remained focussed on improving urban areas rather than encouraging rural pursuits.

In the midst of post-war campaigns for the survival of allotments against new developments, Reginald Ashley, Secretary of SAGS, wrote that allotments are 'the heritage of the tenement dweller', further cementing allotments as a part of the city and linking allotments intrinsically to Scotland's idiosyncratic architecture.[77] I will discuss SAGS and other campaigners' fight for the protection of allotments. City authorities threatened to disconnect sites from the inner city, pushing them out to the suburbs; SAGS was insistent that allotments are part of the city, not a refuge from it.

It is not only humans that thrive in allotments. Urban ecosystems are greatly varied – from carefully maintained flowerbeds to 'weeds' claiming back tarmacked car parks to pockets

[72] James Walvin, *The Quakers: Money and Morals* (London: John Murray, 1997), p. 118.

[73] Ibid, p. 188.

[74] Ibid, p. 187-9.

[75] Joe Murphy, *New Earswick: A Pictorial History* (York: Ebor Press, 1987), p. 29; Walvin, p. 90.

[76] UGAS, Paper of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1932, p. 7.

[77] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/20, SAGS Annual Report 1962, p. 6.

of brownfield land that have escaped development – and it would be ignorant to think we do not share our towns and cities with other organisms whose habitats we constantly change through clearing vegetation, introducing new species and polluting their air, water, soil and food.[78] We are part of the whole urban ecosystem of the cities in which we live but also part of the individual ecosystems we each affect differently. This work is not an ecological study of Glasgow's urban landscapes, but within this exploration of the city's allotments, this philosophy is underlying: humans are within the ecologies of urban landscape, not above or separate to it. Our actions and choices have an impact on the animals and plants we live alongside.

Allotments are part of the urban landscape, places to see ourselves within ecosystems, to see ourselves in connection with both plants and animals, and consider our responsibility for the land. Through this question I will also consider our needs, particularly as 'tenement dwellers', exploring how allotments fit within the architecture of Glasgow and what allotments can teach us about the priorities of the city's planners over the last century.

What is the role of the allotment in sustainable food production? Is this still relevant today?

During the First and Second World Wars allotments were seen as vital for providing fresh fruit and vegetables, but are allotments still a necessity for this reason today? Maureen McKendrick from Budhill and Springboig Allotments explained how she uses her allotment to provide for her family:

> But I come up here because I want to be able to feed my family, you know. I'm struggling money wise so I'm trying to minimise what I need to buy from shops, you know, so. And maybe there's a kind of a – it's like proving to yourself that you can do it, you know, I cannae believe that I've got these potatoes ready to eat now and I've got these ones coming up after and I've got sprouts that will be ready for Christmas and I've got tomatoes that would choke a horse, you know![79]

Throughout this thesis government concerns over health and diet in Scotland will be apparent. Maureen clearly loves vegetables and cooking, and having her own plot has encouraged her to try growing crops she would not have bought in the supermarket:

[78] Jason Byrne, 'The human relationship with nature: Rights of animals and plants in the urban context', in *The Routledge Handbook of Urban Ecology*, ed. by Ian Douglas, David Goode, Michael C Houck and Rusong Wang, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), pp. 65-66.

[79] Interview with Maureen McKendrick, Budhill and Springboig, 27th June 2015.

'…beans, I would never really have considered even buying them, but now we're growing them I cannae wait to actually try them'.[80] However, only nineteen per cent of Scots eat the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day and vegetable consumption in Scotland has not increased since 2003.[81] The authors of *Raising Spirits: Allotments, well-being and community* came across the following story during their research:

> A primary school teacher in Ayrshire asked her class of twenty plus pupils to bring in a potato the next day for a printing project. Only three obliged. Some had forgotten to ask but a good number said that their parents didn't have potatoes at home as they didn't buy them. She found out that they were only eating processed potato products such as chips. And this in Ayrshire! – the home of what many consider to be the best Scottish potatoes.[82]

Concerns over diet in Scotland have been long-standing. From 1911 to 1912, Dorothy E Lindsay carried out a study of sixty working class households for Glasgow Corporation to answer the question 'Do the working classes get an adequate and suitable diet, and, if not, can any improvement be suggested without unduly increasing the cost?'[83] Lindsay concluded that families with a regular incomes of over twenty shillings a week had a diet 'approaching the proper standard for an active life' whilst families with smaller incomes did not have an adequate diet. Meat and eggs were prohibitively expensive for these families but Lindsay suggested that greater use could be made of cheap, protein-rich vegetables such as peas and beans. She had found that these were not being used because of the time it took to prepare and cook them but proposed that children should be taught how to cook vegetables at school.[84] Nearly one hundred years later, in 2007, Linsay Gray produced a report for the Glasgow Centre for Population Health stating that Scotland has one of the worst health profiles in Western Europe and that Glasgow has poorer health than other areas of Scotland, due to poor diet, alcohol consumption and smoking. Gray found that both men and women had a low consumption of green vegetable consumption in West

[80] Ibid.

[81] Mollison et al, p. 18.

[82] Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[83] Dorothy E Lindsay, *Report upon a study of the diet of the labouring classes in the City of Glasgow carried out during 1911-1912 under the auspices of the Corporation of the City* (Publisher unknown: Glasgow, 1913), pp. 10-11.

[84] Lindsay, pp. 27-29

central Scotland but this could not be explained by socio-economic factors.[85] Higher levels of mortality and poor health in Scotland became known as the *Scottish Effect* and the concentration of this effect in West Central Scotland led to greater discussion of the *Glasgow Effect*.

In 2010 the Glasgow Centre for Population Health published a report of their study investigating why Glasgow had different health outcomes to cities with similar levels of deprivation. Liverpool and Manchester were used as comparative cities and it was found that premature deaths in Glasgow were thirty per cent higher; this applied to non-deprived as well as deprived households, again indicating that socio-economic factors did not provide a full explanation of poor health in Glasgow.[86] In June 2016 David Walsh, who had led the 2010 study, wrote an article for the Glasgow Centre for Population Health's website stating that the terms *Scottish Effect* and *Glasgow Effect* were 'unhelpful and outdated'. Walsh stated that what had previously seemed unexplainable was explainable and that the population of Glasgow 'has been made *more vulnerable* to the important influences on population health (poverty, deprivation, deindustrialisation, economic decision taken at UK government level), consequently leading to poorer health than in other places like Liverpool and Manchester which had similar experiences'.[87] Instead of talking about a *Glasgow Effect* Walsh suggested that instead we should seek to understand the politics of the city's poorer health and 'urge our politicians to do something about it'; there is no 'intriguing mystery' but a need to prevent premature deaths.[88]

Initiatives within Glasgow have returned –knowingly or unknowingly – to Lindsay's suggestion that part of the solution lies in education. The skills to cook fresh vegetables are still lacking, as they were in 1913. Schemes such as the North Glasgow Community Food Initiative are trying to change this; they have three plots on allotment sites that they use to teach healthy eating.[89] Community gardens are also gaining popularity in Glasgow. In the Southside, two charities called South Seeds and Urban Roots have worked with volunteers

[85] Linsay Gray, *Comparisons of Health-Related Behaviours and Health Measures between Glasgow and the Rest of Scotland, Briefing Paper* 7 (Glasgow Centre for Population Health, July 2007), pp. 2-3.

[86] David Walsh, Neil Bendel, Richard Jones and Phil Hanlon, *Investigating a 'Glasgow Effect': Why do equally deprived UK cities experience different health outcomes?* (Glasgow Centre for Population Health, April 2010), pp. 7-8.

[87] David Walsh, The 'Glasgow Effect' and the 'Scottish Effect': unhelpful terms which have now lost their meaning, < http://www.gcph.co.uk/latest/blogs/641_the_glasgow_effect_and_the_scottish_effect_unhelpful_terms_which_have_now_lost_their_meaning> [Accessed 25/09/2017]

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid., pp. 18-19.

to turn derelict or unused sites into shared gardens for residents to get to know each other and then work together to improve living conditions in their tenement buildings.[90] Studies in the USA, Canada and Australia have praised community gardens set up by housing projects and women's shelters for encouraging self-help and community involvement, for empowering people to overcome local problems, as places of cultural expression and places to learn from each other, even for having a significantly positive impact on local property price and keeping vandalism to a minimum.[91] Gardening encourages people to become 'activists' in their neighbourhood, to engage in local politics and improve living conditions for themselves. It involves them in broader social movements and concerns, such as food security, whilst providing a common ground in which gardeners can talk equally.[92] Particularly, community gardens are seen as an answer in times of crisis with attention drawn not just to food production but perhaps more to the creation of support networks and a sense of purpose and belonging.[93] These are all qualities that could also be applied to allotments and this will be explored through the question of how allotments too have been a response to crises since 1930. However, the food that is grown and its meaning and purpose for gardeners is often missing from literature on community gardens. In a survey of ninety-six community gardens and city farms in the UK, Leigh Holland found that only thirty-eight per cent gave food provision as a purpose, it was seen as a secondary importance to other aims relating to community development.[94] This question will return to producing food, perhaps the main aim of allotments, throughout the thesis. It will not be an answer to the problem of food poverty currently faced by Glasgow but it will be an

[90] Owen Duffy, 'Tackling Glasgow's substandard homes with peas, beetroot and thermal imaging', *The Guardian*, 12th September 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com> [Accessed 15/11/2013]; Urban Roots, <http://www.urbanroots.org.uk> [Accessed 6th January 2014].

[91] Donna Armstrong, 'A survey of community gardens in upstate New York: Implications for health promotion and community development', *Health and Place* 6 (2000), pp. 319-327, pp. 322-23; Lauren E Baker, 'Tending cultural landscapes and food citizenship in Toronto's community gardens', *Geographical Review* 94:3 (2004), pp. 305-25, pp. 319-22; Leigh Holland, 'Diversity connections in community gardens: a contribution to local sustainability', *Local Environment: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability* 9:3 (2004), p. 287; Ioan Voicu and Vicki Been, 'The Effect of Community Gardens on Neighbouring Property Values', *Real Estate Economics* 36:2 (2008), p. 243; Pierre Walter, 'Theorising community gardens as pedagogical sites in the food movement', *Environment Education Research* 19:4 (2012), p. 524.

[92] Baker, p. 305; Efrat Eizenburg, 'Actually Existing Commons: Three Moments of Space of Community Gardens in New York City', *Antipode* 44:3 (2012), pp. 764-82, pp. 777-78.

[93] Bethaney Turner, Joanna Henryks and David Pearson, 'Community gardens: sustainability, health and inclusion in the city', *Local Environment: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability*, 16:6 (2011), p. 490.

[94] Holland, p. 303.

exploration of how allotments and other food growing initiatives can improve our understanding of healthy eating.[95]

How has the allotment movement advocated changing purposes and roles of allotments from 1930 to the present day?

Advocacy is central to this thesis. Allotments appear to be formed through a top-down process, by local government, but allotment sites have been created, sustained and protected by individuals and groups. Through answering this question, I will chart the history of SAGS and the society's role in advocating the allotment movement in Scotland, from the formation of the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed in 1930 to their campaigns surrounding the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

It will also become clear that certain individuals have played a major role in advocacy for the allotment movement. On reflecting on his actions campaigning for the protection of allotments against post-war developments, Victor Webb wrote: '…it was repeated by many well-informed persons in the early '60s that it was essentially because of me that there were any allotment gardens at all then left in Scotland'.[96] Webb was not being conceited but truthfully modest in this statement – he galvanised the movement and advocated on behalf of threatened associations. Throughout my work I will bring plotholders (such as Jeanette in Figure 2) to the foreground using their individual stories from oral histories and documents to show how plotholders have influenced the history of Scotland's allotment movement.

[95] Sustainable Food Cities, *Joint Statement on Food Poverty by the Leaders of Edinburgh and Glasgow City Councils* <http://sustainablefoodcities.org/Portals/4/Documents/Joint%20leaders'%20statement%20on%20food%20poverty%20final%2026-2-15.pdf> [Accessed 09/09/2016].

[96] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/9, Letter Victor Webb to SAGS member, 7th June 1996.

Figure 2: Jeanette works her plot on Budhill and Springboig (Image: By author)

How have allotments developed as places of community?

Allotments are about being together but allotments are also about being alone. Allotments are about sharing vegetables, helping out and summer barbecues. Allotments are also about fierce independence - producing your own food takes determination - and the space for personal creativity. Allotments are spaces that can form communities but also fulfil our need to be individuals. There is a worry amongst plotholders that public attention is being shifted from allotments to community gardens.[97] Whilst community gardens have the image of being inclusive, friendly and, importantly, without the dreaded waiting lists, allotments appear to be overly private, unwelcoming and come with the added inconvenience of having to wait ten years for a plot. Through answering this question, I will challenge that view and explore how the allotment exists as a wonderful paradox, forming communities but still allowing plotholders the space to be alone when it is needed. Throughout the following chapters I will draw attention to why there has remained a need

[97] The term community garden is used in a different way in the UK than in the US, where community gardens can be very similar to British allotments. In the UK 'community garden' is used to describe a smaller garden, usually made up of raised beds and communally worked (although sometimes individual raised beds are tended to by a single person or one family). These gardens are often temporary.

for *individual* plots rather than overall communal gardening but still emphasise how allotment sites enable communities to evolve.

What does an allotment mean to the individual plotholder?

> *I mean I'm emotionally connected to my garden as well but in my garden I grow flowers mainly and decorative plants, so I suppose I shape my world in the garden but in the allotment I shape my world there slightly differently in that there is this connection with the food. So I'm a bit artistic so I like, you know, almost painting my garden with flowers… and it's a lovely space to be in but when I go down to my allotment there's a bit more of a fundamental connection because of the connection to food and the idea that's producing food that I can eat and then give to my friends and neighbours and everything. And then on the intellectual level if I think about it, well, you know, for environmental reasons and everything else, so I've got that kind of connection with my allotment when I think about it. But when I don't think about it, there's something kind of primeval or basic about growing this food to eat and taking care of the soil and the looking after the worms and having an awareness of how you as a person and how your bit of soil fits into the way the world is and the way we are. So, yeah, I do feel different about my allotment than I do about my garden.*[98] *– Alison Swanson.*

I had asked Alison how her allotment is different to her garden. Although both spaces involve similar activities, her feelings about them were quite different. Her garden is described as a place of leisure but she was absolutely adamant this is not the case with her allotment:

> It's actually quite an emotional thing. It's kind of – this is going to sound really daft – but it's just what I want to do and it's my space and it's my soil – I know it's not mine – but I've just got an emotional and physical connection to it. It's quite a deep connection and if I didn't have my allotment, I don't know, it would be very, very difficult to replace it with something else but it's not a hobby, it's more than a hobby.[99]

[98] Interview with Alison Swanson, SAGS, 13th October 2015.

[99] Ibid.

The connection Alison describes came up often in interviews. Others described their allotments as their 'sanctuary' or their 'bolt-hole'.[100] 'This is my happy place', said Robin Bower (shown in Figure 3) at Queen's Park Allotments looking around at his plot; 'When folk say 'Go to your happy place' I don't need to go to my happy place in my head, I can actually sit in my happy place and potter'.[101]

Figure 3: Robin Bower in his 'happy place' (Image: By author)

There is a deep connection to the land through allotments, making the plotholders safe, secure, happy, and it is often described as belonging to them, an assertion, which like Alison's, is quickly corrected. Alister from Croftburn Allotments in the Southside described this as 'stewardship':

> …it's not yours, and a lot of people think the plot belongs to them but it's just ownership, or as I say, stewardship of the land… if you're lucky enough to have a

[100] Maureen McKendrick; Interview with Brian Timms, Westthorn Allotments, 5th July 2016; Interview with Eve Tucker, New Victoria Gardens, 15th October 2015; Interview with Kathryn Venart, Budhill and Springboig, 28th June 2015.

[101] Interview with Robin Bower, Queen's Park, 25th June 2016.

> house with a bit of garden you own that but here you're actually looking after the soil until someone else takes stewardship of it, and I think it's really important that people recognise it's not their piece of ground, you're just here looking after it until you hand it over to someone else.[102]

As Emily said, plotholders are caring for the land to pass on. Allotments are imbued with a sense of responsibility and belonging, which is perhaps all the stronger for the system of stewardship that connects each plotholder with those who came before and those who will come after. Through this question I will explore how allotments at various times have been framed as places of necessity or leisure, questioning whether or not keeping a plot is a hobby.

Chapter Map

This thesis is arranged chronologically, following the development of Scotland's allotment movement from 1930 to the present day whilst exploring the themes set out above. I have chosen 1930 as the starting point as it is the year that the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed was founded, marking a departure from institutional control of philanthropic businesses and government, to the Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders gaining influence over the allotment movement. This is also the year that the *Papers of Victor Webb* mainly begin. The period 1850 to 1930 would be suitable for a separate research project, making further use of the map work and archive research that the GAHP began.

Chapter One covers the founding and development of the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed. The ideology of this scheme, that allotments were not only places to grow food but also to develop personal creativity and communal co-operation, underlie the development of the Scottish allotment movement in the twentieth century. Through charting the history of the scheme, this chapter will introduce themes that re-occur and develop throughout this thesis; the relationship between both national and local government and the allotment movement; the provision of food in a time of crisis; an emphasis on mental health and the idea that although allotments are an individual endeavour, communities can flourish on allotment sites.

[102] Alister Smith.

Chapter Two sees the government once again take control over the allotment movement to combat Scotland's wartime food shortage. This chapter addresses the effects of the *Dig for Victory* campaign on Glasgow's allotments and the divergence between the government's view of the allotment as a short-term solution to crisis and the allotment movement's long-term vision for allotment sites to become integrated within Scotland's cities. The food shortages of the Second World War affected everyone and this widened the focus of the allotment movement from the unemployed to anyone who needed to grow their own food.

Chapter Three covers the post-war period from 1946 to 1959 and marks several turning points in the history of the Scottish allotments movement, including the establishment of the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society and the passing of the Allotments (Scotland) Act 1950. The government no longer regarded allotments as a necessity, especially after food rationing ceased in 1954, and many allotment sites were closed or came under threat. Realising their argument that allotments were needed to produce food was failing to protect sites; SAGS shaped a new argument that allotments were a vital recreation for physical and mental health. The suggestion that allotments were for everyone was short-lived; both SAGS and the Friends began to focus on old aged pensioners, and especially older men, as plotholders a focus that was to negatively affect the allotment movement until the 1980s.

In Chapter Four SAGS' argument that allotments are the 'heritage of the tenement dweller' is cemented as tension grew between the society and the Corporation of Glasgow. The Corporation became increasingly focused on providing new houses in the city, particularly within its designated Comprehensive Development Areas, and put little thought into providing social or recreational facilities, including allotments which were rejected as an outdated form of social relief or method of food production. SAGS also turned away from the role of allotments in growing produce and focused on allotments as a recreation, whilst still maintaining that sites should be included in city and town development plans.

Chapter Five covers the 1970s and 1980s, focusing largely on the advocacy of individual plotholders who changed the direction of the allotment movement. This chapter uses an extended case-study of the Kelvinside Allotment Association which came under threat when their landlord, the University of Glasgow, threatened to close the site down, exploring the emerging focus on 'tidiness' in the city's allotments. It then moves to the New Victoria Gardens and the stories of two women, Fiona Sutherland and Eve Tucker,

who broke down the cultural barriers that had built up in the previous decades, enabling women to join their association – without needing a husband to join with them.

Chapter Six brings the history of Glasgow's allotments to the present day. This chapter will begin as a continuation of the previous chapter, discussing changing demographics on allotments to increasingly involve women and children. In the 1990s and 2000s this change was further encouraged by a proliferation in gardening television programmes and magazines. The chapter then returns to the story of SAGS; the society almost collapsed in the mid-1990s but was then reinvigorated by a new, determined committee who returned the society to political engagement. Using oral histories collected across Glasgow's allotments, the chapter then broadens thematically to discuss six elements which define an allotment: size, food production, boundaries, creativity, connectivity and community.

These six chapters are interspersed with short glimpses into contemporary allotment life, giving voice to the plotholders themselves, and connecting to themes discussed in the chapters.

I will argue that allotments are not places to escape the city but spaces that enable the city to function. Through answering the five research questions, I will argue that allotments are needed not only as places to grow food in times of crisis but also as spaces for plotholders to both explore their individuality and form communities, a paradox that is needed for good mental health. In addition, allotments fulfil an environmental purpose in providing habitats for plants and animals in changing city environments and maintaining soil for cultivation in urban areas suffering from pollution. Using Glasgow as a study, I will argue that for allotments to fulfil these functions they need to be included within long-term urban planning.

Harry's Story

Harry Scalley, who was born in 1934, has had his plot at Budhill and Springboig Allotments for twenty-five years. When he first arrived on the site, allotments were not popular and so he soon took over two full-sized plots, as well as his garden at home. Now the site is full and it is Harry who gives advice to new plotholders, as well as building their sheds for them if they cannot manage it themselves. Harry's story exemplifies the caring role that older plotholders now often fill in an allotment community.

Figure 4: Harry building a shed for a new plotholder from wooden pallets (Image: By author)

Well, I was actually approached by someone – did I want a plot? Because I had, at that point, I had a garden which had just won a competition in Sandyhills for the best garden. And somebody said did I want a plot and I said 'Yes, that would be very nice' and I came up here then. And I was given a wilderness of a plot which I have gradually changed into slightly less of a wilderness… It was hard in the beginning because there was no fence…the grass was about three foot high and so the first year there wasn't much of a production. It took me about a year to get the thing into shape and then once it was in shape I had a hut to build. There was a wreck of a hut here that I sort of converted. And once I got that done, I got tools in and then I started doing the garden after that. And every

year it sort of surprised me with potatoes and vegetables and everything, and the family too, they get quite a lot out of it… In those days people didn't want plots so we were encouraged to take another plot because they were lying empty and they were just getting full of grass. So I took the plot above me as well so I've still got that now as well… You were more or less left to it…nobody gave you much of a hand, they sort of watched your progress but they didn't come out, eventually they were very friendly but they didn't really give you much of a help, you know.

I grow more or less everything! And in the hot house I grow tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers. Outside I grow onions, leeks. I grow potatoes, sweetcorn, lettuce, two or three different varieties of lettuce. I grow carrots. All of the vegetables… I grow pak choi in the season, French beans, and then I grow flowers as well. And I have a lot of fruit bushes, I have blackcurrant bushes, raspberry bushes, I have a couple of apple trees, plum tree. And I grow blueberries. And I have Worcesterberries, which is a cross between a blackcurrant and a gooseberry. And I have gooseberry bushes as well. Most things. I try most things… And I think I influence more people than they influence me, to be quite honest. I grow a lot of different kind of tomatoes from seed and I tend to give an awful lot of them away, because you get a lot in a packet sometimes. So I tend to give a lot of it away to people and they try it for the first time sometimes. So I am probably the instigator of quite a lot of things here… new people coming in now, somebody will say 'Oh go and see Harry' and they come and the next thing is they're at my gate saying 'What do I do?' Like the girl that we spoke to out there just now, she's always asking advice and so on. But you don't mind that, I don't mind that at all.

My shed, when I first got this place that shed, that first shed, was a bit of a wreck and I made it habitable. It hadn't a roof on it or anything and so I made it habitable. Then I put a little greenhouse on the front which I've extended a bit and over the years it's got bigger. And then I was given a proper greenhouse which I erected and then I was given another one that I added on to it. So I have a double aluminium greenhouse and I have a wooden sort of attachment on to my hut. And I have, in the winter and spring, I have a fire in one of them that I bought from an ex-prisoner-of-war camp and a log fire and I keep the things in there and bring on seeds and everything in there… But I've built quite a lot of huts and greenhouses for people that wouldn't have built. So I give them a hand to do that. There's another guy on the plots who between the two of us we must have built most of the greenhouses and huts in the place, you know… It's just a nice place to have in the winter. You can go in and sit in it or chat to people or whatever or have a cup of tea. I don't know

it's just... plus the fact that you gather so much rubbish and put it in them! And over the years you can hardly get into the place! No it's just a collection of things you get in it. When you need something it's somewhere there, you know. Your tools, you accumulate tools, when somebody leaves or somebody dies or something you get tools, and you get more and more tools. And people will give you things too, they say 'Oh, I've got this lying about do you want it?' So you take it. So you accumulate things. So it's got to go somewhere. I suppose so. So they go in the shed.

You meet an awful lot of nice guys and so on and nice women up here. So it's quite nice you know.[1]

[1] Interview with Harry Scalley, Budhill and Springboig Allotments, 10th June 2015.

Chapter One

The Great Depression: 'They work in their Gardens'[1]

> *The problem of Unemployment to-day is more acute and more serious than it has ever been. In nearly every Town and Village up and down the country men and youths are spending their days in enforced idleness, wearied, and fast becoming broken-spirited…there can be no alternative to Work as a revitalising force. The Allotments movement provides this essential in the form of interesting outdoor work, recreation and pleasure…*
>
> *This scheme is being taken up all over Scotland by those unemployed men who wish to be effective members of the community, and have a very real desire to work both in their own interest and in anticipation of re-absorption into industry proper.*[2] *– Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed, 1933.*

The Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed was set up by the Society of Friends and the Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders (henceforth referred to as 'the Union') in 1930. The scheme provided plots for the unemployed (including both men and women, despite the opening quote) on existing allotment sites as well as founding new sites especially for the scheme. It also offered grants to plotholders to cover tools, seeds, seed potatoes and manure. The aim was to allow plotholders to feed their families with fresh fruit and vegetables but it was also to protect them from the 'enforced idleness' described above from the scheme's 1933 fundraising appeal. The Friends and the Union believed that having something to do would improve both the mental and physical health of the unemployed. Ultimately, the scheme was designed to help plotholders back into work, but even if this did not happen, the allotment provided something meaningful in the plotholders' lives – it was not just something to fill up time without a real purpose. Having an allotment empowered the plotholder to take control of something, making their own decisions and taking responsibility, however, it did not leave them on their own. Working a plot within a site enabled the plotholders to form a community whose members could help and inspire each other.

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[1] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/1/6, 'They work in their Gardens' The Annual Report of the Society of Friends Allotments Committee and Central Allotments Committee, September 1935 – August 1936

[2] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed Appeal for Funds 1933.

This chapter explores the ideas and practices of the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed, demonstrating the emphasis that the scheme placed on health and well-being. During the 1930s the Union and the Friends advocated on behalf of their plotholders but the values they formed through the scheme established the argument that allotments are needed in cities for mental and physical health that is central to the allotment today. This chapter will also show that the allotment movement found sympathy with national and local government during the Depression, as allotments were regarded as a necessity to provide food for families and so fitted with state concerns over diet in Scotland.

The 1930 Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill

The history of the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed began, not in Scotland, but in the south of Wales. John Robson, a member of the Society of Friends, formed the Coalfields Distress Committee in the Rhondda Valley in 1928, with the aim of encouraging unemployed miners to grow their food. As a result of Robson's initiative, 203 allotment societies were formed across the South Wales Coalfield Area.[3] In 1929, the Friends received requests to start allotment societies in Northumberland, Durham, Staffordshire, Yorkshire and other mining areas of England. Supported by Local Authorities, County Directors of Agriculture and existing allotment societies, the scheme was able to cover almost all of England and Wales.[4] By the autumn of 1930, the Friends had decided that the scheme should no longer be confined just to the mining population and the committee was reorganised as the Allotments Committee.[5]

Impressed by the Friends' achievements, the British Government passed a new Bill to extend the allotments scheme for the unemployed across the United Kingdom. The 1930 Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill created new powers for Local Authorities to extend allotments for the unemployed using a budget of £80,000. The scheme was to be delivered through a Central Committee (which included members of the Society of Friends) formed by the Minister of Agriculture.[6] In Scotland, the Union was hopeful about the new Bill but also realistic, understanding that the scheme would never take off without the support of

[3] NRS, AF43/352, Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill 1930, *The Scotsman*, 19th November 1930; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/1/1, Society of Friends Allotment Committee, Report of Committee and Statement of the Work undertaken from September 1928 to September 1931, p. 3.

[4] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/1/1, Society of Friends Allotment Committee, Report of Committee and Statement of the Work undertaken from September 1928 to September 1931, p. 3.

[5] Ibid., p. 4.

[6] NRS, AF43/352, Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill 1930, *The Scotsman*, 19th November 1930; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/1/1, Society of Friends Allotment Committee, Report of Committee and Statement of the Work undertaken from September 1928 to September 1931, pp. 4-5.

local authorities.[7] The Union had noted a steady decline in the number of allotments in Scotland since 1920, from 41,766 plots to just 13,534 in 1930 – a loss of 67.7 per cent over the decade.[8] The chief reasons for this were a shift in interest from gardening to other outdoor recreations and the closure of allotment sites for redevelopment.[9] The Union claimed local authorities had not done enough to secure land for allotments and, where they had, terms of let were so short as to be unacceptable.[10] Unemployment had also affected the allotment movement; plotholders could not afford rent, seeds or manure and there was also widespread concern that working a plot could lead to a disqualification from Unemployment Benefit.[11] In a Memorandum to the Secretary of State for Scotland, William Adamson, in November 1930 the Union stated:

> At Hamilton, Motherwell, Coatbridge, Wishaw, Bellshill and Uddingston there were, ten years ago, thousands of allotments; now there are practically none…yet the streets of these Towns are crowded with thousands of idle men, and there are many areas of land adjacent and accessible which could easily be cultivated in a much more productive and useful manner than they are at present.[12]

The concern here is with idleness, both of men and the land. Representatives of the Union met with Adamson, as well as the Under-Secretary of State, Sir John Lamb, and the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Sir Robert Grieg, to discuss the new Bill. Lamb asked 'Why is the allotment movement so much more lively in England than in Scotland?' The Union replied that it was because of the climate – the 'excessive rain' in Scotland puts people off gardening – but added 'It is partly a matter of taste in food. The English like salads more than we do'.[13] This may seem laughable but Adamson realised

[7] NRS, AF43/353, Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill 1930 Allotments Conference, Interview with Deputation representing Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders, 22nd November 1930.

[8] NRS, AF43/352, Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill 1930 Allotments Conference, Minute of Proceedings at a Conference of Representatives of Local and County Authorities, Allotment-Holders Associations, Market Gardeners and other interested parties in regard to the proposals of the Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill relating to the provision of Allotments to Unemployed and Partially Unemployed Persons, held within the Lecture Hall, Y.M.C.A., Saint Andrew Street, Edinburgh, on Saturday, 13th December, 1930, at Eleven Thirty o'clock forenoon.

[9] NRS, AF43/353, Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill 1930, Allotments Conference, Memorandum to the Secretary for Scotland, 22nd November 1930.

[10] NRS, DD12/835, Allotments, 1924-1968 Scottish Board of Health Papers, 18th February 1929.

[11] NRS, AF43/353, Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill 1930, Allotments Conference, Memorandum to the Secretary for Scotland, 22nd November 1930.

[12] Ibid.

[13] NRS, AF43/353, Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill 1930 Allotments Conference, Interview with Deputation representing Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders, 22nd November 1930.

from this exchange that a fundamental change in Scotland's approach to food was needed. He stated 'Apart from what the Bill can do, the general attitude to allotments and gardening has to be changed. One big thing is to teach our people the great value of using more vegetables and of eating fresh vegetables instead of those brought from a distance'.[14] Adamson organised a conference on 13th December 1930 to discuss the new Bill and the general state of the allotment movement in Scotland. He invited Town, District and County Councils, allotment associations, trade unions and trade and labour councils; the organisations whose involvement was necessary for the unemployment scheme to be effective.[15] Glasgow Corporation sent representatives from its Parks Committee.[16] The involvement of local authorities was crucial to the scheme as they would act as agents for the Department of Agriculture in setting up new allotment sites, as well as providing seeds, fertilisers and equipment at less than cost to unemployed people already working allotments.[17] In his opening speech, Adamson looked back to the First World War to convince the attendants of the importance of allotments for home-grown food and for the mental and physical health of plotholders. He also addressed the need for Scots to eat the same variety of vegetables as the English:

> It is, I think, very well known that allotments in Scotland have never filled the place they have filled in England. It was not until the later years of the War that allotments were created in large numbers. In those days of anxiety, the vegetables provided on allotments, for home consumption, were a most valuable addition to the national food supply, while the manual labour of producing those vegetables then did much to maintain the health and interests of allotment holders… It has been said that allotments flourish in England because the Englishman has a greater liking for a variety of vegetables than the Scotsman has. Well, that may be the case, but such a liking can be stimulated and, from the point of view of health, there is as

[14] Ibid.

[15] NRS, AF43/352, Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill 1930, *The Scotsman*, 10th December 1930.

[16] GCA, C1/3/84, Parks Committee, 3rd December 1930, p. 349.

[17] NRS, AF43/352 Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill 1930, *The Scotsman*, 10th December 1930; NRS, AF43/352 Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill 1930 Allotments Conference, Minute of Proceedings at a Conference of Representatives of Local and County Authorities, Allotment-Holders Associations, Market Gardeners and other interested parties in regard to the proposals of the Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill relating to the provision of Allotments to Unemployed and Partially Unemployed Persons, held within the Lecture Hall, Y.M.C.A., Saint Andrew Street, Edinburgh, on Saturday, 13th December, 1930, at Eleven Thirty o'clock forenoon.

much need for the Scotsman using more vegetables than he does as there is for the Englishman.[18]

The Union's comments about the English and salads certainly seem to have struck a chord with Adamson. Following his speech and comments on the purpose of the Bill, the attendants were invited to speak. Fisher, the secretary of the Union, emphasised their worries: 'Now, the whole crux of the matter is this: the local authorities will have to put their backs into the movement and get the ground – we cannot get it- and the committees, the national committee and the local committees, will have to see that they do so and at once'.[19] Many of the representatives from allotment associations were worried that the unemployed would be reluctant to take on allotments as it was not clear if they would be able to keep their plots if they found work; an investment in rent, manure, seeds and equipment, even with assistance from the scheme, was a costly risk. The Bill did not state plots would be taken away from employed plotholders; however, the government's assumption was that they would give up through lack of time.[20] Fisher was right to be worried about the involvement of local authorities. By May 1931 Glasgow Corporation had received thirty applications from unemployed people for an allotment but the Director of Parks claimed he was unable to find space in Corporation sites and instead forwarded the applications to the Glasgow Allotment Holders' Federation to find plots in private associations.[21] Private associations were not on council land but on sites belonging to associations themselves or a private landlord; for example, the Sir John Stirling Maxwell Gardens in Pollok Park are a private site dating from 1888 when their namesake donated the ground to the people of Pollokshaws.[22] It was to be down to grassroots organisations to keep the pressure up on both local and national government.

[18] NRS, AF43/352 Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill 1930, Allotments Conference, Minute of Proceedings at a Conference of Representatives of Local and County Authorities, Allotment-Holders Associations, Market Gardeners and other interested parties in regard to the proposals of the Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill relating to the provision of Allotments to Unemployed and Partially Unemployed Persons, held within the Lecture Hall, Y.M.C.A., Saint Andrew Street, Edinburgh, on Saturday, 13th December, 1930, at Eleven Thirty o'clock forenoon.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] GCA, C1/3/84, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th May 1931, p. 1658.

[22] Sir John Stirling Maxwell Gardens, <http://sjsmallotments.co.uk/wp/> [Accessed 21/02/2017].

The Scottish Allotment Scheme for the Unemployed

After such promising beginnings, the government scheme lasted only one year 'owing to the state of the National Finances'.[23] During that year, Ramsey MacDonald's Labour government had collapsed and the National Coalition had formed following the 1931 General Election.[24] The disappointment of the Friends in England and Wales can be read in this bitter statement from September 1931:

> Not only has the Government decided that no new work can for the time being be undertaken, but it has also decided not to renew the Grant for the provision of Seeds, etc., for unemployed men to cultivate their allotments. The Central Committee set up by the Government has been dissolved, and the work started so hopefully twelve months ago must be abandoned. That at least is the decision of those responsible for carrying out the economy proposals of the present Government.[25]

In England and Wales, the Friends felt the work should continue and formed a new scheme led by the Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Central Committee, which included members of the former government committee and the National Allotments Society (the equivalent to the Union in England and Wales). Money was raised through subscriptions and payments from associations for seeds and tools and in its first year, 1931-1932, the scheme assisted 62,527 people.[26] In Scotland, the Union decided to take action, fearing that the work begun by the government scheme in 1931 would be 'entirely lost'.[27] Despite being a small voluntary body, with only £18 in their funds, the Union took the decision to carry on the government scheme themselves. They contacted the Central Committee for advice, who readily agreed to support a Scottish scheme if the funds could be raised in Scotland. John Robson, the Chief Organiser, visited Edinburgh and Glasgow with the

[23] NRS, AF45/130, Allotments for the Unemployed Joint Committee of Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and Society of Friends 1931-1932, Copy SASU appeal.

[24] Irene Maver, *Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 235.

[25] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/1/1, Society of Friends Allotment Committee, Report of Committee and Statement of the Work undertaken from September 1928 to September 1931, p. 8.

[26] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/1/1, Society of Friends Allotment Committee, Report of Committee and Statement of the Work undertaken from September 1928 to September 1931, p. 8; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/1/2, Society of Friends Allotment Committee, Report of Committee and Statement of the Work undertaken from September 1931 to September 1932, pp. 2-3.

[27] NRS, AF45/130, Allotments for the Unemployed Joint Committee of Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and Society of Friends 1931-1932, Copy SASU appeal.

Central Committee's Chair, Dr Joan Fry, to help start the scheme.[28] At the same time, the Society of Friends in Scotland 'independently and without knowledge of the Union's decision' also contacted the Central Committee to 'try and do something for the Unemployed'.[29] This led to a collaboration between the Union and the Scottish Friends set up by the Central Committee.[30]

The Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed was constituted in 1932. A Joint Committee was formed of four members from the executive of the Union, four members of the Society of Friends and one member of the Central Committee.[31] It was agreed that the Joint Committee would be able to give aid in the purchase of seeds, fertiliser and tools as well as towards the rent of plots for 'unemployed and seriously impoverished men or women'. It would also purchase, lease, sell or mortgage ground to set up allotment sites and provide fencing and other general equipment.[32]

The first task for the new Joint Committee was to secure funding for the scheme through grants and donations. In their first report, they make dramatically clear that the need for funding was rather urgent '…the Committee had none – and remember it was the end of November. The Spring was not far off and no time could be lost'.[33] The Committee decided that the appeal would be more successful if they waited until after Christmas. With the help of the Scottish press, the first appeal was launched in January and £1922:6:3 was raised, including £400 from three generous anonymous donors in Dundee and £50 from King George V.[34] The Joint Committee attempted to secure help from the government, writing to the Secretary of State for Scotland, now Liberal politician Sir Archibald Sinclair, asking him to write them 'a line or two which could be printed and issued along with the

[28] UGAS, Paper of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1932, p. 1; NRS, AF45/130, Allotments for the Unemployed Joint Committee of Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and Society of Friends 1931-1932, Copy SASU appeal.

[29] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1932, p. 1.

[30] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/1/2, Society of Friends Allotment Committee, Report of Committee and Statement of the Work undertaken from September 1931 to September 1932, p. 4.

[31] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed Constitution 1932.

[32] Ibid.

[33] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed Constitution 1932; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1932, p. 2.

[34] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1932, p. 2; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Meeting of Joint Committee held in University Buildings, Glasgow, on Wednesday, 30th November 1932 at 6.30 p.m.

Appeal'.[35] However, Sinclair declined.[36] Fisher's disappointment with the lack of government assistance is clear in his letter to Greig, the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture in Scotland, dated March 1932. He clearly stated his opinion that the Joint Committee would improve with financial support from the Department:

> Notwithstanding all that has been done, the Joint Committee has only been able to touch the fringe of the matter. An active campaign should be carried on throughout the country to secure ground and to induce the Unemployed to cultivate it. A special Organiser would be necessary to do this and the work will require to be taken up in the Autumn to secure success in the following Spring. The Joint Committee, being operated voluntarily, has been quite unable to undertake the necessary organisation throughout the country. It really has not the funds to do so.[37]

No funding was offered, however, the government did seem happy to fall back on the Joint Committee's scheme and Sinclair offered some personal support when he agreed to be the scheme's President in November 1932.[38] In a Parliamentary debate, Sinclair was asked if allotments would be provided for unemployed people. Sinclair replied that this has been impossible because of 'financial stringency' but that the Joint Committee had a scheme to do just this.[39]

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[35] NRS, AF45/130, Allotments for the Unemployed Joint Committee of Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and Society of Friends 1931 – 1932, Letter Fisher to Sir Robert Greig, Secretary of Department of Agriculture for Scotland, 11th December 1931; NRS, AF45/130, Allotments for the Unemployed Joint Committee of Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and Society of Friends 1931-1932, Letter Archibald Fisher (Secretary) to Archibald Sinclair (Secretary of State), 21st December 1931.

[36] NRS, AF45/130, Allotments for the Unemployed Joint Committee of Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and Society of Friends 1931-1932, Draft letter Secretary of State to Archibald Fisher, December 1931.

[37] Underlining as in original document. NRS, AF45/130, Allotments for the Unemployed Joint Committee of Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and Society of Friends 1931-1932, Letter Fisher to Secretary of Department of Agriculture for Scotland, 15th March 1932.

[38] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Meeting of Joint Committee held in University Buildings, Glasgow, on Wednesday, 30th November 1932 at 6.30 p.m.

[39] NRS, AF45/130, Allotments for the Unemployed Joint Committee of Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and Society of Friends 1931-1932, Excerpt from Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 19th April 1932.

Figure 5: Garscube Allotments, Glasgow – Cleaning and Draining, November 1932 (Image: *The Bulletin*, 1933 Annual Report, UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2)

Figure 6: Garscube Allotments, Glasgow – The Same Ground, September 1933 (Image: The Bulletin, 1933 Annual Report, UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2)

In the first year of the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed, 2300 people were assisted, including 1600 first-time plotholders. The Joint Committee supplied seventy-six allotment associations with 2740 tools, 1772 cartons of seeds (containing 17,720 individual

packets), 16 tons of fertiliser and 30 tons of seed potatoes.[40] New special Allotment Associations for the Unemployed had been formed in Edinburgh, Barrhead, Airdrie, Kirkcaldy, Clydebank, Perth, Dalkeith, Westfield, Rosyth, North Queensferry, Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Motherwell, Linlithgow, Alloa, Irvine, Stirling, Hamilton, Bo'ness, Bathgate, Thornliebank and Bellshill and had either set up new allotments or were actively searching for land.[41] The unemployed people themselves cleared the land and laid out the plots, as shown in Figures 5 and 6. In Glasgow, there were 1145 allotments in October 1930; by October 1933 there were 1464 allotments including 316 specifically for unemployed plotholders.[42]

Date	Number of allotments
October 1930	1145
October 1931	1148
October 1932	1153
October 1933	1464
October 1934	1465
October 1935	1611
October 1936	1524
October 1937	1324
October 1938	1104
October 1939	1081

Table 1: Number of allotments available in Glasgow during the 1930s[43]

This was a result of the Joint Committee approaching Glasgow Corporation's Sub-Committee on Allotments to ask for new plots to be provided for the unemployed. In response to this request, the Sub-Committee asked for land from other Sub-Committees, for example on Water and Housing, and acquired a little over thirty-four acres across the city to use as allotments.[44] The Joint Committee quickly found that too much work was

[40] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1932, p. 3.

[41] NRS, AF45/130 Allotments for the Unemployed Joint Committee of Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and Society of Friends 1931-1932, Letter Fisher to Secretary of Department of Agriculture for Scotland, 15th March 1932; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Meeting of Joint Committee held in University Buildings, Glasgow, on Wednesday, 30th November 1932 at 6.30 p.m.

[42] GCA, C1/3/83, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 6th October 1930, p. 2644; GCA, C1/3/89, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 3rd October 1933, p. 2620.

[43] GCA, Sub-Committee on Allotments Minutes, C1/3/83, p. 2644; C1/3/85, p. 2870; C1/3/87, p. 2790; C1/3/89, p. 2620; C1/3/91, p. 2757; C1/3/93, p. 2674; C1/3/95, p.2653; C1/3/96A, p. 2776; C1/3/98, p. 2793; C1/3/100, p. 3036.

[44] GCA, C1/3/86, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 3rd May 1932, p. 1617; GCA, C1/3/87, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th September 1932, p. 2570.

entailed for volunteers, supporting plotholders and campaigning, and employed an Organiser to visit the industrial areas of Scotland, as well as a typist.[45]

On seeing the first year's successful results, from Scotland, England and Wales, the government agreed to support the schemes financially across the United Kingdom in September 1932. For every pound raised another pound was offered up to £10,000 and then one pound for every two pounds raised for a further £2500. Of this grant, £2500 was allocated to Scotland.[46] The following year this assistance was continued with a further £1500 allocated to Scotland, through the Joint Committee, to support areas worst affected by unemployment.[47] In 1933 the number of people helped by the Scottish scheme increased to 8884, including 1379 in Glasgow; the highest for any region in Scotland and 94.2 per cent of all plotholders in the city.[48]

Year	Scheme A	Scheme B	Scheme C	Total
1932	2300	-	-	2300
1933	8884	-	-	8884
1934	8116	-	-	8116
1935	8153	-	-	8153
1936	8406	795	458	9659
1937	6835	788	87	7710
1938	5731	659	733	7123
1939	5467	463	71	6001

Table 2: Number of people assisted by the unemployment schemes during the 1930s[49]

Allotments for Miners

In December 1932, Sinclair set up a new allotments scheme in Scotland to provide unemployed miners with a quarter of an acre to one acre near their homes, with a rent of

[45] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1932, p. 3; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Meeting of Joint Committee held at 207 Bath Street, Glasgow, on Wednesday, 15th February 1933, at 6.30 p.m.

[46] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/1/3, How 10,000 men have been helped. Report of the Friends Allotments Committee and the Central Allotments Committee from 1st September 1932 to 31st August 1933, p. 3; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed Appeal for Funds 1933.

[47] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/1/3, How 10,000 men have been helped. Report of the Friends Allotments Committee and the Central Allotments Committee from 1st September 1932 to 31st August 1933, p. 9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Meeting of Joint Committee held at No. 9 St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Tuesday, 29th August 1933.

[48] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1933, pp. 2, 5.

[49] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Reports 1932 - 1939.

around 10d per week.[50] Miners were targeted as it seemed unlikely that many miners would ever be employed within their industry again.[51] No rent was paid in their first season and the Department of Agriculture provided plants, seeds, tools and fertilisers which were paid for in weekly instalments from the second season.[52] There were a few problems that had to be overcome for Sinclair's scheme to work. Firstly, because the scheme started in the winter it was difficult to find enough land as autumn farming was well underway. Secondly, the miners had to be persuaded that if they cultivated a plot their unemployment benefit would not be reduced. To allay these fears, the Department of Health for Scotland sent a circular to other government departments explaining that if plotholders sold produce from allotments this would indeed be taken into account for unemployment benefits, however, allowance should be made for the costs in producing the crops, including labour. If the produce was solely used by the plotholder and not sold, then benefits were not reduced.[53] The miners' plots were much larger than the 300 pole, or 250 square metres plots promoted by the Joint Committee. They were encouraged to grow mainly potatoes, but also brassicas and other vegetables. Many of the plotholders also grew fruit such as rhubarb, strawberries and currants and kept poultry.[54] The Department of Agriculture for Scotland employed local officers to visit plots and arranged support visits from the East and West of Scotland Agricultural Colleges.[55]

By June 1933 there were 120 plotholders working on the Department of Agriculture plots, on ninety acres of land across Ayrshire, Dumbarton, Fife, Lanark, Linlithgow and Midlothian. The scheme was mainly limited to rural areas as the idea was to provide large

[50] NRS, AF66/98, Allotments for Unemployed Miners 1932-1934, 'Land for Scots Miners: Hopes from Scheme for Unemployed Men', *The Scotsman*, 6th May 1933; NRS, AF66/98, Allotments for Unemployed Miners 1932-1934, Plots for Unemployed Miners, Experimental Scheme. Progress of Holders, 22nd May 1933; NRS, AF66/98, Allotments for Unemployed Miners 1932-1934, letter from Secretary of State to the Scottish MPs, 15th June 1933.

[51] NRS, AF66/98, Allotments for Unemployed Miners 1932-1934, Plots for Unemployed Miners, Experimental Scheme. Progress of Holders, 22nd May 1933.

[52] NRS, AF66/98, Allotments for Unemployed Miners 1932-1934, letter from Secretary of State to the Scottish MPs, 15th June 1933.

[53] NRS, AF66/98, Allotments for Unemployed Miners 1932-1934, Local Government Circular No. 1/1933, Department of Health for Scotland, 21st March 1933; NRS, AF66/98, Allotments for Unemployed Miners 1932-1934, 'Land for Scots Miners: Hopes from Scheme for Unemployed Men', *The Scotsman*, 6th May 1933; NRS, AF66/98, Allotments for Unemployed Miners 1932-1934, letter from Secretary of State to the Scottish MPs, 15th June 1933.

[54] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1932, p. 3; NRS, AF66/98, Allotments for Unemployed Miners 1932-1934, Plots for Unemployed Miners, Experimental Scheme. Progress of Holders, 22nd May 1933.

[55] Ibid.

plots close to the plotholders' homes.[56] One of the organisers, Mr McWilliam, 'remarked that the men on his schemes had benefitted greatly, physically and mentally from the working of their plots: they had been given an interest in life, and their outlook was now quite different'.[57] However, a letter from the Treasury to Greig in December 1932 shows that Westminster was not happy with the new Scottish scheme. The Treasury regarded it as a variation of the previous scheme under the 1930 Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Act – described as a 'great bugbear' – despite the recommendation that this scheme should be discontinued and commented that Sinclair's scheme would 'side track' the Friends, whereas it had been advised that 'the Friends should be used for allotments work generally'. A further objection was that 'if central action were taken in Scotland, similar action would probably be demanded in England'. The letter concluded that it was 'improbable that the Treasury will look kindly on your proposals'.[58] Despite these criticisms from London, Sinclair and Greig continued. By 1935 the Department of Agriculture had provided nearly 800 plots of a quarter of an acre to an acre, but there was a weakness in Sinclair's scheme.[59] It only supported the plotholders in their first season, so there was a real danger they would give up in their second year. The Joint Committee stepped in and set up a new scheme to provide seeds, tools, manure and fertiliser payable in instalments to miners on Department plots, in addition to their own scheme.[60]

Further help came from the government through the 1934 Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Act. This legislation enabled the creation of the Special Areas Commission to facilitate development in areas of the United Kingdom particularly affected by the recession. In Scotland this included Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, parts of Stirlingshire and the Lothians.[61] The Special Commissioner for Scotland set up a fund for

[56] NRS, AF66/98, Allotments for Unemployed Miners 1932-1934, letter from Secretary of State to the Scottish MPs, 15th June 1933.

[57] NRS, AF66/98, Allotments for Unemployed Miners 1932-1934, Miners Plots, Notes of meeting with Mr Skelton, Under Secretary of State for Scotland, 13th November 1933.

[58] NRS, AF66/98, Allotments for Unemployed Miners 1932-1934, letter CL Stocks (Treasury Chambers) to Sir Robert Greig (Scottish Office), 6th December 1932.

[59] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/15/2, Memorandum by the Hon. Secretary relative to draft proposals by the commissioner for Special Areas in Scotland, 4th February 1935.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Denis Lineham, 'An archaeology of dereliction: poetics and policy in the governing of depressed industrial districts in interwar England and Wales', *Journal of Historical Geography* 26:1 (2000), p. 97; AC Page, 'State Intervention in the Inter-War Period: 'The Special Areas Acts 1934-37', *British Journal of Law and Society* 3:2 (1976), p. 175; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Unemployment: How the Allotment Garden is Helping to Solve the Problem of Unwanted Time to Spare' booklet issued by the Joint Committee of The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and The Society of Friends, June 1935.

the allotments schemes and formed a Liaison Committee to work in the Special Areas, with members from the Joint Committee and the Department of Agriculture for Scotland. The Liaison Committee was only advisory but it did provide a budget from the Special Areas fund for the Joint Committee to finance their work. Through this grant they were able to employ a clerical assistant, book-keeper, poultry instructor and two assistant organisers, to work specifically in the Special Areas.[62] The Special Commissioner requested the Joint Committee to undertake local enquiries, report on available land and assist in the formation of new allotment associations.[63]

By 1935 there were several allotment schemes managed by the Joint Committee. Scheme A was the original scheme which provided seeds, seed potatoes, tools, fertiliser, manure and lime. Plotholders could also apply for 75 per cent of the cost of materials to build a communal hut. Scheme B was the 'Development Scheme' for plotholders in their second year or later on a Department of Agriculture's plot for miners. This covered seeds, seed potatoes, lime and fertiliser with an initial payment of 25 per cent of the cost and the remainder spread over twenty weeks. Communal huts were provided for free. Scheme C was also for Department plotholders but provided poultry houses, poultry, pigs, bees, goats and fruit greenhouses up to £10 with 50 per cent paid in the second year and 50 per cent in the third year. Communal huts were provided for free on sites with ten or more plotholders. Within the Special Areas this scheme was funded by the Special Commissioner but elsewhere it was covered by a government development fund of £2500. Finally, Scheme D was essentially the same as Scheme A but it only covered the Special Areas and was therefore covered by the Special Commissioner's budget.[64] The government Report on Depressed Areas in Scotland from 1935 spoke highly of the work of the Joint Committee:

> Too high praise cannot be given to the work of the Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and the Society of Friends, whose labours have resulted in

[62] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/15/2, Memorandum by the Hon. Secretary relative to draft proposals by the commissioner for Special Areas in Scotland, 4th February 1935; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Notes as to conference with representatives of the commissioner for Special Areas in Scotland 8th February 1935; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Minute of Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Thursday, 18th April 1935; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Unemployment: How the Allotment Garden is Helping to Solve the Problem of Unwanted Time to Spare' booklet issued by the Joint Committee of The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and The Society of Friends, June 1935.

[63] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Minute of Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Thursday, 18th April 1935.

[64] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/4/3/2, Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed, Revised Headings for the various Sections as agreed at Joint Committee Meeting 29th July1935, dated 30th July1935.

> hundreds of men, unwillingly compelled to experience long periods of Unemployment, being able to keep themselves fit, maintain their self-respect, and make no mean contribution to the feeding of themselves and their families.[65]

At the same time it continued to instruct local authorities to provide allotments. In March 1935, the Secretary of State for Scotland (no longer Sinclair but Godfrey Collins) wrote to Glasgow Corporation asking that further land be given for allotments for the unemployed.[66] This was not easy for the Corporation and the problems they faced in providing allotments in the 1930s foreshadow difficulties during the Second World War. Because allotments were being squeezed into available land, it was not always suitable for cultivation. In April 1935 the Director of Parks reported to the Sub-Committee on Allotments that he had received complaints from plotholders on a new site in Germiston. He had inspected the plots and found that the soil was poor – 'the ground having been made up during the excavation necessary for the formation of the adjoining streets'. As it would take the plotholders a lot of work to bring the soil to an acceptable standard, he cancelled the first season's rent.[67] A further problem was that whilst the Sub-Committee on Allotments was opening sites, other committees were closing them; in June 1936 Springburn and Cowlairs Plotholders' Association were given notice as the Housing Committee had acquired their site and in February 1937 the Water Department gave fourteen plotholders on their land notice to remove.[68] The total number of allotments provided by Glasgow Corporation during the Depression peaked in 1935 at 1611 plots; by October 1939 provision had fallen to 1081 plots, sixty-four fewer than there had been in October 1930 (see Table 1).[69]

Allotments on Show

As the number of plots available fluctuated, so did the number of people assisted each year by the various allotments schemes in the 1930s. In 1934 there was a slight decrease in Scheme A to 8116 people (see Table 2). The Joint Committee thought this was due to a rise in employment but also because a number of their plotholders had moved on to the

[65] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, ACCN 1999/4/5 Unemployment. How the Allotment Garden is Helping to Solve the Problem of Unwanted Time to Spare' booklet issued by the Joint Committee of The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and The Society of Friends, June 1935.

[66] GCA, C1/3/92, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th March 1935, p. 1069.

[67] GCA, C1/3/92, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 2nd April 1935, p. 1326.

[68] GCA, C1/3/95, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 26th June 1936, p. 2079; GCA, C1/3/96, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 2nd February 1937, p. 871.

[69] GCA, C1/3/93, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 1st October 1935, p. 2674; GCA, C1/3/100, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 3rd October 1939, p. 3036.

larger plots supplied by the Department of Agriculture.[70] There was also a slight decrease in the amount of money raised to £3025:17:-.[71] However, the King continued to give a yearly donation, an excellent advertisement for the Joint Committee to include in their annual reports. In 1934 they wrote 'These gifts have emphasised in a marked and striking manner the National and outstanding nature of the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed'.[72]

An innovative way to advertise the scheme, both to attract donors and applicants, was to display a demonstration plot at the Highland and Agricultural Society annual show. In June 1934 this was held in Glasgow and the Joint Committee secured a 'competent Unemployed man' to cultivate the plot. The man, not named in the report, was not paid a wage but it was agreed he could keep all the produce.[73] The Chief Organiser, Mr Hooper, reported that the plot 'had attracted much attention and that a large amount of literature had been distributed'.[74] The idea of a demonstration plot was used again in 1938. Despite a rise in unemployment, the numbers applying to the allotment scheme were falling. In 1938 only 5731 people were assisted and ten new associations formed through Scheme A, quite a drop from the 6835 people assisted and twenty associations formed in 1937 (see Table 2).[75] So the Joint Committee acted by displaying a Model Allotment at the Empire Exhibition of 1938 (Figure 7). The Empire Exhibition was a demonstration of Scottish business and enterprise with the aim of encouraging economic revival. It took place throughout the summer of 1938 and despite an incredibly wet season, even for Glasgow, it attracted a little over 12.5 million visitors.[76]

[70] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1934, p. 2.

[71] Ibid., p. 4.

[72] Ibid., p. 4.

[73] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Friday, 26th January 1934.

[74] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Minute of Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Wednesday, 4th July 1934.

[75] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1937, p. 5; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1938, p. 5.

[76] Irene Maver, *Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 256-7.

Figure 7: Model Plot at the Highland and Agricultural Show 1934, Glasgow
This photograph is an unusual shade of blue. The 1934 Annual Report was titled 'The Bluebird of Happiness', after a popular song in that year. The entire report is printed in blue ink. (Image: Ian Smith, UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, 1934 Annual Report)

The Joint Committee were provided with a plot free of charge.[77] In the 1938 annual report it was described as being '…entirely worked by unemployed men and was not a pretentious or elaborate garden, but a simple plot as could be seen anywhere in Allotment areas in Scotland, with this difference, that it was cropped in a comprehensive and skilled manner', perhaps showing that the Joint Committee did not always approve of their plotholders' gardening.[78] Thousands of specially made leaflets were distributed describing the work of the Joint Committee: how the scheme operated, who managed it, the details of Schemes A,B and C, how many people had been assisted so far and, crucially, how the public could help by providing land or donating money.[79]

The leaflet (shown in Figure 8) emphasised the benefits of keeping an allotment for families, not just individual plotholders:

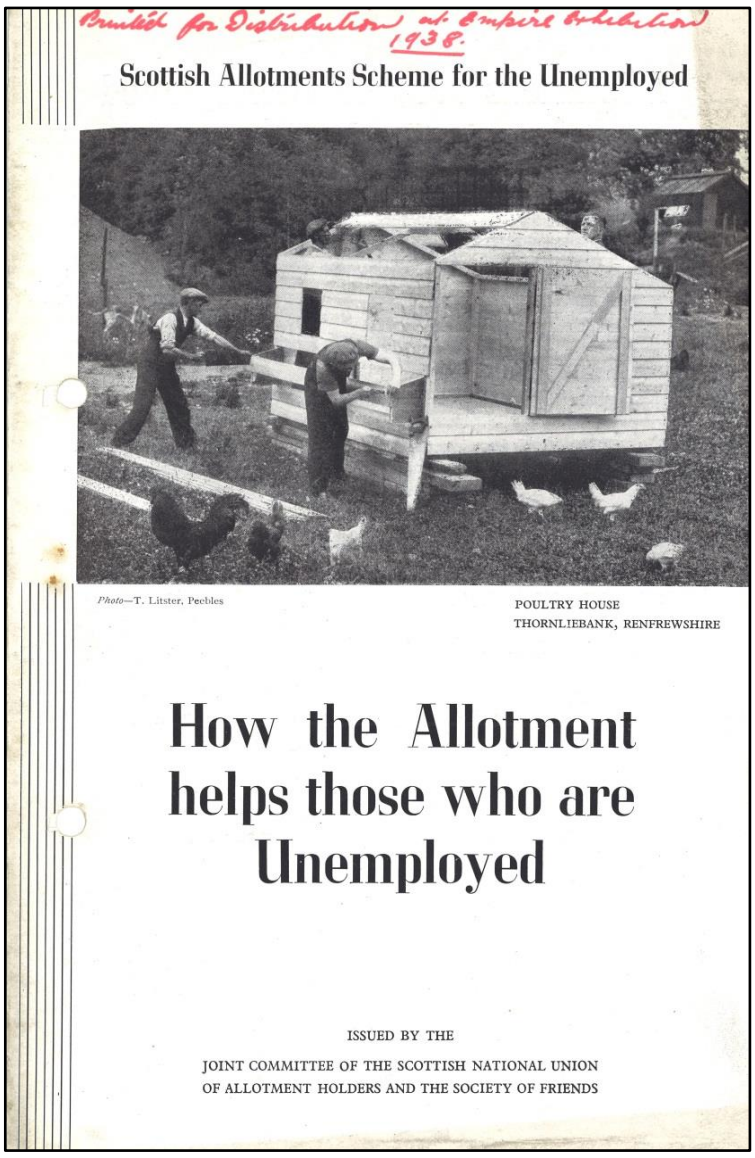
> Apart from the moral effect of doing something useful, there is a substantial reward for the labour expended, in fresh grown vegetables, often flowers, and sometimes

[77] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Minute of the Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Monday, 22nd November 1937; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1938, p. 6.

[78] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1938, p. 6.

[79] Ibid.

fruit. Imagine what these things mean to a family which has had to accustom itself to bare necessities: visualise the personal satisfaction enjoyed from a knowledge that the larder is never quite empty and from providing flowers to brighten the home. The allotment garden can and does bring additional comfort and happiness to thousands of families suffering through unemployment.[80]


Printed for Distribution at Empire Exhibition 1938.

Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed

Photo—T. Litster, Peebles

POULTRY HOUSE
THORNLIEBANK, RENFREWSHIRE

How the Allotment helps those who are Unemployed

ISSUED BY THE
JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL UNION
OF ALLOTMENT HOLDERS AND THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Figure 8: The cover of the Empire Exhibition leaflet (Image: UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2)

Although there is clearly an emphasis on work, doing 'something useful' and the 'labour expended', it is clear from this leaflet that happiness was also an important part of the scheme; indeed the 1938 annual report states that men can find both 'happiness' and 'profit' in cultivating a plot.[81] In the photographs from the Highland Show and the Empire

[80] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Empire Exhibition leaflet 1938.

[81] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1938, p. 3.

Exhibition, flowers can clearly be seen. Despite the emphasis that the scheme places on work, plotholders were not limited to the 'bare necessities' but were also encouraged to garden for enjoyment.

Supporting the Plotholders

By 1936 the Department of Agriculture had provided 1600 plots and it was agreed that two Organisers should be employed to give support, with costs covered by the Special Commissioner.[82] This supervision was seen to create 'a very different state of affairs from merely handing out the goods and leaving the men to succeed or fail without guidance or encouragement'.[83] By 1937 there were four Organisers employed to cover the Special Areas.[84] Schemes were also changed over time to better support the plotholders. Plotholders under Scheme C found the loans too difficult to repay, so in 1938 the Scheme was changed so that in the Special Areas only a third was repaid and elsewhere only one half had to be paid back.[85] Literature was another useful way to instruct plotholders. The English and Welsh Committee wrote three booklets – *Allotment Cultivation*, *Cooking of Vegetables* and *Erections on Allotments* and these were sold by the Joint Committee to plotholders and at demonstration plots.[86] *Erections on Allotments*, published in 1934, contained detailed plans for huts, greenhouses and shelters for animals. Many of these were individual huts but there was also a whole section on communal huts designed for the dual purpose of tool storage and social events.[87] The same year the Joint Committee began to provide huts as part of their schemes. Their report of that year stated 'In Scotland the ordinary citizen does not have the 'allotment complex' developed to the same extent as his fellow south of the Border. Probably the chief reason is the inclement Scottish spring'; the committee were implying a belief that the English were obsessed with their allotments and that a similar love of gardening needed to be instilled within the Scots. Huts were the Joint Committee's solution to this, particularly for plotholders who lived at a distance and could

[82] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/3, Memorandum by the Hon. Secretary with Regard to Development Schemes, January 1936; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/15/1, Minute of Meeting of Liaison Committee held in the Department of Agriculture Office, York Buildings on Tuesday, 10th March 1936.

[83] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1936, p. 8.

[84] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Minute of the Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Friday, 23rd July 1937.

[85] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1938, p. 6.

[86] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Friday, 26th January 1934; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/1, Meeting of Joint Committee held in the Botany Department of the University, Glasgow, on Wednesday, 30th May 1934.

[87] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/8/7, Erections on Allotments, Central Allotments Committee, 1934.

not quickly get home in the rain.[88] The Joint Committee provided grants to sites, covering building materials for communal huts on the condition that the plotholders built the structures themselves. This was also a way to promote teamwork on the sites, by more or less forcing plotholders to work together. In 1936 thirty-seven communal huts were provided, a further fourteen in 1937 and forty-three in 1938. The Joint Committee wrote that they 'have tended to foster the communal spirit'.[89]

The Joint Committee also used the layout of their sites to promote unity. Photographs from their annual reports show that although plots are clearly demarcated the boundaries do not isolate plotholders (see Figures 9 and 10). If there are hedges evident they are quite low, although this could be because the hedges had not matured yet. However, where there are fences, as in the photo of Springburn, these too are low at around waist height. There are clear boundaries between plots, maintaining independence, but these are low enough to have a conversation over with a neighbour, promoting togetherness. Perhaps this was seen as being particularly vital for plotholders such as the miners who had been used to working in industries which had formed their communities.

Figure 9: Springburn, Glasgow in 1934
(Image: UGAS, Paper of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, 1934 Annual Report)

[88] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1934, p. 4; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1936, p. 8.

[89] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1936, p. 8; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1937, p. 7; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1938, p. 7.

Figure 10: West Mains, Edinburgh in 1938
(Image: UGAS, Paper of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, 1938 Annual Report)

The Language of the Scheme

There were strong morals and beliefs at work within the unemployment scheme, perhaps best expressed by the title of the 1936 English and Welsh report *They work in their Gardens*. This was a play on the title of JB Priestley's novel *They Walk in the City*, published that year, and the report has a quote from the writer inside the front cover: 'Your title – 'They Work in their Gardens', instead of 'They Walk in the City', is excellent. Having actually seen what this allotment scheme has done for the men I can testify to its value. It is finely creative.'[90] Whereas *They Walk in the City* brings to mind an image of hopeless, workless men drifting around a struggling city, *They Work in their Gardens* conjures the idea of healthy, hardworking men tending their vegetables – exactly the self-help scheme the Union and the Friends wished to portray. This idea was also demonstrated by the use of photographs in reports; for example, the cover of the 1933 Scottish report (Figure 11) compares unemployed men 'making the best of it' on their allotment with unemployed men shown standing or sitting in a group with 'nothing to do'.

Similarly, the appeal leaflets for the Scottish scheme strongly emphasise that the scheme was not a charity but involved hard work and the plotholders were not simply given tools and seeds for free but were fully expected to repay their loans. This can be seen in the 1938 leaflet appealing for funds: 'The distinctive features of the scheme are that men taking

[90] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/1/6, 'They work in their Gardens' The Annual Report of the Society of Friends Allotments Committee and Central Allotments Committee, September 1935 – August 1936, inside front cover.

advantage of the Scheme undertake to Pay and to Work, Pay towards the costs of their seeds and tools, and Work their plots'.[91] Both the appeal leaflets and the annual reports of the Joint Committee define the benefits of the scheme: hard work to prepare the unemployed for returning to work, exercise to improve their mental and physical health, nutritious food for the plotholders and their families, and, quite simply, occupation to protect the unemployed from boredom and apathy. This can be read in the 1933 Annual Report:

> The benefits that accrue to an unemployed man who occupies his hours of enforced leisure in cultivating a garden cannot be exaggerated. These include the preservation of his mental, moral, and physical well-being, to say nothing of the rich supplies of health-giving food which he would otherwise be unable to afford.[92]

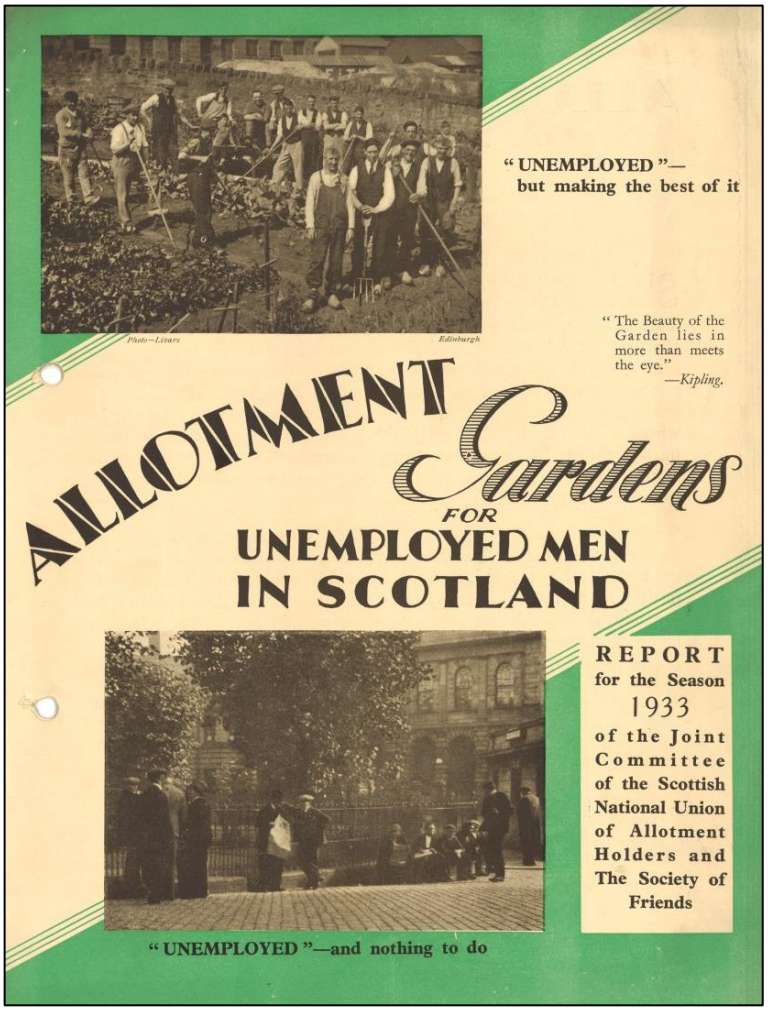


Figure 11: Cover 1933 Annual Report

(Image: UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2)

[91] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed Appeal for Funds Leaflet 1938.

[92] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1933, p. 4.

At times the language of the reports is in danger of slipping into melodrama as the Joint Committee emphasised the situation of the unemployed people they were seeking to help:

> It is difficult for those who are in comfortable circumstance, or in regular employment, to appreciate the position of those who are idle and have been kept idle for years. Think of it, morning after morning, week after week, month after month, year after year they have nothing to do, nothing to look forward to but a dreary vista of empty days. Is it a wonder that there is a lack of energy, a lack of response in the part of many?[93]

Perhaps such language was needed, it must have been difficult for the people in a position to give donations to imagine how dire unemployment really was, but the appeals and reports only give voice to the Joint Committee. Reading the report and appeals from both the Scottish and English and Welsh schemes, only one single comment from an unemployed plotholder himself can be found. This is from the English and Welsh annual report for 1937:

> It's the kids I worry about most…As for me, I'm finished, finished at forty…Somebody asked my youngster what he wanted to be when he grew up, and he said he wanted to work on the dole like his father. Funny, wasn't it? But it hurt me something cruel when I thought it over. Then, there's my wife…once she swallowed twenty aspirins, thinking it would finish her off.
>
> Surely to God someone's got the brains to think of a solution. They can't just leave us to go out of our minds.[94]

But even this quote, although powerfully illustrating the pain of the situation, says nothing about what those who took part in the scheme thought of it. The Committees were keen to emphasise the ideal of self-help, but through the lack of the unemployed plotholders' voices, they also emphasised their incapability without the assistance of the allotment movement and the Society of Friends.

[93] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1932, p. 3.

[94] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/1/7, Keeping Fit by Allotment Digging, The Annual Report of the Society of Friends Allotments Committee and Central Allotments Committee, September 1936 – August 1937, p. 12.

The Outbreak of the Second World War

The Second World War had an immediate effect on the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed. As employment rose, applications dropped and the scheme shifted its target audience to assist Old Age Pensioners and women whose husbands were called up to service. The War also affected the staff; the typist was called up for Hospital Duty (although she soon returned), an Organiser resigned to take up a military appointment and the Chief Organiser, Mr Hooper, who was a Naval Pensioner, was recalled.[95] The Commissioner for Special Areas' office was closed, bringing an end to the Special Areas Fund; salaries and office expenses were covered until March 1940, but then the Special Areas Act expired.[96]

However, the unemployment scheme had placed the allotments movement in a strong position going into the Second World War. As the unemployed plotholders generally continued once they had found work, there had been a steady increase in plotholders overall, unemployed and employed, across Scotland. In the Union's 1935 Annual Report, secretary Mr Fisher wrote:

> I believe that the Allotment Movement is steadily and rapidly advancing in Scotland and that this advance…is largely due to the National Union. As a Union we can look forward with confidence to a steady rise in our numbers, and we believe we shall be able to exercise in the future an even greater beneficial effect on the people of Scotland than we have done in the past.[97]

As the movement prepared for its involvement in the Second World War, Fisher's words in the 1939 Annual Report make clear that the Union was ready: 'We have placed the Allotment Movement in a secure and outstanding place in the eyes and minds of the public, of Government Departments and of Local Authorities, and we intend to carry on our

[95] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Minute of Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Friday, 31st March 1939; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Minute of Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Wednesday, 13th September, 1939; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Minute of Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Thursday, 2nd November 1939.

[96] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Minute of Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Wednesday, 13th September, 1939; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Minute of Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Thursday, 2nd November 1939.

[97] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/1, The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders Annual Report 1935, p. 7.

National Work'.[98] Through the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed, the Union believed it had brought the country through a time of crisis and it was proud: 'We, as a Movement, may congratulate ourselves that, for the third time in our history, viz. 1917, in the crisis of 1931 and again in 1939, the Allotment Holder has again been looked to to assist the Country in times of difficulty'.[99] The Union was ready for its next great challenge.

The Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed had prevented the further decline of allotments in Scotland and built an imperfect but effective working relationship between the Union and the government, both local and national. It had also shaped the movement's thoughts on what an allotment was for. Allotments were certainly to provide fresh food and it was this that had motivated Sinclair to become involved; allotments could be a way to improve the Scottish diet. Allotments also prevented idleness; hard work was seen as the antidote to both poor mental and physical health. However, even in a time of desperation, cultivating a plot was about happiness too, with space to grow flowers and relax. Individual plots required independence and responsibility that prepared plotholders for going back to work but the architecture of the scheme's sites, with low boundaries and communal huts, enabled communities and support networks to form. The Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed had shaped the allotment as a place to both be together with others, forming a supportive community, and to be on one's own, developing individuality and creativity.

[98] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/2, The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders Annual Report 1939, p. 8.

[99] Ibid., p. 5.

Laura's Story

In late 2014, the Scottish Parliament carried out a public consultation on the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill. Laura's response, explaining how her plot has helped her to live with depression, highlights the reasons the Scottish Allotments Scheme for Unemployed were campaigning for an increase in the availability of allotments eighty years before.

I have heard that you're interested in hearing from people with experience of allotments and community growing and have posed several questions. I'd like to share with you how having an allotment since February of this year has benefitted me.

I am 41. I was diagnosed with mental health problems in my late twenties having been ill but untreated for a long time. I have had various jobs - from temping in various offices as a student to being a Public Relations Executive. Most of the time I was feeling pretty desperate - I couldn't cope with the interpersonal relationships in the workplace, wasn't actually good at what I was doing and didn't see the point to most of it in any case. When I had a psychotic breakdown and was finally diagnosed I was working as a Training & Development Advisor for Scottish Power. After several failed attempts to return to work they and I accepted that this wasn't going to happen and I accepted an Ill Health Retiral when I turned 31.

There followed ten years of therapy, medications, illness, self-harm and changing diagnoses. I made a few attempts to work again, self-employed or as a volunteer. None of these really had a happy ending. I'd try one activity after another, trying to find some kind of meaning to my life but couldn't sustain my interest for more than a few days or a couple of weeks. Every time I dropped the threads of a project I felt a failure. I was depressed, unfulfilled and couldn't see that there was any point in living. I was so ill that Leverndale authorised me to take a high, unlicensed dose of one of my medications with the attendant risks to my physical health that this brings.

In September/October last year I decided to try gardening. I planted vegetable seeds in troughs in a cold frame my parents weren't using. I watered them. They grew as I watched and, eventually, I ate them. I had grown my own food! Here was something for which I could see the point in working even when I didn't feel much like it. I kept adding pots and troughs to my parents' garden and had good results. But I wanted more … and my parents wanted their garden back!

At the beginning of this year I decided to take the plunge and apply for an allotment. I expected to have to wait years and I would have if I wasn't prepared to travel. It takes two hours to reach 'Lottie' by public transport, a little less if I can afford to take the train. Lottie was in quite a state when I first met her but the Allotment Committee gave me lots of support and practical help (and two skips and a lot of muscle power) but by June of this year I was cooking food I'd grown myself. My best moment this year has been cooking a meal using only produce I'd grown myself.

Over the year I've learned that:

I am strong and love hard, physical work.

I can make friends with people I have something in common with.

I can work as part of a team.

It's OK to ask for help.

People seem to like me.

Sometimes all you need is to sit down and watch the birds.

My mental health has improved greatly - I've had my medication reduced three times this year and am nearly back to the licensed dose. I'm stronger and healthier than I have been in years. I'm eating well of fresh, organic produce. I'm getting exercise. I'm making friends - something I haven't been able to do for a very long time, if ever. And I know that there is one place I can go to in Glasgow when I'm feeling ill that somehow makes me feel like all is well with the world.

I couldn't cope with the world of work and I don't know if I'll ever work again. In today's climate that left me feeling useless and a drain on society even though I knew I'd done my best and damaged myself in the process. But Lottie has given me purpose and a fulfilment

I have never felt before. I don't know why working outside to grow my own food should make such a difference. But it does.[1]

[1] Scottish Parliament, *Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2nd Report, 2015 (Session 4) Stage 1 Report on the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill* (Published by the Scottish Parliament, 26th January 2015).

Chapter Two

1939 – 1945: Digging for Victory

Throughout 1939, the British government were carrying out preparations for war with Germany, both visible and invisible to the public. One, perhaps alarming, provision that made the public aware of the impending international crisis was the delivery of Anderson shelters to back yards and gardens from February 1939; steel panels dug into the ground and covered with soil designed to shelter six people in an air-raid.[1] On 2nd September 1939 radio broadcasting was restricted solely to the Home Service, so it would not have been unexpected when war was declared the following day.[2] Life was changing and government control was becoming tighter, including the State's control over the allotment movement.

The British government anticipated food shortages, the major concern of this chapter. Britain was importing two thirds of its food supplies in 1938 and the government knew that home production would have to increase as shipping was freed from trade for the war effort.[3] Following the First World War, during which there had also been food shortages, there had been an attempt by the government to improve domestic production through the Agricultural Act of 1920. This legislation guaranteed prices across crops considered to be staples. However, as the Great Depression set in, little investment was actually made in modernising market gardening, especially as cheaper, hardier vegetables could be imported from northern Europe and exotic fruit and vegetables from Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.[4] In 1939, the value of imported fruit and vegetables was £33.8 million. Eighty per cent of fruit was imported, along with ninety per cent of cereal, fifty per cent of meat and seventy per cent of both cheese and sugar.[5] In December 1939 the government predicted that food supplies would only last for three months.[6] As part of the preparations leading up to the war, the Ministry of Agriculture had considered how to increase home production. It set up War Agricultural Executive Committees (commonly known as 'War

[1] Ursula Buchan, *A Green and Pleasant Land: How England's Gardeners Fought the Second World War* (London: Hutchinson, 2013), pp. 28-29; Daniel Smith, *The Spade as Mighty as the Sword: The Story of the Dig for Victory Campaign* (London: Aurum Press, 2013), pp. 59-60.

[2] Buchan, p. 33.

[3] Lesley Acton, *Growing Space: A History of the Allotment Movement* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2015), p. 101.

[4] Buchan, p. 18; Smith, p. 16.

[5] Buchan, p. 18; Franklin Ginn, 'Dig for Victory! New histories of wartime gardening in Britain', *Journal of Historical Geography* 38:3 (2012), p. 296.

[6] Acton, p. 101; Buchan, p. 18; Ginn, p. 296.

Ags') in each British county, under the Cultivation of Lands Order of 1939. The War Ags, made up of Ministry officials, landowners, farmers, gardeners and scientists, became the main way to disseminate information to farmers and commercial gardeners during the war. Each War Ag was given targets for land reclamation and different varieties of crop.[7] However, it was not just the agricultural industry that had to step-up; everyone in Britain was expected to contribute to the food supply. A particular worry was the impending shortage of vitamin-rich imports, such as lemons and bananas, as British meals were already lacking in nutrients and vitamins. In 1936 Sir John Boyd Orr had estimated that over fifty per cent of the population could not afford a diet containing enough nutrients and ten per cent were severely malnourished.[8] It was, therefore, vital that during the war British people grew their own food. The *Grow More Food* campaign had been announced slightly ahead of the declaration of war in August 1939.[9] A month into the war, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries announced that 500,000 more allotments would be available in England and Wales, calculated to feed one million adults and one and a half million children. For the Scottish Department of Agriculture and Fisheries the target was 50,000 more allotments.[10] The objective of this campaign was not just to grow more vegetables, resulting in gluts, but through careful planning to provide families with a year round supply of their own fruit and vegetables.[11] The title of the campaign did not inspire enthusiasm, so when young journalist Michael Foot used a more rousing phrase it was quickly adopted by the media, with the Ministry of Agriculture soon following. From October 1939 the nation was not just growing more food, it was digging for victory.[12]

This chapter is not concerned with the overall efforts to increase home food production, which concerned private gardens as well as allotments, but will examine how the *Dig for Victory* campaign played out on Scotland's allotments. Government control over allotments became greater, on both a national and local level, as the authorities worked to increase site provision. Initially this was an encouragement to the allotment movement but,

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[7] Buchan, p. 35; Caroline Foley, *Of Cabbages and Kings: The History of Allotments* (London: Frances Lincoln Ltd, 2014), p. 174.

[8] Acton, p. 101; Buchan, p. 36; Smith, p. 17.

[9] Acton, p. 101.

[10] Acton, p. 101; Buchan, p. 3; Twigs Way, *Allotments* (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2008), p. 19; NRS, AF45/141/2, Note of Meeting between representatives of the Department and Town Councils of Burghs with populations of 20,000 and over held in St. Andrew's House on Friday, 16th February, 1940 at 2.15p.m.

[11] Ginn, p. 297.

[12] Buchan, pp. 3, 44; David Crouch and Colin Ward, *The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 1997), p. 75.

over time, it became clear that for the government allotments were a short-term solution to food shortages only. For the Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed Joint Committee, allotments continued to be a long-term project and both groups continued in their campaign to promote allotments for mental and physical health, as well as for food provision. This chapter will explore the actions of both the authorities and the allotment movement during the Second World War ending with a discussion on security of tenure for plotholders, which was to become a major focus of the movement in the decades following the war. Despite the government view that allotments were for individual effort, a response only to crisis, this chapter will argue that a long-term outlook was instead needed to embed allotments within cities, both to improve cultivation and for communities on sites to develop.

Digging for Victory in Scotland

On 29th September 1939 the Department of Agriculture wrote to all local authorities across Scotland to explain new powers provided under the Defence Regulations of 1939. Regulation 51 stated that local authorities could take possession of unoccupied land without obtaining consent or occupied land with consent from the owner and occupier to use as allotments. If needed, land could even be taken within a neighbouring authority's area, with their consent, for a wartime allotment site. As local authorities were acting as agents of the Secretary of State for Scotland any deficiencies would be met by the government at two pounds per acre, although it was expected that expenses would be covered by charging plotholders rent.[13]

The Glasgow Corporation was quick to act on the Department's instructions and increased the number of allotments in the city. In early October 1939, the Director of Parks compiled a list of ground in housing schemes which could be used for 2100 plots measuring 200 square yards (167 square metres, so somewhat smaller than the Joint Committee's recommended 250 square metres plots for the unemployment scheme) and also acquired land from the Hutcheson's Educational Trust where the building of a new school had been delayed.[14] The Corporation's Education Department also offered land for wartime allotments, to be returned at the end of the war, as did companies such as seed merchants Austin and McAslan, who offered thirteen acres in Cathcart, and the London, Midland and

[13] NRS, AF45/142 Allotments Defence Regulations 1939, Trespass 1939-1947, Letter from the Department of Agriculture for Scotland, 29th September 1939; NRS, AF25/141/2 Memorandum by Secretary of State.

[14] GCA, C1/3/100, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th September 1939, p. 2796; GCA, C1/3/100, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 3rd October 1939, p. 3036; GCA, C1/3/100, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 13th October 1939, p. 3122.

Scottish Railway Company, who let 6.6 acres in Cardonald.[15] By February 1940, 1014 wartime allotments had been created across Glasgow, in addition to the 1081 allotments that existed in October 1939.[16]

Local authorities' powers were expanded by Regulation 62A in December 1939. This regulation meant that local authorities could also adapt land that was already under its own occupation for allotments, including unoccupied land or land used for parks and green spaces. However, under this regulation the local authority was acting as its own agent rather than that of the Secretary of State, so no costs would be covered by the government.[17] Local authorities, including Edinburgh, Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Ayrshire, strongly protested against this distinction stating that whether or not the land was already in their possession made very little difference to the actual cost as fences, gates and water infrastructure still had to be supplied to the allotments.[18] A memorandum by the Edinburgh Town Clerk clearly explains the city's situation. Edinburgh Corporation had found land for two thousand plots, based on an initial estimate for demand. However, despite an advertising campaign in evening papers and public transport, only 476 applications were received for an allotment and sixty of these were later withdrawn. The problem the Corporation encountered was that plots were simply not taken up unless they were within walking distance of people's homes, as well as being fenced off to protect crops from dogs and rabbits. The Corporation reacted to this and provided 460 plots in twelve different areas of Edinburgh, but still only 322 plots were taken.[19] The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Sir Patrick Ramsey Laird, agreed with the local authorities. He wrote to the Treasury in London in May 1940 to ask for further funding, sending the Edinburgh Memorandum as evidence.[20] A further problem for local authorities, although not addressed in Laird's letter, was whether to use public parks for allotments. For parks there

[15] GCA, C1/3/100, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 18th October 1939, p. 3123; GCA, C1/3/101, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th December 1939, p. 371.

[16] GCA, C1/3/100, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 3rd October 1939, p. 3036; GCA, C1/3/101, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 6th February 1940, p. 770.

[17] NRS, AF45/141/2, General Regulations No. 1838, 20th December 1939; NRS, AF25/141/2, Memorandum by Secretary of State; NRS, AF45/141/2, Letter Mitchell, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to Hyslop, 27th March 1940.

[18] NRS, AF25/141/2, Memorandum by Secretary of State.

[19] NRS, AF45/141/2, Memorandum by the Town Clerk with regard to the Emergency Allotments Scheme, City and Royal Burgh of Edinburgh.

[20] NRS, AF45/141/2, Laird to Twentyman, the Treasury, London, 27th May 1940.

was not only the usual cost of creating allotments but also the anticipated cost of restoring the site back to parkland after the war had ended.[21]

It is a much celebrated part of allotment history that parks were used during the Second World War for growing fruit and vegetables. Commonly, examples are given of London's Royal Parks, including St. James, Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, the moat at the Tower of London and the demonstration plot at Kew Gardens, so it is not unreasonable to assume that the rest of the UK followed London's example.[22] However, the national picture is more complicated and in Glasgow the Corporation simply refused to create wartime allotments within its parks.[23] Hyslop, who like Laird was a member of the Department of Agriculture, recognised the difficulties of funding. He wrote to Mitchell at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries asking whether it would be possible for local authorities to receive funding after the war for restoring park allotments to grass.[24] However, Mitchell replied with the not especially encouraging response that London was a special case:

> I write to say the position of the London County Council was regarded as being entirely exceptional. Apart from the fact that London is in an exceptional position as regards available land, political considerations were also involved and we went to the Home Policy Committee and got authority from them to negotiate with the London County Council on the basis of a contribution of one-half of the net cost of reinstatement, less receipt for rents, based on a gross reinstatement not exceeding £30 per acre, and we were able to settle on that basis. But we obtained that authority from the Home Policy Committee in the distinct understanding that we should resist the application of the principle elsewhere, and we are doing so, and shall continue to do so.[25]

This lack of funding meant that London's famous park allotments were an unreachable standard for many other cities. Following Laird's letter, the Treasury consulted the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and found that they had been approached by local

[21] NRS, AF45/141/2, Letter Hyslop to Mitchell, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 19th March 1940.

[22] Way, p. 22; Foley, p. 176-77.

[23] GCA, C1/3/101, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th March 1940, p. 965; GCA, C1/3/101, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 2nd April 1940, p. 1145; GCA, C1/3/102, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 6th August 1940, p. 1979; GCA, C1/3/103, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 4th March 1941 , p. 932; GCA, C1/3/106, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 9th June 1942, p. 1473.

[24] NRS, AF45/141/2, Letter Hyslop to Mitchell, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1st April 1940.

[25] NRS, AF45/141/2, Letter Mitchell, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to Hyslop, Department of Agriculture for Scotland, 4th April 1940.

authorities in England and Wales with similar objections to those coming from Scotland.[26] For example, in Hove, on the south-east coast of England, the local authority opposed allotments in parks as the beaches had already been closed to the public; they felt unable to further limit people's access to leisure activities.[27] It was finally agreed that local authorities should receive the same financial assistance for allotments created on their own property as for allotments created on acquired land at the same rate of two pounds per acre, far less than the thirty pounds per acre provided for London's parks.[28] Glasgow Corporation remained resolutely against creating allotments in its parks; the one exception was for a previously existing site within Queen's Park that was extended by twenty more plots in October 1940, at the association's request.[29] The Glasgow and District Federation of Allotment Holders' Associations wrote repeatedly throughout the war to the Sub-Committee for Allotments asking them to reconsider but each time the Sub-Committee refused. On 5th June 1942 the Federation passed a resolution 'deprecating the action of the Corporation in refusing to allow allotments in the public parks, and pressing for the granting of this facility'.[30] It is unclear from the Corporation minutes whether this refusal was simply down to cost or, like Hove's local authority, it was also a protection of limited leisure facilities.

In February 1940 the Department of Agriculture called a meeting of local authorities 'in order that they might learn how other authorities were tackling the urgent problem of increasing the number of allotments in cultivation and to ascertain whether there was any way in which the Department could help in getting over difficulties'.[31] Returns submitted to the Department showed that local authorities in Scotland had only succeeded in creating 1879 new allotments since September 1939 (the vast majority in Edinburgh and Glasgow) falling far short of the government's target of 50,000.[32] A representative to the meeting

[26] NRS, AF45/141/2, Treasury to Laird, Department of Agriculture for Scotland, 24th June 1940.

[27] Buchan, p. 71.

[28] GCA, C1/3/102, Sub-Committee on Allotment, 6th August 1940, p.1979; NRS, AF45/141/2, Treasury to Laird, Department of Agriculture for Scotland, 24th June 1940.

[29] GCA, C1/3/102, Sub-Committee for Allotments, 29th October 1940, p. 2548.

[30] GCA, C1/3/101, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th March 1940, p. 965; GCA, C1/3/101, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 2nd April 1940, p. 1145; GCA, C1/3/102, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 6th August 1940, p. 1979; GCA, C1/3/103, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 4th March 1941 , p. 932; GCA, C1/3/106, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 9th June 1942, p. 1473.

[31] NRS, AF45/141/2, Note of Meeting between representatives of the Department and Town Councils of Burghs with populations of 20,000 and over held in St. Andrew's House on Friday, 16th February, 1940 at 2.15p.m.

[32] NRS, AF45/141/2, Note of Meeting between representatives of the Department and Town Councils of Burghs with populations of 20,000 and over held in St. Andrew's House on Friday, 16th February, 1940 at

from Glasgow Corporation, Bailie Duffy, stated that they had only received five hundred enquiries, of which just two hundred were actual applications for an allotment. Duffy thought that his Sub-Committee for Allotments and Parks Department had done everything they could but 'Glasgow citizens were obviously reluctant to 'Dig for Victory' and could not be compelled to do so'. The experiences of other local authorities were similar. A common problem was that people were engaged in National Service and too busy to manage an allotment. Laird concluded that 'the final impression of the discussion that had taken place was somewhat depressing'.[33] It presumably would have been difficult to convince new gardeners to start a new plot over the short days of winter and it does seem curious that the weather was not also cited as a problem. The winter of 1939 and 1940 had been the worst in the UK for fifty years – cold enough to warrant plotholders' reporting that their cabbages had frozen in the ground.[34] This must have deterred many from taking up an allotment for the first time, especially in Scotland. It also cannot have helped that between 5th September 1939 and 2nd April 1945 there were no radio weather forecasts, for fear that the Germans were listening.[35]

A further Department of Agriculture meeting was called in March 1940, together with the Colleges of Agriculture and the press to explore ways to stimulate demand, which the Department hoped would increase in the spring.[36] Glasgow was raised as an example by *Daily Record* delegate Mr Grant who believed the problem, as Edinburgh Corporation had also identified, was the location of plots. In south-west Glasgow there were seven hundred allotments available yet in Maryhill, in the north-west, there were only fifteen.[37] It was clearly important, particularly if time was scarce for those working or on National Service, to be able to walk to a plot quickly and easily. The Colleges of Agriculture stated that it was also crucial to give support to plotholders. Dr Nisbet, from the West of Scotland

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2.15p.m; NRS, AF45/141/2, Memorandum by the Town Clerk with regard to the Emergency Allotments Scheme, City and Royal Burgh of Edinburgh.

[33] NRS, AF45/141/2, Note of Meeting between representatives of the Department and Town Councils of Burghs with populations of 20,000 and over held in St. Andrew's House on Friday, 16th February, 1940 at 2.15p.m.; NRS, AF45/141/2, Note of Meeting between representatives of (1) the Department, (2) the Colleges of Agriculture, and (3) the Press, held in St. Andrew's House on Monday, 11th March, 1940, at 2.30p.m., p. 1.

[34] Buchan, p. 54; Twigs Way and Mike Brown, *Digging for Victory: Gardens and Gardening in Wartime Britain* (Sevenoaks: Sabrestorm Publishing, 2010), p. 11.

[35] Buchan, p. 33.

[36] NRS, AF45/141/2, Note of Meeting between representatives of (1) the Department, (2) the Colleges of Agriculture, and (3) the Press, held in St. Andrew's House on Monday, 11th March, 1940, at 2.30p.m., p. 1.

[37] Ibid.

College, described their activities to the meeting, which included vegetable growing schemes with eighty schools in Ayrshire, Saturday classes for sixty school teachers in Glasgow and visits to allotments across the west of Scotland on weekends to offer plotholders help and advice.[38] Whilst local authorities had enthusiastically created new allotments, the Colleges had recognised that it was personal contact that made a real difference to new plotholders.

Down to Work

Many of the wartime plotholders were gardening for the first time and so needed guidance. The Ministry of Agriculture devised various ways of delivering practical information such as *Dig for Victory* exhibitions, using visiting lecturers and technical advisors, publishing leaflets and bulletins and asking local authorities to set up demonstration plots.[39] The first Ministry *Growmore* bulletin, issued in September 1939, was titled *Food from the Garden* and was designed for 250 square metres plots, the same size as the unemployment scheme plots. This bulletin had been prepared in advance of the war by the Royal Horticultural Society, the Horticultural Education Association, the National Allotment Society (the equivalent of the Union in England and Wales) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Inspectorate. The bulletin included an all year cropping and rotation plan, harvest periods for crops, lists of fertilisers and notes on how to garden, including digging. The aim of the bulletin was to ensure a year round supply; plotholders could not just grow what they wanted to, summer gluts and winter shortages were to be avoided. The problem with the bulletin was that there was only one to cover the whole of the UK, so it was much less useful for the harsher, cooler climate of Scotland and the north of England. Those in the north complained that there was not enough space in the plan for potatoes (which had been replaced by leafy greens), plant spacings were too tight, varieties were not suitable and a lack of consideration had been given to cooler temperatures. In January 1941 a revised version was published with more space for potatoes but still containing plenty of leafy greens to replace the vitamins usually provided by imported fruit. Later in the war, the bulletin was revised again for half-plots when it was realised that a whole plot could prove too much work for a full-time worker to take on.[40] A national wartime survey found that only about ten per cent of gardeners actually used the plan, whilst seventy per cent used

[38] Ibid.

[39] Acton, p. 104; Crouch and Ward, p. 75; Foley, p. 176; Way, p. 24.

[40] Acton, p. 105; Buchan, p. 54; Crouch and Ward, p. 75; Foley, p. 178; Ginn, p. 298; Way and Brown, p. 8-10.

advice from newspapers and radio instead.[41] Local advice, such as that from the West of Scotland Agricultural College, would have been far more useful than a plan designed to cover the whole of the UK with its varying climate.

Locally, the Department of Agriculture encouraged practical demonstrations of gardening, either on special demonstration plots or on a willing plotholder's land. In Glasgow, the Director of Parks ensured that such plots were set up in most areas of the city, tended by park staff, who provided monthly postings of tasks for the public to follow.[42] There was also a new government committee, the Scottish Gardens and Allotments Committee, which set up smaller, local committees around the country to encourage food production. The Joint Committee supported them by offering the use of two of their organisers.[43] The focus of the authorities' desire for allotments, local and national, was largely on food production; however, social events were also encouraged. In February 1943 an anonymous donor gave a trophy for an annual allotments competition to be organised by the Glasgow Corporation and between 1943 and 1947 a Mr Lindsay donated monetary prizes annually with 'the object of encouraging the development of allotments'.[44] In addition to this, the Glasgow and District Federation of Allotment Holders' Associations organised exhibitions and sales of produce. Children, too, were encouraged to grow their own food and in October 1940 the Director of Education and the Director of Parks arranged for an acre of ground in Glasgow Green to be used by pupils from several schools in Bridgeton and the Gorbals.[45]

These activities, although social, still placed emphasis on food production but for some plotholders gardening remained important to them beyond nutrition. The previous chapter explained that flowers were actively encouraged on allotments for the unemployed but during the war flower growing had been in danger of disappearing from Scottish plots. In July 1940, Laird wrote to local authorities encouraging the number of allotments, as he believed that private gardeners would also be inspired by the amount of food they saw

[41] Figures from Wartime Social Survey No. 20 'Dig for Victory: A Study of the Impact of the Campaign to Encourage Vegetable Growing in Gardens and Allotments for the Ministry of Agriculture' from Franklin Ginn, 'Dig for Victory! New histories of wartime gardening in Britain', *Journal of Historical Geography* 38:3 (2012) 294-3-5, p. 298); Way, p. 25.

[42] GCA, C1/3/108, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 31st August 1943, p. 1335.

[43] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Minute of Meeting of Joint Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Thursday, 24th October 1940; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1940.

[44] GCA, C1/3/107, Parks Committee, 17th February 1943, p. 527; GCA, C1/3/107, Parks Committee, 14th April 1943, p. 772.

[45] GCA, C1/3/108, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 31st August 1943, p. 1335; GCA, C1/3/102, Parks Committee, 30th October 1940, p. 2549.

growing and replace their flowering plants with vegetables at home: 'Similarly, the production of food from private gardens demands the creation of a body of local opinion and emulation which will ensure that vegetables are substituted for flowers'.[46] But there had already been signs of plotholders, too, missing their flowers. In April 1940, the Secretary of the Glasgow and District Federation of Allotment Holders' Associations had written to the Sub-Committee on allotments asking that 'the condition prohibiting the growing of flowers in Corporation allotments be relaxed'. It was agreed that this should be granted and Glaswegian plotholders were allowed to use up to one-eighth of their plots to grow flowers.[47] Put simply, flowers cheered people up, a fact well understood by Cecil Henry Middleton who gave gardening advice on the BBC's Home Service. In March 1942 he devoted a programme to pruning roses and growing flowers, even though he agreed that 'flowers must take a back seat' for the duration of the war:

> There are plenty of pretty things you could plant now which give a wealth of summer colour, but take up very little room. A few packets of seeds of hardy annuals, for instance, can brighten up a border or a small front garden with very little trouble or expense. Marigolds, cornflowers, scarlet flax, coreopsis, escholtzias, godetias, nigella, and viscarias are only a few of the annuals which make a fine show without covering up much space.[48]

The nasturtium, he claimed, was 'one of the brightest and most cheerful of wartime flowers' and he even suggested planting them in the gaps left behind where iron railings had been taken away.[49] For the authorities, *Digging for Victory* was about maximising home food production but the insistence of the Glaswegian plotholders to grow flowers suggests that the sense of creativity on allotments, nurtured by the Joint Committee, remained.

For plotholders, allotments were not just a necessity for growing food but also a place for happiness and even safety. The idea of the allotment as a sort of sanctuary is perhaps best exemplified by two wartime stories from Glaswegian plotholders. Jean McKay's mother had a plot in South Western Allotments in Pollok Park during the Second World War and when the siren sounded for an air-raid, she would take her two children to the plot where

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[46] NRS, AF45/141/2, Letter from Laird, Department of Agriculture for Scotland to all LAs, 18th July 1940.

[47] GCA, C1/3/101, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 2nd April, 1940, p. 1145.

[48] Cecil Henry Middleton, *Digging for Victory: Wartime Gardening with Mr Middleton* (London: Aurum Press, 2008), pp. 147-48.

[49] Middleton, p. 153.

she lit the stove to keep them warm throughout the night.[50] Fiona Sutherland, a plotholder at New Victoria Gardens, had been told a similar story by her mother who was a teenager in Dalmarnock during the war. In the tenements, air-raid shelters were provided by reinforcing the bottom of closes but the family found it terrifying to shelter there during the first few bombing raids. Fiona's grandfather had an allotment and with three neighbouring families, he built an air-raid shelter on their plots:

> …it had a wee stove and paraffin lamp and it was stocked with some basic essentials. So she said that was fine, she said, it was so much better there and a lot safer…the adults would just keep the children going playing games and so it all became tolerable rather than sitting shivering in a cold close underneath some steel beams going 'These aren't going to work!'[51]

It might not actually have been any safer, but it *felt* safe. It also brought plotholders together, ties that became closer through sharing food. Despite advice, gluts were unavoidable and difficult to manage. Generally plotholders gave away excess produce to family, friends or neighbours but there were such tight controls on food distribution during the Second World War that simply giving food away could earn a plotholder a fine. By September 1941, the Ministry of Food had prosecuted 26,721 cases of giving away spare food so collecting centres were set up which delivered to greengrocers.[52] Despite the risk, plotholders continued to give away excess crops. Fiona knew from her mother that her grandfather had fed his family from his allotment, even during the winter, but whatever he had spare he gave to their relatives and friends.[53] This suggests a difference in attitude between the authorities and the plotholders in regards to the allotments. The government rules against sharing produce emphasised the allotment as an individual endeavour - gardening was for yourself and your family - however the actions of plotholders suggests that allotments remained a place of togetherness forming communities that helped each other, with the benefits of fresh food spilling out beyond the site boundaries.

The social opposite of this 'crime' of generosity was theft. It became increasingly difficult to protect allotments from trespass as metal fences were in short supply, so in 1943 it was

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[50] Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson and Rona Wilkinson, *Raising Spirits: Allotments, well-being and community* (Edinburgh: Argyll Publishing, 2014), p. 46.

[51] Interview with Fiona Sutherland, New Victoria Gardens, 4th August 2015.

[52] Acton, p. 106.

[53] Fiona Sutherland.

made an offence to trespass on allotments even if there was no warning sign in place, punishable by a week's hard labour or a fine of up to £50. In February 1941, the Director of Parks for Glasgow reported to the Sub-Committee on Allotments that it was unlikely that any of the thirty-six allotments on a site in Germiston would be taken up 'owing to the persistent destruction of fences, tool-sheds, glasshouses, etc.' The Sub-Committee agreed that anyone who wished to work on these plots could do so rent free at their own risk.[54] Such theft was reported in newspapers as being cheap and unkind, and quite often not even beneficial to the thieves:

> The allotment thief is on the prowl again. It's a low down trick to pinch vegetables or fruits that have been cultivated after much time and effort. Some of the stuff stolen is very immature and useless to anyone. As most gardens and allotments are without any protective railing, the public should co-operate in protecting each other's products.[55]

Keeping an allotment throughout the war was clearly not easy but even the plotholders at Germiston continued at 'their own risk'. Allotments increasingly became part of people's lives through the *Dig for Victory* campaign and received increased government support, but the Joint Committee also continued with their own campaigning.

The Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed continued throughout the Second World War. In their 1939 Annual Report the Joint Committee declared, in bold capitals: 'WAR CONDITIONS HAVE INCREASED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK…EVERYTHING DONE TO INCREASE THE HOME PRODUCTION OF FOOD IS NATIONAL WORK OF THE GREATEST VALUE'.[56] Like the government, the Joint Committee placed emphasis on food production as the purpose of an allotment at the beginning of the war. In 1940 they expanded their scheme to provide seeds and tools for unemployed people working private home gardens and for employed people cultivating allotments (although they had to pay for the equipment at a price to cover the cost and administration). They also supplied seventeen schools with seeds and tools suitable for children to use.[57] Even with this expansion the Joint Committee

[54] GCA, C1/3/102, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 3rd February 1941, p. 700.

[55] NRS, AF45/142, Allotments Defence Regulations 1939, Trespass 1939-1947, *The Courier and Advertiser*, 21st July 1943.

[56] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1939, p. 3.

[57] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/2, The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders Annual Report 1939, p. 7; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Minute of Meeting of Joint

expected the number of applications to decrease as early as 1940 because unemployment was much lower; however, it actually increased.[58] The Joint Committee were suspicious of this. Mr Fisher, the Secretary, described the rise as 'rather remarkable' considering there had been a steady fall in numbers for the previous three years and a recent improvement in the job market. He raised his concerns at a committee meeting in May 1940 saying that 'for some time he had felt that the Joint Committee was not, in the general case, assisting the same class of Unemployed persons as in the earlier years of the operation of the Scheme'. Mr Roberts, the Treasurer, and Miss Thompson (a member of the scheme's office staff as well as the secretary of the Union) agreed that 'a good many underserving persons were taking advantage of the Scheme', although they did not define what made a person 'undeserving'. Altogether it was agreed that there was 'a great deal of dishonesty and ingenuity shown in getting round the Regulations of the Joint Committee and avoiding payment'. No written evidence was given for this, but the suspicions of the Joint Committee were deep enough for them to tighten up the application procedure.[59] In 1941 the Joint Committee made it a requisition that application forms should be stamped by the applicant's employment exchange, proving that he or she was unemployed at the date of the applications. Miss Thompson reported that this was a great help but the reaction from the allotment associations' secretaries ranged from the honest 'Yes, the stamp will help, but the men will find a way to get round it' to the indignant 'Your forms are no use to us this year with that stamp on them!'[60] As a further measure, the Joint Committee put up the price of seeds. In 1941 it cost 4/10 for a carton of seeds, two stone of early potatoes and three stone of maincrop potatoes; in 1942 it cost 10/- for the same. Although pensions had been increased, the cost of living had also gone up and Thompson reported to Fisher and the Chairman, Harold Sharp, that whilst the new regulations had 'eliminated all the ineligibles' she was also worried that their prices were too high. On the copy of her report

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Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Thursday, 2nd November 1939; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1940, pp. 3-4.

[58] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1940, p. 3.

[59] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Minute of Meeting of Sub-Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Monday, 27th May 1940; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/5, Memorandum by the Hon. Secretary relative to the operation of the scheme 4th September 1940.

[60] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/5, Memorandum by the Hon. Secretary relative to the operation of the scheme, 4th September 1940; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/3, Report from Miss Thompson to Mr Fisher, 24th December 1940.

there is a pencil note, presumably by Fisher or Sharp, agreeing 'It was perhaps a mistake both to tighten up our regulations and increase prices'.[61]

The high price and shortage of seeds was a problem nationally. The Joint Committee also became the administrators of the *American Free Seed Scheme*, in which Americans donated and posted seeds to Scotland. In April 1941, 10,071 packets of onion, carrot and parsnip seeds were sent out to plotholders. This scheme continued throughout the war and, in turn, inspired the creation of *Seeds for Europe*. The Union asked allotment societies to donate seeds and tools for people in occupied Europe, to be sent once it was liberated from the Nazis. Fundraising events were held, such as the Bannockburn Gardens and Allotments Association's whist drive and dance which raised £40.[62] The Union wrote:

> Remember the plight of the people of the occupied countries – remember too what America and Australia have done for us. Willingly, generously, year after year they have sent us a most valuable supply of seeds. Every small cultivator in America has been eager to subscribe his dollar so that this gift might come to Britain. We in Scotland have been spared most of the horrors of war. Let us show our sympathy and our gratitude by making a real effort to relieve the distress of the countries which have suffered much during the bitter struggle of the last four years.[63]

Under the Joint Committee's new regulations, the number of people assisted by the unemployment scheme fell during the war. In 1942 a total of 993 people were assisted, by 1944 there were just 346. The majority were old age pensioners, 597 in 1942 and 293 in 1944, whilst the number of unemployed applicants fell from 218 in 1942 to just twelve in 1944.[64] Many old age pensioners were no longer eligible for the free schemes as they had been called back into full time employment for the war for roles such as fire-watching. The remaining applicants were 'a sprinkling of service-men's wives' and people 'who through

[61] Underlining as in original document. UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/3, Report from Miss Thompson to Mr Fisher 17th March 1942; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/3, Report from Miss Thompson to Mr Sharp 30th July 1942.

[62] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/3, Report from Miss Thompson to Mr Fisher, 17th March 1942; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/3, The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders Annual Report 1943, p. 4.

[63] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/3, The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders Annual Report 1943, p. 6.

[64] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/3, Report from Miss Thompson to Mr Sharp 30th July 1942; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/3, Report from Miss Thompson to Mr Sharp 1st September 1944.

physical or mental defects, in many cases caused by the last war, are unfit for ordinary routine work', including blind veterans.[65]

Despite the decrease in numbers the Joint Committee was prepared to keep 'its machinery in good working order'. Their experience of the aftermath of the First World War gave them an expectation of mass unemployment following the Second World War. Although their focus had changed to food production for the duration of the war, their overarching vision for allotments was based on health and well-being. 'In addition', they wrote in their 1944 annual report 'there will be many disabled men – wounded in mind as well as in body – to whom the tilling of the soil and the interesting work of vegetable cultivation will act as a soothing balm after the turmoil of war'.[66]

For the government, allotments were a short-term solution to a food crisis but for the Joint Committee allotments were a permanent necessity for physical and mental health. Plotholders involved in the scheme were also keen to keep it going. An organiser named Mr Lewis visited associations as he believed that it was personal contact that showed plotholders the Joint Committee cared and did not just consider allotments to be a wartime occupation. He wrote that the plotholders at Longriggend 'are very keen that the allotments should come to stay and are working with this end in view. There are many places in the same position'.[67]

Another organiser, Mr Hooper, was a naval pensioner and had been re-called for the war. In October 1944 he wrote to Harold Sharp, with demobilisation and unemployment clearly on his mind. He was aware of government initiatives for service men to return to their former jobs, but also understood the difficulties for former employers. Having been an organiser himself he knew too well the troubles of unemployment:

[65] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/3, Report from Miss Thompson to Mr Sharp 8th May 1943; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1943, p. 2; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1944, p. 2.

[66] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Minute of Meeting of Committee held at 9 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, on Thursday 24th July 1941; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1942, p. 2; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1943, p. 2; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1944, p. 2.

[67] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/3, Records of Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed, Report JD Lewis, organiser 5th March 1941.

> You will appreciate my reluctance on retuning to civil life again, to find myself in the ranks of the many, or the few, who must inevitably be unemployed…
>
> It will obviously give me immense pleasure and satisfaction to know that I am not to be among the first to be demobilised who will form the nucleus of yet another army of unemployed.
>
> I place myself unreservedly in the hands of the Joint Committee for its consideration of my case and in the full knowledge and assurance of your sympathy and consideration.[68]

Sadly, Sharp replied that it was unlikely that there would be work for Hooper as the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed was so 'diminished', but his letter demonstrates well the real fears of service men of returning home to no work.[69] The Joint Committee understood these worries, and this led to an agreement with the Development Commissioners that the scheme should be continued:

> Again we have considered carefully what is the proper course to adopt, and have consulted the Development Commissioners on whom we rely to secure us a Government Grant. If we were sure there would be no appreciable or long-continued unemployment after the war, our course would be clear: but we are advised – and we think it wise – to go on for another year, hoping that in twelve months' time we shall see more clearly if there is a real need which we feel ought to be met, or, alternatively, if any other organisation can do the work which we have continued for the past fourteen years.[70]

Although there was a spirit of co-operation between the government and the Scottish allotments movement during the Second World War there was also a great tension. For the government allotments were temporary, a reaction to a particular situation and largely provided to fill a gap in the nation's food supply. At the end of the war, wartime allotments would be discontinued. For the Union and the Joint Committee the purpose of allotments went beyond food production to health and well-being through the activity of gardening as

[68] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/2/1, Hooper to Sharp, 9th October 1944.

[69] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/2/1, Sharp to Hooper, 12th October 1944.

[70] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/2/1, Allotments Committee, Extract from Report to Meeting for Sufferings 1945, 11th October 1945.

well as through the provision of outdoor space. The allotments movement began to campaign for sites to be made permanent and integrated into cities, rather than squeezed into vacant, sometimes unsuitable, land. This tension is most clearly seen through the issue of security of tenure.

'That much ventilated and vexed question'[71]

Security of tenure for plotholders was an issue throughout the Second World War. In 1939, the Union stated that the only way to have true security was for allotment associations to buy their own land, and they seriously urged those capable of raising enough funds to do this. The Union simply did not trust local authorities to not sell allotments, even if they were considered to be 'permanent' sites.[72] However, the Union was also realistic about wartime pressure on land and was highly critical of anyone who expected a guarantee of tenure, describing this as 'quite a mistaken attitude'. For the period of the war, the Union believed that everyone had a duty to produce their own food, with or without security of tenure.[73]

The government, both at national and local levels, did not regard wartime allotments as permanent sites. There were even restrictions on crops that were productive for more than one year:

> The limited period of occupation makes it undesirable to allow such crops as rhubarb or asparagus, which can be grown profitably only when several crops can be taken, and the principal object of the scheme is to stimulate the growth of foodstuffs such as potatoes, onions, carrot, etc.[74]

Throughout the war the Glasgow Corporation Sub-Committee on Allotments numbered its permanent plots and wartime plots separately in its minutes; there is a clear distinction between them. Their figures show that by October 1940, the Corporation had doubled the number of wartime plots available in Glasgow (2122 in total) and by October 1942 the number had more than doubled again (to 4613 plots) despite the number of permanent

[71] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/4, The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders Annual Report 1945, p. 4.

[72] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/2, The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders Annual Report 1939, pp. 6-7.

[73] Ibid.

[74] NRS, AF45/142, Allotments Defence Regulations 1939, Trespass 1939-1947, Letter from the Department of Agriculture for Scotland, 29th September 1939.

plots being reduced by nearly seventy. The figures also show that that the majority of plots were rented although the permanent plots were more popular than the wartime plots, hinting at the importance of tenure to the plotholder.[75]

Date	Permanent	Available Plots	Wartime	Available Plots
October 1939	1081	-		-
October 1940	1052	-	1070	-
September 1941	1058	-	2781	-
October 1942	990	-	3623	662
October 1943	979	6	3396	466
October 1944	967	13	3326	729
October 1945	955	16	3326	1215
October 1946	909	10	2925	1286

Table 3: Number of allotments available in Glasgow during the Second World War[76]

Land for wartime allotments in Glasgow was identified in various ways. Some were readily given or offered for rent by companies. Seed merchants Austin and McAslan, mentioned earlier, continued to offer land from their nursery in Cathcart, four acres without charge in October 1940 and a further ten acres in December 1941 at five pounds per annum.[77] Solicitors Montgomerie, Flemings, Fyfe, MacLean and Company offered four acres in the West End on behalf of the proprietors in April 1941; property agents Graham, Primrose and Todd offered vacant ground in Mount Florida in May 1941 and Universal Casings offered their recreation ground in Carntyne for the duration of the war.[78] The Parks Director also continued to make regular inspections and surveys for land as well as approaching other Corporation Committees to ask for their available land. In January 1941 he reported that since a decision the previous November to cultivate all areas of land less than five acres not required for recreation, he had laid out four hundred allotments and had made arrangements for six hundred more as soon as the weather allowed.[79]

[75] GCA, C1/3/101, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 7th May 1940, p. 1483; GCA, C1/3/106, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 12th May 1942, p. 1291.

[76] GCA, Sub-Committee on Allotments Minutes C1/3/100, p. 3036; C1/3/102, p. 2547; C1/3/104, p. 2199; C1/3/106, p. 1947; C1/3/108, p. 1489; C1/3/110, p. 1522; C1/3/112, p. 1703; C1/3/114, p. 1969.

[77] GCA, C1/3/102, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 1st October 1940, p. 2380; GCA, C1/3/105, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 9th December 1941, p. 451.

[78] GCA, C1/3/103, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 1st April 1941, p. 1134; GCA, C1/3/104, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 13th May 1941, p. 1361; GCA, C1/3/105, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 9th December 1942, p. 451.

[79] GCA, C1/3/103, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 7th January 1941, p. 553.

The Parks Director certainly seemed enthusiastic for locating land but not all the land he acquired was suitable for allotments. The soil was often not of a good enough quality to grow crops and as crops were needed quickly and reliably, there was no time for plotholders to gradually build up the nutrient content by composting. In August 1941, the Fairfield Ward Committee wrote that forty-five allotments in the Shieldhall Road area were unsuitable for cultivation and the Glasgow and District Federation of Allotment Holders' Associations wrote with the same complaint concerning allotments in West Drumoyne.[80] A further problem was that borrowed land was reclaimed throughout the war. As early as December 1939 nine allotment holders in Dalmarnock were given notice by the Town Clerk at the request of the Electricity Department and in December 1940 twenty-three more plots were reclaimed at the same site.[81] The problem increased towards the end of the war as construction of new houses began. In February 1945 the Housing Department requested that their land occupied by allotments in Hillington and Balornock be returned to them for erecting temporary houses.[82] A month later, the Sub-Committee on Allotments and the Housing Committee came to an agreement that no plotholders should be given notice until 1st November 1945 to allow them to at least finish the season.[83]

The Union fully expected wartime allotments to be claimed back but they did object to it. In October 1944 the Secretary and President of the Union, Helen Thompson and Walter Scott, wrote to Edinburgh Corporation asking them to consider the future of allotments:

> They have come to be regarded as a real permanent necessity and it is desirable that they should take their place in all future planning of recreational ground and public parks. Their provision should be regarded as a public duty and necessary social service. To business men the work of cultivation comes as a tonic, and to very many, allotments provide sole out-door recreation.[84]

This marks a change to the allotment movement's rhetoric, which during the 1930s had focussed on the unemployed. Here 'business men' are also cited as benefiting from

[80] GCA, C1/3/104, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th August 1941, p. 1836; GCA, C1/3/104, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th August 1941, p. 1836.

[81] GCA, C1/3/101, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 20th December 1939, p. 426; GCA, C1/3/103, Sub-Committee on Allotments, p. 343.

[82] GCA, C1/3/111, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 13th February 1945, p. 549.

[83] GCA, C1/3/111, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 13th March 1945, p. 733.

[84] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/8/1, Letter to the Town Clerk or Clerk of the Council named in the address from H Thompson (Secretary) and Walter Scott (President), October 1944, 28 Stafford Street, Edinburgh.

allotments as a place to relax. There is no mention of food production, the emphasis is solely on recreation, but to the Union this was a necessity in itself. It is strange, or at least leading, that Thompson and Scott mention parks but go on to claim that for 'very many' allotments are the 'sole out-door recreation'. This perhaps links back to the Joint Committee's value placed on both independence and creativity; parks are relaxing but allotments offer a space to be on your own, influencing your own surroundings and making your own decisions.

The main objection to allotments identified by the Union was that they were 'unsightly'; a problem they believed could be solved with security of tenure as an incentive to keep plots tidy.[85] In their letter, Thompson and Scott gave six recommendations to the Edinburgh Corporation: to consider providing allotments with parks and recreation grounds and ensure land was available for cultivation; in 'congested areas' to lay out 'rest gardens' with seats providing allotments in the centre; to provide future allotments with paths and water supplies; to provide communal huts on small sites or individual huts and greenhouses on individual plots; to provide smaller plots for young people and, where allotments were a long distance from plotholders' homes, to provide public transport at cheap rates. They also stated that 'Women should also be provided for' but gave no suggestion for how this might be done.[86] Thompson and Scott firmly emphasised that allotments should be permanent and their suggestions connect allotments with their surroundings; they need not be separate to parks but could be linked, improving security and sharing infrastructure such as water supplies. This is radically different to the wartime allotments that were placed in any available land, suitable for cultivation or not, unconnected to other facilities and often difficult to reach from plotholders' homes. A similar letter is noted by the Glasgow Corporation in December 1944; however, there are no records of a response from either Edinburgh or Glasgow Corporation.[87] The lack of a reply demonstrates further the divergence between the authorities who regarded allotments simply as a short-term measure, so no reply was necessary, and the allotment movement who wished allotments to be contained within long-term city planning. For the authorities allotment sites were temporary but for the allotment movement the idea of a plot as a place of stewardship was maintained throughout the war. A plot could reach its full potential with security of tenure as a place of nurture for both the soil and the plotholder.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] GCA, C1/3/111, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 12th December 1944, p. 299.

By the end of the war the Union was greatly concerned by 'that much ventilated and vexed question of SECURITY OF TENURE'. Although there had been co-operation between the Union and local authorities during the war, pressure was building as housing requirements were given precedence. The Union were outraged:

> This, in the view of the Executive, is hardly in keeping with the good work done during the war period when we set to the task of producing Food to relieve shipping for essential purposes. Both questions are serious and require attention, but with the food problems confronting us at the present it is the duty of every citizen to cultivate every available space to provide for the winter, otherwise in winning the war we might lose the peace. Let us go to it with all our united efforts, and in the long run we will win through by having permanent Allotment Areas set up worthy of the name.[88]

It was highly frustrating for the Union that after so much effort to enthuse the general public in growing their own food, wartime allotments were now to be closed despite the continued need for home production. Although the Union's campaigning had been focused on health issues, the unexpected speed of the reclamation of land immediately after the end of the Second World War perhaps led them to argue with the government on their own terms, emphasising the continued need for food production.

The End of the War

In October 1945 there were 4281 allotments in Glasgow, 955 listed as permanent and 3326 as wartime plots, nearly four times as many as there had been in 1939 (see Table 3).[89] A Ministry of Agriculture survey carried out in 1942 found that 41 per cent of Scottish people living in urban areas were growing their own fruit and vegetables in allotments or gardens. This was far below the UK's average of 55 per cent, but considering the governmental concerns in the 1930s that Scots could not be persuaded into gardening and eating vegetables, *Dig for Victory* appears to have influenced a significant change.[90] During the Second World War an increased number of people were involved in producing food, which undoubtedly led to a better understanding of diet and cooking. Fiona Sutherland's mother claimed that her family's diet was much better during the war than other people

[88] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/4, The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders Annual Report 1945, p. 4.

[89] GCA, C1/3/100, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 3rd October 1939, p. 3036; GCA, C1/3/112, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 11th September 1945, p. 1553.

[90] Buchan, p. 76.

they knew because they had an allotment.[91] But this momentum was not to be carried forward. Wartime allotments were largely laid out on borrowed land, already destined for the development of new schools and housing schemes. Plots were squeezed in rather than planned and longevity was never intended; allotments were a necessity for wartime, certainly, but not for ordinary life. For the Union and the Joint Committee this was not acceptable and the changes that had taken place during the Second World War needed to be developed further to ensure allotments became a permanent feature of towns and cities.

During the Second World War the effective working relationship between the allotment movement and government had continued, however, a tension had formed as it became clearer to the Union that the government saw allotments as a short-term solution to crisis. This tension was to develop through the 1950s and 1960s. However, it did encourage the Union to shape their voice as an advocate for the allotment movement; they were now campaigning for allotments for all, not only limiting themselves to the unemployed. For the Union, and many of the plotholders they represented, allotments were more than an answer to the scarcity of food (although the importance of their role in the food crisis should not be underplayed); allotments were also a place of safety and comfort. The war had solidified the Union's view that allotments were for everyone - unemployed or employed, male and female - and that they were a long-term part of Scotland's cities. For allotments to truly allow communities to form, sites now needed full security of tenure and integration with their surroundings.

[91] Sutherland.

James' Story

James Speirs, who is fifty-six years old, has had his plot on Vicarfield Allotments in Govan for almost two years. Although he has had great success with both flowers and vegetables on his plot, he is in a constant battle with the 'critters' who also enjoy his produce. James' story describes the challenges of being an organic gardener.

Figure 12: James and his lupins
(Image: By author)

I have several beds and our plots are bordered by fruit bushes. And the first season I'd never grown anything before in my life, so everything was trial and error, so I was growing everything like onions, potatoes, sweet corn, French beans, I tried garlic, all sorts of things. And some were successful. Some weren't. And I thought to myself the next season, which is this season, I'm going to change things about because some were too much work and I thought well I really want to grow stuff for the kitchen, for the soup pot. So this year I decided just to grow onions, carrots, potatoes, lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower, spring onion, and that sort of thing. I wanted to give myself less workload. And not just because of that but because the amount of critters that I've seen on the beds nowadays, there's a lot of them

go for a lot of the veg I was growing and I thought 'How am I going to sort this out?' So I tended to grow a lot of onions this year and carrots and anything like cabbage, which the moths and the butterflies lay eggs on, I cover it up, in case they work, because it's so frustrating when you put so much effort into sowing seeds and then they get eaten alive**...** although moths and butterflies are beautiful to watch, they're nasty critters! Because what happens is they lay eggs in your, in all your hard work, and you end up with hundreds upon hundreds of caterpillars that munch their way through all your hard work. So that was a disaster because I didn't have the knowledge but this year I'm prepared because I've got everything covered under micromesh! And if I see any of the critters I try to swat them away to someone else's bed! Apart from that, mainly slugs, slugs are a nightmare. And that was an eye-opener for me because they munch through so much of your vegetables it's unbelievable. So this is, this was a big eye-opener for me. Trying to be eco-friendly in the allotment is difficult sometimes but you find ways to try and stop the critters coming into your plot, they might end up in somebody else's because of what I'm doing because what I started doing was to put sand and broken mussels shells. I like to go to Loch Fyne Sea Shop Glasgow and get some mussels and what I do is I keep the shells and then I come home and crush them up and I put them round my vegetables ‘cause slugs don't like travelling over things that are jaggy and they don't like sand. So, I'm finding ways to keep the critters at bay. Either covering things up or putting barriers round the veg.

Foxes at the start were an absolute nightmare. And, to go back to my potato bags, they'd come up so well, were beginning to flower, and there was two or three fox cubs in the allotment one day. I was out having a cigarette and I peered through the fence and here's the foxes jumping up on top of my potato bags, flattened all the leaves. And what they were doing was - fox cubs - they were just playing, but the damage they caused was so destructive it was unbelievable. And I've actually got a raised fence which I had my cabbages in to keep the moths away, it worked brilliant, this was last year, and I covered it up with one of these net curtain things and I thought ‘This is ideal. It will keep the critters away’. And when I went out one day, there was holes all over it - I think the foxes were using it as a trampoline! And it actually fell down, so it's put a hole in it, the fox has fell through, and it's obviously been in a panic and it wrecked the whole bed. And I had to start from scratch again. So what we did to deter them critters was we put up chicken wire all around the perimeter fence but for some reason they still got in. I think there's a few Houdinis there. But they've not been causing as much damage as they did last year. So, I don't mind odd foxes as long as it behaves itself.

Only two weeks ago I was out watering the fruit bushes that border the plots and there was a major infestation of caterpillars and it was an eye-opener, I've never seen so many caterpillars at any one time. There was that many caterpillars they actually skeletonised the fruit bush. And I thought 'Google! I need to get to Google to find out what to do here', you know? So because we're an eco-allotment and we don't use pesticides, we've got to come up with other means to get rid of these critters. Now I sorted out snails with the shells and the sand. I sorted out the moths with enviro-mesh to cover up the cabbages and the cauliflower, I thought 'How am I going to sort these critters out?' So I made up a concoction of peppers, this is kind of funny actually because when I followed one of the YouTube channels and this guy said 'Do this, do that' so I made up this concoction of five spices, pepperoni, Cayenne pepper, all sorts of spices and you mix it with water and give it a shake and leave it for an hour then give it another shake. And I thought, well, I put my pinkie in to taste this and it burnt the mouth off me! And I thought 'Right, that should work on the caterpillars', so I put that in a spray can, and I'm spraying the fruit bushes and they all started to drop off like flies and they're wriggling about and I thought 'This must be working', right? But here, after ten minutes the caterpillars started to crawl back up the fruit bush!.. It's not worked because there's still a lot of damage there so, but as I say, it's a learning process. Every day there's always something different.[1]

[1] Interview with James Speirs, Vicarfield Allotments, 25th June 2015.

Chapter Three

1946 - 1959: 'That vexed question of security of tenure'[1]

> *When convenient, memories can be very short, for within living memory there has been two world wars, and during both these periods the allotmentholder was considered a very important person by the National Government and the Local Authorities and as he did not fail the country in the time of emergency, surely he is entitled to expect a square deal in time of peace.*[2] *– Reginald Ashley, 1959.*

At the end of the of the Second World War, the Scottish allotment movement was concerned by the rapid reclamation of allotment land; however, the Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders and the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed Joint Committee still had good reason for optimism. They had co-operated with the government, national and local, throughout the war and built good working relationships. The movement had greatly expanded; even with the loss of sites there were still four times as many plots in Glasgow in 1954 than there were in 1939. By 1959, when the above quote was written for the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society annual report, this optimism was gone. In the 1950s the relationship between government and the allotment movement drastically changed. This chapter will explore the significance of these changes, beginning with the decline of the National Union and the establishment of the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society. It became clear to the new society that the government no longer regarded allotments as a necessity for growing food and they formulated an alternative argument for the purpose of allotments as a vital recreation for physical and mental health for male, old-aged pensioners. This changed the concept of community on Scotland's allotments from being inclusive to all to having a discriminatory focus based on age and gender. However, this chapter will also argue that the period was key to shaping the allotment movement's stance that allotments are an integral part of Scotland's cities at all times, not just in times of crisis.

The Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society

At the end of the Second World War the National Union was in crisis. Two of its most active members, Mr Fisher and Mr Roberts, had died. The Union had also been

[1] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/4, The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders Annual Report 1945, p. 4.

[2] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/17, SAGS Annual Report 1959, p. 5.

overshadowed by the Scottish Gardens and Allotments Committee. This body carried out similar activities to the Union but as a government organisation it did not need to ask for subscription fees as it was fully funded.[3] In August 1945, a few weeks before the end of the war, a meeting was held with representatives from the Department of Agriculture, the Scottish Gardens and Allotments Committee, the Union and the Joint Committee of the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed. The delegates agreed that the government committee would be wound up and their work would instead be transferred to the Union. The Union would be financially supported by the Joint Committee and the Department of Agriculture would fund a full-time secretary, subject to the Union drafting a new constitution. The first secretary, William McWilliam, a plotholder in the West End of Glasgow, was appointed in December 1945 and in 1946 the Union was reconstituted as the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS). The government allotments committee was disbanded in early 1947.[4] The members of the new society, which was led by a voluntary committee, were mostly from allotment associations or federations. In addition many local authorities, including Glasgow Corporation, also joined, which suggests some local government support for the allotment movement.[5] SAGS provided various services to allotment associations. These included an insurance scheme to cover greenhouses and huts (frequently the target of vandals and arsonists); supplying lime and fertilisers; a scheme for shallot sets, onion sets and gladioli bulbs; a typing and duplication service and the production of a year book with a month by month gardening calendar, articles on horticulture and news from various associations across Scotland.[6] The major yearly event for SAGS was their annual conference, held every June, which enabled the SAGS committee to disseminate information and members to join discussions and make suggestions.

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[3] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/7/2/1, Notes of the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed, General Meeting for Scotland 13th October 1945, written 8th October 1945 by Harold Sharp; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2, Minute of Meeting of Joint Committee held at 28 Stafford Street, Edinburgh, on Saturday, 25th August 1945.

[4] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2, Minute of Meeting of Joint Committee held at 28 Stafford Street, Edinburgh, on Saturday, 25th August 1945; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, Minute of Meeting of Joint Committee held at 28 Stafford Street, Edinburgh, on Saturday, 29th December 1945; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/4, The Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders Annual Report 1945, p. 7; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/1, Letter McWilliam to SAGS members, 25th February 1947.

[5] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/5, SAGS Annual Report 1946, p. 3; GCA, C1/3/114, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 3rd September 1946, p. 1825.

[6] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb , UGC 222/2/2/5, SAGS Annual Report 1946, p. 5; UGAS, UGC 222/2/5/1, Letter McWilliam to SAGS members, 25th February 1947; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/13, SAGS Annual Report 1954, pp. 4-6; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/14, SAGS Annual Report 1955, pp. 4-7; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/15, SAGS Annual Report 1956, p. 5; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/17, SAGS Annual Report 1959, pp. 7-8.

The political intentions of the new society were highlighted by the secretary, McWilliam, from the very beginning when he wrote to the members that SAGS' main aim was 'to fight for the establishment of PERMANENT ALLOTMENTS in all large cities and to help and assist all amateur gardeners in their work of home production of vegetables and horticulture'.[7] SAGS were positioning themselves to pressure the government for better protection and new allotments legislation. Their first annual report, from 1946, demonstrates the committee's expectations that post-war redevelopment would seriously and negatively affect the allotment movement: 'the need for Home Food Production was never greater, and though the building of houses is also essential, it is hoped Councils will give the plotholder every consideration before clearing the ground, and at the same time provide him with alternate ground'.[8] As affiliated members, local authorities would have received this report and, whilst it is impossible to know how much consideration they would have given to it, it must have been clear that SAGS were readying themselves for a fight. The society had good reason to be concerned. Having already seen the closure of allotment sites for housing developments towards the end of the Second World War, the committee anticipated further closures as normal life returned. As food shortages continued, the government launched the appeal *Dig for Victory Over Want*, more popularly known as *Dig for Plenty*, to encourage home production in allotments and gardens.[9] However, little financial support was given to the campaign and for local authorities housing, rather than food production, became the major priority.

The Second World War had taken its toll on the housing stock of Britain; houses had been damaged or destroyed by air-raids and the problem was exacerbated by labour and supply shortages delaying repairs and the suspension of planned developments. By the end of the war there were 120,000 houses to be replaced immediately in Scotland. A further 200,000 houses were classified as overcrowded by the government, 405,000 had no sanitary conveniences or internal water supplies and a further 64,000 were damaged during the war. In addition there were 134,000 newly formed households that also needed accommodation.[10] Despite largely escaping air-raids, Glasgow's housing situation was

[7] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/1, Letter McWilliam to SAGS members, 25th February 1947.

[8] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/5, SAGS Annual Report 1946, p. 3.

[9] Lesley Acton, *Growing Space: a history of the allotment movement* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2015), pp. 113.

[10] Andrew Gibb, 'Policy and politics in Scottish housing since 1945',in *Scottish housing in the twentieth century*, ed. Richard Rodger (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), p. 157; Richard Rodger and Hunain Al-Qaddo, 'The Scottish Special Housing Association and the Implementation of housing policy, 1937-87', in *Scottish Housing in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Richard Rodger (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), pp. 188-90.

particularly acute as there had been few new developments during the war and existing problems had only worsened. 172,000 houses were overcrowded and unfit in Glasgow, a city that was home to thirty-five per cent of the total Scottish population.[11] In 1946, the City Engineer, Robert Bruce, made a plan for the total reconstruction of Glasgow aiming to build 316,000 houses by 1986. These would all be high-quality flats which Bruce believed could be sited within the city's boundaries, even including open space and gardens.[12] However, Clement Attlee's Labour government did not approve of Bruce's plan and the Secretary of State for Scotland, Thomas Johnston, appointed Patrick Abercrombie to draw up the alternative Clyde Valley Regional Plan. Abercrombie based his plan on previous development plans he had designed for English regions favouring houses over tenements, the main form of housing stock in Glasgow.[13] Abercrombie used a greenbelt to limit the expansion of Glasgow and argued that only half of the 500,000 tenement dwellers displaced by Bruce's planned slum clearance could actually be resettled within the city; the remainder would have to be relocated to expanded towns or New Towns. Glasgow Corporation regarded Abercrombie's plan as a threat, as it took away their building land and a significant part of the population, and favoured Bruce's plan as it protected their income from city rates and kept their voters within the city. Despite the Corporation's opposition, the government accepted Abercrombie's plan and the designation of a new town, East Kilbride, but the delay to building whilst the debate over plans rumbled on led to the further decay of Glasgow's tenements and overcrowding escalated.[14]

SAGS found themselves facing a local authority in Glasgow that was highly opposed to relocating people but had little available land; allotments were sited on a very valuable resource. In April 1946 the Housing Committee took possession of thirty-five allotments in Cardonald and the following November they took sixty-five more allotments across six

[11] Gibb, p. 157; Miles Horsey, *Tenements and Towers: Glasgow working-class housing 1890-1990* (Edinburgh: The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 1990), p. 28.

[12] Gibb, p. 157-61; Horsey, p. 28.

[13] Scottish housing is much more closely aligned to northern Europe than England and Wales, favouring flats over houses. Tenements in Glasgow, mostly built in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, are generally three to four storeys but vary in the number of flats they contain. Working-class tenements can contain up to twelve flats whilst middle or upper-class tenements, such as those in Hyndland, contain spacious apartments. The tenement dwellers affected by post-war planning were mostly in working-class areas of the city. James Stevens Curl, *Victorian Architecture* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles Publishers, 1990), p. 195; Raymond Young, *Annie's Loo: the Govan origins of Scotland's community based housing associations* (Glendaruel: Argyll Publishing, 2013).

[14] Seán Damer, *Glasgow Going for a Song* (London: Lawrence and Wishart Limited, 1990), pp. 188-89; Gibb, p. 161-2; Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius, *Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 158-60; Horsey, pp. 32-33.

small sites in Mosspark, Craigton, Carntyne and Kennyhill.[15] The Corporation stated that the allotments were closed because of a lack of interest but to plotholders these closures represented a threat; the Berridale Association, in the Southside of Glasgow, were so afraid of losing their allotments that in 1947 they purchased their own site.[16] It was clear to SAGS that there was little protection for allotments, especially wartime sites considered to be temporary, so the society began to campaign for new legislation.

The Allotments (Scotland) Act of 1950

In 1947 the SAGS committee invited the Under-Secretary of State, Thomas Fraser, to give an address at their annual conference on 'the vexed question of security of tenure'. Fraser admitted that allotment ground was being taken for housing, schools and industrial development but he also argued it was due to a lack of interest because Scottish people were not 'sufficiently vegetable conscious', an odd comment to make to the vegetable growing delegates.[17] In 1930 the Under-Secretary of State, then John Lamb, and the Department of Agriculture had seized upon allotments as an opportunity to encourage Scots to eat more fruit and vegetables; following the Second World War, poor diet was actually being used as an excuse to close allotment sites. With the *Dig for Plenty* campaign underway and rationing still in force it was a missed opportunity to improve the nation's diet. Following Fraser's talk a resolution was passed at the conference to be sent to all Scottish MPs pledging allegiance to *Dig for Plenty* and asking for new legislation to provide security of tenure 'as without reasonable security, allotment holders do not feel inclined to lay out, finance or labour'.[18] SAGS was promising to help the government's campaign but not for nothing.

In January 1948 SAGS took further action and organised a meeting on food production. Two hundred representatives of local authorities and allotment associations were in attendance, including Glasgow Corporation.[19] They invited the Secretary of State for Scotland, Arthur Woodburn, to give the address, an invitation that appears to have backfired. Although Woodburn agreed that security of tenure was a 'thorny question' he

[15] GCA, C1/3/113, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 2nd April, p. 949; GCA, C1/3/114, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 3rd September 1946, p. 1825.

[16] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/6, SAGS Annual Report 1947, p. 4.

[17] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/1, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1947, p. 3.

[18] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/1, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1947, p. 6; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/6, SAGS Annual Report 1947, p. 4.

[19] GCA, C1/3/117, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 6th January 1948, p. 499; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/1, Report by McWilliam on meeting 12th January 1948 addressed by Secretary of State for Scotland.

also said that when it came to a choice between housing or allotments 'the allotment holder would have a hard time of it', giving his support to the local authority representatives at the meeting that housing should be given priority over allotments.[20] SAGS responded to Woodburn's talk by circulating a further memorandum to Scottish MPs again asking for a revision of existing legislation, but also adding a request of financial support to local authorities and allotment associations to make sites permanent. At the same time the National Allotments Society (for England and Wales) sent a similar memorandum to their MPs.[21] The Scottish memorandum was discussed in the House of Commons on 27th January 1948. When Woodburn was directly asked whether he was prepared to introduce new legislation he neatly dodged the question saying merely that he intended to discuss the memorandum with the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. Woodburn added that he expected plotholders to do everything they could to produce their own food instead of waiting for legislation.[22] Central government still expected food to be produced at home because of continued shortages but the support given during the war was rapidly coming to an end.

Despite a lack of offers of financial or practical assistance, the Department of Agriculture sent a series of letters to local authorities in 1946 and 1947 asking them to support the allotment movement and keep wartime sites open in 'view of the continued gravity of the world food situation'.[23] Glasgow Corporation ran advertising campaigns in the press as well as in their Transport Department vehicles in 1946 and 1947 in an attempt to lease empty plots. In May 1947 the Director of Parks reported to the Allotments Sub-Committee that two hundred unlet plots had been taken up as a result, however, this still left 855 plots in Glasgow without a plotholder. The Director thought these would 'never be let owing to the difficult nature of the ground, and, in some cases, the lack of protection by adequate fencing'.[24] The plots were empty not because people were not interested in gardening, but because of impossible conditions for cultivation. In June 1947 the Allotments Sub-Committee made the decision to close a further 368 plots in Lambhill, Hillington, Ibrox,

[20] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/1, Report by McWilliam on meeting 12th January 1948 addressed by Secretary of State for Scotland.

[21] Ibid.

[22] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/2, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1948, p. 3.

[23] GCA, C1/3/113, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th February 1946, p. 588; GCA, C1/3/113, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th March 1946, p. 823; GCA, C1/3/115, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 1st April 1947, p. 1027; GCA, C1/3/117, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 25th November 1947, p. 254.

[24] C1/3/113, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th March 1946, p. 823; GCA, C1/3/113, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 2nd April 1946, p. 949; GCA, C1/3/115, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 1st April 1947, p. 1027; GCA, C1/3/116, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 13th May 1947, p. 1295.

Mosspark, part of a site at King's Park and part of the Trinley Brae site.[25] Fencing, or lack of fencing, was frequently a problem. In February 1947 the Director of Parks reported to the Allotments Sub-Committee that across four allotment sites in Carntyne, Balornock, Maryhill and Cambuslang only twenty-six of 138 plots were let; he recommended that the land should be returned to its previous owners because of the 'very high cost of upkeep of fencing'.[26]

In March 1948 the Department of Agriculture wrote to local authorities asking them to grow potatoes on unlet plots or any vacant land in their possession, without giving any suggestion of *who* was supposed to grow the potatoes. In response, the Director of Housing for Glasgow gave the Director of Parks a list of areas to use but he turned them all down because of the poor quality of the soil, a lack of fencing or a lack of demand.[27] In September 1948 McWilliam attended an inquiry into Glasgow Corporation's plan to remove 400 plotholders in the Nether Pollok estate. Afterwards he wrote to Harold Sharp, the Chairman of the Joint Committee: 'The Housing Convenor of Glasgow thinks that houses come before allotments. We do not dispute this, but surely some space under their Town Planning Acts should be devoted to allotments'.[28] SAGS could not argue that allotments were more important than housing - it was clear that Glasgow was in a housing crisis - but they did believe that allotments were needed alongside housing, especially flats with no outdoor space. Wartime allotments were failing because they were not planned nor maintained; they were too far from plotholders' homes; the soil was too poor for cultivation and a lack of fencing opened plots to vandalism. McWilliam wanted to see allotments integrated into town planning to correct these issues. However, he also believed that plotholders themselves had to take responsibility for the survival of allotments. McWilliam requested in the 1948 annual report that all SAGS members write to their candidates in the local election asking for their views on allotments, encouraging plotholders to become politically engaged themselves rather than relying on the SAGS committee. In the same report McWilliam asked plotholders to keep their plots 'clean, tidy and properly cultivated', a request for tidiness that was to become a key part of SAGS'

[25] GCA, C1/3/113, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th February 1946, p. 588; GCA, C1/3/113, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th March 1946, p. 823; GCA, C1/3/113, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 2nd April 1946, p. 949; GCA, C1/3/115, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 1st April 1947, p. 1027; GCA, C1/3/116, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 13th May 1947, p. 1295; GCA, C1/3/116, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 10th June 1947, p. 1479.

[26] GCA, C1/3/115, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 4th February 1947, p. 666.

[27] GCA, C1/3/117, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 2nd March 1948, p. 844; GCA, C1/3/117, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 13th April 1948, p. 1098.

[28] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/1, Letter McWilliam to Sharp, 14th September 1948.

campaign for the protection of allotments.[29] A tidy plotholder could not be accused of being an uninterested plotholder. In the 1949 annual report McWilliam wrote: 'Dirty allotments become an eyesore and bring disrespect on the movement, but no better advertisement for permanent allotments can be made than clean, tidy, well-cultivated crops. They will attract others.'[30]

McWilliam's campaign for tidiness came under threat when the government produced the Allotments (Scotland) Bill in 1950. Clause 10 (1) stated that buildings or structures 'reasonably necessary' for keeping rabbits or poultry could be erected on plots. SAGS was against this clause as they expected any structure would be messy and work against their 'efforts to improve the appearance of allotments'. At the 1950 annual conference an emergency resolution was passed and sent to Prime Minister Clement Attlee, the Secretary of State Hector McNeil and political party leaders protesting against the clause.[31] Help was also sought from the press and in June 1950 *The Scotsman* included an article titled *Allotments Bill Criticised: Unsightly Buildings Possible* stating that SAGS had been 'struggling for years to improve the appearance of allotments by tying down allotment-holders to put their buildings in alignment and conform to certain standards'.[32] The Bill was debated in Parliament on 18th October 1950 and the ministers agreed to remove the offending clause, conceding that there was no longer a need for plotholders to keep rabbits and poultry as there had been during the food shortages of the Second World War.[33]

The Allotments (Scotland) Act was passed on 26th October 1950 but SAGS' celebrations for the much needed legislation were short-lived. What McWilliam and the committee did not anticipate was that on the same day as the act was passed, the Housing (Scotland) Act 1950 was also passed with a clause that cancelled out a key part of the allotments legislation. The Allotments (Scotland) Act 1950 stated that if allotment ground was to be reclaimed then one year's notice had to be given to allow crops to be harvested. If shorter notice was given then compensation had to be paid.[34] This was not full security of tenure as the committee might have hoped but the conditions were much better than before and it

[29] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/7, SAGS Annual Report 1948, p. 4.

[30] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/8, SAGS Annual Report 1949, p. 4.

[31] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/6, Emergency Resolution.

[32] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/8, 'Allotments Bill Criticised: Unsightly Buildings Possible', *The Scotsman*, 19th June 1950.

[33] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/3/7/1, Allotments (Scotland) Bill, Wednesday 18th October 1950.

[34] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/9, SAGS Annual Report 1950, p. 4.

guarded against the financial worries of being dispossessed from a plot. However, Section 63 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1950 stated that a local authority that had purchased land for providing houses could enter and take possession within fourteen days. So if an allotment site was required for housing, a local authority need only give two weeks' notice, not a whole year. It did not take long before such an incident occurred. Two SAGS members from Edinburgh, Crawford and Webb, reported at the 1951 SAGS conference that plotholders at West Mains had only been given fourteen days' notice to remove from their allotment site. This was despite previous assurance from Edinburgh City Allotments Committee that their tenure was permanent. After viewing the Edinburgh city development plans in November 1950 the West Mains association had become concerned and again had sought and received confirmation from the committee that their site was permanent.[35] The secretary of the city-wide Edinburgh Allotment Holders' Association (EAHA), Andrew Judge, had begun to campaign to save West Mains in April 1951 by writing to the Depute Town Clerk. He received a reply stating that the Corporation's actions were legal under the Housing (Scotland) Act of 1950:

> In the interests of the many thousands of houseless people in the community it is urgently necessary that, to provide houses as soon as possible, work on the development in the West Mains housing area be started immediately, and in the circumstances I am afraid that the interests of the allotment holders must be subjugated to the interests of the community as a whole.[36]

McWilliam supported the EAHA, writing to *The Scotsman* asking 'to record the facts as a warning to holders of gardens and allotments throughout Scotland'. McWilliam argued that Edinburgh Corporation's actions were inconsistent with the report of an Allotments Advisory Committee in 1950, which had recommended four acres of allotment area per one thousand people as a target. In his letter, McWilliam described allotments as 'a healthy occupation for all classes of the community, providing interest and a means of self-expression, and giving scope for enterprise and skill'.[37] W.W. Simpson, a member of the SAGS committee, also wrote to *The Scotsman* stating that the West Mains dispossession showed 'a deplorable lack of sympathy by the Local Authorities for the needs and the

[35] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/5, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1951, p. 7.

[36] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/3/5/4, Letter Depute Town Clerk to Andrew Judge, 2nd April 1951.

[37] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/3/5/4, Letter McWilliam to editor of *The Scotsman*, 2nd April 1951.

importance of the allotment movement'. Simpson stated that not only were allotments being closed for housing, such as the site at West Mains, but also for playing fields. He criticised local authorities for not realising that they had a duty to provide permanent allotments and to put sites 'into a neat and tasteful condition in the same way as they set aside and lay out a piece of ground for recreations such as football, cricket, bowling or tennis'.[38] Simpson's letter aligns with McWilliam's argument that allotments should be permanent and therefore part of town planning but it also represents a turning point in the Scottish allotment movement. Allotments were no longer regarded by the government as a necessity. Despite the *Dig for Plenty* campaign, sites were being closed and the argument for permanent allotments based on home food production was simply not working. A new argument was needed and in aligning allotments with football, cricket and bowling, Simpson was presenting gardening as a recreation. This does not seem to be a true shift in how the allotments movement saw itself but rather a political move.

Losing the Plots

Glasgow Corporation also continued to close its allotment sites. In January 1950 the Director of Parks had submitted a statement to the Allotments Sub-Committee suggesting that 568 of the remaining 2126 wartime plots be closed - although rationing was to continue until 1954. This included ninety-eight to be handed to the Housing Department and eight to be redeveloped for a Scout Hall; for the rest it was said there was no demand. These plots were spread over fourteen sites across Glasgow to be either completely or partially closed.[39] A few years later, in March 1952, McWilliam wrote to the Secretary of State for Scotland, James Stuart, objecting to the proposed development plan for Glasgow, which he believed would lead to the closure of as many as 800 to 900 plots in Partick West Ward and Whiteinch alone:

> Unfortunately, allotments are a necessity at the present moment, so far as food production is concerned, while it also gives many old people a great deal of pleasure, who otherwise would not find space when they live in tenements.[40]

SAGS arguments at this time are caught between the allotment as a necessity for food and the allotment as recreation, especially for older people, but McWilliam's connection

[38] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/3/5/4, 'Allotment Holders' Protest', *The Scotsman* , 6th April 1951.

[39] Acton, p. 130; GCA, C1/3/121, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 31st January 1950, p. 1634.

[40] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/5, Letter McWilliam to James Stuart, Secretary of State for Scotland, 25th March 1952.

between tenement flats and allotment gardening was becoming starker. There is no record of a response from Stuart.

The major difficulty for SAGS in protecting sites was that many wartime allotments were on land already earmarked for projects that had simply been delayed, not permanently abandoned, because of the Second World War. Sometimes the land belonged to housing companies and had been leased to local authorities. In April 1951 John Lawrence (Glasgow) Limited asked the Corporation to evict plotholders in Hyndland and Scotstoun on their land so that they could begin a development, however, the Corporation reached an agreement with the company that they would wait until October, giving the plotholders time to harvest their crops.[41] Other allotment sites were reclaimed for public facilities. In February 1952 the Education Department reclaimed allotment sites in Knightswood and Anniesland and in November 1952 four plots were evicted for British Railways to modernise the Mosspark West station.[42] Surprisingly, at the same time the Corporation was making new sites; in December 1952 the Allotments Sub-Committee approved a £370 estimate to lay out thirty-two new plots in Priesthill. However, the number of plots closed greatly outweighed the number being created; also in December 1952, the Scottish news broadcast that two hundred plots in Glasgow were to be closed.[43]

In closing its sites, Glasgow Corporation claimed that there was a lack of interest in allotments but the allotment movement contested this opinion. The Glasgow Federation of plotholders sent a resolution to the Town Clerk asking that allotments actively under cultivation should be made permanent. At a SAGS meeting in December 1952 a Federation member, Reginald Ashley, reported that allotments in Glasgow were often not fenced, had no shelter from the rain and no security of tenure. Ashley believed that people would simply not take on a plot under these conditions; there was not a lack of interest, it was just too large an investment in time and money to garden under such difficult circumstances.[44] At the 1952 SAGS annual conference Victor Webb, the West Mains plotholder and a member of the Joint Committee, gave a talk. Webb estimated that 20,000 allotments had been lost in Scotland since the end of the Second World War; 10,000 were given up in

[41] GCA, C1/3/123, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 10th April 1951, p. 2048.

[42] GCA, C1/3/124A, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th February 1952, p. 1615; GCA, C1/3/125, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 30th September 1952, p. 885.

[43] GCA, C1/3/126, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 9th December 1952, p. 1317; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/5, Minutes of Meeting held at Glasgow on Saturday, 6th December 1952.

[44] GCA, C1/3/124A, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th February 1952, p. 1615; GCA, C1/3/125, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 30th September 1952, p. 885.

1946 by plotholders who no longer wanted to garden and a further 10,000 were closed for redevelopment. Webb argued that local authorities did not recognise the value of allotments at a time when world resources were diminishing whereas the population was growing and the price of imported food was rising. Strongly influenced by the tenets of the Joint Committee he stated that allotments could fill the elderly's time and keep them 'free from minor ailments'; they were a place for young people to get 'rid of their high spirits and energy' and for everyone allotments meant 'fewer troubles, breakdowns, fewer cases for the mental homes, fewer matrimonial disputes'. Allotments, according to Webb, also allowed for mixed income groups and 'people from all walks of life to come together'. He asked members to write to their local councillors and MPs to persuade them to include allotments in city development plans.[45] This request was repeated by McWilliam in the 1952 annual report when he requested members to study their city's development plans and lodge their objections with the Secretary of State for Scotland. Again he drew on the importance of allotments in tenement areas:

> While we admit gardens are being supplied in housing schemes, these do not meet the necessary requirements of tenement dwellers who desire allotments in or within easy reach of their homes where they can follow up a healthy and recreational hobby while assisting in the vital necessity of home food production.[46]

Following the conference McWilliam again wrote to the Secretary of State with an emergency resolution passed unanimously by the delegates:

> This Conference views with concern the alarming decrease in the number of allotments in Scotland and records the impossibility for plotholders to properly cultivate their allotments under the present insecurity of tenure.
>
> We appeal to the Secretary of State for Scotland to issue directive to local authorities or by other means at his disposal, to ensure that an adequate number of allotment gardens be provided within reasonable reach of people's homes.[47]

[45] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/5, Excerpts from Victor Webb's address to the SAGS Annual Conference, 21st June 1952.

[46] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/11, SAGS Annual Report 1952, p. 5.

[47] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/6, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1952, p. 5; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/5 Letter McWilliam to James Stuart, Secretary of State for Scotland, 14th August 1952.

Again, there was no reply. Added to the SAGS committee's consternation at a lack of communication and support from the government was a troubling financial situation. The loss of plots, and therefore plotholders, meant that SAGS had fewer subscriptions coming in and a major source of their funding was therefore diminished.[48] The society was receiving an annual grant from the Development Commission but this was linked to the money the committee raised themselves, so the grant was reduced when SAGS' own fundraising was reduced. McWilliam wrote to the secretary of the Commission in November 1951 explaining that although he had projected an income of £438 that year in subscriptions only £368 had actually been raised:

> Scottish Allotment Gardens are almost entirely in industrial areas on which is an unprecedented demand for houses. The Allotment Gardens have repeatedly in recent months been requisitioned for building sites without alternative ground being provided. The drop in Subscription Income is accordingly largely due to causes out with our control.[49]

In the same year SAGS had agreed with the Joint Committee that they would take over the administration of the unemployment scheme, with the Joint Committee providing SAGS annually with £200 for the grants as well as £25 to cover administration costs.[50] Considering their financial difficulties, the decision for SAGS to administer the scheme was not one that they could take lightly. On 20th February 1951 McWilliam had met with Mr Campbell from the Department of Agriculture for Scotland to discuss their situation. The following day Campbell wrote to McWilliam saying that he hoped SAGS would ensure the necessary funds came from the Joint Committee as the Department could not recommend an increase in the grant SAGS received from the Development Commission: 'My reason for writing is to make quite sure that your Committee do not undertake any new financial burdens on the assumption that they could rely further on grant-aid from the Development Fund to carry it'.[51] This letter suggests relations between the government and SAGS had become somewhat strained. In his annual report for 1952 McWilliam asked bluntly 'Can we carry on?' He had cut expenses as much as possible and it seemed that

[48] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/3, Interim report for year ended 16th November 1951, 1st February 1952.

[49] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/5, Letter McWilliam to Secretary of Development Commission, 2nd November 1951.

[50] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/2, SAGS Report on Joint Meeting, 24th January 1951.

[51] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/2, Letter Campbell (Dept. of Agriculture for Scotland) to McWilliam, 21st February 1951.

membership subscriptions could be only increased with an advertising campaign that the society could not afford.[52] In October 1952 the Secretary of the Development Commission wrote to McWilliam emphasising the need for economies in public expenditure, asking SAGS to consider this in their grant application for 1953.[53] SAGS were confronted with decreasing government support, both politically and financially.

The Joint Committee were also considering the future. Far fewer applications had been received for the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed during the Second World War. However, the Joint Committee also felt it should be continued in anticipation of a post-war rise in unemployment based on their experience of the recession following the First World War. Because of their uncertainty the scheme was only run on a year-to-year basis in the late 1940s and reduced to just the original Scheme A. In 1947 the Joint Committee decided not to ask for any further subscriptions as their funds were healthy and the number of applications they were receiving was relatively small.[54] Throughout the war the majority of applications to the scheme had been from pensioners rather than the unemployed and the Joint Committee continued to encourage older people to apply. They stated that that the allotment was 'an ideal form of activity' for older people 'contributing to their physical, mental, economic and social well-being and independence', an argument that was recycled from their former campaign for younger, unemployed people.[55] There was also a focus on older people by SAGS, as seen in the quotes from McWilliam above, and this limitation in the promotion of allotments for the benefits of pensioners was to influence, negatively, the allotment movement for many years to come. In the political climate it was becoming impossible for the Scottish allotment movement to keep arguing that allotments were the necessity they had once been throughout both World Wars and the Great Depression; a new argument was needed to protect allotments. The focus on food was almost lost so instead SAGS and the Joint Committee began to promote the allotment as a hobby for pensioners, and in particular, a hobby for older men. At the 1951 SAGS annual conference the president, Mr Birkett, commented in his address that allotments give pensioners 'a great deal of pleasure' but also that they take them 'out of the way of their

[52] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/5, SAGS Supplemental Report for year ended March 1952, written June 1952.

[53] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/5, Letter Secretary of Development Commission to McWilliam, 4th October 1952.

[54] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/7, SASU Annual Report 1946; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/8, SASU Annual Report 1947; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/9, SASU Annual Report 1948.

[55] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/8, SASU Annual Report 1947.

wives'.[56] In the 1930s, although the main focus had been on men, the Joint Committee had actively included women in their scheme and considered how more women could become involved on allotments; this inclusion might have been an oddity. In his paper on wartime gardening, Franklin Ginn explains how garden writer AJ Macself advised men in the 1930s to avoid 'ladies tools', which were inadequate for real gardening, and to give their wives separate small areas of the garden where they could do no damage to vegetables whilst looking to cut flowers. Although the Ministry of Agriculture appealed to women to garden during the Second World War, wartime advice still assumed gardening to be a man's work and they were to direct the women. Ginn argues that *Dig for Victory* 'legitimised masculine control over the garden and ensured norms of patriarchy were reproduced through the practices of domestic gardening'.[57] This argument could be extended from private gardens to allotments, which in the 1950s, were becoming a male only domain.

During the 1950s around 360 people annually received grants from the unemployment scheme. By 1956 the scheme was almost completely focused on older people with 360 pensioners receiving grants and only fifteen unemployed people.[58] In 1959 Reginald Ashley, who had taken over as SAGS secretary after the death of McWilliam in 1953, noted that despite a rise in unemployment there was 'an absence of applications from the younger unemployed men'; there were thirty unemployed people assisted that year. Harold Sharp, the Joint Committee's Chairman, noted that 'a non-gardening man had to be fairly devoid of hope before entering upon the cultivation of a plot'.[59] The allotment movement too seemed fairly devoid of hope; rather than fight to encourage young people to garden and challenge the government to protect allotments, the Joint Committee and SAGS were almost admitting defeat.

Allotment sites continued to close into the mid-1950s. In December 1954 a total of 105 plots, fifty-one of which were let, in Carntyne, Mosspark, Hillington, Mount Florida and Springburn were returned to 'their former use as amenity open spaces'.[60] Just under half of these plots were let at the time, which seems low, but Corporation minutes always show a

[56] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/3, SAGS Annual Conference Chairman's Address 1951.

[57] Franklin Ginn, 'Dig for Victory! New histories of wartime gardening in Britain', *Journal of Historical Geography* 38:3 (2012), p. 301.

[58] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, SASU Joint Committee minutes, 7th December 1955; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, SASU Joint Committee minutes, 24th October 1956; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, SASU Joint Committee minutes, 30th October 1957.

[59] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UCG 222/1/5/9, SASU Minutes, 4th November 1959; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, SASU Joint Committee minutes, 4th November 1959.

[60] GCA, C1/3/130, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 7th December 1954, p. 1302.

lower number of plots let in the winter than in the spring when all missives have been paid; the rent may not have been paid for the fifty-four plots for the upcoming year but that does not necessarily mean the plots were unoccupied. Plotholders on Darnley Road at Crossmyloof were given notice to move by 15th March 1955 for the Hutchesons' Educational Trust to build a new school and in November 1955 the Lighting Department reclaimed their land from plotholders in Ibrox to build a new depot.[61] Generally there are no suggestions of alternative ground in the Corporation minutes to replace the allotment sites. In July 1956 Reginald Ashley wrote to Webb:

> Within the City of Glasgow, land for building is at a premium, with the result the speculative builders are buying up small areas devoted to Allotments… for the erection of houses for Owner-Occupiers, and where these dispossessions are taking place alternative ground is not available.[62]

There were a few exceptions. In October 1953 the Allotments Sub-Committee received letters of protest over the termination of tenancies at King's Park from the Croftfoot Gardens and Allotments Association, SAGS and the Glasgow and District Federation of Allotments and Gardens Associations with petitions signed by the plotholders. On this occasion the Sub-Committee withdrew the notices.[63] However, the overall trend was the loss of allotments and by the mid-1950s it was not only wartime sites that were at risk. Since 1921 the Corporation had let ground at Winton Drive in Kelvinside which they had sublet as allotments but the owners served notice on the Corporation in December 1956 requiring them to move before the end of the year. In this case the Allotments Sub-Committee agreed that the Town Clerk and the Director of Parks would discuss the provision of alternative ground with plotholders as well as compensation.[64] In December 1950 there had been a total of 2645 plots in Glasgow, including wartime and permanent plots, but by December 1956 the number was reduced to just 1793, revealing a loss of close to a third.[65]

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[61] GCA, C1/3/130, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 1st February 1955, p. 1560; GCA, C1/3/131, Sub Committee on Allotments, 8th November 1955, p. 1149.

[62] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/4, Letter Ashley to Webb, 19th July 1956.

[63] GCA, C1/3/127, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 13th October 1953, p. 953.

[64] GCA, C1/3/134, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 4th December 1956, p. 1377.

[65] GCA, C1/3/123, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th December 1950, p. 1316; GCA, C1/3/134, 4th December 1956, Sub-Committee on Allotments, p. 1377.

Date	Permanent	Wartime	Total
December 1950	1185	1460	2645
December 1951	1177	1164	2341
December 1952	1177	1107	2284
December 1953	1207	855	2062
December 1954	1226	729	1955
December 1955	1260	533	1793
December 1956	1260	470	1730
December 1957	1235	470	1705
December 1958	1235	470	1705
December 1959	1220	285	1505

Table 4: Number of allotments available during the 1950s[66]

The 1956 SAGS annual conference speech was given by Captain JAL Duncan, MP for South Angus. Duncan had formerly been supportive of SAGS, reading out their letters in the parliamentary debate on the 1950 Allotments (Scotland) Bill, but unfortunately SAGS' choice of guest speaker once again backfired.[67] Duncan read out a letter from the government: 'You may perhaps care to mention the Government's interest in the welfare of the Allotment movement and in the special part it has to play in the social life of the community'. This sounded shallow when Duncan added that in his opinion allotments being lost to housing 'really cannot be complained of' when it was considered how many housing schemes provided gardens for tenants.[68] This was of no comfort to tenants in Glasgow who were being housed in new multi-storey flats with no outside space. SAGS' treasurer, John Thomson, responded to Duncan's speech:

> When the society was formed ten years ago, we had basic grant of £600, so like the decline in the number of allotments the amount of grant is also down, and we are struggling and doing our very best to keep down costs, and as a result of these efforts the basic grant has been whittled by half. I hope the Honourable Gentleman will be able to do something for me and something for our Society. Every year we work hard and strive to do our best, Mr Ashley has given us reductions in postages

[66] GCA Sub-Committee on Allotments Minutes C1/3/123, p. 1316; C1/3/124, p. 1319; C1/3/126, p. 1317; C1/3/128, p. 1233; C1/3/130, p. 1302; C1/3/132, p. 1379; C1/3/134, p. 1377; C1/3/136, p. 1349; C1/3/138, p. 1459; C1/3/140, p. 1516.

[67] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/3/7/1, Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Scottish Standing Committee. Official Report, Allotments (Scotland) Bill, Wednesday 18th October 1950; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/10, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1956, p. 9.

[68] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/10, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1956, p. 9.

> and other things, and what do we find? By making these cuts and saving as much as possible we are no better off, the amount of grant being reduced accordingly.[69]

The bitterness in Thomson's comments is clear. In a decade SAGS had gone from a supportive relationship with the government, who enabled their formation, to having their grant reduced by half in spite of greater financial need. The government's letter read by Duncan must have seemed hollow to the gathered members. Local government funding was also reduced. In April 1957 plotholders in Springburn and Mansewood requested water supplies to be provided and both requests were refused by Glasgow Corporation. The Mansewood plotholders were not prepared to accept this and their MP, James George, wrote on their behalf to the Allotments Sub-Committee to say that the site association would arrange the work themselves if they could just have permission. The Sub-Committee agreed but the plotholders themselves had to cover the cost.[70] In December 1959 Tollcross Allotments Association had their request for improved fencing refused.[71] The infrastructure SAGS regarded as vital for plotholders to effectively maintain their plots was being denied, unless plotholders could provide it themselves.

William S. McWilliam

The difficulty in researching the allotment movement in this period is that there is a lack of testimony. It is clear that SAGS and the Joint Committee believed that allotments were beneficial to health and well-being but their records contain no personal stories to support their claims. From the Glasgow Corporation minutes it can be known that there were protests to allotment closures and requests to improve sites but it cannot really be known what the loss of a site, or inadequate infrastructure, meant to the plotholders. There are plenty of facts and figures but few thoughts and feelings. For one plotholder, however, it is possible to piece a short biography together. William S. McWilliam has been mentioned a few times throughout this chapter as the secretary of the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society. Reading his letters and reports, he appears to have been a kind, thoughtful and sensitive man with a passion for the allotment movement, slightly tempered by politeness. In 1972 John Thomson gave a talk at the SAGS conference on his history with the society and shared that in 1949 he went with McWilliam to a conference, held at Olympia. McWilliam, seemingly again just to be polite, gave his address in French, even though he

[69] Ibid., p. 11.

[70] GCA, C1/3/134, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 30th April 1957, p. 2319; GCA, C1/3/135, Parks Committee, 26th June 1957, p. 515.

[71] GCA, C1/3/140, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 8th December 1959, p. 1516.

found it 'hard going'.[72] McWilliam personally understood how it felt to lose an allotment as his own site, in the West End of Glasgow, was compulsory purchased for a school to be extended.[73] He wrote in protest to the Secretary of State but received a reply in March 1953 from the Glasgow Town Clerk commenting that he felt McWilliam was 'reading into the proposals in the Development Plan results which the Corporation do not intend'.[74] On 7th April 1953 McWilliam attended a public inquiry into the plans and made the familiar comment that allotments should be zoned on to the city development plans.[75] The outcome of the inquiry is not evident in the records. In the previous few years McWilliam had come under great pressure from SAGS. He wrote to Victor Webb in August 1952 confessing he was greatly worried. He was receiving little support but plenty of criticism from the SAGS committee: 'You may have realised it and perhaps been observant, but this fault finding at every cut and turn does eventually get below one's skin'.[76] By November 1952 McWilliam had been signed off work for a month by his doctor and he wrote to Webb, understatedly, again: 'It is bad enough but not too bad I am pleased to say. My Heart has given out a little due to overwork and worry'.[77] Evidently McWilliam felt under a great deal of pressure and he wrote again to Webb twice over a few weeks – 'Even though it is against medical advice to write – I feel I must' as he did not want Webb to have to take on all of the secretary's work in his absence.[78] There appears to have been very little sympathy for McWilliam's illness. In January 1953 the Dundee Federation of Allotments and Gardens Associations sent a resolution to be considered at the annual conference that the secretary's salary should be reviewed. However, one member, Mr Stalker, wrote privately to McWilliam calling the motion 'a dirty, lousie motion' and explaining he had tried to stop it. The resolution was later withdrawn but it had upset McWilliam who again wrote to Webb saying that his illness was caused by overwork.[79] McWilliam's arguments that allotments were good for mental and physical health suggest that this had been his personal

[72] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/20, SAGS Annual Report 1972, p. 2.

[73] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/4, Letter McWilliam to Webb, 10th March 1953.

[74] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/4, Notice of public enquiry, March 1953; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/4, Letter Town Clerk Depute to McWilliam, 7th March 1953.

[75] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/5, Minute SAGS exec., 11th April 1953.

[76] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/3, Letter McWilliam to Webb, 13th August 1952.

[77] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/5, Letter McWilliam to Webb, 13th November 1952.

[78] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/5, Letter McWilliam to Webb, 20th November 1952; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/5, Letter McWilliam to Webb, 21st December 1952.

[79] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/4, Letter Stalker to McWilliam, 28th January 1953; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/4, Letter Dundee to McWilliam, 29th January 1953; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/4, Letter McWilliam to Webb, 30th January 1953; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/4, Minute of SAGS Exec. Meeting, 7th February 1953.

experience; it is not unreasonable to think that a stressful time at work coinciding with the possible loss of his plot would have been devastating for him. In June 1953, McWilliam suddenly died. SAGS' notice of his death said:

> With the end of the war and the Dig for Victory campaign public interest and enthusiasm in the movement flagged at a time when dispossession for various development purposes took place on an unprecedented scale. Despite apathy and lack of support from others he faced these difficulties at much self-sacrifice, but always animated by a warm and generous heart and in a cheerful manner. [80]

McWilliam's story provides one individual voice, which hints at the importance of a plot to a plotholder, but it also shows great tension within SAGS. He was under enormous pressure, with little help, and this perhaps suggests that other plotholders were struggling too. The Dundee Federation were angry and, in Stalker's eyes at least, it was unfair to take their anger out on McWilliam, but anger has to come from somewhere. In less than a decade the plotholders, to borrow Ashley's words, had gone from being considered 'very important' people by the government, to being considered as hobbyists on land that was needed for the government's current priority of housing.[81]

In the SAGS report for 1959 Ashley again addressed the loss of allotments to housing developments. He understood the demand but not why allotment land, rather than vacant land, had to be taken: 'why is so little consideration shown to the tenants who, as tenement dwellers, are being denied the chance of pursuing their hobby, there being no alternative accommodation within reasonable distance of their homes'.[82] By the end of the 1950s the allotment movement felt abandoned by the government which they had supported throughout the crisis of the Second World War. At the end of the war the government were no longer concerned with allotments, their focus has shifted to providing housing. In turn, this forced a shift in SAGS' focus. Although the Society had attempted to continue their argument that allotments were a necessity, at least until food rationing came to an end in 1954, it was clear that the government were no longer sympathetic to this message. Instead the society began to focus on allotments as a recreation. This continued the argument that allotments have a role in health and well-being but SAGS' emphasis on allotments as a recreation particularly for male old-aged pensioners was to endanger the movement as it

[80] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/4, Notice of McWilliam's death.

[81] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/17, SAGS Annual Report 1959, p. 5.

[82] Ibid., p. 5.

changed the concept of community on allotment sites from one of inclusion to one of exclusion. However, the challenges SAGS faced in the 1950s were significant to the history of the allotment movement as, although the government saw a choice between allotments or housing, SAGS saw that both were needed by people living in cities. SAGS' long-term vision of allotments to be included in city planning and accepted as permanent sites in Scotland's cities was cemented; a vision that was to be further developed in the 1960s.

Donna's Story

Donna Blake, who is thirty-six, has had her plot on High Carntyne Allotments for seven years. Vandalism, especially of sheds, is mentioned several times throughout this thesis; Donna's story presents a personal account of how vandalism affects plotholders.

Figure 13: Donna with her pink shed
(Image: By author)

Well, the shed is mostly storage for, obviously, like tools and things. At the moment I'm drying lavender as well, so it's good for drying lavender or drying - plaiting and drying - onions. Storage, chairs, I did have like a stove and all that inside it so I would have offered you a cup of tea but it all got taken out because the shed got broken into? So rather than run the risk of leaving gas and things in it, it all got taken out, but yeah, it's basically storage, it's somewhere to hide when it's raining. Tools, seeds, clothes that are, you know, work clothes, our trainers and our wellies and things like that. It's good to have it, it is a benefit having it sometimes but it's just hard when it's constantly getting vandalised or broken into. It makes it a bit sad…

Yeah, I've been broken into a few times. To be honest it was kind of like Fort Knox. The window never used to have a grill on it so the window got put in. But they never steal anything, they just go in. I don't know what they're looking for, they just go in and I think

it might be kids that are maybe bit bored? They go in and they just mess things up and then they leave again? But they haven't realised that it would be more hurtful to actually, if they vandalised like the veg and things because that's the bit that takes the age to grow? But last week, two weeks ago, my door got ripped off. You can see where it used to be? And they vandalised all the roof inside it. But they didn't steal anything they just kind of mess it up a bit. I've known that some people have had their tools and things stolen and I don't know if they get re-sold or whatever, but I've Sharpied all mine with my name so if I find them somewhere I can take them back…

Yeah, it's hard. It is when you've put a lot of effort in. I mean our shed, we've painted the inside of it, we had nice bunting around the outside, we have - or had - beautiful deck-chairs and things but I just took them out because you can see, well you can't see right here, but you can see there's scorch marks where they tried to burn it down. So rather than lose the things that I want to keep here I just took them out…

…they'd not normally go into the greenhouse, just the shed, but I don't know if it's because they think there's something worth a value in the shed or I used to have up until last week three massive padlocks on it? And I don't know if whoever's breaking in thinks because there's padlocks on it there must be something in it so now we don't padlock it, we just latch it and put a screw in and if they want in through the door there's nothing worth stealing, you know? So yeah it always seems to be the shed that gets it…

But it's worse in the school holidays 'cause kids are bored. Kids are absolutely bored so what can they do? 'Oh let's go down and break into a few sheds'…I just don't understand, like, well, in some ways I do. It's like a mindset of thinking 'I'm going to get in there and naebody's going to stop me' but then you think all the effort, like they must have went at mine good style because those full two panels were ripped off of that. They must have spent ages on it and then got in and there's nothing worth stealing, so. It is quite violating to think that someone's been in at your things but it's all part and parcel of having an allotment I suppose, or having a shed on an allotment, the sheds and the greenhouses probably are an attraction. Especially in the winter where people aren't necessarily down to trash them but come down to shelter or go into a greenhouse to get a bit of heat or they know that paraffin heaters and things are kept in.[1]

[1] Interview with Donna Blake, High Carntyne Allotments, 5th August 2015.

Chapter Four

1960-1969: 'The heritage of the tenement dweller'[1]

> *With the value of land soaring to such astronomical heights it is very obvious that the future of the Allotment Movement in Scotland, especially in our cities and large towns, lies with the local authorities in the land they control on which has been provided statutory allotments, for such land if properly cared for and cultivated will remain the heritage of the tenement dweller for many years to come, for most local authorities realise they have a duty to provide, where possible, the town dweller with the necessary facilities for the pursuit of the recreation that the cultivation of an allotment affords.*[2] *– Reginald Ashley, 1962.*

At the 1962 Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society annual conference, Secretary Reginald Ashley gave a report on the continued loss of allotment sites in towns and cities across Scotland. Closures were particularly prolific on private sites when rent was raised to match the value of the land, 'an impossible state of affairs' according to Ashley who claimed it was 'tantamount to saying pay up or get out'.[3] Ashley believed that the survival of the allotment movement was dependent on local authorities as, unlike the private site owners, they had a duty to provide sites with facilities. In his report Ashley called allotments 'the heritage of the tenement dweller', intrinsically linking the allotment with the idiosyncratic architecture of Scottish cities and cementing SAGS' argument that allotments needed to be integrated into city planning. This chapter will explore the continued tensions between SAGS and local or national government in the 1960s, particularly between SAGS and the Glasgow Corporation. SAGS continued to campaign for allotments to be included within planning and the Corporation remained resolutely focused on high-rise homes, with little thought into providing social or recreational facilities. As the authorities turned their backs on allotments, SAGS became further focused on the social benefits of the movement; the protection of existing associations and the potential re-formation of communities fragmented by new housing developments.

As Glasgow's housing crisis continued into the 1960s, efforts to provide new housing intensified. The 1957 city development plan for Glasgow had included 40,000 new houses

[1] UGAS, UGC 222/2/2/20, SAGS Annual Report 1962, p. 6.

[2] Ibid., p. 6.

[3] Ibid., p. 6.

within the city boundaries and a further 60,000 as overspill (outside the boundaries) but by 1972 only 25,000 overspill houses had been built and 48,000 inside the city.[4] The convenor of Glasgow's Housing Committee, David Gibson, was adamantly opposed to the overspill policy as he believed it would fail to re-house the slum-dwellers, those most in need, in the new houses. Gibson described bad housing as an 'unpardonable offence' against human dignity and he set himself a mission of providing as many new dwellings as quickly as possible. He believed the way to do this was to build multi-storey tower blocks on gap sites whilst the Comprehensive Development Areas (CDAs) were cleared, thus bridging the gap between slum clearance and re-development. As sites outside of the CDAs had no maximum population densities, multi-storeys could provide more homes in smaller areas.[5]

This housing strategy and a shortage of land in Glasgow continued to affect the city's allotments. In March 1960 the Secretary of the Caledonian Gardens Association wrote to the Corporation with a petition signed by their members asking for alternative land for the plotholders on five acres of allotment land within the Hutchesontown/Polmadie CDA, which was to be redeveloped. The Allotments Sub-Committee initially refused the application then, over a year later in August 1961, they did visit the CDA to report on alternative ground but claimed that none was available.[6] As CDAs were areas of almost complete demolition and clearance, they would have represented an opportunity to integrate allotments with the new housing; instead the Corporation had not zoned any land within Hutcheson/Polmadie as allotments, which meant allotments could not be included at a later stage.[7] Private land leased by the Corporation for use as allotments was also sold off. In June 1960 solicitors Mitchells, Johnston and Company served notice on behalf of the trustees of Elizabeth and Grace Steven on the Corporation in Bellahouston. The Corporation minute simply states that the Sub-Committee 'noted the report' so it seems unlikely any effort was made to replace the allotments. Similarly, in June 1960 the University of Glasgow served notice of removal on the Corporation in Kelvinside, giving allotment holders a year's notice to remove.[8] Ashley commented on the number of

[4] Michael Keating, *The City that Refused to Die. Glasgow: the politics of urban regeneration* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), p. 24.

[5] Miles Horsey, *Tenements and Towers: Glasgow working-class housing 1890-1990* (Edinburgh: The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 1990), p. 45.

[6] GCA, C1/3/140, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 29th March 1960, p. 2262; GCA, C1/3/143, Parks Committee, 16th August 1961, p. 820.

[7] Raymond Young, *Annie's Loo: the Govan origins of Scotland's community based housing associations* (Glendaruel: Argyll Publishing, 2013), p. 40.

[8] GCA, C1/3/141, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 7th June 1960, p. 415.

allotments lost in Glasgow, both to private builders and the Corporation, in the 1960 SAGS annual report. He attributed the loss of sites to rumours:

> The spread of rumours, very often unfounded, that allotment areas are to be taken over for other purposes does have a very unsettling effect upon the members, with the result organised Associations begin to disintegrate and loss of membership takes place, such rumours of course should, if possible, be stopped at source, in any case they should be passed on to Head Office so that investigations can be made in good time and at the right place.[9]

The closure of sites led to communities fragmenting but also the loss of good, productive soil that plotholders had spent many years improving.[10] The rumours created a vicious circle. The uncertainty of a site's future led to plotholders leaving or not investing time or money into their plots so that they appeared neglected; it was then easier for local authorities and developers to justify their actual closure.

The SAGS annual conference for 1960 was held in Dundee and, as had happened at the 1956 conference, the invited speakers took the opposite stance on allotments to the members of the society. In his welcome, the Lord Provost McManus of Dundee commented that in his city the demand for allotments had decreased because of their housing schemes with gardens. Similarly, the MP for Dundee East, George Thomson, said there was less need for allotments because houses were being built with gardens. The Vice-President, Thomas Birkett, responded that it was not always possible for those who wanted a garden to get one and where allotments were offered they were 'usually situated about five miles out of town and too far away from homes'.[11] Whilst Thomson's comments might have been pertinent for Dundee, such an argument did not stand in Glasgow as many of the new homes there were high-flats with no provision of outside space. As had been commented throughout the 1950s, President Ian Grant raised the question of why councils provided other recreational facilities for their tenants but not gardening for council tenants housed without access to a garden.[12] This would be a problem particularly for tenants who were not able to choose whether they were placed in a flat or a house with a garden.

[9] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/18, SAGS Annual Report 1960, p. 6.

[10] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[11] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/12, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1960, p. 3.

[12] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

Ashley remained outraged by the lack of government support for allotments despite plotholders' hard work during the Second World War:

> …following on from the campaigns of 'Grow more food, Dig for Victory, Dig for Plenty and Dig or Starve' when the land we cultivated was a valuable potential, the cry is now build more houses, land is too valuable to be used as allotments, and so our hobby becomes a Cinderella one and only looked upon as essential in the times of national emergency.[13]

Allotments had been considered important in periods of food shortages, especially during the Second World War when labour and material shortages had also made housing developments almost impossible. Now that the food crisis and rationing were over, allotments were no longer considered a necessity by local authorities. By 1960 SAGS had also abandoned their argument that allotments were for food production, a role that had until then been a fundamental part of the allotment movement. Fruit and vegetables were still grown by plotholders but this was now considered a hobby rather than to fulfil a real need. SAGS now focused on the allotment as a place of recreation that provided outdoor space for those that lived in tenements or high-rise flats. The role of gardening in mental and physical health for plotholders had been promoted at least since the 1930s but this was now brought to the fore over food production. However, local authorities did not seem to accept this development in the allotment movement and would not include sites in planning as they would for parks or other open spaces.

The number of allotments in Glasgow continued to fall throughout the 1960s. In November 1961 notice was given to seventy-four plotholders in Kelvindale on a site owned by the Housing Department. In December 1962, the Director of Parks submitted a report stating a fall in demand for allotments at Tollcross Park, Mansewood and Glasgow Green; he planned to reduce the number of plots combined in these places from 231 to 130.[14] This is the last time that individual sites, to be reduced or closed, are named in the Corporation minutes. From 1963 the minutes simply state numbers of plots available in the city as a whole and from January 1965 the Allotments Sub-Committee began to meet quarterly rather than monthly; allotments were now of less importance and less worthy of time to the

[13] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/12, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1960, p. 9.

[14] GCA, C1/3/144, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 21st November 1961, p. 1444; GCA, C1/3/146, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 4th December 1962.

Corporation. In March 1960 there were 1528 plots in total (wartime and permanent) in Glasgow but by March 1969 there were just 690, a reduction of 54.8 per cent.[15]

Date	Permanent	Wartime	Total
March 1960	1243	285	1528
March 1963	1013	154	1167
June 1966	863	81	944
March 1969	633	57	690

Table 5: Number of allotments available in Glasgow during the 1960s[16]

In 1961 Ashley lost his own allotment in Glasgow to a housing development, having been a plotholder for thirty-one years. At the 1961 conference he estimated that in his 'area' (unfortunately he did not say where this was) there were a quarter of a million people without access to an allotment reasonably close to their homes. His association had sent an appeal to the Glasgow Corporation asking them to take over their allotment site, which suggests it was a private allotment, as it already had all amenities and infrastructure in place and to use the land that had been offered to them as a replacement for the housing development instead.[17] It seems reasonable that Ashley's association was at least offered an alternative site but his worry after improving and working the soil for thirty years would have been that the new ground would not be suitable for cultivation. A move to a different site was breaking a plotholder's physical and emotional connection to their land. At the conference Ashley went on to bitterly comment:

> We say if this is planning God save us from the planners. Glasgow so far as Allotments are concerned are in a most unenviable position, the demand for houses is so great it takes priority over everything else, sooner or later a halt will have to be called to the taking over of our productive resources for the building of houses or King Midas like the country might be faced with starvation.[18]

A year later, in the SAGS 1962 annual report, Ashley wrote, probably from his personal experience, that private allotments were especially in trouble when a landlord who had let his site at 'a very nominal rate' passed away and the successors were not quite so

[15] GCA, C1/3/140, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th January 1960, p. 1637; GCA, C1/3/158, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 19th March 1969, p. 2165.

[16] GCA, Sub-Committee on Allotments Minutes, C1/3/140, p. 2046; C1/3/146, p. 2273; C1/3/153, p. 555; C1/3/158, p. 2165.

[17] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/13, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1961, p. 11.

[18] Ibid.

benevolent to plotholders, instead looking 'to cash in on the current prices'. As demand for building sites continued to increase, Ashley realistically understood that landowners would rather sell land than keep it as allotments as if they matched the rent to the value of the land 'it would be far in excess of what the average allotment holder could afford to pay'.[19] He used an example of the British Transport Commission increasing rent for their allotment sites by more than 1000 per cent. Ashley therefore believed that the future of the allotment movement was with local authorities. He asked SAGS members to 'show their appreciation by putting the ground to its best possible use; that is, by keeping it in constant cultivation and productive capacity'.[20] Ashley was re-establishing McWilliam's campaign for tidy plots to combat poor security of tenure against the similar effects of rumours, although couching it in different language.

SAGS also had to contend with apathy from plotholders themselves. The number of associations affiliating to SAGS continued to fall and in the 1961 annual report Ashley suggested three reasons for this: the closure of allotment sites for development; a lack of management when associations could not find presidents and secretaries; and a lack of interest from the plotholders themselves. This weakened SAGS' campaign for allotments to be provided in cities as non-cultivated allotments would hardly be considered a good use of valuable land by local authorities.[21] There were also difficulties with getting association secretaries to pass on information about SAGS' campaigns and services to plotholders; one secretary even told Ashley that when he received 'all that stuff from Glasgow' he simply threw it in the fire.[22] It is unclear why this was happening but it seems that sites were becoming more insular and not trusting SAGS to fight on their behalf.

At the 1962 SAGS annual conference Mr McClure, representing Kelvinside in Glasgow, mentioned an article in *Garden News* by Tony Ireson 'praising the great work done by Glasgow Corporation Parks Department for the Allotment movement'. McClure said 'So far as we are concerned, they do nothing for Glasgow Corporation Allotments. In fact, they would like to see the movement in Glasgow non-existent'. Ashley said that Ireson had often been on the telephone to ask him about allotments in Scotland but because SAGS had had no resolutions for the last few years Ireson was 'under the impression that we are very

[19] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/20, SAGS Annual Report 1962, p. 6.

[20] Ibid.

[21] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/19, SAGS Annual Report 1961, p. 5.

[22] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/13, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1961, p. 10.

satisfied and very complacent'.[23] This seems to have shocked the SAGS committee back into action and after their apparent lapse they re-engaged with politics. The following year the committee submitted a resolution to the 1963 conference that, concerned with the number of associations threatened with dispossession, SAGS should employ a planning consultant. The President asked for donations to set up a Special Fund to meet expenses, which would be kept separate from the society's regular income. The delegates all agreed and associations contributed two pounds each to start the Special Protection Fund.[24] The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland also regarded this fund as separate from SAGS' regular income so it would not affect their annual grant. SAGS then sent out an appeal to all their affiliated associations asking for contributions. By the time Ashley wrote the 1963 annual report, £200 had been collected, including a £50 donation from the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed Joint Committee.[25]

Also at the 1962 conference, the Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and Gardens Associations submitted a resolution 'deploring the lack of interest shown by local authorities in Scotland towards the allotment movement compared with those in England'. Consequently, SAGS wrote to authorities in Birmingham, Leeds and Cardiff and found that the amenities were indeed much better than in Scotland but the charges for plots were higher and there was also a separate charge for water. SAGS undertook a survey in Scotland and found that 'on the whole' local authority allotments were well maintained and provided with communal huts, water and boundary fences and that security of tenure was better on local authority sites than it was on private allotments, confirming Ashley's opinion that the future of the movement was with local authority rather than private sites. The demand for plots was also assessed and SAGS found that the greatest demand, unsurprisingly, was 'in the crowded tenement areas of our cities where there is no ground that could be made available to meet the demand'.[26] By 1963 Ashley's outlook had become very bleak:

> During the year we have been subjected to the ever-increasing demand for the land we occupy as allotments and we have several groups who, though carrying on, know only too well that they will be ultimately dispossessed. The future is none too bright for our movement in the cities and large towns, where the demand is for

[23] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/14, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1962, p. 13.

[24] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/15, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1963, pp. 16-17.

[25] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/21, SAGS Annual Report 1963, p. 6-7.

[26] Ibid., p. 6.

> houses and more houses, for it is very well known that the few remaining virgin sites left for development are those occupied as allotments.[27]

Although Ashley referred to gardening as a 'hobby' and a 'recreation' he also wrote that land 'capable of growing crops' needed to be conserved so that plotholders could continue to contribute to the 'national larder'.[28] SAGS were sending a mixed message. The argument promoting food production on allotments had all but been abandoned, however, the fear of having no land to cultivate in the possibility of another food crisis was still present, probably especially for older members of SAGS, including Ashley, who had lived through two world wars. Despite outwardly arguing for allotments as a recreation, there was perhaps little true acceptance of this within the society; it was merely an argument to try and meet the government on their own terms.

In the annual report for 1964, Ashley described the year as 'one of the blackest in the history of the Society'. Sixteen groups had failed to re-affiliate, which meant a loss of over six hundred members and a large reduction in income. A few of these groups were housing associations that had simply lost interest but the majority were allotment associations that had lost their sites to development and been offered no alternative land. Most of the associations were private sites whose owners had sold off their land to developers but some sites belonged to local authorities that were closing allotments to make way for housing, playing fields and other recreational facilities. This last particularly irked Ashley who stated that one form of recreation should not be provided 'at the expense of another'.[29] As a result of SAGS' loss in income, they had to raise their affiliation fees.[30] Discussions at the 1964 annual conference continued around the crisis. Victor Webb suggested that landowners were buying allotment land and 'then insisting on impossible conditions of let so that areas became neglected'. Then, having demonstrated that the allotments were uncultivated, the owners could apply for an amendment to development plans so the ground could be used for building houses. Other delegates agreed that this was also happening in their areas; Webb suggested that the only way plotholders could fight was to illegally remain on the ground after notice to quit had been served.[31] Ashley again stressed the need for allotments to be fully cultivated, saying that when there were firewood

[27] Ibid., p. 5.

[28] Ibid., p. 5.

[29] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/22, SAGS Annual Report 1964, p. 5.

[30] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/16, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1964, p. 8.

[31] Ibid., p. 3.

merchants, dog fanciers and plots being used to keep cars then the Society had 'no leg to stand on when it came to fighting a case'. 'It was wrong', he said 'for a man to take an allotment when he had no intention of cultivating it'.[32] It is unlikely that any of the misbehaving plotholders were at the SAGS conference but Ashley was expecting the members present to influence, or police, their sites to make sure they were fully cultivated. There was also a worry that younger people were not getting involved, although arguably this was a result of SAGS' own emphasis on gardening as a recreation for old age pensioners. The Vice-President, Hugh McMorran, put forward the slightly desperate thought that 'One of the difficulties was in getting young people introduced to gardening, what with the Beatles, etc.'[33] In the 1930s the unemployment scheme had played to current trends, using a well-liked song as the title of one of their reports and asking writer JB Priestley to comment on the scheme, but in the 1960s popular culture was seen as a threat to the allotment movement rather than something to utilise.

Before the 1965 annual conference the SAGS executive committee held a meeting with representatives from local authorities. The President explained that the society was very concerned by the continued loss of associations; the demand on land for development purposes had become so great 'that allotments might be squeezed out altogether'. Bailie Allan from Dunfermline asked what exactly SAGS wanted the local authorities to do. He said the number of allotments in their area had fallen from six hundred to two hundred 'entirely due to the falling off in demand'. In Dunfermline three blocks of multi-storey flats had been built with provision for allotments but only three tenants were interested. Similarly the representative from Motherwell said there were fewer plots in cultivation and those remaining were 'not being too well cultivated'. The representatives from Hamilton, Rutherglen and Port Glasgow all spoke similarly. Victor Webb countered the local authority delegates by again putting forward his argument that a false lack of interest can be manufactured using difficult terms of let.[34] The difficulty with Webb's argument was that he had no solid cases to prove his point. However, it is also very difficult to know to what extent the lack of demand claimed by the local authorities was true. In the case of the new allotments in Dunfermline, for example, it is impossible to know what the quality of ground was like; if it was around the base of the new multi-storeys it could have been well compacted by construction work and difficult to cultivate. There might also have been a

[32] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

[33] Ibid., p. 6.

[34] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/17, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1965, p. 2.

lack of support or guidance from the local authority; new gardeners would have found it challenging to start on a new site with no experienced gardeners to learn from. Ashley closed the discussion by saying that if the allotment movement was to have a future then the stigma of charity had to be removed by local authorities treating allotments on the same level as the other recreational facilities they provided.[35] In the main part of the conference following this meeting, the Executive submitted a resolution:

> That the Society's Executive views with growing concern the continued loss of allotment ground held under private arrangement due to it being offered and taken over for development purposes and asks this Conference to propose that privately-owned allotment areas should be acquired by the local authority in which they are situated for continued use as allotments.[36]

Bailie Allan said outright that the Dunfermline Council would not be prepared to do that and the representative from Rutherglen, McKay, said the wording would have to be changed. The resolution was passed but it was very tight, with thirty for and twenty-eight against. Webb then put forward an emergency resolution, accepted by the Chairman, that allotment gardening should be included as a need to be met by recreational land and also proposing that local authorities should provide model allotment sites in all major cities.[37] Both resolutions were sent to the Secretary of State for Scotland and SAGS received an acknowledgement that they would receive the attention of the Minister, however, no further word came from the Scottish Home Office. SAGS did have an interview with an official from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, but they merely stated that local authorities were already using their normal powers to do all they could to find alternative accommodation for dispossessed allotments.[38]

To help in their campaigning SAGS considered more closely what the purpose of allotments were and who was using them. In 1965 they sent out a survey, which had a seventy five per cent rate of returns.[39] They discovered 'a hard core of enthusiasts' around the four major Scottish cities. The average age of plotholders was between forty and sixty,

[35] Ibid., p. 2.

[36] Ibid., p. 5.

[37] This argument had previously been put forward by the Minister of Land and Natural Resources at the National Allotments and Gardens Society conference in Southport, UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/17, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1965, p. 5.

[38] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/23, SAGS Annual Report 1965, pp. 5-6.

[39] Ibid., p. 5.

perhaps not quite as old as expected, and that there had been 'an increase in the numbers of professional men and white collar workers cultivating the soil' suggesting that allotments were 'being cultivated by a wider cross-section of the community'. Many sites were full and had waiting lists but others had vacant plots. This was mostly because of problems with tenure but other reasons given for vacant plots included plotholders moving away or the rival recreations of motorcars, bingo and television. The results of the survey reinforced to SAGS that allotments were no longer a necessity and that the future of the movement was in recreation. Ashley commented that a name change might be required, for example, 'Leisure Garden' or 'Chalet Garden' might emphasise to local authorities that gardening was an enjoyable activity.[40] SAGS also felt that the definition of an allotment needed replacing; allotments were no longer vital for food production and people were easily buying vegetables - either fresh or tinned - from supermarkets.[41] Self-service shopping, which had originated in America, was encouraged by the post-war government of Britain as they believed it would benefit both retailers and the general public, as well as releasing labour during a labour shortage.[42] The range of self-service shops, and the goods they sold rapidly, expanded in the 1960s. In 1961 there were 6350 self-service stores in the UK, including 531 supermarkets; by 1970 there were 28,000 self-service shops including 3400 supermarkets.[43] Shoppers enjoyed being able to choose products themselves and with easier access to a much greater variety, it must have seemed unlikely even to the SAGS committee that anyone who did not enjoy gardening would still be working an allotment.[44] It might not have been possible to compete against the supermarkets but it was perhaps possible to compete against bingo. To emphasise the allotment movement as 'a healthy form of physical recreation', SAGS applied to the Scottish Council of Physical Recreation for recognition. This status was granted and Ashley wrote in the 1967 annual report that he hoped this meant the movement would 'reap a rich reward' for their labour, not only

[40] Ibid., p. 4.

[41] UGAS, UGC 222/2/2/25, SAGS Annual Report 1967, p. 4.

[42] Kathryn A Morrison, *English Shops and Shopping: An Architectural History* (London: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 275-77; Gareth Shaw, Louise Curth and Andrew Alexander. 'Selling Self-Service and the Supermarket: the Americanisation of Food Retailing in Britain, 1945-60', in *Business History* 46:4 (2004), p. 571.

[43] Dawn Nell, Andrew Alexander, Gareth Shaw and Adrian Bailey, 'Investigating shopper narratives of the supermarket in early post-war England, 1945-1975' in *Oral History* 3 (1) (2009), p. 64.

[44] Nell et al., p. 69.

through their harvest but through 'the tranquillity and peace of mind that the cultivation of the soil affords'.[45]

Despite SAGS' efforts the number of allotments in Scotland continued to fall and in 1967 Ashley reported that several counties had no allotments at all. Ten associations failed to re-affiliate to SAGS that year, six because their tenancies had been terminated. Ashley described the situation as the opposite of what was happening in both World Wars when the ground was plentiful and 'every assistance' available; now allotments were being 'filched away'. However, he also laid some of the blame on the plotholders themselves, for taking their land for granted and not making enough effort to cultivate their plots. He warned SAGS members that the Land Commission had special powers to advise local authorities in acquiring land and he was sure they would not 'turn the "blind eye"' when it came to neglected allotments.[46]

Taxman: Financial problems for the allotment movement

Alongside organising conferences SAGS continued its other services throughout the 1960s, until financial problems made this difficult. The typing and duplication scheme was highly successful and the shallots, onions and gladioli scheme also did well, although by 1964 onions had taken over in popularity and there was almost no demand for shallots – a change in fashion which seems to have taken the SAGS committee by surprise: '…they appear to be out of favour with our members'. This scheme was for individual plotholders until 1967, when costs became too high, and then only bulk orders for associations could be placed.[47] Similarly the lime and fertiliser scheme continued until 1966 when taxes on fertilisers were increased and SAGS had to cut the service to individuals and instead supply in bulk to associations. There was a considerable loss of orders from 1967, a result of the closure of allotment sites, and by 1969 the lime order was so small the service was

[45] Unfortunately the Scottish Council of Physical Recreation is never mentioned in a report again, so it is difficult to know whether this was a successful move or not. UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/25, SAGS Annual Report 1967, p. 4.

[46] Ibid., pp. 4, 5.

[47] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/18, SAGS Annual Report 1960, p. 10; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/19, SAGS Annual Report 1961, p. 9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/20, SAGS Society Annual Report 1962, p. 9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/21, SAGS Annual Report 1963, pp. 9-10; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/22, SAGS Annual Report 1964, pp. 8-9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/23, SAGS Annual Report 1965, pp. 6-9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/24, SAGS Annual Report 1966, pp. 6-8; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/25, SAGS Annual Report 1967, pp. 6-7; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/26, SAGS Annual Report 1968, p. 9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/27, SAGS Annual Report 1969, p. 8.

no longer viable and payments had to be refunded.[48] SAGS' fire insurance scheme became more crucial as vandalism worsened across Scottish allotments.[49] The rise in crime also led to some novel ways of preventing vandalism; in 1960 Mr Reid from Paisley described to the SAGS conference how his local authority was combatting vandals 'by putting up poles with fairy lights on them around the gardens'.[50] In 1967 SAGS received reports from 'several areas about the extensive damage done by vandals', made worse by severe storms in January that had destroyed fences and allowed the vandals easy access into sites. For some plotholders the vandalism was so bad that they gave up their plots and Ashley commented, a little dramatically, that some of the damage went 'far beyond the imagination of decent human beings'.[51] Ironically, sheds also burnt down more frequently following the Clean Air Act; in smokeless zones plotholders had started using paraffin oil for heating their greenhouses, which proved to be much more dangerous. As a result of the proliferation of greenhouse fires, the insurance company used by SAGS decided in 1969 that they could 'no longer underwrite the risk of fire in horticultural buildings' and the scheme was ended. The committee described this as a 'double blow' as the members had lost a valuable service but the society had also lost a good source of revenue, their fees as agents for the scheme.[52]

A further loss in income came from the demise of SAGS' year book. The year book was doing well in the early 1960s, expanding to 110 pages from its original sixty-three in 1951. Around three thousand copies were ordered annually, with the Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotment and Garden Associations making up half of this order to supply to their members. However, in 1966 after two years of creating a deficit rather than making a

[48] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/19, SAGS Annual Report 1961, p. 9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/20, SAGS Annual Report 1962, p. 9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/21, SAGS Annual Report 1963, pp. 9-10; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/22, SAGS Annual Report 1964, pp. 8-9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/23, SAGS Annual Report 1965, pp. 6-9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/24, SAGS Annual Report 1966, pp. 6-8; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/25, SAGS Annual Report 1967, pp. 6-7; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/26, SAGS Annual Report 1968, p. 9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/27, SAGS Annual Report 1969, p. 8.

[49] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/18, SAGS Annual Report 1960, p. 10; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/19, SAGS Annual Report 1961, p. 9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/20, SAGS Annual Report 1962, p. 9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/21, SAGS Annual Report 1963, pp. 9-10; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/22, SAGS Annual Report 1964, pp. 8-9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/24, SAGS Annual Report 1966, pp. 6-8; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb ,UGC 222/2/2/26, SAGS Annual Report 1968, p. 9.

[50] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/12, SAGS Annual Conference Report 1960, p. 13.

[51] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/25, SAGS Annual Report 1967, p. 4.

[52] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/25, SAGS Annual Report 1967, p. 8; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/27, SAGS Annual Report 1969, p. 8.

profit, the SAGS committee decided to discontinue the year book. Orders were largely reduced because of the number of allotments that had closed but the committee thought there was also competition from gardening books.[53] The 1966 annual report stated:

> It is a great pity that the Executive was forced to come to this decision as the book did act as a liaison between the officials of the Society and its affiliated members, but we have to face facts and we could not possibly afford to strain the slender financial resources of the Society still further by incurring losses in the publication of the year book.[54]

It was a difficult decision; money had to be saved but it meant that a crucial way to communicate with members, especially those who could not make it to conferences or whose secretaries were failing to distribute information, was lost. The fact that there was competition from gardening books shows that it was a popular activity in the 1960s, perhaps because of an increase in suburban houses built with gardens, yet the demise of allotments continued.

The Scottish Allotment Scheme for the Unemployed was continued on a reduced scale, helping between 300 and 400 people annually. Applicants were mostly old age pensioners but between twenty-five and thirty-six unemployed people applied each year. 'Necessitous persons' or 'necessitous widows', women under fifty whose husbands had died leaving them unable to draw a pension, also received grants.[55] In the early 1960s the Joint Committee put the fall in numbers down to allotment sites being closed rather than a lack of interest in the scheme but in a Joint Committee meeting in 1968 Ashley said he believed it was because new members of associations were not numerous enough to replace the older members when they died.[56] It was in this same Joint Committee meeting that Ashley made an announcement that SAGS were in financial crisis. Ashley reported on the serious difficulties facing SAGS; office rent and rates had increased whilst subscriptions were

[53] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/19, SAGS Annual Report 1961, p. 7; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/20, SAGS Annual Report 1962, p. 7; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb UGC 222/2/2/21, SAGS Annual Report 1963, p. 6; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/23, SAGS Annual Report 1965, pp. 6-9; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/24, SAGS Annual Report 1966, pp. 6-8.

[54] UGAS, UGC 222/2/2/24, SAGS Annual Report 1966, p. 8.

[55] It is useful that this category of applicant was recorded separately as it proves that women, who were often invisible in the records, were working plots.

[56] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, SASU Joint Committee Minutes, 9th November 1960; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/2, SASU Joint Committee Minutes, 14th November 1962; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/7, SASU Joint Committee minutes, 13th November 1968.

falling, and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries would not increase their annual grant. Ashley estimated a deficit for the financial year of £400-£500 with no reserve to fall back on. The Joint Committee expressed their concerns and offered a donation of £25 but the deficit was considered too great for them to make a substantial difference.[57] After reviewing their finances the SAGS committee realised that, even with an increase in affiliation fees, the gap between income and expenditure could not be met by March 1969 and they took the drastic measure of closing the society's offices in Glasgow. Ashley continued to work from his home but only on a part-time basis and his wages were cut and replaced by an honorarium. The assistant secretary was made redundant. These actions saved SAGS payments on office rent and burgh rate, salaries, National Insurance and Selective Employment Tax (which was going to be increased in 1969). The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland also offered a limited aid grant.[58] Unfortunately this arrangement did not work out for Ashley. His wife became very ill in 1969 and, finding it difficult to both care for her and manage his SAGS duties, he resigned in June 1970.[59] SAGS had been forced into making financial savings which severely limited their campaigning efforts; the society had lost a central, stable base from which to work and their workforce was reduced to the voluntary efforts of the committee.

From a tower to a garden

Meanwhile the rapid construction of high-rise homes in Glasgow had continued. By the mid-1960s the Labour Party had pledged to build 500,000 houses a year in the UK, including 50,000 in Scotland.[60] With such promises being made no-one favoured renovating old properties and many tenements in Glasgow were demolished to make room for new developments. Renovating tenements would have cut down on the number of families that could be housed in one building. To provide bathrooms, floors containing three flats had to be reduced to two flats to make enough room, whereas new buildings could be built with modern facilities in place. Between 1961 and 1968 almost three quarters of completions in Glasgow were high-rise flats; in all other years between 1945 and 1974 high-rise flats made up just ten per cent of completions.[61] Between 1961 and

[57] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/7, SASU Joint Committee minutes, 13th November 1968.

[58] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/26, SAGS Annual Report 1968, p. 4.

[59] Ashley died just a few years later in 1972. UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/27, SAGS Annual Report 1969, p. 4; UGC 222/1/5/12, SASU Minutes, 22nd November 1972.

[60] J. Dickson Mabon, 'Rebuilding Scotland: The role of government' in Miles Glendinning *Re-Building Scotland: The Postwar Vision 1945-1975* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), p. 53.

[61] Seán Damer, *Glasgow going for a song* (London: Lawrence and Wishart Limited, 1990), p. 194; Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius. *Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales*

1971 the percentage of homes in Glasgow with both hot and cold running water, fixed baths and inside toilets went from 59 per cent to 75 per cent, arguably showing some success in Gibson and Cross's housing strategy. However, the multi-storeys did not fit within a comprehensive plan.[62] In a short space of time, Gibson, who was clearly passionate in providing enough houses, had built more houses within the city boundaries of Glasgow than had originally even been planned as overspill, by building multi-storeys on gap sites or areas of waste ground, anywhere he could.[63] Rapid building had come at a price. By 1971 there were two hundred tower blocks in Glasgow containing 21,000 flats but they were not the perfect homes that Gibson had wanted them to be.[64]

In 1971 Pearl Jephcott published her study on multi-storey life in Glasgow, *Homes in High Flats,* in which she concluded that such flats 'have positive drawbacks and may conceal actual dangers'. She stated that local authorities should discontinue multi-storeys as a form of social housing; they were costly, negatively affected social life, exposed children to risks and were not actually an answer to land shortage, unless any open-space provision was completely ignored.[65] It had been assumed that life in multi-storeys would be very like the life in tenements that so many people in Glasgow were used to, but instead many families became isolated. It was particularly difficult for children who had nowhere to play and their mothers became cut-off and lonely. Life was similarly difficult in the new large housing estates, Castlemilk and Easterhouse, which had been built without shops, pubs, cinemas or schools and provided no local jobs.[66] One of the arguments Jephcott put forward for improving life in multi-storeys was including gardens around the bases of the tower blocks to add interest to the landscape. As SAGS and the Joint Committee had done so many times before, Jephcott commented that the gardens would allow freedom of expression, provide 'solace for the lonely' and give interest to the retired.[67] The integration

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and Northern Ireland (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 224; Miles Horsey, *Tenements and Towers: Glasgow working-class housing 1890-1990* (Edinburgh: The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 1990), pp. 48-49; Mabon, p. 58.

[62] Miles Glendinning, '1945 – 1975: An architectural introduction, in Miles Glendinning *Re-Building Scotland: The Postwar Vision 1945-1975* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), p. 23.

[63] Mabon, p. 59; Horsey, p. 45.

[64] Lynn Abrams and Linda Fleming, 'From Scullery to Conservatory: Everyday Life in the Scottish Home', in Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown (eds.) *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 56.

[65] Pearl Jephcott, *Homes in High Flats: Some of the human problems involved in multi-storey housing* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1971), pp. 126 -30.

[66] Ronnie Cramond, 'The National Housing Drive', in Miles Glendinning, *Re-Building Scotland: The Postwar Vision 1945-1975* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), p. 63; Mabon, p. 59.

[67] Jephcott, p. 111

of allotments into new housing schemes, as had been requested by, and denied to, the Caledonian Gardening Society at the Hutcheson/Polmadie CDA, could have been a remedy for the isolation and lack of community described by Jephcott.

Jephcott had taken the idea of providing gardens around tower blocks from a government report on allotments known as the *Thorpe Report*. In 1965 the Minister of Land and Natural Resources appointed a committee, led by Harry Thorpe, the Head of Geography at the University of Birmingham, to review allotment policy in England and Wales and recommend any necessary changes to the existing legislation. The ministry itself was dissolved in 1968 but the committee continued their work under the Minister of Housing and Local Government in England and the Secretary of State in Wales, inviting local authorities, government departments, allotment associations and the National Allotments and Gardens Society to submit evidence.[68] The resulting report showed that the relationship between the allotment movement and the local authorities was 'at a lower ebb than any time in the movement's history' with the closure of allotments showing no sign of stopping; the committee saw a strong possibility that allotments would completely disappear. The reasons for this suggested in the report included a lack of engagement from plotholders (although the committee did agree that to some extent interest had been 'artificially stifled'), competition from television and motor-cars, and the lack of government campaigns to popularise allotment gardening that had been present throughout the Second World War.[69] Like the SAGS committee, Thorpe believed that for allotment gardening to survive it had to be regarded as a recreation rather than a necessity. Many of the arguments in the *Thorpe Report* mirror SAGS' own arguments; allotments are good for both physical and mental health; they enable plotholders to be creative; they provide fresh food free from pesticides and artificial fertilisers and they promote 'a strong community feeling'. The *Thorpe Report* also argued, as SAGS and the Joint Committee had often done, that 'it seems important to maintain the strong gardening tradition which has always existed in this country against any future eventuality requiring sudden and drastic increases in our domestic supplies of food from non-commercial agricultural and horticultural sources'.[70] As Ashley had considered a few years before, Thorpe suggested the word allotment be replaced by 'leisure garden' to move away from the stigma of charity. He suggested that

[68] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UCG 222/3/7/3, Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Allotments Report, October 1969, p. xvi; Lesley Acton, *Growing Space: A History of the Allotment Movement* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2015), pp. 145-46.

[69] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UCG 222/3/7/3, Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Allotments Report, October 1969, pp. 257-58.

[70] Ibid., p. 260.

two types of gardens were needed: chalet gardens on the periphery of cities based on continental gardens but also sites within high density housing for those who could not easily get to the chalet gardens, such as the elderly or working people with little spare time. Thorpe also argued for smaller gardens around council flats that should be affiliated to the leisure gardens to create a community of gardeners within towns and cities. The report encouraged gardeners to be more creative: incorporating flowers and ornamental shrubs into their plots and replacing linear paths with curvy ones and rectangular beds with circles.[71] Just as SAGS had been arguing for twenty years, the report stated that leisure gardens should receive equal consideration in development plans to other recreational facilities; they could even be attached to playing fields and parks and share amenities such as toilets. The need for security of tenure and good soil was stressed but, perhaps a little controversially for most plotholders, the report also suggested allowing the general public to walk through the gardens. Altogether forty-four recommendations were made in the Thorpe Report, including repealing the existing legislation and combining it all into one act.[72] Ashley recorded his optimism in the 1969 SAGS annual report, believing Thorpe's work would help revive interest in the allotment movement.[73] However, McWatt Green (the treasurer for the Joint Committee) predicted that the report was 'heading for a comfortable pigeon hole' and Frank Catford, also involved in the Joint Committee, thought that although the recommendations were 'extremely sensible' there would be no new legislation. They were right; none of the recommendations contained within the report were acted on by the government.[74]

Thorpe had commented that at a time when traditional communal activities were lacking, gardens formed 'bonds of companionship and co-operation':

> …the benefit which allotment gardens provide to those who are lonely or live alone and to retired people who may have no other incentive to induce them to mingle

[71] Ibid., pp. 268-73.

[72] Ibid., pp. 275- 77; Acton, p.146.

[73] Acton, p. 147; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/7, SASU Joint Committee minutes, 26th November 1969; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/27, SAGS Annual Report 1969, p. 4.

[74] Acton, p. 147; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/7, SASU Joint Committee minutes, 26th November 1969; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/2/27, SAGS Annual Report 1969, p. 4; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/12, Letter Catford to McWatt Green, 17th January 1970; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/12, Letter McWatt Green to Catford, 21st January 1970.

> with their fellows, may be so great as to create an argument even for providing allotments *instead of* home gardens in certain cases.[75]

In the 1960s the role of allotments in food production was almost lost but the purpose of allotments in building communities was becoming increasingly apparent. SAGS were joined in their advocacy for the role of allotments in bringing people together, especially residents of new housing developments with few social activities, by researchers Jephcott and Thorpe. This argument was also once again being tentatively expanded to include women and children rather than focussing solely on male old aged pensioners. However, the government continued to regard allotments as a short-term solution to food crises, a left-over relic of charity that no-one was much interested in. The re-development of the Comprehensive Development Areas in Glasgow during the 1960s could have been an opportunity for allotments to be planned and integrated with housing but SAGS campaigns had been ineffective, hampered by losses in membership and funding. In 1969 the Scottish allotment movement was at a critical moment; the role of allotments in food production was challenged but the role of allotments in forming communities had found new supporters. The heritage of the tenement dweller had come under threat from post-war development and a lack of cohesive thinking over what the allotment movement stood for. In the 1970s this threat was to continue but plotholders themselves were to take control of the movement to make allotments inclusive communities once more.

[75] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UCG 222/3/7/3, Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Allotments Report, October 1969, p. 261.

Brian's Story

Brian Timms, eighty years old, has had his plot on Westthorn Allotments for ten years. A researcher for the British Trust for Ornithology, he began gardening not so much to grow food for himself, but to feed the birds and other wildlife that live in and visit his plot. Brian's story illustrates how plots become habitats for animals as well as humans.

Figure 14: Brian by his teasels, which he grows for the goldfinches to eat the seeds (Image: By author)

… you know the little things that make it are these wood piles, they're full of wildlife and that log there? I move that log, I'll show you what happens… There's all sorts of things running around. The birds will be down in five minutes and they'll pick away at it… There's slugs there. And so I move these things over, these logs there, I'll roll that over... I jiggle things about so the animals can get in to it… I dig a piece up as well so you'll see the robin comes down immediately. The birds are always diving into that, it's quite unbelievable… All these things I move so the birds can get a good go at it and underneath there, the tree, my neighbour asked me to cut some branches off that tree, there's two compost things and I take the lid off them and the birds dive in there as well.

I come more in the winter because I feed the birds every day. So I come every day in the winter, if I'm not away. …I feed the birds and watch the birds and I do little surveys on them for the British Trust for Ornithology, you know, I do surveys and I can always do a survey here because there's so many good varieties of birds here. Yeah. And just come down and say hello to the plants. That's the winter. … I light a fire, make a cup of tea, and also it gets me out on my bicycle because I pedal out here, come out here, only by bike. And I'm eighty, so I've got to keep fit, you know! Yeah.

For slugs we use traps with sugar and yeast in - sugar, yeast and water - and they climb into them and apart from that, nothing. There's no other treatment for anything. We don't use sprays, we don't use weed killer, we don't use anything like that at all… my next door neighbour Gordon, he's a lovely neighbour and we get on really well, he's a very keen gardener on producing food, he likes food, so his plot is very well organised but he uses absolutely everything to make sure he gets food. He uses slug pellets, he sprays everything. Insecticides. Whatever's necessary to get food. I'm completely opposite. And I think, I think, they should all be organic because they're such small plots and if you can get the necessary stuff out for your family without using all these things, you have to make a bit more of an effort, like you do with anything. If you do anything organically. So that's why it's all down to looking after the birds on the planet, as far as we're concerned, and also the foxes and the cats and the wildlife here. I understand also that that can't happen in a greater world. We're feeding, I mean in my life time it's gone from three billion people to six billion people on the planet, so that's three billion people more lives to feed and they can't grow crops like we do here, I understand. I'm not an idiot, I know there's got to be some control over pests. But in my job at the moment, you know, it's no surprise to find out that in my life time the humans have doubled and the birds have halved. So to me that tells its own story, you know. Yeah. So that's why we're organic gardens, 100 per cent organic. Yeah.

Teasels. Yeah they're great for goldfinches, full of seeds, very prickly, but we get goldfinches because of the - so we grow teasels specially for the birds. I like growing blackberry bushes for them as well. They're not that keen on strawberries but they eat the raspberries. So this in here is all for the birds, all the trees in here. So you've got fruit bushes, teasels and for the pollinators we've got all the wild flowers that they like, you know, they don't come on to blooms, you know. Bees don't like blooms very much, you know, asters, and so they want the foxgloves and the stuff like that, you know. You'll find if you've got bees here you've got birds here, if you encourage both of them you'll get both

of them, you know, they're not exclusive. Yeah. We get the pollinators and that brings the spiders, so you get more birds. It's pretty simple.

Of course there's a raptor that comes and takes the odd bird of the bird feeder, he always comes the same way, creatures of habit. We've got a sparrow hawk that comes and takes the odd pigeon. We see the feather and the detritus. But there was, in the winter there was a pigeon killed here and I left it because the animals devoured it and at the end of the winter, towards the end of the winter, there was just the feathers left and then I noticed that from my window the birds were taking the feathers to build their nests. So even the feathers were used up, so everything - ashes to ashes. Everything was used up.[1]

[1] Interview with Brian Timms, Westthorn Allotments, 5th July 2016.

Chapter Five

1970-1989: Living the good life?

> *The first woman I remember was Fiona. I don't think she had an easy time at the beginning!...I don't know what's wrong with the guys here, you know, I don't think they liked women…But she was one of the first women, poor lady, poor girl, she was only a young girl at that time, you know, they didn't make it easy for her. But she's determined! She is determined.*[1] *– Eve Tucker.*

By the end of the 1960s it was looking doubtful that the Scottish allotment movement could continue. Allotments had increasingly become the reserve of older, male gardeners through the influence of the Scottish Allotments Scheme of the Unemployed and the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society committee, who were mostly older men themselves. Through their new focus on recreation, as well as the loss of interest from both national government and local authorities, the role of allotments in food production had almost been lost. This chapter will cover the changes that took place on Glasgow's allotments during the 1970s and 1980s which turned the struggling allotment movement around. Focusing on an extended case-study of the Kelvinside Allotment Association, which came under threat when the University of Glasgow threatened to close the site, and the experience of two female plotholders on New Victoria Gardens, this chapter will argue that from the 1970s plotholders became their own advocates, bringing the role of food production on plots back into focus and breaking down the cultural barriers that had built during the previous decades to enable women to re-join allotment sites.

The 1970s are commonly considered to be a time of revival on Britain's allotments. In the early 1960s, the publication of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* had opened the public's eyes to the harm pesticides used in modern farming practices were causing to the environment.[2] Over the following years a green movement became established and, with it, a new interest in home food production.[3] Friends of the Earth, the environmental charity founded in San Francisco in 1969, became established in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 1971 and actively encouraged people to take on allotments. For Friends of the

[1] Interview with Eve Tucker, New Victoria Gardens, 15th October 2015.

[2] David Crouch and Colin Ward. *The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 1997), p. 78; Twigs Way, A*llotments* (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2010), p. 34.

[3] Crouch and Ward, p. 78; Way, p. 34.

Earth, allotments were not just a place to grow food organically but also to learn more about nature and build communities. They suggested that people ask their local authorities to provide permanent sites in their area and that if this was not possible to 'borrow the land'.[4] It seems unlikely that borrowing took place on a wide scale, considering the observations SAGS had repeatedly made about the stresses of gardening without security of tenure, but Friends of the Earth did continue to promote allotments, publishing *Economic Growth – the Allotments Campaign Guide* in 1979.[5] Crouch and Ward have suggested that the oil crisis in 1973 encouraged people to return to allotments; not so much because of the higher food prices which might have encouraged people to try growing their own food, but because of a raised awareness of transport and packaging used in the food industry. The rate of allotment closures in England and Wales certainly slowed; between 1970 and 1977 the closure of sites in England and Wales was cut by eighty-four per cent.[6] The increased demand for allotments in the 1970s has even been attributed to the BBC sitcom *The Good Life,* which ran from 1975 to 1978 and followed the efforts of Tom and Barbara Good to become entirely self-sufficient. Although the series gently mocked new gardeners with their greater awareness of environmental issues, it was also considered to be an encouragement that inspired a new generation to grow their own food.[7] However, others have argued that it was not environmental concerns that drove the renewed demand for allotments but high inflation and rising food prices; in 1975 prices rose by 24.2 per cent, the biggest increase since the First World War.[8] In 1973 to 1975 Denis Moran carried out a survey of allotments in Swindon for his doctoral thesis. He found that ninety-nine people were on the waiting list for an allotment in 1970 and by 1974 the number had increased to 256, an increase aligning with the rise in inflation.[9] This was not an isolated example; many English regions experienced an increase in demand for allotments. In 1976 Humberside had only one vacant plot out of 4792 and Bedfordshire had only six unoccupied plots out of nearly 4000.[10] In reality it seems likely that renewed interest in allotments was more complex and due to both environmental concerns and economic issues.

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[4] Lesley Acton, *Growing Space: A history of the allotment movement* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2015), p. 160; Friends of the Earth, *When was Friends of the Earth founded?*,< https://www.foe.co.uk/faqs/when-was-friends-earth-founded> [Accessed 5th January 2017].

[5] Way, p. 35.

[6] Crouch and Ward, p. 78-79.

[7] Acton, p. 159; Way, p. 34.

[8] Acton, pp. 159-60.

[9] Denis Moran, *The Allotment Movement in Britain* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), p. 6.

[10] Crouch and Ward, p. 79.

In Glasgow, it is less clear whether or not there was an increase in demand for allotments. In 1970 there were 618 permanent allotments of which seventy-three were unlet. In addition, fifty-six wartime allotments remained of which only ten were unlet.[11] The last figures available come from December 1973 when there was a total of 544 allotments in Glasgow with sixty unlet, of which forty-three were wartime allotments with only three unlet.[12] After this date, the Parks Department was restructured into eleven new staff roles, none of which specifically covered allotments, and the Sub-Committee for Allotments appears to have been dissolved.[13] Then in 1975, the Glasgow Corporation became Glasgow City District Council, in a re-organisation of all Scottish local authorities, and from that time no annual figures are given in the Council minutes for the number of allotments in existence and how many of these were let. It is, therefore, difficult to know whether any sites were closed or established during the 1970s. No closures are listed in the minutes although two sites did come under threat of closure: Kelvinside Allotment Association, which will be discussed later in the chapter, and Kennyhill, an allotment site in the East End established during the First World War. Kennyhill was owned by the Corporation's Housing Committee and had been approved as a working area by that committee for the construction of the Monkland Motorway (a section of the M8) in 1971. It had been agreed that when the road operations were finished 'a new and improved allotment' would be provided by the Corporation, however, the plotholders did not want to lose their existing site and were led in a successful campaign to save Kennyhill by plotholder Gert Lory. Lory later received a medal from SAGS for service to the allotments community.[14] Closures of allotment sites do appear to have slowed down and the Council was seemingly willing to listen in the case of Kennyhill. However, the Council also seems to have stepped back from allotments; the lack of information in the minutes suggests a lack of resources – both time and materials – were devoted to allotments. Oral testimonies also suggest little Council involvement during the 1970s. Alister Smith had a plot at that time in Croftburn Allotments, in the Southside of Glasgow, when he was in his twenties. There were around ten other plotholders, all of whom were men:

[11] GCA, C1/3/161, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 2nd September 1970, p. 807.

[12] GCA, C1/3/168, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th December 1973, p. 1370.

[13] GCA, GDC 1/1/1, Parks Committee, 4th November 1974, p. 102.

[14] GCA, C1/3/164, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 8th December 1971, p. 1397; Glasgow Allotments Forum, *Glasgow Allotments Heritage Project: Discovering the stories of Glasgow's allotments* (Unpublished booklet: Glasgow Allotments Forum, 2013), p. 41; Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson and Rona Wilkinson, *Raising Spirits: Allotments, well-being and community* (Edinburgh: Argyll Publishing, 2015), p. 41.

> …like many allotments in the 1970s, it just fell into disrepair because of the lack of numbers and no input from the council… It was very loose, there were no set plots, you know, just people could take on a wee bit of land beside them…they weren't laid out in the sense of there was posts or wire to demarcate different plots. Just sort of a bit of grass verge between you and the person next to you, that was all there was, nothing else.[15]

Alister also found that the other plotholders largely kept to themselves:

> No, you were on your own. You hardly saw anybody… You'd come up at the weekend and you might see an occasional person but not much and most of the people who had the plots actually came from Castlemilk and they were older plotholders who had been there from – because the plots opened up, I've been told, in 1955 – so a lot of them were from that era, just kept on.[16]

Castlemilk was one of the large peripheral housing estates that had been criticised for providing little for tenants to do socially; there were few shops, pubs or cinemas.[17] In coming to Croftburn, the plotholders from Castlemilk appear to have formed their own community but it was an exclusive one and not welcoming to new, younger plotholders. Alister kept his plot for about seven years before he left Glasgow for a new job but he thought he would probably have stopped working his plot even if he had not moved away:

> And I was going to give up anyway because there was so much vandalism and so much damage to crops. That you'd come up and all the potatoes would be pulled up with the potatoes just left. It just kept happening. I think that's the story of quite a lot of plots at that time. People just had no support from the council and you either had to braze it out or just give it up.[18]

Vandalism was indeed common across Glasgow for plotholders. At the 1972 SAGS conference a representative from Glasgow reported: 'Many of our Old Age Pensioners have to give up their plots because of this and we can do very little about it.'[19] The

[15] Interview with Alister Smith, Croftburn, 27th June 2016.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ronnie Cramond, 'The National Housing Drive', in Miles Glendinning *Re-Building Scotland: The Postwar Vision 1945-1975* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), p. 63.

[18] Alister Smith, Croftburn.

[19] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/20, SAGS Annual Report 1972, p. 3.

representative's choice of words is also telling; it was Old Age Pensioners giving up, not plotholders, which also supports Alister's description of plotholders as all older men. Joyce Gibson's memories of her father's plot in High Carntyne, in the East End of Glasgow, have similarities to Alister's memories of Croftburn. Joyce, pictured in Figure 15, was very young when she started going to the allotment with her father and continued as a teenager in the 1970s:

> I started going probably from the age of four and I loved it…I weeded; he showed me what were weeds. I used a hoe; even though I was small he let me use a hoe. Just anything he asked me to do really. Can't quite really remember at that age but as I got older he let me do more things – like tie up the peas and the sweet peas.[20]

Figure 15: Joyce on her father's plot in July 1962
This plot was in Haghill before the site was closed to build houses and her father moved to High Carntyne (Image: With permission of Joyce Gibson)

Like Alister, Joyce also remembers the majority of plotholders were older men:

> It was all old men actually. I don't remember any young women. I don't remember any young or old women apart from Margaret and I think it was her Dad's plot. No, it was all older men. Obviously some of them were nice but some of them were grumpy. Some of them would give you maybe strawberries or raspberries or something like that.[21]

[20] Interview with Joyce Gibson, High Carntyne, 29th July 2015.

[21] Ibid.

Across England and Wales, Harry Thorpe's committee had discovered that only 3.2 per cent of plotholders were women.[22] This figure may be skewed as tenancy agreements were usually made in a husband's name, even if the wife mainly worked the plot, but Alister and Joyce's stories both suggest that Scottish allotments too were mainly worked by male gardeners. Thorpe's committee could see no reason to suggest that gardening was less popular with women so they concluded that there was a gender division in gardening, with men taking the supposedly more physically demanding task of growing vegetables whilst women tended to flowers in private home gardens.[23] Crouch and Ward commented that this trend continued into the 1980s, citing a study by Ray Garner on allotment sheds in South Yorkshire. He wrote:

> Allotment gardening, or to be more accurate, activities conducted on allotment gardens, are almost without exception male orientated. This is not because women are not interested in gardens but simply that established attitudes and working patterns dictate that the allotments are almost exclusively a male domain. It is considered as an annexe to the working-man's club or in the betting shop.[24]

This division does not work so neatly for Glasgow where fewer women would have had access to a home garden but it still seems that women were not particularly welcome on allotments. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s SAGS and the Joint Committee had encouraged allotments as a recreation for male old age pensioners and by the 1970s it seems that that group had become the main population of Glasgow's allotments.

Joyce also remembered serious problems with vandalism:

> And there was lots of vandalism, it was sad. There were men, grown men, with tears in their eyes because their shed had been broken to the ground. And I remember my Dad coming in and he was talking to my Mum kind of quietly about it and my Mum said 'Oh, your Dad's devastated, they've set fire to his shed'…The whole shed…Twice that happened to my Dad.[25]

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[22] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UCG 222/3/7/3, Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Allotments Report, October 1969, p. 142.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ray Garner, *After the Coal Rush: Attitudes and Aesthetics of the Allotment Garden Shed* (Unpublished dissertation for Hull School of Architecture: Hull, 1984) quoted in Crouch and Ward, p. 89.

[25] Joyce Gibson.

Joyce's father built his own shed and her description of it makes the reasons for his devastation more tangible:

> ….you went into a shed, like a really wide shed, quite low lying but really wide but not particularly deep. And then a door at the other, at the back of the shed, led into his greenhouse so they were joined. And he had a long greenhouse, I don't know, twenty feet or more long and it had extensions on either side so it was massive. And he'd built it all himself, he'd built it just with scrap wood and the greenhouse was made of old frames that he'd maybe taken apart, you know, and used the wood to form the structure and then he'd glazed all the panes with putty in the old fashioned way. But it was brilliant! Absolutely brilliant!... And he had a central heating system that ran through it that he'd put in. So that was good… And most of the greenhouses, in fact all of the sheds and greenhouses, were made by the men on their own… I'm sure they all built them themselves. They were fun though, they had loads of character and they were different and painted different colours.[26]

The men of Glasgow's allotments were an exclusive community but they were a community nonetheless; the men at Croftburn and High Carntyne had made the sites theirs. At High Carntyne their creativity flourished through building sheds from recycled materials and strong friendships were formed. Joyce remembered that when another man, George Hootie – 'he was a lovely, kind old man' – lost his shed to arson, all the men grouped together and rebuilt his shed for him.[27] Glasgow Council may not have been helping the site but their lack of involvement also gave the plotholders freedom: freedom to build, create and be messy.

Keeping up appearances

Conversely, as Glasgow Council became involved with Kelvinside Allotment Association (KAA) the allotments became increasingly regulated and tidy. In the summer of 1972 plotholders at the Kirklee North part of KAA, the part containing the most plots, were given notice of eviction from their landlord, the University of Glasgow, as the University planned to build a new hall of residence for students on the site. The plotholders were given until 1st May 1973 to leave.[28] In November the KAA received a letter from SAGS

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/20, SAGS Annual Report 1972, p. 7; GCA, C1/3/167, Parks Department, 6th June 1973, p. 307.

secretary, Dennis Evans, who had written on their behalf to the Parks Department and found out that Glasgow Corporation were negotiating the purchase of the site from the University of Glasgow.[29] At the association's Annual General Meeting in December 1972, plotholder Adam Curtis proposed a resolution that was passed unanimously:

> That the members of the Kelvinside Allotments most strongly wish to continue their use of the Plots on the North Side of Kirklee Road and support the Chairman Secretary and other Members of the Association in their efforts to this end.[30]

The plotholders also agreed that all plots should be kept cultivated and tidy, as well as keeping the gates locked at all times.[31] By August 1973 the plotholders remained on the site and the University had still not carried out any of the anticipated surveying, measuring or boring. However, the KAA Committee remained concerned and they sent a letter round members asking them to 'keep plots in good order and paths clean'.[32] The emphasis on tidiness appears to have developed from the same feeling that William McWilliam had had in the 1950s, that a tidy plotholder could not be accused of being an uninterested plotholder. Whilst the Council's ambivalence towards allotments appears to have given certain sites space to develop their own distinct characters, such as at High Carntyne, sites under threat of closure had to conform to outsiders' standards of good gardening to survive. In the late 1990s Lisa Taylor carried out a study of gardening practices in the north of England. This was based on private, home gardens but there are useful comparisons. Taylor discovered that middle-class gardeners, who were sure of their social standing and ownership of their houses, tended to be unconcerned by neighbours' opinions of their gardens and described their messy, informal areas of planting proudly. Conversely, working-class gardeners usually living in council houses, kept their gardens tidy, always hoeing the soil to keep it 'clean' and removing all weeds. Taylor argued this way of gardening had developed from 'deeply felt anxieties' that they would be judged by others. Whereas the middle-class gardeners regarded their gardens as private and were even 'scornful' of working-class tidiness, the working-class gardeners saw theirs as public spaces that had to be kept

[29] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Committee Meeting held at 35 Clouston St. on Wednesday 22nd November 1972 at 7.30 p.m.

[30] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Annual General Meeting held in N. Kelvinside School, at 7.30 p.m. on Friday 15th December 1972.

[31] Ibid.

[32] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Area Committee Meeting held at 35 Clouston Street on 22nd August 1973 at 7.30 p.m.

attractive for passers-by.[33] The KAA had a mixture of both working and middle-class gardeners but their anxiety compares with that felt by the gardeners in Taylor's study; allotments, like front gardens, are highly visible to passers-by and those passers-by make judgements on how well cultivated the plots are. This reflects on the plotholders and whether or not they are deserving of their land, so when a site is under threat, as the KAA's site was, this anxiety over tidiness is heightened.

The Corporation failed to purchase Kirklee North from the University of Glasgow but it did acquire a 3.30 acre site at nearby Julian Avenue for the threatened plotholders to move into. As this site was considered to be a replacement rather than an addition to the KAA's existing plots, the Corporation gave planning permission to the University for the hall of residence.[34] One plotholder, Moira Vickerman, saw the new site as an opportunity for change:

> Well, I used to phone at five to eight and ask for this particular person who was in charge of Land Services or whatever by name and they always say 'Who's phoning?' and I say 'Vice-Chairman of Kelvinside Community Council' and then they put me through…and then I would say about this land and what it should be and what I want and then finally he said 'Oh, what is it you want?' 'It's not just an allotment, I want a German leisure garden and I want it landscaped and I want hard paths, I want loos. Because then old people can come out, people can bring their children.[35]

As Moira commented 'It's okay for old men, they can pee in their bucket' but for an allotment to be fully accessible to everyone, proper facilities needed to be provided.[36] Moira had visited leisure gardens in Germany and liked their approach, which tended to be more formal than Scottish allotment sites but also encouraged a wider demographic of people to garden.[37] Moving to Julian Avenue had provided Moira with a chance to put in place the layout and facilities that would attract new plotholders. By April 1974 all the

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[33] Lisa Taylor, *A Taste for Gardening: Classes and gendered practices* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), pp. 110-24.

[34] GCA, C1/3/167, Parks Department, 6th June 1973, p. 307; GCA, C1/3/168, Sub-Committee on Allotments, 5th December 1973, p. 1370; GCA, C1/3/168, Parks Department, 5th December 1973, p. 1372.

[35] Interview with Moira and Keith Vickerman by Marilyn Boyd, Kelvinside, date unknown.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Interview with Judy Wilkinson, Kelvinside, 14th June 2016.

plots at Julian Avenue had been allocated.[38] Judy Wilkinson who, with her husband Chris, was amongst the first plotholders on the site described being on the plot with their young children:

> There were one or two plotholders with children and it was lovely because just at the bottom there was a play-park and so my kids…I mean the three of them just used to go down there, and I was particularly attuned to sort of screams and I could get down there in thirty seconds fast, sort them out and get back again![39]

SAGS had suggested in 1944 that allotments should be integrated with other recreational facilities and Harry Thorpe had made the same suggestion in his report of 1969.[40] It may have been a quirk of fate rather than planning that Julian Avenue had a play-park adjacent to it but Judy's comment shows the usefulness of linking allotments with parks, for parents and children. Moira felt that a new community had been formed:

> …we had another really nice couple just behind the house and they were in a high-rise in Knightswood and they would come all day and they would bring lunch with them and so on and it was the real escape for them and then they had the community as well. And that was the thing. I mean having come from a village that, you know, it's sort of recreating a community feel and it meant to say that when our daughter was growing up she mixed with all sorts of people where - as you know everyone in the road - you know, middle-class and professional and so on…this has stood her in very good stead because she just got to know people as people.[41]

As Victor Webb argued at the 1952 SAGS conference, allotments allow people from different places and classes to mix, becoming one community and increasing understanding of each other.[42] However, the move was difficult for some plotholders who

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[38] GCA, T-LA, Letter Mrs EG Emslie to Mr Oldham, 16th April 1974.

[39] Judy Wilkinson, Kelvinside. .

[40] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/8/1, Letter to the Town Clerk or Clerk of the Council named in the address from H Thompson (Secretary) and Walter Scott (President), October 1944, 28 Stafford Street, Edinburgh; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UCG 222/3/7/3, Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Allotments Report, October 1969.

[41] Moira and Keith Vickerman.

[42] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/5, Excerpts from Victor Webb's address to the SAGS Annual Conference, 21st June 1952.

were leaving their well-cultivated soil behind to start over. One plotholder, Mrs Emslie, wrote to complain to the Director of Parks, Mr Oldham:

> One despairs of being able to do anything this year, except to pick out the couch grass that riddles the ground and maybe break up the biggest lumps of clay subsoil which has been brought to the top. The difference from the beautiful fertile loam we have had to leave is heartbreaking. I wish you would come and look at what has and has not been done and advise us on how to overcome our problems.[43]

Oldham replied to Emslie that she should contact the curator of the Botanic Gardens, Mr Curtis, for help with the couch grass.[44] These letters are written as if Emslie and Oldham know each other, with a degree of informality. The KAA was a well-connected and well-educated site and Moira had had the confidence to persist in asking the Corporation for exactly what she wanted until she got it: a site with a very different outlook to the more insular nature of Croftburn. As stated above, no site closures are listed in the Corporation or Council minutes for the 1970s, so it is possible that no sites were closed, but it also seems very likely that a site without a plotholder such as Gert Lory or Moira Vickerman to champion it could have been closed easily and fairly invisibly. Until this point SAGS or the Friends had advocated on behalf of plotholders. This was most apparent in the 1930s when the Union and the Friends campaigned for the Scottish Allotment Scheme for the Unemployed, which was rather paternalistic in outlook, but also through the 1950s and 1960s when the voices of plotholders except those on the SAGS committee remain absent. In the 1970s, Gert Lory and Moira Vickerman advocated for the sites independently of SAGS; plotholders were beginning to stand up for themselves.

At the KAA Annual General Meeting in 1974 the Chairman praised the new plotholders in Julian Avenue, who had done so well that the annual prizes for best plot and best flower garden had both gone to Julian Avenue rather than the more established plots at Kirklee North or Kirklee South.[45] However, it does appear that there was a certain level of pressure across the KAA sites to keep up appearances. There were repeated requests to keep plots tidy and the German design of Julian Avenue meant that it developed in quite a formal manner, as described by Judy: ‘So we’ve got plots that are the same size, huts were

[43] GCA, T-LA, Letter Mrs EG Emslie to Mr Oldham, 16th April 1974.

[44] GCA, T-LA, Letter Director of Parks to Emslie, 26th April 1974.

[45] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Annual General Meeting held in North Kelvinside School at 7 p.m. on Thursday 5th December 1974.

supposed to be at one side of it and - I mean it's good and it's fine – it's probably more formal, well, it's more formal than Kirklee which is grown a bit more organically'.[46] Mustering the support of Glasgow Corporation may have saved the KAA but it may also have given them less freedom for creativity.

Although the KAA and Kennyhill had been successful in their campaigns to protect, or at least replace, their allotments sites, overall the number of allotments in Scotland continued to fall. At the 1972 SAGS Annual General Meeting a freelance journalist, Mr Fowler, who was aware of events at Kennyhill, asked the delegates why they thought allotment sites were closing. The Vice President thought that the overall problem was the familiar issue of a lack of security of tenure. He added that few allotment secretaries were familiar with the Town and Country Planning Act. To effectively object to plans, complaints had to be made when notice to submit the plans to the Secretary of State for Scotland was announced in the press. Instead, many secretaries only objected when sites were given their eviction notices and by then it was often too late. The Vice President claimed, as Victor Webb had done in previous years, that 'Many local authorities want the sites to be untidy so that they can be evicted. If there was security of tenure people would spend more money on their allotment sites'.[47] It had been difficult to prove this theory but it was about to be seen in action, albeit at the hands of the University of Glasgow rather than the local authority, at a continuing battle in Kelvinside.

In March 1976 the Kelvinside Allotment Association had a waiting list of seventy-seven people for their fifty-three plots; the committee predicted there could be up to a thirty year wait.[48] The University of Glasgow had delayed building their new hall of residence because of financial shortages and technical difficulties with the land, which had been undermined by coal mining. They invited Glasgow City Council to re-lease the vacated ground at Kirklee North on a short-term basis as an allotment site.[49] Because of the long waiting list, the Council agreed to a seven-year lease and prepared the ground (which had been vandalised since the plotholders' move to Julian Avenue) for fifty-five plots at half the size

[46] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Annual General Meeting held in N. Kelvinside School at 7.30 on Monday 3rd December 1973; Judy Wilkinson, Kelvinside.

[47] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/20, SAGS Annual Report 1972, p. 4.

[48] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/23, SAGS Annual Report 1976, p. 12.

[49] GCA, T-LA, Letter Small to Gilmour, Horticultural Officer, Parks Department, 11th December 1981; GCA, T-LA, Letter Principal Officer Policy Planning, Parks Department, to Small, 12th January 1982; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/23, SAGS Annual Report 1976, p. 12; GCA, GDC 1/1/6, Baths and Parks Committee, 12th January 1976, p. 1027; GCA, GDC 1/1/6, Parks Committee, 14th October 1976, p. 639.

of the standard 250 square metres area.[50] However, the University then wrote to the KAA that the lease was actually only for four years and thereafter would be renewable on a year-to-year basis. If repossession did come up then the plotholders would be given a growing season's notice to quit.[51] By December 1977 there were only four vacant plots across the KAA's sites (Julian Avenue, Kirklee North and Kirklee South) but thirty-five people remained on the waiting list.[52]

The plotholders were safe until March 1982 when the association heard a rumour that both Kirklee North and South may be sold off by the University to a private developer, although they had no official confirmation of this from the University. The association remained optimistic as planning permission would have to be acquired before the land could be sold, which would require Glasgow City Council to rezone the land from its designation as allotment and open space use, and it was still unclear whether the undermined land could actually be made suitable for building on.[53] By December 1983 the University had still not sold the ground and had not sought planning permission to build on the site. The University Court told the sixteen plotholders on Kirklee South that they should remain on a temporary basis but the KAA secretary, Mr Small, was greatly concerned by the plotholders' legal position. The Parks Department were no longer paying a lease for Kirklee South and the University had declined an offer from the association itself to pay. So after the first of December 1983 the plotholders were essentially squatting on the land, although they were 'squatters with permission'.[54] As this was a very uncomfortable position for the plotholders at Kirklee South, the association agreed that they could have first refusal of any plots vacated in Kirklee North or Julian Avenue.[55] At the December 1984 Annual General Meeting, Small described the year as 'fraught with anxieties' for the

[50] GCA, GDC 1/1/6, Baths and Parks Committee, 12th January 1976, p. 1027; GCA, GDC 1/1/6, Parks Committee, 14th October 1976, p. 639; GCA, T-LA, Letter Mr Fraser, Director of Parks, to Mrs Aston, 3rd February 1977.

[51] GCA, T-LA, Letter Mr Marshall, Assistant Planning Officer at University of Glasgow to Mrs Aston, Secretary, 9th March 1977.

[52] It may seem odd that there were any vacant plots if there was a waiting list! However, it is not uncommon for plotholders to give up during the winter and associations to then wait until spring to start several new plotholders off together, rather than allocate plots one at a time. GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Committee Meeting held in Association Hut at Julian Avenue at 2.30 pm on Saturday 24th April 1977; GCA, T-LA, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in North Kelvinside School, Glasgow, on Wednesday 7th December 1977 at 7.30pm.

[53] GCA, T-LA, Letter Small to Gilmour, Horticultural Officer, Parks Department, 11th December , 1981; GCA, T-LA, Letter Principal Officer Policy Planning, Parks Department, to Small, 12th January 1982; GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Committee Meeting held at 72 Lauderdale Garden Glasgow on 1st March 1982 at 7.30 pm.

[54] GCA, T-LA, Letter Small to Downing, 1st December 1983.

[55] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Committee Meeting held at 72 Lauderdale Garden, 26th October 1983.

KAA. It was still no clearer what would happen to Kirklee South and all the plotholders there had applied to be transferred to either Kirklee North or Julian Avenue. This put extra pressure on the waiting list of thirty people, which the Association considered to be 'embarrassingly long'.[56]

In August 1984 Small had written to the Parks Department following the collapse of a sale to Tayport Developments when test borings showed the site to be unsuitable for high buildings. Small requested that the Parks Department purchase the site from the University. This idea had previously been rejected as the Parks Department could only have bought the land at a rate for recreational use, rather than the rate at which the University were selling, but as the land had been proved unsuitable for high buildings Small was hopeful that the request could be reconsidered, as he was increasingly worried that the current 'squatters' had no security of tenure.[57] However, the University would not sell the land to the Parks Department despite it proving difficult to sell the land to developers. By November 1986 several contractors had shown interest in the site as a housing development only to pull out once they realised that only small buildings would be possible.[58] In 1987 the University and the Parks Department reached an agreement that Kirklee South would be re-allocated as allotments. However, eight days before the new lease for three years was to be signed, the University received an offer from housebuilding firm Wimpey for Kirklee South and decided to terminate the KAA's occupation at the end of the growing season. The KAA committee asked all their members to write to the Planning Department at the Glasgow District Council to protest.[59] Between December 1987 and August 1988 the Planning Department received a series of letters protesting the closure of Kirklee South, not only from plotholders but also from the Hillhead and Kelvinside Community Councils and supportive local residents (including people on the waiting list).[60] A few plotholders commented on the 'irony of planning permission being given for a private housing

[56] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Annual General Meeting held in N. Kelvinside School, 23rd November 1984 at 7.30 pm.

[57] GCA, T-LA, Letter Small to Downing, 28th August 1984; GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Committee Meeting held at 72 Lauderdale Garden, 4th October 1984.

[58] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Annual General Meeting held in N. Kelvinside School, 27th November 1985 at 7.30 pm; GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Annual General Meeting held in Hillhead Library Hall at 7.30pm 18th November 1986.

[59] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 17th February 1987 in Hillhead Library Hall; GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Committee Meeting held on the 28th April 1987 in Hillhead Library Hall; GCA, T-LA, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in Hillhead Library Hall at 7.30pm on 26th November 1987; GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 8th December 1987 Hillhead Library Hall.

[60] GCA, T-LA, Objection Letters to Planning Department, January 1988; GCA, T-LA, Objection Letters to Planning Department, August 1988.

development on one of the few allotment sites in this part of Glasgow in the period leading up to Glasgow hosting a garden festival.[61] The Glasgow Garden Festival was the third in a series of four garden festivals which took place across the UK to stimulate development in inner cities, part of the Thatcher government's efforts to foster partnerships between the public and private sectors.[62] The Glasgow festival, which was sited on the south bank of the Clyde on former dockyard Prince's Dock, sought to invoke the spirit of the Empire Exhibition held in 1938 and incorporated art installations, musical gardens, sculpture and also commercial displays.[63] It even included model allotments, worked voluntarily by plotholders from sites including Mansewood and Queen's Park, to demonstrate plots as a form of recreational activity.[64] One protester wrote directly to the Development Manager of Wimpey, Mr Weir, commenting on the contradiction between Wimpey's takeover of the Kirklee allotments and their own involvement in the Garden Festival. Weir replied claiming that the allotments had not been used in five years – referring to the plots that were being used by the 'squatters' - proving a lack of interest in the site, and that Wimpey's interest in the festival was 'to promote quality private housing by Wimpey Homes and to help sponsor a local festival', so nothing to do with gardening.[65] Other letter writers commented that the Council would not propose to build on a football pitch or other sporting facility, so why should allotments as a recreational facility be built over?[66] One plotholder from Maryhill wrote:

> Those who cultivate them clearly consider them of considerable benefit judging by the amount of effort put into them, and this point is further reinforced by the demand for plots in the area. Moreover, I know many people would greatly regret the demise of the gardens, although they themselves might not be interested in gardening, since the plots are regarded as an important area of open space in a part of the city which is heavily populated, and increasingly so. True, the parks play a vital role, but it cannot be assumed that parks supply all the open space needs of an urban population. I would argue that this is particularly so when such needs include

[61] GCA, T-LA, Objection Letters to Planning Department, December 1987; GCA, T-LA, Objection Letters to Planning Department, January 1988.

[62] Theokas, Andrew. *Grounds for Review: The Garden Festival in Urban Planning and Design* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004), p.142.

[63] Maver, Irene. *Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 283; Ray Rushton, 'Art in the Garden: Glasgow Garden Festival', in *RSA Journal* 136:5385 (1988), p. 679.

[64] GCA, T-LA, Objection Letters to Planning Department, December 1988; Interview with Terry Parker by Robert French, Mansewood, 19th September 2011.

[65] GCA, T-LA, Letter Weir, Development Manager Wimpey Homes, to Dr Downie, 20th October 1988.

[66] GCA, T-LA, Objection Letters to Planning Department, January 1988.

> the facility to work and cultivate land rather than to walk in already laid out park areas. People must, in my view, feel able to influence and improve their environment, or else they will cease to care for it.[67]

For this plotholder it was not just access to green space that was important but the ability to work the land herself; plotholders need to feel stewardship for the land. This plotholder also went on to object to the 'shabby state' of Kirklee South being used 'as a testimony to the lack of care taken by allotment holders, and further justification for their removal' and explained that the reason for shabbiness was uncertainty and even the eviction of plotholders for the land to be drilled and surveyed.[68] In January 1988 local resident Martyn McCafferty wrote to the *Glasgow Herald* to say that he often jogged past the allotments and described them as 'wasteland soon to return to jungle'. 'Use it or lose it', he wrote.[69] The KAA secretary, now Douglas Wood, responded by explaining that the plotholders had been given notice to quit two years previously by the University of Glasgow and now Wimpey Homes were seeking planning permission to build there.[70] Plotholders were experiencing SAGS' old suspicion that a false lack of interest could be manufactured by land owners and developers in action.

In April 1988 Glasgow District Council refused Wimpey's planning application for five-storey flats as a result of the strong protests of the KAA.[71] If Kirklee South was closed it would mean the number of allotments in the West End of Glasgow would have fallen from five hundred plots in 1950 to only sixty in 1990.[72] In August 1988 the association were informed that Wimpey had appealed to the Secretary of State. A hearing date was set for 19th June 1989 but this was cancelled at the 'last minute' as Wimpey had submitted a revised plan which made it necessary to go through the Planning Department again,

[67] Ibid.

[68] GCA, T-LA, Objection Letters to Planning Department, February 1988.

[69] GCA, T-LA, 'Unkempt state of allotments', *Glasgow Herald*, 29th January 1988.

[70] GCA, T-LA, 'Why allotments were abandoned', *Glasgow Herald*, 3rd February 1988.

[71] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 26th April 1988 in Julian Avenue Porta-Cabin; GCA, T-LA, 'West End Allotments Under Threat', *Glasgow Guardian*, 26th August 1988; GCA, T-LA, 'Local site may beat the bulldozer: new hope for allotments', *Glasgow Guardian*, 23rd September 1988.

[72] GCA, T-LA, 'West End Allotments Under Threat', *Glasgow Guardian*, 26th August 1988; GCA, T-LA, 'Local site may beat the bulldozer: new hope for allotments', *Glasgow Guardian*, 23rd September 1988.

delaying the process further still.[73] A Public Local Enquiry by the Secretary of State was held on 22nd October 1990, this was held and Wimpey's appeal was sustained.[74]

Wimpey were successful in their appeal for a number of reasons. Kirklee South was considered to be brownfield in an area of housing shortage and the West End Local Plan included the construction of large flats; the use of the allotments had officially ceased in 1983 so there were considered to be no allotments to actually keep (the years in which the plotholders were 'squatting' were disregarded); and, the Glasgow District Council had been supportive of the University's proposed development in the past and had always agreed that the allotment site was temporary. The waiting list was not accepted as a reliable indicator of demand.[75] The report for the appeal, which was written by town planning and development consultancy, John Warren, stated:

> An examination of relevant appeals sustained elsewhere in the United Kingdom, reveals that the development of allotment sites is not prohibited by the objections of existing and potential allotment holders and their objections are only one of a number of considerations.[76]

The report went on to say:

> It is clear from planning decisions made elsewhere in Glasgow District, that the Council does not consider that the potential loss of allotments or recreational open space should prohibit development. There are a number of cases where former or existing allotment or open space sites have been developed or have received planning consent for development or have been put forward for the City Council's housing land supply.[77]

Glasgow City Council had set a precedent for the closure of allotment sites for development by consistently closing sites themselves for development. Now that they

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[73] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 25th April 1989 in Julian Avenue Porta-Cabin; GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Annual General Meeting held in Hillhead Library on Friday 24th November 1989.

[74] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 22nd April 1990 in the Julian Avenue Porta-cabin.

[75] GCA, T-LA, Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1972 Section 33 Appeal by Wimpey Homes Holdings Ltd Against the Refusal of the City of Glasgow District Council to Grant Outline Planning Consent for a Residential Development at Kirklee Road, Glasgow, John Warren, Town Planning and Development Consultants, 29th October 1990.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

wanted to preserve an allotment site, their past actions worked against them. The report also shows that Mr Small had been right to raise concerns over the 'squatting' plotholders; their unofficial time working the allotments had been ignored. The verdict was not only devastating news for the Kelvinside plotholders but also worrying for the overall future for allotments in Glasgow and, indeed, across the UK as it made clear that similar appeals by developers were taking place across the country and being repeatedly sustained.

Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society

The voice of SAGS is noticeably absent during the KAA's problems. In 1979 the committee ended their membership with SAGS because of a lack of communication; the KAA no longer thought their fees were worth the cost.[78] This was part of a larger loss of membership fees in the late 1970s to SAGS who had, to some extent, turned their back on political involvement. For the previous two decades SAGS conferences had largely been pre-occupied with political issues, particularly security of tenure and the closure of sites. In the 1970s the conference broke away from politics and instead focused on gardening. Membership was dwindling and this change in theme appears to be a response; it could well have been expected that members would be more responsive to gardening advice than politics. James Bruce, from the Department of Horticulture at the East of Scotland College of Agriculture but perhaps better known to SAGS members for his involvement with BBC radio, gave a talk on the scientific basis of some 'old wives tales' in 1970. For example, it had been common to put barley seeds into the split stems of cuttings and the first rooting hormones were later discovered in barley seeds.[79] Bruce also made the comment that plants are living things 'who respond to sympathy':

> The finest gardens are not the ones full of chemicals and insecticides. Loving the plants and making the right kind of compost is the way to grow plants successfully. You must treat the plants with sympathy.[80]

Bruce's talk indicates that although SAGS had moved away from their more obviously political conference subjects they were clearly familiar with the developing green movement and public awareness of chemical use in food production. By the end of the 1960s there was a strain between SAGS and various government organisations; Bruce's

[78] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 6 Kelvin Drive, Glasgow on Tuesday, 13th February 1979 at 7.30 pm; GCA, T-LA, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in the Maryhill Community Centre Hall on Wednesday, 21st November, at 7.30 pm.

[79] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/18, SAGS Annual Report 1970, p. 5.

[80] Ibid.

talk suggests an attempt to align themselves with new allies with the same environmental concerns. This trend continued through the 1970s. In 1974 the talk was given by Mr Lacey, the Director of Parks for Perth, on his response to the Thorpe Report; although he disliked the term 'leisure garden' he did think allotments needed 'a dynamic and positive image' and suggested the development of 'Community Garden Centres'. In 1975 the Director Secretary of the Henry Doubleday Research Association and writer Lawrence D Hills gave a talk on organic gardening and in 1976, the founder of the Scottish branch of the National Vegetable Society, Donald Maclean, spoke about his 'greatest love', the potato.[81] Ultimately though, SAGS new strategy for conferences appears to have failed and in the early 1980s the conferences ceased; the yearly meetings were now limited to just Annual General Meetings. At the same time the Society's annual report was also reduced to a simple two-page letter detailing the year's activities from the usual small booklet which had been produced since 1946.

Financially the 1970s had been a struggle for SAGS. The Scottish Allotment Scheme for the Unemployed Joint Committee continued to support SAGS by giving the society an annual donation but they became worried that this simply reduced the amount of money annually granted to SAGS by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. They therefore limited their donation to £25 as a 'token sum' to demonstrate their support. Alister McWatt Green wrote to Dennis Evans, who had taken over as SAGS secretary from Ashley: 'This simply boils down to the Joint Committee being ready and willing to help SAGS but not prepared to hand out money which would simply, although indirectly, find its way into the coffers of the Department'.[82] In October 1972 SAGS received a letter from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries stating that the Department wished SAGS to become fully self-supporting through increasing their affiliations so that they could end their annual grant to the society.[83] But SAGS had little success and their membership continued to fall. In 1975 the President, Mr Coutts, reported a very poor year:

> Developers are taking more and more of our ground. It is less work for a Council if a developer takes over a piece of ground. Gardening is the number one hobby in

[81] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/21, SAGS Annual Report 1974, pp. 2-4; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/22, SAGS Annual Report 1975, pp. 2-6; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/23, SAGS Annual Report 1976, pp. 1-5.

[82] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/12, SASU Minutes, 22nd November 1972; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/12, SASU Minutes, 17th November 1971; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/12, Letter McWatt Green to Evans, 13th September 1972.

[83] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/12, Letter McWatt Green to Evans, 20th October 1972.

this country, but unfortunately, our membership is dropping each year. We are going wrong somewhere.[84]

In 1977 the main topic for the conference was whether or not SAGS could survive, threatened as it was by rising costs and the loss of association fees. It was agreed that the Secretary's honorarium should be cut by £75 and affiliation fees were raised by forty pence.[85] Cutting the annual report in size and no longer holding conferences were presumably also cost-saving measures. Similarly, in England and Wales, the National Allotments and Garden Society found that their support declined throughout the 1980s and fewer members attended their conferences.[86] In 1985 only thirteen people attended SAGS' AGM and there was a real possibility that the society would be disbanded. However, those present at the meeting decided to continue so that SAGS could continue to distribute the Joint Committee's grant.[87] The following year there was a slight 'upsurge' in interests, largely due to associations in Dundee rallying around SAGS in an attempt to save the society.[88] In 1987 there were no new members but existing members gave donations and the affiliation fee was raised to seventy-five pence.[89] Conversely, the Joint Committee's finances were increasing. The Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed continued to help around three hundred people a year with two-pound grants throughout the 1970s and 1980s.[90] In 1973 the president Frank Catford and the treasurer Alastair McWatt Green agreed to exhaust the funds by 1990 by continuing with grants until that time. As the present scheme had been set up to deal with 'the special circumstances of the 1930s' Catford did not believe the Joint Committee would be 'breaking faith with anyone' by closing the scheme.[91] However, Catford stood down in 1975 and Victor Webb, who believed the scheme should be continued, took over as Chairman.[92] He reinvested the Joint

[84] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/3/22, SAGS Annual Report 1975, p. 6.

[85] GCA, T-LA, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in North Kelvinside School, Glasgow, on Wednesday 7th December 1977 at 7.30pm.

[86] Acton, p. 162, 167.

[87] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/8, 1985 SAGS Annual Report.

[88] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/8, 1986 SAGS Annual Report.

[89] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/8, 1987 SAGS Annual Report.

[90] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, SASU Statement of Accounts, November 1970; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, SASU Statement of Accounts, November 1971; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/12, SASU Minutes, 22nd November 1972; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, SASU Statement of Accounts, November 1973.

[91] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/12, Letter Alastair McWatt Green to Frank Catford, 24th October 1973; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/12, Letter Frank Catford to Alastair McWatt Green, 29th October 1973.

[92] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/12, SASU Minutes, 26th November 1975.

Committee's stock and in 1977 made further investments into several companies.[93] In 1980 the Joint Committee's investments totalled £6616 and by 1985 totalled £14,000.[94] In 1989 there was no sign of the scheme being wound-up, by that year the investments totalled £25,000. Two hundred and sixteen grants of eight pounds were given that year, one hundred and seventy to Old Age Pensioners and forty-six to unemployed people. A donation of one hundred and thirty pounds was given to SAGS.[95] Through their investments, the Joint Committee were able to fund grants from their interest alone and no longer had to ask for donations.

Inclusion and exclusion

Julian Avenue was successfully developed as an inclusive site with facilities to make allotments accessible to families, older people and plotholders that lived further away than an easy walk to the site. In its layout, New Victoria Gardens in Pollokshields is not dissimilar. Founded in 1871 this site was also laid out in a neat grid, each plot with a shed and surrounded by a well-kept hedge, with a large grassy open area in the centre and a communal hall at the top of the site. If you visit the site today it is clear that the green is well used by the children and grandchildren of the plotholders and that the plotholders are a mix of men and women. However, in the early 1980s New Victoria Garden's demographics were much more similar to the demographics of Croftburn and High Carntyne in the 1970s. Fiona Sutherland, who got her plot in her early thirties, believes that she was the first woman on the site to have a plot in her own name but the committee would much have preferred her partner, Mick, to have leased the plot:

> I come in and asked if I could get an allotment and they said 'Well, you know, just apply in writing to the secretary', which I did. And then I got a letter back saying I had been refused a plot and my partner, Mick, he actually knew one of our neighbours, a kind of older man – a retired dredger captain on the Clyde – he was on the committee, so he met Alistair in the street and said 'Oh Fiona got knocked back for a plot, why? You know, she's a real keen gardener and she knows quite a lot about it'. And he said 'Ooh well, if we'd known she belonged to you, we'd have given her a plot' and he said to Mick 'Oh, well, you should have applied for a plot

[93] Namely, Ladies Pride, PC Henderson Group, Lonrho Ltd and the Barron Hepburn Group. UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/12, SASU Minutes, 17th November 1976.

[94] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/10, SASU Minutes, 26th November 1980; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/10, SASU Minutes, 20th November 1985.

[95] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/10, SASU Minutes, 22nd November 1989.

> and then we'd have given it to you and Fiona could garden it' and Mick went 'Why? I hate gardening! I have no interest in gardening! Why? Why can't you just give Fiona the plot?'[96]

After this conversation Fiona was given a plot but she was tested before she was accepted by the other plotholders:

> So it turned out I was invited in and they gave me this sort of rough paddock that had laid empty for a couple of years and they'd been using it to grow vegetables just to sell at the show but they hadn't made a very good job of it so it had just turned into what looked like rough pasture land…So after a couple of weeks when I'd had it all double dug and was kind of starting to plant some crops…the guys started turning up at my gate with kind of wee gifts of spare plants and, you know, kind of chatting away. So, I don't know, I'm not sure, but I have the feeling I was the first woman that was allocated a plot in her own right 'cause although there were other women gardening there are the time that had kind of inherited the plot from their husband or in one case from her father and I have no, I can't say for certain, but I certainly don't think any other woman had been allocated a plot in her own right at that time.[97]

When the plotholders realised Fiona knew what she was doing, they accepted her 'as a gardener' but she had had to prove herself first.[98] She had to show she was willing to work:

> …they had like a work party the first Tuesday of every month and, you know, as all these places are it's all the usual faces that turn up for it so...the first one I could make I came in at seven o'clock and there was a group of them standing on the path and I just went up and stood beside them and they were chatting and then they turned round and went 'Err, yeah, can we help you?' and I went 'I'm here for the work party' and they all just looked totally astonished and they all went 'Really?' and I said 'Yes, well, there's a work party here tonight so I'm here to help'. So they

[96] Interview with Fiona Sutherland, New Victoria Gardens, 4th August 2015.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

were all delighted with that…So I was kind of welcomed into the crowd of the old guard I think just because I was willing to turn out and help.[99]

One plotholder who particularly welcomed Fiona was Sandy Hetherington. He had been a head gardener on estates in Ayr and when he realised Fiona had 'a real interest in gardening' he became her mentor and taught her how to enter plants into the New Victoria Garden annual show.[100] Fiona's success on her plot made the way for other women to be accepted:

> But I mean it changed very quickly and then there was quite a few women in gardening and they actually the next year gave a plot to a nineteen year old girl who made a wonderful job of it so as I say things changed very quickly. At that time I think I was thirty but I mean like, they were just astounded 'cause to them I was a slip of a girl and you know, what was I wanting to do coming in gardening and they didn't think I would be strong enough for, you know, capable enough to do it, so I think the fact that I made a good job of the garden kind of really encouraged them to be a bit more open-minded about who they let in…[101]

New Victoria Garden's committee were making the same assumption as Thorpe's committee had done in their 1960s survey; men could grow vegetables but women were only capable of tending flowers. After Fiona proved otherwise they began to lease plots to other women. Fiona only claims to be the first woman on the site with a plot in her own name; other women were on New Victoria Gardens first, including Eve Tucker who described herself as the first woman of colour on the site. Eve moved to Glasgow from Penang, Malaysia in 1974 with her husband, a Scotsman who had been stationed in Penang with the Royal Air Force. Eve had found the move very difficult so, as she loved gardening, her husband got her a plot (in his name) at New Victoria Gardens as a way for her to take their children out and meet people. Eve started her plot a few years before Fiona took on hers, when she was also in her early thirties, but she was even less welcome than Fiona had been:

> …it was the way they looked at me. As if they were saying 'What on earth is she doing there? What's she doing walking in here?' And it made me quite unnervey

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

> and for once, you know, I think my husband was glad that I was standing behind him. And I said to him 'What's going on?' and he said 'Just smile and just come'. And there was this gentleman in Plot 42 who tipped his hat with a smile and we all said 'Good morning' and walked in but nobody else except this person that was showing us the plot and Sandy Hetherington from Plot 42…it was a horrible feeling. And funny to say, at that time, I really felt as though, I'm coloured and is this what you get coming into somewhere that's so close? You know, it's a close knit community in this place, so for over a year they wouldn't speak to me except two people…even my children were not allowed to come and play in the green here. So I brought my kids and they stayed with me in the plot 'til we went home… I see other kids playing here and I wondered why I was told to keep my kids there and that really angered me.[102]

Like Fiona, Eve just kept trying:

> It was all men. The only time you saw the women is when they come visit when the husbands brought them, you know, it's all men…the majority of them were elderly gentleman and I just thought at that time to meet elderly people and they're so hostile really shocked me because I come from Malaysia, there's a lot of respect for people, you know, and most of all elderly people and that's why I just kept on saying 'Good morning' or 'Good bye' and that was it…How did I manage? I never give up.[103]

It was also Sandy Hetherington who befriended Eve:

> I didn't know how to grow things. I made a lot of mistakes, a lot of mistakes, because, you know, in Malaysia – anywhere in Asia – you don't dig up tubers like dahlias and things and store them to plant the next year. Back home, everything you plant, it's there 'til it dies. So I didn't know how to save things and so on 'til Sandy Hetherington taught me. He came and he said to me 'I've got some dahlias'. I'd never seen dahlia tubers because back home I've only seen the flowers and the plants and he told me what they were and he told me how to grow them…So he

[102] Eve Tucker.

[103] Ibid.

was one of the first ones that ever told me how to grow dahlias so I'm very fond of dahlias because, like he said, it gives colour. It really cheers you up.[104]

It was easily noticeable that it was not just women that were unwelcome on the allotments but ethnic minorities too. Fiona had spoken to Irish plotholders who said that fifteen years ago Catholics had not been allowed on the site and noted that in an area of Glasgow with a large Asian population, Eve was one of only very few – if any other – Asian plotholders:

> …there were no Asian members at all and there was one year, it was our flower show, and when we were sitting with the judges having lunch and chatting and he just said 'Oh, well, I'm a bit surprised you don't appear to have any Asian members and there's such a big Asian population here'. I mean, it's much more now but it was still considerable then. And the then secretary said 'Oh, well, you know, I file their applications where I usually file them – in the bin'. And we all just – our jaws dropped…And right, fine, we now have the proof, you know, kind of this is what we've been looking for – he's damned himself from his own mouth.[105]

When other plotholders found out that the committee was throwing away applications from Asian people away, a group formed to attempt a coup at the association's Annual General Meeting. However, the group did not want to cause a confrontation (with the exception of Fiona who thought 'a big stromash, a big barney' would help) and so did not make it clear to other plotholders. Fiona missed the meeting but found out what had happened from another plotholder later:

> …so all they saw were these young upstarts trying to oust the old committee so they actually voted on the old committee. Somebody I knew, a plotholder here was Jewish, and she was going 'Oh, you know these people were trying to oust' – she was quite a new member as well – 'these people just came in and I don't know agree with what a lot of the old committee do but I just thought it was really a cheek what they were doing so I just voted them back on'. And I'm going 'Well, you know, did you realise what it was all about?' and she's going 'No, nothing was

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

> really said' so I told her and she went 'Oh that's outrageous! I didn't know that, if I'd known that I would have, I now realise why they were trying to do it'.[106]

The Chairman, however, realised that 'there was a lot of ill feeling about what was going on'. He resigned and once he was gone things began to change. Older members still disapproved of Asian gardeners but they no longer had 'the kind of consensus to allow them to be too outspoken about it'.[107] Although the site has changed to include many more women and children it is still a predominantly white site. Eve said:

> But it will be nice to see a few more coloured people, coloured people I mean Asians, whether you're Indian, Pakistani, Malaysian, Chinese, doesn't matter, there's only, what? Myself, I'm Malaysian, there's Syma who's Pakistani, and there's Anita, she's Afro-American. That's the only three.[108]

However, her experience has taught her to take care of new plotholders:

> There's a lot of newcomers who don't know very much about growing things and I, through horrible, bad experience where nobody was helpful, I will be the first one – I go and introduce myself and I say to them, you know, if there's anything they want to know…and I take plants and things and give it to them because it's a good way to do it, it's nice to give, it's nice to show people, you know…it's a good feeling to show them how to plant it and there's some very helpful people here now, very kind and helpful.[109]

When Andrew Young retired and started on his plot in 1987, he found New Victoria Gardens to be quite a different place. He too mentioned that Sandy Hetherington had helped him but also Eve: 'She was very helpful too, so yes, they were all very nice, very helpful'. He had expected to find that the site would be 'full of old men who grew chrysanthemums, you know, and smoked pipes' but instead he was surprised by 'a lot of young people in the plots'.[110] In less than a decade New Victoria Gardens had changed

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[106] Fiona Sutherland.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Eve Tucker.

[109] Ibid.

[110] There is a seeming contradiction here. I have been describing the view that men grow vegetables and women grow flowers yet men on New Victoria Gardens are growing dahlias and chrysanthemums. These flowers are for competition, whereas the view that women only grow flowers holds that these are cut

from being a site of predominantly older men to accepting plotholders of different ages, genders, religions and nationalities.

Land for the people

Promising changes were taking place on individual sites but nationally the Scottish allotment movement was still in a precarious position as it moved towards the 1990s. In 1985 Irene Evans wrote a paper on allotment provision in Scotland for *The Land for the People*, a Scottish Socialist Society publication. A bill 'to amend the law relating to allotment gardens and to confirm that allotment gardening has the status of a recreation' was in the process of being passed and although it only applied to England and Wales, Evans was greatly concerned by what it could mean for Scotland too:

> This is dangerous stuff. The right to grow some of your own food is fundamentally different from any right you might have to score a goal or sink a putt. Growing food is a productive occupation, significant to the economy as well as to the health and well-being of the allotment holder. To deprive people of their right to an allotment would be the last step on the way to cutting people off from the land.[111]

Evans wrote to all the District Councils in Scotland with questions about their allotment provision. She found that Dundee had the best provision with one allotment per 270 people. Aberdeen District Council provided one per 350 people, Edinburgh one per 450 people and Glasgow only one per 950 people. Glasgow District Council's reply stated the city had 800 plots in 1985 and it planned to make new plots as a form of job creation. However, it did not plan to advertise these plots.[112] This again suggests that Glasgow tolerated allotments but was not willing, or did not have the resources, to promote the movement. Some councils that had no allotments claimed that there was no demand for them but Evans was not convinced by this. She wrote: 'Of course people who do not know what their rights are will not be a in a position to demand them'.[113] Evans recognised that not everyone would want an allotment but she thought it was 'only right that those who do should have one'.[114] Once it was conceded that allotment gardening was a recreation 'we have signed away our

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flowers for the house, not the show-bench. Interview with Andrew Young, New Victoria Gardens, 11th July 2016.

[111] Irene Evans, 'Allotment provision in Scotland, 1985', in *The Land for the People*, ed. by Irene Evans and Joy Hendry (Blackford: Scottish Socialist Party, 1985), p. 43.

[112] Ibid., p. 43-47.

[113] Ibid., p. 43-47.

[114] Ibid., p. 48.

birthright to our own land'.[115] Evans attitude was quite different to the one presented by SAGS in the 1960s, that allotment gardening should be presented as a recreation. It is not clear how widespread her opinion was but taken with the letters of protest from the KAA it does seem to come from a wider consensus that people have a right to access land and have influence over their own surroundings. SAGS' efforts to protect allotments through promoting sites as recreational had largely failed; now there was a return to the idea that allotment gardening was a right.

Ultimately, it is people who shape an allotment, forming communities that are inclusive or exclusive, accepting or unaccepting. The committees of SAGS and the Scottish Allotment Scheme for the Unemployed had actively encouraged older men to take on allotments as their place. This had had benefits for older men and such groups were not always unfriendly to others; Joyce described the strong friendships that evolved on High Carntyne but the plotholders there also made room for a young girl and her father. However on other sites such as Croftburn where no-one welcomed Alister or New Victoria Gardens where Fiona and Eve were initially rejected, cultural boundaries had built up excluding anyone who was not an older, white male. This changed in the 1980s as new plotholders began to take charge of the allotment movement. Fiona Sutherland and Eve Tucker influenced their sites through sheer persistence and friendliness, supported by plotholders such as Sandy Hetherington, opening the way for other women to join allotment associations in their own names rather than their partners' names. Gert Lory and Moira Vickerman fought for their sites to be saved, or at least relocated, shifting advocacy from SAGS to individuals. At Moira's insistence toilets were included on her new site to make it more accessible for women and children to spend whole days at the allotments. This too, as simple as it seems, enabled the formation of a new community made up of men and women, adults and children, middle-class and working-class.

It is not clear that the 'good life' or the environmental movement had the same effect on Scottish allotments as it did in southern England but it is apparent that a return to the allotments as a place to grow food was made, either through a desire to grow organically or because rising food prices had once again made growing your own more attractive than the supermarkets. The argument that allotments are for communities remained but added to this was a growing belief, described by Evans, in the right to cultivate land; it is not enough for outdoor access to be limited to parks, people have a need to influence and

[115] Ibid., p. 48.

change their surroundings. This deep passion for gardening is shown through the stories of Fiona and Eve who overcame prejudice to become plotholders, Eve in particular continued against great adversity. Through the determination of these plotholders the struggling, ageing allotment movement from the end of the 1960s had taken on new life.

Joyce's Story

Joyce Gibson gardened as a little girl with her father, Alex Gilmour, on his plot at High Carntyne Allotments. When her father died in 1999 the other plotholders asked her if she would like to take on his plot and she accepted. Joyce became the secretary and fought for the plotholders to have better facilities on their site, including a toilet and fencing. Not long after, the committee found out that Glasgow Council was planning to close High Carntyne Allotments to construct a new road in the East End. Joyce and the committee led the battle for a new site.

Chapter Five included an extended case-study of the campaign to save Kirklee South, however, without the testimony of the plotholders themselves it is perhaps hard to fully understand the emotional toll of allotment closures. Joyce's story, also referred to in Chapter Six, is deliberately longer than the others to provide a personal account in a plotholder's own words.

Figure 16: Alex Gilmour (left) at High Carntyne Allotments in 1970 (Image: With permission of Joyce Gibson)

Well, he died in 1999 and I took over his plot. There was no waiting list so I went down to kinda clear his plot and the men there said 'Do you want to come on the committee?' And I stupidly said yes!... I felt kind of obliged to take over his allotment because he had always fought with the council to get better protection, better fencing, toilets, just better facilities, and never, ever got them. So I made that first year of taking it over my personal quest to

get fencing and a toilet. And I got both. A whole year it took, applying for funding, fighting with everyone, fighting the Council particularly, threatening to go to the media, threatening, you know, everything, how in this day and age we didn't have public facilities, we had no toilets to use. We were vandalised, I think in that year we had something like a hundred bouts of vandalism - serious, huts burnt down, sheds broken into. So eventually - I'll not go into details - but we got a grant and we got funding and we got the local blacksmith apprentices from the council to build a fence the whole way round the site. And we got toilets in, which were the steel container toilets that you see there... So that was a whole year but that was hard, I would never, ever do that again.

[The plotholders] were really lovely, they welcomed us and a lot of them had really respected my Dad. Some of them weren't really that keen on him but I think, again, it was because he was on the committee and he'd been trying to enforce rules. The plots were a disgrace when I took it over, they were shocking, the majority of them were shocking. They were just so run down, the site was really in a bad state. There were some men that had been there and they had never, ever lifted a spade, they'd been there for years. There was a boat on one of them! An actual boat on one of the plots. So the majority of the men welcomed us with open arms but I stirred things up a bit. And I got like a proper committee made up and re-wrote rules and forced them - not quite forced them - I contacted the Council and got together with them to see what rules should be in place. And then as I say I was at the Councillors, my MSP, repeatedly to try and get. So on the whole, they were, the men were good, they were happy they'd got an idiot to take over the secretary basically! No, they were okay. And then it was a long haul to fight to get a new site because we knew we were being moved off and they weren't offering us new land. And if we'd just given up then this site would have just closed and there would never have been a High Carntyne anymore.

I found letters in my Dad's kind of paperwork and stuff - I can't remember exactly what they were. Maybe letters from them to the Council to say 'We're hearing rumours that the site's going to be closed'. But that was like twenty years before so there was talk even then of some kind of road going through. And then I continually asked the Council until we found out that there was talk of the new whatever route and this was going to be the East End regeneration route; that was the name of the route that was going to go through it. So I gradually, eventually found out more about it, how it was going to affect us and then it kind of, I think we got the letter saying they were going to close the site. So then the committee went to meet the Council and said 'Well, by law you've got to find us another

site' but they said 'There's no sites available - you find us one and we'll move.' So the Chairman at the time came over and looked at Kennyhill allotments and all of this area was just all kind of derelict, lying in a bit of a state, but he persisted eventually, yeah. I think it cost three quarters of a million to build this site. But it came out of the money for the East End regeneration route I think because I was annoyed, I said 'That better not be coming out of, like, taxpayers' money' but in the long run it did, it did. But, that's apparently what it cost, it caused a lot of jealousy amongst the other plotholders in the city. They said 'Oh they've got a brand new site with new sheds and greenhouses'. But we didn't want to move! High Carntyne was set in like a valley, it was low down, it was perfect, it was sheltered, this is more exposed. We didn't want to move here, you know, we fought to stay but we couldn't.

So you're talking nearly thirty years there was talk of that site being closed 'til it actually did close**...** And they were trying to get us off before this was finished and I wouldn't let them, so I told the Council we're not moving, I had to tell all the plotholders not to move because I don't trust the Council. I don't!

Well, they said you'll need to find some land, where is the land? And we debated and argued about it and said we need to be - you know, we couldn't be too far away from the existing site. But they didn't try to look for anywhere. If they'd said, you know, 'We've really done our research and there's nowhere' but this was sitting here. Obviously just the ordinary person in the street would look and think there's no way we could have a site there but I think they took part of the park away too in the plans, part of the park. And then they realised, I think, that we meant business and we weren't going to leave and we wanted a new site. So GAF were very good at that point.[1] Because we could, I could go and kind of voice what our concerns were at the meetings and they were very useful for being heard if you like, and the minutes would be distributed to everyone and the accounts would get the minutes and whatever and I think they realised then that we were here to stay. And because GAF had been formed by that time we had more of a stronghold if you like…I did monopolise the meetings a lot of the time, yeah, I probably did. But hey ho, I was fighting for something that was worth fighting for.

We'd looked at Alexandra Park to see if there was an area of the park we could use but there wasn't an area that they were willing to give us. And then it was Alec [the Chairman]

[1] Glasgow Allotments Forum.

who said 'I think that bit over there' and we came and looked and I'll be honest I was 'Oh, I don't think so' but they identified it as being an area they could work on… And we had various meetings with the Council, and the Committee, to discuss how big it would be, you know, it was going to be smaller, they were trying to give us smaller plots and have more plots. They said 'We'll give you x amount of plots but they'll be smaller' but the men didn't want that, they wanted big plots, and these are big plots, they're very big plots. So I fought for what the men wanted. I never fought for what I wanted, I fought for what the men wanted because they were worth fighting for. And with the agreement that eventually I would have my allotment when I could work it. So they then drew up plans, the architect - Wayne - he was lovely - Wayne eventually got a plot on this site, went on the waiting list and got one but then very quickly realised he didn't have time to work it and went away. But he designed it - he was good at the meetings, he was very, very good at the meetings, you know, and he would listen and hear what I was saying. They were talking about giving us an old scabby meeting hut from somewhere, that was falling - an old one - which would have fallen apart and they talked about small huts and small greenhouses but we said no because ours were big, you know, my Dad had double the amount, probably three times the amounts of tomato plants so it wasn't fair that the men would accept something less. So they then agreed to give us the great big greenhouse and the sheds. They were all built all wrongly as well. The soil was shocking. It's been really honestly a struggle to get where we are today. It really has been hard work, real hard work. Would I do it again? Probably would actually, yeah. But it's harder than anyone will imagine it was. I had three young children, I had to work full time, I had a husband and would just come in from work before I could get my jacket off I was on the phone to people, answering email, arguing with folk, phoning up all these bizarre people because I'd found them online - 'Would you support us if we did this?' Yeah, it wasn't easy but we're here now.

And then when we moved in the soil was shocking, absolutely disgusting. So we had, again, an argument with the Council. Four of them came down to see us and I had this sudden urge to run because they were angry and they came in and dug areas and said, you know, you probably have a bit of flooding and whatever. Anyway, we got thirty loads of top soil dumped and I said 'What have we to do with that?' 'Dig it in' and I said 'We're not digging it in'. So they then hired some men for a full week and they came and rotavated it in but the soil was still crap. We have dug hundreds of bags of compost, like, we've paid for compost, bought compost to dig in in that plot and still when my husband's digging he'll come across large areas of clay and rubble and rubbish. Oh the rubble we get out, it's

shocking, it's disgusting. But that was the contractors. That wasn't the council. But it was too late and the Council had signed them over to us and we were basically told you need to

Figure 17: The committee meet to make sure the work is on schedule, March 2008 (Image: With permission of Joyce Gibson)

get on and do it yourself. So there's still some plots in here that are still the soil is shocking.

It was very hard because you imagine all the years, all the years my Dad digging compost in every year, all these barrow loads that I'd helped him all these years ago, dig in, you would dig in ash, wood ash, you would dig in anything he could get. … It was really sad [to leave]… I was sad, all my memories had been there since I was really young, and my Mum and Dad and, you know, all these years they had spent down with a wee flask of soup and their tea and their sandwiches, sitting on a lovely summer's evening, and all the plants ready to get loaded up. Oh aye, it was sad really. My Dad wasn't obviously there anymore. Yep. It was really sad. Exciting in a way to be moving here. But aye. Lots of memories. And my Grandmother had stayed right across the road from the allotments so it was even that, leaving there, even though my Granny wasn't there anymore, that was quite sad, aye. But such is life.

We'd moved in before we realised how bad it was. And then one of the men that had come over, old Ernie, he was an older man, he'd kind a poked about a bit and went 'Yeah, it's

fine' and they'd accepted that, so. But I said 'I don't care if we accepted it or not'… It was the Senior Horticultural Officer, it was the Allotments Officer and two other men that came that day that I was with Alec at the gate and they walked up towards the gate, towards me, and I swear, I had this urge to say 'Alec, I should be somewhere else, I can't be here'. I was scared! Their faces, they were raging, furious! Oh let's see! And they were so rude… They started digging just Janine's plot there and as they were digging the water was pooling, just water was, you know, the water was just pooling in the hole as you dug it up, just filled immediately with water. And we showed them other areas. And they obviously agreed 'Och, you would just do this and that' and I said 'No, I'm not doing it'. When we took rubble out of our plots we piled it up and took photographs everywhere and it was awful, it really was. A lesser man would have crumbled! But we're pretty tough people.

We formed a good strong committee where we wrote the rules and a constitution and we let the plotholders know. We told them don't bring any rubbish from the old site, we don't want the site to get congested with a load of rubbish we want to keep seeing the site neat and tidy. But as a result we kept issuing warning letters, we really have stuck to the rules really rigidly and the plotholders, some plotholders don't like it. We didn't have that same rigidity over there, I think my Dad had got fed up trying to make a difference and he'd thought 'I'm just going to work my own plot' but we were really strict…and we've split some of the plots to make them smaller? To see if that would help newcomers to cope but it really hasn't, you know. It's helped some, there's a few moved on to their own plot and they're absolutely over the moon, but I would think the majority of them have failed even though they're smaller plots. So we split one into three and we split two into two. So we've still got two split into two, the one we split into three we've just decided to make that two. Some of the plotholders think we should go back to full plots but my argument is but then the full plot doesn't get worked, at least a half plot is easier, maybe. So I think the plotholders in general, I think in general, were quite excited that they were getting new greenhouses and sheds, yeah.

I don't feel it's a continuation, no, no, I think it feels like a totally different thing. Totally different. So the character, ambience, and all that, did not move from the old site to the new one, I would say. I don't mean everyone's fighting or all that. But it just lost its whole character and on the old site you went in at the gate at the top and you went down a wee slight incline and as you went down, you actually felt like the side was like, not closing around you, but you were surrounded by it, it was lovely, do you know what I mean? I mean the gate was kind of high and as you walked down, you walked kind of down. So the

greenhouses and that appeared taller somehow. So you felt like you were being, I don't know, it was a lovely feeling. And you felt like a peace and relaxed as you walked in. I don't get that at all, not at all. I would say I've never really, if I'm honest, possibly because I've not been down so often, I've never, ever felt the same warmth and all that as I did on the old site. But remember I was on that for forty odd years, so.[2]

Figure 18: Joyce and her husband on the old site, Corston Street, in 2004 and Joyce on her new plot in Duchray Street in 2008
(Image: With permission of Joyce Gibson)

[2] Interview with Joyce Gibson, High Carntyne Allotments, 29th July 2015.

Chapter Six

1990 - 2017: A gardener's world

The changes that had taken place on Glasgow's allotments in the 1980s continued into the 1990s, influenced by a new blossoming of popularity in gardening. This chapter will continue to follow the development witnessed in the 1980s before returning to the history of the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society and its successful campaigning for new legislation. Finally, the voices of current plotholders on Glasgow's allotments will be brought into the discussion to explore six elements that form, and have formed, allotments: size, food production, boundaries, creativity, community and connectivity. These elements will be used to argue how and why allotments are and should be part of Scottish cities.

Coffee and TV

When Robin Bower took on his plot at Queen's Park Allotment in 1993 it was still largely an older man's site. Robin, a young father at the time, had been growing tomatoes and cucumbers on his daughter's bedroom windowsill but when they began to block out the sunlight his wife told him 'You're gonna have to grow them elsewhere!'[1] He stumbled across the allotments whilst taking his daughter for a walk in the park and he soon got a plot of his own:

> Well, when I started here it was mostly Irish guys that were up here, a few other folk as well, in fact the secretary was a woman that had a plot over on the side and so, but it was mostly Irish, mostly men. I think Jean was the only female on at the time… And it was the usual overgrown, wee bits had been used, other wee bits hadn't been used. So I just came up and started digging and planted some potatoes and I took my first crop home in my pocket and my wife laughed again at that. But the second year, I had a big bag of them so I was quite pleased…[2]

It was only after a few years that Robin had been on the site that things began to change:

> It's not as though you could sort of say, you know, 1999 was the big change or something like that… In the 2000s it changed because you would get a lot more nonsense in all the magazines about things about allotments, about how this was the

[1] Interview with Robin Bower, Queen's Park Allotments, 25th June 2016.

[2] Ibid.

> new great idea and such like. So after that we were getting a lot of people putting their name on the waiting lists…so the numbers jumped from say about six, seven, eight, to twenty, thirty, forty and the maximum we had was about a hundred and forty odd names on the list…[3]

Robin attributes this leap in popularity to gardening magazines, a convincing insight - in 1995 the UK's population spent £18.57 million on gardening magazines but by 1999 the figure had risen to £30.20 million.[4] There were also many more gardening programmes on television, part of an increase in lifestyle programmes which saw 'factual entertainment' virtually replacing comedies or documentaries in the prime time slot of eight o'clock to nine o'clock by the year 2000.[5] Denis Barrett, a plotholder on Budhill and Springboig Allotments, said this trend did not come without its problems:

> …there's a demand for plots, and the demand for plots is coming from a lot of the TV driven programmes where people think it's easy to have a plot. From the experience of the committee, the number of people who have ambitions for a plot, and great plans for a plot but when they discover the amount of work that's involved and the detail that's involved and the knowledge that's involved can be a challenge for some of them.[6]

Robin is in agreement that the television programmes made gardening look too easy:

> …there's always one that stuck in my mind 'Do your allotment in the weekend' in an hour in the weekend, something ridiculous like that and so, and then, you had all the gardening programmes starting up and they became more mainstream. I mean *Gardener's World* has been out for years and years and years and years and it was all Percy Thrower and such like but no one really bothered, it was just a quaint wee thing, but all of a sudden a lot of guys, a lot of folk, Monty Don, Alan Titchmarsh, and that, it's just making it sexy and saying 'Ooh yeah, I can do that'… I mean it's no a hard thing, but you have to apply yourself and do it. That's the difference.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Lisa Taylor, *A Taste for Gardening: Classed and gendered practices* (Ashgate Publishing: Aldershot, 2008), pp. 85-6.

[5] Ibid., pp. 85-6.

[6] Interview with Denis Barrett, Budhill and Springboig, 10th June 2015.

> They obviously look at a programme and it's done in half an hour and 'Ta dah!' you know, *Garden Force*, and things like that and it just made it look far too easy.[7]

There had been a change in gardening programmes. Earlier gardening programmes, including *Gardener's World*, focused on demonstrating seasonal tasks to do in the garden showing viewers what to do with commentary on how to do it. But the gardening programmes of the 1990s, such as *Ground Force*, focused on makeovers, diluting instructions and focusing instead on homeowners' reactions to their 'new' gardens.[8] Such programmes were focused on private home gardens but for those living in Glasgow's flats an allotment was the only available option. Denis and Robin found such programmes did not reflect the real amount of work needed to garden an allotment effectively. Robin added:

> Plus also when people came up here, and we're sitting here chatting away and having a cup of tea, folk are laughing and having a drink and things like that, and you think 'Ooh, that's lovely' but they don't see all the work that's gone before that and after that as well. So it's a bit of a sort of a misinformation because people think 'Ooh that looks cush' and it's not, it's a lot of hard work.[9]

There is a hint of Robin and Denis feeling insulted that their hard work has been portrayed by the media as being so *easy*. It is not an issue with age, the old criticising the young; in 1999 Robin would only have been in his early forties, a young man to be on an allotment. Neither would Robin or Denis claim that an allotment is all hard work; both men are happy to sit and talk over a cup of coffee. It is simply that they want their world to be taken seriously. Although there had been a high turnover on allotments in the 1990s and 2000s, Denis has found that if plotholders get past their initial challenges they tend to stay:

> So we have a high turnover but what you do find is once someone gets into the plot, if they get past the first year, then they will keep the plot for a good number of years. But they tend to come down, it's harder than they maybe expected, they have to put more time into it than they expected, so there's a harder, a change in

[7] Robin Bower.

[8] Taylor, p. 89.

[9] Robin Bower.

> that respect. The demand is there but the reality to turn that demand into plots is a different thing.[10]

The influence of gardening programmes, although they had almost disappeared by the late 2000s, has brought lasting changes to Glasgow's allotments.[11] The programmes had their negative aspects but a positive was certainly that they featured as many female experts as men and the presenters were also relatively young with regional accents, making gardening seem more accessible and achievable. The experts also acted outside of their traditional roles. Charlie Dimmock, for example, did not merely cultivate dainty flowers; she also did the heavy work.[12] A change in demographics has been notable on allotment sites as Robin explains:

> Well, a lot of the Irish men went but there was a lot more women, obviously, coming in doing it as well, still had guys, but the number of women applying for it increased considerably. I would say, I would reckon, about seventy per cent of the list is female, you know, the waiting list. And up here I would say roughly, I think it's about sixty forty to women sort of thing, or name on the missives, they might have their husbands up with them and things like that but their name's on the missive. So it's technically theirs as such, so there's no dividing if they divorce, she keeps the plot![13]

By the twenty-first century women were not only welcomed on allotments, they increasingly made up the majority of the population of plotholders on sites; Fiona Sutherland also said that 'there have been times in the recent past when more than, well over half our members have actually been women'.[14] This change has also increased the number of children on allotments. One plotholder on Queen's Park has even sectioned off part of his plot and built a playhouse so that the children on the site can play together.[15] The increased gender and age diversity on Glasgow's allotments clearly illustrates that since the 1970s these communities are no longer exclusive, as seen in the previous chapter, but are increasingly inclusive.

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[10] Denis Barrett.

[11] Taylor, p. 106-7.

[12] Taylor, p. 87.

[13] Robin Bower.

[14] Interview with Fiona Sutherland, New Victoria Gardens, 4th August 2015.

[15] Robin pointed this plot out as we walked around Queens Park Allotments.

The Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society

The growing popularity of allotments in the 1990s did not extend to the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society. Membership continued to fall and in 1993 the Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotment and Gardens Association limited the number of visits the president and secretary of SAGS were making to sites, in an effort to persuade associations to join the society, until 'their effectiveness has been assessed'.[16]

Internal arguments and stresses reached a climax at the 1995 SAGS Annual General Meeting; prior to this the committee posts had been filled by strong-willed people who, although they presumably thought they were doing the right thing for the society, were not adept at working together. Following the 1990 AGM a new member had taken on the role of secretary. A proactive man, he had made several encouraging changes: he registered with the Scottish Office for notice of any legislation that would affect allotments, visited sites and attended association annual general meetings to observe site management and good practice, set up a trial seed scheme across seven sites and even tried to rectify the old problem of secretaries not passing on information by creating 'notice-board-friendly-posters'.[17] However, he felt he had no support from the rest of the committee, commenting that 'personal pride' was being put before work.[18] SAGS, which had struggled for a few decades to maintain its place in the allotment movement, appeared to have completely lost its way. The secretary could not establish contact with the Aberdeen District Federation, a newly formed Glasgow Federation said they did not want contact with SAGS and the Dundee Federation was only infrequently in communication with the society.[19]

The secretary soon left and a new one took his place in 1993. When a representative for Glasgow made a request for the names and addresses of site secretaries in her area, the new SAGS secretary refused her the list, seemingly because of her understanding of data

[16] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/8/3, Report of SAGS management committee meeting, 24th October 1992; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/8/3, Report of SAGS Management Committee Meeting, 30th January 1993.

[17] Events have ben anonymised in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 for this section, with the exception of current or former SAGS committee members who were interviewed and gave permission for their names to be used. UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/8/3, Secretary's report 1993 AGM.

[18] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/8/3, Report of SAGS Management Committee Meeting, 9th May 1993; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/8/3, Letter former SAGS secretary to Joint Committee member, 18th July 1993.

[19] The Glasgow Federation was not the same organisation as the Glasgow Allotment Forum. The Federation appears to have been rather short lived. UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/8/3, Report of SAGS Management Committee Meeting, 30th January 1993; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/8/3, Secretary's report 1993 AGM; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/8/3, Report of SAGS Management Committee Meeting, 9th May 1993.

protection law.[20] The resulting dispute escalated when an association in Clydebank contacted the Glasgow representative for her advice and the secretary, who said this action was outside of the representative's area, asked her to resign.[21] By the 1995 AGM the secretary had decided not only to expel the representative but the entire allotment association that she belonged to.[22] When the Glasgow representative heard this was going to happen she planned a coup, which Fiona Sutherland took part in:

> We had actually been contacted kind of just really in the days, maybe a week or so before the AGM…just to make sure that we were coming and she informed us that in her opinion there were some real problems with the committee and she kind of briefly explained that…she had been excluded from meetings and she had really struggled to get any information about, you know, the Glasgow sites, so she could actually visit them. So she asked that all of the Glasgow representatives, from the sites in Glasgow, that as many as could make it would briefly rendezvous at the motorway [service station]…So we did, we met them, quite a group of us met there for coffee just about an hour before the meeting and she went through some of the things that she had experienced at that meeting... the then chair opened the meeting by saying that they had had a committee meeting shortly before the AGM and they had just come straight out of that and they were wanting to pass a resolution that Springboig and Budhill Allotment site was being ejected from SAGS because their representative had caused so much trouble in the meetings, so that set the tone. So then there was a huge argument about, you know, they couldn't do that, they can't just, kind of eject a whole allotment site just for one person, even, you know, if it turned out that her behaviour had been unreasonable and also we didn't feel that they had the power to do that, it was something that should be put to an AGM and voted on by the membership.[23]

The coup had been well planned. All the delegates from Glasgow had copies of the constitution to quickly flick through and use to support their arguments and people that

[20] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/9, Letter Glasgow representative to SAGS secretary, 9th March 1995; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/9, Letter second SAGS representative to SAGS secretary, 21st March 1995.

[21] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/9, Letter SAGS secretary to Glasgow representative, 18th March 1995; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/9, Letter second Glasgow representative to SAGS secretary, 22nd March 1995.

[22] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/12, SAGS AGM Minutes, 3rd June 1995.

[23] Interview with Fiona Sutherland, New Victoria Gardens, 11th July 2016.

were willing to stand for committee roles had already been chosen. When the elections took place, all the committee members were replaced by new members who were nominated and accepted and the motion to expel Budhill and Springboig Allotment Association from SAGS was easily beaten with only three votes for the expulsion and twelve against.[24] The meeting was an upsetting affair with 'disparaging remarks' made about committee members. Arguments escalated over the secretary's financial statement, particularly over her decision to change the society's auditor without informing other members of the committee, and the meeting ended with the secretary locking the money in her car and being blockaded in by other members. Trust had completely broken down within the society's leadership.[25] The previous secretary wrote about the meeting: 'I certainly extended my experience of what angry men (and women) can inflict on one another and hope there is someone in the new committee with enough time, energy and principle to lift up SAGS again. It is a task needing much sacrifice on someone's part.'[26] It was an upsetting affair that could have ended the society. Instead, SAGS had a new beginning.

The new committee were determined. By the early 2000s committee members were once again visiting sites, or making phone-calls to those further away, not just to persuade associations to join but also to find out the needs of plotholders.[27] SAGS also looked to embed allotments within their local communities, encouraging associations to link with Community Councils and Tenants Associations, and linked themselves to national bodies joining the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardens in 1997.[28] In Glasgow SAGS helped to set up the Glasgow Allotments Forum (GAF). When the City Council

[24] Fiona Sutherland, 11th July 2016; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/12, SAGS AGM minutes, 3rd June 1995.

[25] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/12, SAGS AGM minutes, 3rd June 1995; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/9, Report by SAGS secretary on 1995 AGM.

[26] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/5/8/2, Letter former SAGS secretary to Victor Webb, 5th June 1995.

[27] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/14, SAGS Minutes, 23rd June 1999; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/14, SAGS Minutes, 23rd February 2002; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/14, Paper written after discussion October 5th 2002.

[28] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/14, Paper written after discussion October 5th 2002; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/14, SAGS AGM, 17th June 2000.

decided to raise rents for plotholders, SAGS met with a local councillor on their behalf; the result was the formation of GAF in 2001.[29].

Perhaps most importantly, SAGS made a return to political engagement. In June 2000 the SAGS committee met with MSP Robin Harper and Jim Boyle, representative for MSP Des McNulty MSP. They agreed that SAGS would organise a petition to parliament to be submitted to the Transport and Environment Committee. SAGS would also organise a march to Holyrood, complete with gardening tools and produce, and on the same day, Harper would organise for fruit and vegetables grown on allotments to be served in the Holyrood Canteen.[30] The following year SAGS formed working parties to divide tasks between the committee, to limit the pressure on volunteers, including public relations, finance, policy and strategy and information (which included working on a society website).[31] The committee also sought to involve other members of SAGS, beyond the committee, in its actions and campaigns through its annual general meetings, which continued to be held every June. The SAGS conference was also reintroduced. There was a sense of excitement, as Judy Wilkinson, who joined the committee in the late 1990s describes:

> …they really wanted to go forward and establish SAGS as a force as it had been in Scotland to sort of promote and, I guess - it was later we got the mantra, you know, 'Promote, Preserve and Protect' - but we wanted to protect allotments and we felt that working together we'd have more and more opportunity to do that. And it was then the time that was coming with, sort of, the Scottish Government or the Scottish Parliament coming, so it was all times of that change. It was hope; that we could get change and we could start to build up the allotments movement again.[32]

An area of SAGS' work that came to an end was the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed. The number of grants applied for and given had dwindled in the 1990s and into the 2000s so by 2005 just one hundred and forty six people had applied. This was the last year of the scheme; SAGS and the Society of Friends mutually decided it was no

[29] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/14, SAGS Minutes, 19th May 2001;Interview with Judy Wilkinson, SAGS, 13th July 2016.

[30] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/14, Report on Meeting 1st June 2000.

[31] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/14, SAGS Minutes, 7th July 2001.

[32] Judy Wilkinson, SAGS.

longer fulfilling its purpose.[33] The Friends donated £10,000 to SAGS as a 'recognition of work over the years' and the SAGS committee placed this in a high interest account, with the aim of keeping it intact and only using the interest to fund their activities.[34] Judy explained 'It actually enabled us to do the things we wanted because we then had a pot of money that we could draw on'.[35]

Re-introducing the conference enabled plotholders to meet, to talk to each other and share stories from their sites.[36] By the time the Scottish Government consulted on allotment legislation in 2012, SAGS were in a strong position, with motivation and funding, to fight for the plotholders they represented. The society had raised the need for new legislation in their petition to the Scottish Parliament in 2000; both plotholders and local authorities felt that the existing legislation, last revised in 1950, was confusing and it needed to be simplified. The Scottish Government decided that this new legislation would be incorporated into the Community Empowerment Bill, as allotments involve communities and local authorities working together. For SAGS the main issues to cover were the size of plots, land for new allotments, waiting lists and, that old vexed question, security of tenure.[37] When the Bill was introduced in June 2014, following two consultations in which SAGS had taken part, the society was concerned over what had been lost: 'It did not empower the allotment community. In fact it could be considered to dis-empower them and empower local authorities as they would have disproportionate control over the provision, size and placement of allotments.'[38] Determined, the SAGS committee continued to campaign, as described by Judy:

> It was difficult because we hadn't got a professional background in any of this, but we'd got passion. And the whole SAGS committee, twelve of us, were committed to this… 2014 was absolutely amazing in terms of how people came together and worked on this. And we had meetings with the Scottish Government people who

[33] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/5/15, Letter SASU to SAGS, 4th March 1996; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/10, SASU Minutes, 18th November 1992; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/10, SASU Minutes, 17th November 1993; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/10, SASU Minutes, 13th November 1996; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/2/13, SASU Minutes, 18th November 1998; UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/14, SAGS Minutes, 9th April 2005.

[34] UGAS, Papers of Victor Webb, UGC 222/2/4/14, SAGS Minutes, 9th April 2005.

[35] Judy Wilkinson, SAGS.

[36] Interview with Alison Swanson, SAGS, 13th October 2015; Judy Wilkinson, SAGS.

[37] Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson and Rona Wilkinson, *Raising Spirits: Allotments, well-being and community* (Edinburgh: Argyll Publishing, 2015), p. 108.

[38] Mollison et al, p. 109

> were writing the legislation, we still didn't realise the process and I think they were still, they were consulting us, but they were also consulting COSLA [Convention of Scottish Local Authorities] and there was no way that COSLA was going to allow our demands to be met and they made that absolutely explicit that we perhaps could get something in guidance but there was no way that in the Act we were going to be allowed to have size of plot, waiting list and fair rents. Which were the three things that we really wanted. And so it was a very interesting two years![39]

When a report was published on the bill in January 2015 it did not include SAGS' amendments but in the following March, when the amendments were voted on, Ken McIntosh the Shadow Minister for Local Government presented the allotment amendments and these were accepted by four votes to three. This was a small victory as the amendments could still be removed when the bill went to chamber for the Stage Three debate. The SAGS committee continued to press for their changes making it clear that if the bill was passed without their amendments the allotment community would deem the act a failure. This led to further meetings between Scottish Government Officers, representatives from local authorities and SAGS. Final amendments were agreed and these were accepted in the Stage Three debate.[40]

Part Nine of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 has replaced all former legislation for allotments. It has greatly improved the security of tenure for plotholders in Scotland; now local authorities have to consult with ministers before closing one of their allotment sites and replacements will have to be provided if the demand is there. This will help plotholders in the same situation as Joyce Gibson when High Carntyne was closed; no more excuses can be made about there being no available land if the demand for plots is clear. Local authorities have a legal duty to provide allotments; a central waiting list has to be maintained and if the number on it exceeds fifty per cent of the number of existing plots, or if anyone has been on a list for more than five years, 'reasonable steps' have to be taken to provide new sites. Currently, waiting lists are managed by individual sites in Glasgow so it is difficult to estimate the true number waiting for a plot or how long they have been waiting. A fair rent clause was included to keep allotments affordable for everyone and prevent them from becoming a middle-class hobby and the size of an allotment was defined as 250 square metres so that local authorities cannot turn to decreasing plot sizes to

[39] Judy Wilkinson, SAGS.

[40] Mollison et al, pp. 111-13.

cut their waiting lists. Finally, all local authorities now have to develop food growing strategies, including identifying land to use as allotments.[41]

This is not the end of SAGS' work on legislation; the committee is now working on producing guidance notes with local authorities and the Minister for the Environment, the first time that guidance is informed by a tripartite committee.[42] As volunteers with no professional legal experience, this is a significant achievement for the SAGS committee. Campaigning for the amendments had been 'an enormous responsibility' for those involved, as Judy states:

> …we were conscious of all our predecessors marching up behind who had done so much work for allotments before that, and I think we've still got apprehension that it really will do what we want… we were all very concerned that we weren't going to let them down, we weren't going to lose something.[43]

SAGS now has a strong committee that advocates on behalf of plotholders across Scotland, following the 'mantra' that Judy mentioned. To *protect* sites, by networking, campaigning and raising awareness of the planning process and new legislation; to *preserve* by recording stories and working to conserve seeds and plants; and, to *promote* allotments as places for 'healthy activity and good food', celebrating communities and encouraging bio-diversity.[44]

The definition of an allotment as well as the needs of plotholders, or those on waiting lists, are now in legislation; but what do plotholders themselves see as the meaning of an allotment? This chapter will now turn to the words of plotholders in Glasgow, who give voice to the meaning of an allotment through six defining elements: size, food production, boundaries, creativity, community and connectivity.

Size

> *It matters for a whole lot of reasons but it matters because one, it was traditionally the allotment size. Two, a lot of the traditional allotments are that size, therefore if it's not enshrined in law or it's taken away then those would be at threat. Three,*

[41] Mollison et al, pp. 113-14.

[42] Mollison et al, p. 114; Judy Wilkinson, SAGS.

[43] Judy Wilkinson, SAGS.

[44] SAGS, <http://www.sags.org.uk> [Accessed 27/02/2017].

somewhere along the line that size was decided because it was to feed a family - people have an emotional connection to that.[45] *– Alison Swanson.*

The SAGS committee campaigned to have the size of a plot defined in the Community Empowerments Act as they were concerned that without that definition local authorities would make plots smaller and smaller to meet the demands of waiting lists without acquiring land to create new sites. In the 1930s the Scottish National Union of Allotment Holders with the Society of Friends had promoted 300 square yards, or 250 square metres, as the amount of land required to feed a family of four.[46] This was also the standard size for an allotment used by the Ministry of Agriculture during the Second World War.[47] SAGS maintained that that is the size needed by today's plotholders if allotments are to continue their role in feeding families. SAGS committee member Alison Swanson explained that the Scottish government were against such large sized plots:

> Their argument against it was, nowadays, people do not want two hundred and fifty square metres. And our argument was, well, maybe they don't want it but they could have less by agreement but they should have the right. And then there was this whole underlying thing about working people were getting spoken to who are too busy for 250 square metres and the modern life – there was a lot about modern life and people wanting smaller allotments – but that argument wasn't taking account of the environmental thing.[48]

Plotholders in Glasgow have agreed with SAGS that to grow food you need space. Roland Albiker on Kennyhill Allotments said:

> I don't think under 200 square metres is, well, it's not, I could not do with it. I mean, I am sure if you want to have a real hobby and growing just for a bit of pottering around that's fine but you couldn't really supply your main vegetables and salads of it. With two hundred you probably just about could but you would have to be much more organised than I am.[49]

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[45] Alison Swanson.

[46] UGAS, Paper of Victor Webb, UGC 222/1/3/2, Allotment Gardens for the Unemployed Report 1932, p. 3.

[47] Foley, p. 178.

[48] Alison Swanson.

[49] Interview with Roland Albiker, Kennyhill Allotments, 10th July 2015.

Lisa Clifford, from High Carntyne Allotments, agrees. She had been placed on a half plot for her first year but now has a full size plot:

> And I love the size of it. My first year I ran out of space really quickly, when I had sort of been reduced to the half plot. And I love the fact that if someone says, you know, 'Look, I've ran out of space' I'll always say 'Oh, I've got a bit of space for you, do you want to stick something in one of my corners?' so I quite like that. Yeah, lots of room to kind of breathe and it's nice, yeah. I just wish my greenhouse was twice as big! Never enough space in there![50]

Figure 19: Lisa Clifford in her greenhouse (Image: By author)

Both Roland and Lisa have full sized plots that are fully cultivated and both are working as well as keeping their plots. There is an acknowledgement that full sized plots can be a struggle, especially for new gardeners who have a plot for the first time, so there needs to be an option for half or quarter sized plots, or even raised beds for beginners. The

[50] Interview with Lisa Clifford, High Carntyne, 27th July 2015.

committee at Croftburn Allotments have introduced this system as explained by Alister Smith:

> And we have started putting in raised beds for people who maybe apply for a plot and we can give them the raised bed - when they're completed - to say look you can start off in this and if you do well and you're quite happy, you'll then know what you can grow and how much time it takes, etc., and then when a plot comes up then you'll get a plot. Now that's quite universal, I've now discovered across a number of allotment sites when they actually bring people on and they start them off in a raised bed, then a small plot, then a half plot, then a full plot if they want to go that far and sometimes when people get older or physically restricted they can go down the way.[51]

Maureen McKendrick began gardening through this system at Kennyhill Allotments and now has a full-sized plot on Budhill and Springboig Allotments:

> I think this is a 250 square metre plot. And I think this is an ideal size. Look, when I started with the raised bed and then the quarter plot and then a full plot. The full plot that I had at Kennyhill was a big long plot, it wasnae as wide as this, but it was maybe a wee bit longer and this to me is just ideal. I felt that I kinda worked my way up the chain, you know, and I was able to prove that I could commit and deliver. But this to me is the size that you would need to be able to do what I'm trying to do and just be self-sufficient in terms of vegetables, you know. I think you would struggle to, if it was smaller than this, you would struggle.[52]

The 250 square metres definition of the size of a plot enshrines food growing as the main purpose of keeping an allotment, but is it the main purpose for the plotholders themselves?

Growing Your Own

> *I should plan it a bit better for like late winter, early spring, but I very rarely buy vegetables or fruit from the supermarket, I usually buy - I find I buy - dairy, eggs and kind of luxury stuff? Food and wine more, chocolate and things like that rather than - I always walk past the vegetables. Particularly in the summer and autumn I just completely walk past where the vegetables are which makes me look like an*

[51] Interview with Alister Smith, Croftburn Allotments, 27th June 2016.

[52] Interview with Maureen McKendrick, Budhill and Springboig, 27th June 2015.

> *unhealthy shopper 'cause I've got another supply somewhere! And it's made me a cook as well I think, it's made me be able to cook and be imaginative with things because you don't want to waste any of it. If I read up a bit more on how to keep it going all year round, I reckon I could, but I think you need certain things that you can't grow on an allotment, certain vitamins and minerals… And this size of plot should feed a family of four allegedly so if it's just me then there's no excuse!*[53] – *Emily Chappell.*

All plotholders in Glasgow grow their own food to some extent but the reasons for doing so vary and there is little consensus on whether or not it is cheaper to grow your own fruit and vegetables than buy them in shops. Robin Bower thinks it is more expensive to grow your own produce and his reasons for doing it are more to do with getting some fresh air:

> But it's not the cheapest way to feed yourself, an allotment…it gets you out, you're sitting in the sunshine, you're working outdoors, it gets you out the house – but it's not the cheapest. For the price we pay for that row of potatoes you could probably buy a week's supply of potatoes out the shops, you know.[54]

Conversely, Maureen McKendrick took on her plot to save money – which she firmly believes it does - and provides not only for her husband and sons but also grows enough produce to share it with her parents, aunties and uncles too.[55] Lisa Clifford took on an allotment as she found the cost of organic food in supermarkets prohibitive: 'I wanted to be able to grow my own fruit and veg. I try to buy mainly organic and it is very difficult to get in Glasgow and the prices are very high so I thought I would give it a try and try growing by myself'.[56] Some plotholders specifically target crops that are expensive in supermarkets but easy to grow in an allotment, like Donna Blake, who also has a plot on High Carntyne:

> …that mint plant started out as ninety-nine pence plant from a supermarket. I have to chop it every other day because it just goes boom!... So I can have as much mint as I like. It's the same with all the herbs probably, they've all just started as probably supermarket plants or in small pots and they've just sprouted. So when you take, when I take it to account for example the amount of beetroot and things

[53] Interview with Emily Chappell, Kennyhill Allotments, 25th September 2015.

[54] Robin Bower.

[55] Maureen McKendrick.

[56] Lisa Clifford.

> that we've got as well, definitely it's a massive saving. It's a lot of work obviously and a lot of maintenance but the actual return on the vegetables, yeah. It's practically next to nothing, it's good… Like, last year, was a hot summer so we ended up with a massive glut of strawberries like baskets full of them so - we drink smoothies and things like that - so quite often we would freeze them and then you're using them in the mornings for smoothies and breakfast and things like that. Strawberries are expensive, you know, in the supermarkets whereas here I can have as many as I like, you know?[57]

For Lisa, growing food is absolutely the main purpose of an allotment. She has very little enjoyment in the actual process of gardening and does it entirely for the end result:

> I also, again, love the produce… putting in the hard work is so so - some people enjoy gardening and it's a therapeutic thing for them - couldn't care less about that side of it. I love at the end of the season, love sitting down to a dinner and knowing that the aubergine was mine, the courgette was mine, the tomatoes were mine, the salad leaves were mine, the cucumber was mine, the fruit pie for dessert was mine. There's just something really satisfying about that. You know, and knowing that I know exactly what happened to that produce from seed to the plate basically. I know its whole history.[58]

There is immense pride in Lisa's words, perhaps even amplified by her lack of enjoyment in gardening. For Lisa, it is important to have control over the production of her own food. Knowing the provenance of food is also important to Roland Albiker:

> But the kind of savings in carbon, in mileage, for when the food comes, the delivery costs, I mean the carbon footprint of food, it's immense. That is one aspect that I, which I am sort of concerned about. And yes, you really don't know what's in it. I mean, you read articles about what happens to the garlic in China or the salad packs in Spain, the way they are produced, and it's not an ethical thing. I mean, food can't be that cheap as it is in a supermarket without people cutting corners. It's just not possible.[59]

[57] Interview with Donna Blake, High Carntyne, 5th August 2015.

[58] Lisa Clifford.

[59] Roland Albiker.

Growing your own food is educational; it teaches plotholders to eat seasonally, to experiment with cooking and to think about the production process of the food industry. For some plotholders learning takes place on an individual basis but charities have also begun to use allotments as places to teach people about healthy eating and cooking. The North Glasgow Community Food Initiative has a plot on Springburn Allotments to 'strengthen knowledge of healthy eating' and Auticulture, a gardening charity for adults with autism spectrum disorder, keep a plot on Hamiltonhill.[60] Andy Forrester maintains a plot on Westthorn Allotments with local children's group Playbusters in the East End of Glasgow: 'Before the allotment plot the kids thought carrots came from ASDA, now they can't wait to wash and eat their own'.[61] Donna Blake, who is a primary school teacher, takes her produce into her class:

> I've taken in quite a few vegetables from the plot and actually framed it as like a health and well-being lesson… The kids love it, yeah, especially things like pumpkins that grow massive, they love that, you know? Or, introducing them to a courgette, that was quite interesting, you know? The area that I teach in is quite a deprived area so for a lot of the children fresh vegetables are something that some often potentially don't have exposure to, so it's important I think, yeah.[62]

The reasons for growing food on allotments vary from a need to save money, to a belief in growing organically, to a wish to eat seasonally, but for all plotholders growing their own food has increased their understanding of where food comes from and the work involved in its production, storage and preparation. This knowledge does not stop with the plotholders but extends to their friends and family or the children that they teach.

Boundaries

Despite their emphasis on community in the 1930s the committee for the unemployment scheme had still maintained the boundaries of individual plots. Today, boundaries remain an integral part of allotment sites; plotholders need a sense of ownership which enable them to develop a sense of responsibility and creativity. It is noticeable that allotments generally seem to come in two types; those with high enclosing, prickly hedges or fencing

[60] Mollison et al, pp. 18-9; North Glasgow Community Food Initiative, *Springburn*, <http://www.ngcfi.org.uk/what-we-do/food-hubs/springburn> [Accessed 24/02/2017] ; Auticulture, *Glasgow Autism Allotment Project*, <https://auticulture.net/network/gaap-glasgow-autism-allotment-project> [Accessed 24/02/2017].

[61] Mollison et al, p. 19.

[62] Donna Blake.

bordering private, secretive plots, or, open planned sites where you can barely make out where one plot ends and another one begins. Different plotholders are attracted to different sorts of sites as commented on by Emily Chappell:

> So there's three other people who come into this small area. You could time it when you came and there isn't anybody here so you could get a bit of peace. But then it's nice having an open plan for a few people… it's like a sub-area of the whole plot which is a good idea. I'm not so keen on completely open sites where you can see everything but I like the idea of having little nooks where there's just a couple of plotholders who can see what each other are doing, it's like a little mini community in a community. And I don't like completely closed off either, that's daunting, a bit scary, a single girl on her own gardening at nine o'clock at night, it's not really wise…[63]

There is safety in openness but Emily does not trust it entirely:

> I think it reminds me of some sort of social experiment in my head, as if I'm like being monitored or something, I don't know. It may be irrational, I'm not too sure, but I like a little bit of privacy or the illusion of privacy now and again. Just to get some quiet time because I don't think you should be in company all the time, you should have quiet moments on your own.[64]

Allotments allow this quiet time as whether or not plots have high fences or barely visible borders, they are marked out as individual spaces. There are times that it feels entirely necessary to be on your own, as Kathryn Venart from Budhill and Springboig Allotments explains:

> …I was keen to get one [an allotment], and then my Mum died in the January and I just felt as though I needed something and luckily it just came up. So I got it. And it was good at that time, do you know what I mean? It was good to get away and dig a hole, fill it in, it's just something physical to help you.[65]

[63] Emily Chappell.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Interview with Kathryn Venart, Budhill and Springboig, 28th June 2015.

Similarly, Eve Tucker from New Victoria Gardens described her plot as her 'sanctuary': '…at the end of the day you could just go into your plot and shut the gate and if you don't want to talk to anybody you don't have to'.[66] Sometimes solitary peace is needed. Lisa Clifford commented that it is important to have this space to yourself even though the wider site is communal: 'You know, the outdoor space, my own outdoor space, there's absolutely nothing wrong with spending time in parks, and sitting in the sun enjoying people watching. But it's nice to have a private area. As much as it's still a communal plot, it's still my area outside.'[67] Kathryn sums up the dichotomy of an allotment as private and communal very neatly:

> But it is quite good, if my gate's open my gate's open, but if my gate's snibbed, do you know what I mean? Apart from Harry who knows how to flick it, he comes in and flicks it open, so. But it's good that you can either be, you know, open and folk can come and go, or else you can just sort of switch off…[68]

So, allotments offer a place both to be together and to be on your own. As well as a sense of privacy, the individual plots also provide a sense of responsibility which is recognised by plotholders. Roland Albiker said:

> I believe too you have to have ownership. Well, at least temporary ownership. Community gardens I think they only work if there is employed people in it or one person who over sees just the regularity of it. Because if you don't feel responsible for it you think 'Oh, there should be some weeding done, oh, I'll do it tomorrow' or 'Someone else will do it, I've done it so many times now.[69]

Roland considers himself to have a guardianship rather than ownership of the land, something he considers to be a privilege as well as a responsibility:

> I consider it more of a guardianship rather than ownership of the land and I think it's a big responsibility to have an allotment and not to work it I think is just wrong because with everything with privilege comes responsibility. And I think it's a big privilege to have an allotment in Scotland. To have an allotment in general… the

[66] Eve Tucker, New Victoria Gardens, 15th October 2015.

[67] Lisa Clifford.

[68] Kathryn Venart.

[69] Roland Albiker.

> land is here to feed us and if you have part of it then you are responsible for that part of it… you have privileges but you can't just go around just having privileges you also have responsibilities which comes with a - equality doesn't mean that everyone can do what they want without, you know, considering the people next to you.[70]

Occasionally plotholders do begin by sharing a plot, rather than working on their own. Kathryn began at Budhill and Springboig allotments in this way, sharing a plot with an older man named Jocky. However, as Kathryn explains, sharing can cause problems:

> Well, when I started it was a fellow, Jocky, had this plot, but he had a heart condition. So I actually started with half of it, I was sharing it. And it was – a Great Dane would have got lost in the weeds! And as I say, Jocky was here, with his words of wisdom, everything I did was wrong…And then he gave it up totally because he was going for an operation and then he moved up to a wee half plot and he said that I could just have the whole one… I think it would be better if you had an actual half plot that was yours rather than sharing with someone because you do something and then I would come in, I don't use slug pellets or anything, and I'd come in, and they'd be slug pellets in mine. And I'd be like 'Jocky, I'm organic!' 'Ah but it's alright'. So that was a wee bit difficult.[71]

Kathryn's comment demonstrates that plotholders need their own space to develop their own ways and methods of gardening. As the unemployment scheme had emphasised, individual plots allow a sense of responsibility and creativity to develop. Allotments can encourage togetherness but the individual plots also enable plotholders to do things their own way and have time to themselves.

Creativity

The boundaries of individual plots enable plotholders to develop their own ways of gardening, to be creative. As seen in previous chapters, there has been increasing pressure on plotholders to keep their plots tidy but for many plotholders, such as Harry Scalley on Budhill and Springboig, allotments need to have a sense of freedom:

[70] Ibid.

[71] Kathryn Venart.

> A garden at home has got to be much tidier and on an allotment you don't have to be as tidy. Front garden at home and everything, people are passing it and you just can't leave it to look wild whereas part of your allotment you can actually leave to look wild - even if it was deliberately wild, you can leave some of it sometimes just as a pasture just to give it a rest.[72]

Allotments are a creative space, shaped by individual plotholders' personalities. Judy Wilkinson explains how, for her, her plot is a place for expression but it may be perceived by other plotholders as untidy. Until her husband, Chris, passed away they worked together but now Judy gardens on her own:

> A jungle. At the moment it's an absolute jungle. Chris used to balance me and I think, you know, since the last four years I've probably got much worse and this year I've particularly gone in for companion planting which basically means I've got herbs scattered around it which seem to have grown much bigger than I expected and I like self-set flowers, so at the moment it's full of Dame's Violet which has decided to seed itself. Foxgloves, which it seems to be the year for the foxgloves, and so when I don't want to plant something I allow these to grow and as they grow I realise they're bigger than I expected… I'm just very happy with mine, I mean, you know, I appreciate other people's. I think, I really do think, that plots and how you grow them are an expression of your personality. It used to be that I'd say that you can go round and you could see which were the female plots and which were the male plots with about eighty per cent certainty. I think that's changed now. I think more of the female plots are becoming more formal.[73]

Judy attributes this increasing formality to 'more books written of what an allotment looks like' and people being more aware of gardening programmes; there is a conformity to what an allotment is supposed to be.[74] This conformity is encouraged by the city council, particularly when creating new sites such as High Carntyne Allotments, described in Joyce's story. Lisa Clifford has a plot there and explained that she may have been happier moving into neighbouring Kennyhill, which allows its plotholders more freedom:

[72] Harry Scalley.

[73] Judy Wilkinson, Kelvinside Allotments.

[74] Ibid.

> When you take on a plot across the fence in Kennyhill it is just a blank slate and you're free to do absolutely anything in there that you wish. In this one you are limited to how high your fences can be, what colour your fence can be, what colour your shed's painted, what happens on paths, you know, it's not, it's not really regimented but it's definitely quite regimented… But I think I would - I really appreciated moving into the plot and it already having slabs, and raised beds and a shed and a greenhouse - but I can be quite creative and I like to make marks on things myself and there's definitely a bit of me would, wouldn't have minded being in a Kennyhill plot where I got to decide everything myself. Don't get me wrong, it's a lot easier when things are laid out for you and you kind of have to work to that structure but it almost takes some of the enjoyment out of it for you.[75]

There can be fear amongst plotholders that if plots are seen to be untidy, they will be given a warning letter after a plot inspection and ultimately removed from the site. Lisa commented that High Carntyne is particularly strict:

> We're not allowed to have weeds that go to seed, or you'll get a letter of warning. If you get three warnings you're out. It's really quite strict, keeping on top of things and keeping things looking really good... But the other sites definitely, I'm not saying they don't have plot inspections, but they certainly aren't run to the degree that this one is run to. You have to play ball here.[76]

The idea of a 'dirty' plot was first mentioned in Chapter Three, when William McWilliam began his campaign for tidiness on allotments. Today, the term 'dirty plot' is used to describe a messy, uncultivated plot but it is an emotive term which does not allow room for differences in gardening methods or understanding of why plots might be neglected. Judy explains:

> There's also this feeling, and I think it's a very emotive word but it is there, about 'dirty plots' and about people using their plots… there will be a number of plots that are not being cultivated and I think the Council feels that if they were cultivated then the waiting list would go down. But, on the other hand, there are various reasons why they are not being cultivated and I think it should be much more working in partnership to sort of see what people want and how this can

[75] Lisa Clifford.

[76] Ibid.

> happen… when you get pressure from the Council, that people have this vision of what allotment sites, what a plot, should be like and that's not necessarily what people want. So I think there should be more acceptance of difference but also acceptance of the fact of how people get attached to their plot and that's land and it's emotional.[77]

Alison Swanson described a similar change on her allotment site in Stirling:

> …when I went down at first it was beautiful and peaceful and there was one little lady called Anne who was the secretary who managed what needed to be managed in a hands off way and you didn't notice she was there but over the years the whole thing has become formalised… As a result of the way the social dynamic has worked the thing has been spoilt…it's become a kind of competitive arena where actually what we should be doing is growing vegetables, and respecting the soil and respecting each other.[78]

On such sites there is judgement and not acceptance. Some plots are unused or misused but there also needs to be an understanding that people have different ways of gardening; one gardener's mess is another gardener's patch for wildlife. There also needs to be understanding for events happening in plotholder's lives - perhaps an illness or a new baby - that temporarily affect their ability to cultivate their plots. Emily Chappell, from Kennyhill, explains that there needs to be acceptance on allotment sites:

> Sometimes they can look quite wild but people have got used to seeing just council areas that have been cosmetically produced, you know, to look good but they're not necessarily good growing sites and they're not really good for wildlife. So people being a bit more accepting of things looking a bit ramshackle, there's a reason for it.[79]

Some sites are tolerant of this and plotholders learn to be accepting of others. When Roland Albiker arrived on Kennyhill allotments he could not understand why so many allotments were 'just not tended to':

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[77] Judy Wilkinson, SAGS.

[78] Alison Swanson.

[79] Emily Chappell.

> In the beginning really, it really bugged me as well. You know, that people get an allotment and have the chance and they don't really do anything, and I found it quite, considering the waiting lists for other sites, but now I am much more relaxed about it. I mean really in a way it gives me more freedom as well! I just have to look over the fence and I think 'Oh, well mine doesn't look too bad![80]

When the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed was established there was room on plots for creativity, however, during the 1950s and 1960s this began to be squeezed out by the campaign for tidy plots, a result of sites being closed due to an apparent lack of interest. It is clear that creativity and freedom are appreciated by the interviewed plotholders but a legacy of fear of closure has led to stringent plot inspections to keep plots tidy. A culture change is needed on allotments to allow plotholders differences in their gardening methods but this can only happen if allotment sites are considered to be permanent parts of our cities.

Community

> *I really didn't have a clue what I was doing at the beginning. I didn't realise the importance of soil, I just thought it was all magic. So it was nice looking back that people would come and offer their help, their advice even if you didn't want it or not! But the general vibe was welcoming and the committee at the time lent me tools because I didn't have anything, lent us tools, and advice or help. And I think it still continues today in that way, in that respect, they look after one another, it's welcoming, helpful.*[81] *– Emily Chappell.*

So far this chapter has focused on individuality on allotments but, as I have argued throughout this thesis, allotments also enable communities to develop. Because of their individual plots and fenced off sites, allotments have often been perceived as being solely for the individual rather than the community. SAGS even considered changing the name of allotments to remove themselves from this idea. Judy Wilkinson explains:

> …in SAGS we started playing around with the idea of changing our name from allotments, which we didn't do which was a good thing, but trying to bring out the fact that we are community and that we do get involved with the community and bringing that out. But if you still talk to people, a lot of people, they feel that they

[80] Roland Albiker.

[81] Emily Chappell.

> are closed spaces for the individual and they're not contributing to the wider sense… I think it's slowly changing that people are becoming more aware of the requirements of the individual as well as the group, certainly in terms of health and welfare, wellbeing, that the individual needs their space as well as the group.[82]

However, in talking to plotholders there is a clear sense of community on allotments, especially with older plotholders helping younger, inexperienced beginners, as in Donna Blake's experience:

> …the two Jimmies were really helpful 'cause they'd had allotments for a long, long time so they were helping with like giving us guidance like crop rotation…But I quickly noticed that a lot of people on the site were really charitable so people were turning up with, say for example if they'd planted cucumbers and they had a glut of cucumbers, people were really generous…[83]

It was similar for Jeanette on Budhill and Springboig Allotments. Although she was a pensioner when she began, her plot was still her first experience of gardening:

> …there was a chap called Hughie - he's dead now - and he would pass and he was an old fashioned gardener and he would say 'Just keep going. A little bit at a time. That'll do you'. … But it was very, very encouraging and I felt as though I was doing something right when they would pass and always saying something. 'You're doing good. You're doing good'.[84]

Donna explains how the allotment has introduced her to friends she would never have spoken to outside of the site:

> I've got a lot of friends down here, I would say I'm probably one of the youngest on the plot, on the site, and people that I would never have thought I would be friends with I'm friends with, you know, the two Jimmies who are retired, over the back plot, you sit and you have a cup of tea and a blether with them. It's a social,

[82] Judy Wilkinson, SAGS.

[83] Donna Blake.

[84] Jeanette.

> it's a social thing for me as well as the hard work and everything else that comes with it.[85]

Allotments allow people to care for the land, but they also allow people to care for one another. Allotments are communities; Robin expresses the need for the government to recognise this:

> I don't think the government, the local authorities, appreciate the potential they have with allotments… it's clear that they have preconceived ideas of what allotments are all about and I maintain that if there were a lot more allotments then there would be a lot more people involved in them and everyone will tell you that there is a health benefit. Take part of the NHS budget and put it into the allotments and people would be better, healthier. Take part of the other benefits and put it into the allotments and people would be better for it…We've just seen Bob who this year has had two new knees. He was in agony last year, he's had his two knees replaced. He's now in his seventies building again, building huts…Now if he didn't have an allotment, in his words, he'd be sitting in the pub.[86]

Strangely, Robin's comment about his friend links back to the 1930s unemployment scheme; allotments still prevent men from being idle but now it is through choice and not desperation. Similarly, Robin explained why his wife understands his need to be on the allotment:

> She knows I'm up here - you're not in a pub, you're not in the bookies, you know? I would say you're not spending money but sometimes you are when you see plants and think 'Ooh, that's nice!' But other that, you know, you're not staggering around drunk or losing your money or losing your shirt in bookies and things like that, you know?[87]

Many things have changed on allotments since 1930 but the importance of community, of making friends, finding support and simply spending time with other people, has remained constant.

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[85] Donna Blake.

[86] Robin Bower.

[87] Ibid.

Connectivity

> *I live in a top storey tenement and I have no access to a garden, I had just moved back from St Albans where I had a beautiful garden and I lived on a conservation area so I had a gorgeous park at my front door so I missed being outside. So actually just being here and being outside was lovely and just really nice.*[88] *– Lisa Clifford.*

Allotments connect plotholders with other plotholders but to fully function within cities allotments also need to connect with their surroundings. This section will explore three different forms of connectivity. Firstly, it will look at how allotments connect plotholders with land, re-visiting the idea of the allotment as the 'heritage of the tenement dweller'. Secondly, it will argue that allotments need to be connected within the wider community to promote and protect sites, especially from vandalism. Finally, this section will explore biodiversity on allotments; allotments sites not only connect plotholders with wildlife, they also provide connections for wildlife, enabling plants and animals to spread and move across the city.

Although some of the plotholders interviewed live in houses with gardens, many are still tenement dwellers for whom allotments are their only access to their own outside space. Donna Blake was one of the younger plotholders interviewed and thought that, in her mid-thirties, she was the youngest on site. She had grown up in the countryside and missed 'outdoor living' but none of her friends thought it was odd for her to have an allotment, instead they became interested in having one too:

> I mean anyone who I've said I've got a plot have always been dead enthusiastic about it and asked 'What do you grow? And how do you go about getting a plot?' And I think for Glasgow because there are so many like city flats and not a lot of outside living for everyone, I think it's a great opportunity. I think it should be fully embraced, yeah.[89]

Allotments and flats are not totally disconnected in plotholders lives. Many plotholders start off their seedlings within their homes, like Lisa:

[88] Lisa Clifford.

[89] Donna Blake.

> I try to start everything off sort of the end of February, the beginning of March. I have a big, huge window area. It's an old - it's a tenement flat - so there's a big, big, window area. And I just have lots of little pots and I have a little propagator and just sort of give, yeah, give the front end of my living room for a few weeks to all my little seedlings.[90]

Inspired by allotments for those living in flats, the Govan Housing Association opened a community allotment within a new housing development in November 2013. There are nineteen plots, including three used by community groups which, although much smaller than standard plots, have introduced beginners into gardening and perhaps will inspire more housing associations to become involved in providing their tenants with outdoor space. Kellieanne MacMillan gardens one of the plots: 'I wouldn't give up my plot now. I wouldn't give it up because it's precious. In the Govan area the majority of the housing here is tenement flats, there isn't a lot of garden space, we're right in the middle of Glasgow city and I know that it's precious because we don't have a lot of green space in Govan proper.'[91]

Allotments are recognisably connected to living spaces for the plotholders, but to others sites can appear closed off and secretive; their locked gates and high fences giving a perception of seclusion and unfriendliness.[92] Vandalism has remained a problem on Glasgow's allotments, as shared in Donna's story on High Carntyne allotment. Whilst Donna thought the young people breaking in were bored in the summer holidays, Lisa Clifford, who has a plot on the same site, suggested they may have been searching for cannabis illegally grown in greenhouses:

> Unfortunately, recently there has been a huge spate of break-ins. There's a lot of gossip, I mean I'll call it gossip because nothing's been verified why it's happening so much just now… somebody had previously had an allotment plot and they were growing something they weren't supposed to be growing on it?... there's kids

[90] Lisa Clifford.

[91] Interview with Kellieanne McMillan, 31st July 2015.

[92] Sandra Costa, Runrid Fox-Kämper, Russell Good and Ivana Sentić, 'The position of urban allotment gardens within the urban fabric, in *Urban Allotment Gardens in Europe*, eds. Simon Bell, Runrid Fox-Kämper, Nazila Keshavarz, Mary Benson, Silvio Caputo, Susan Noori and Annette Voight (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 222.

> breaking in trying to see if anything's being grown in sheds that shouldn't be growing in sheds.[93]

Lisa's plot had not been broken into but she had taken the precaution of removing anything valuable from her shed as well as sharp shears and secateurs to stop anyone being injured.[94] Neighbouring site Kennyhill had also been broken into regularly which encouraged sculptor Roland Albiker to craft his own deterrent, shown in Figure 20: 'There is a sculpture of two eyes, big eyes, and they look over the plots. And there have been studies done that if there are eyes painted on a site vandalism and things goes down more than fifty per cent. Drastically. And so that's why I've got the eyes'.[95]

Figure 20: Roland with his 'eyes'
(Image: By author)

[93] Lisa Clifford.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Roland Albiker.

Denis Barrett explained that vandalism is also a problem at Budhill and Springboig Allotments:

> In the years I've been here, we've had, probably last year was our worst year. We are surrounded on three sides by property, houses and so on, and the fourth side is a graveyard. And the graveyard is the one that gives us the most problems because the wall on this side of it is six to eight feet tall but the wall on the other side of it is only a couple of feet tall… those who want to come in and pinch, whatever they want to do in here, have easy access. We've tried to grow trees or plants that are jaggy, that will grow and prevent people getting across the wall but if they're determined they will throw a carpet over it and they will find a way in.[96]

Being surrounded by property, walls, fences or even 'jaggy' plants does not prevent vandals or arsonists from entering allotment sites. Urban designers Antoine Zammit, University of Malta, and Ina Šuklje Erjavec, Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, have suggested that allotments could be safer and more secure if they had multiple functions. For example, if sites were open and incorporated cycling and pedestrian routes or if they were included in parks, there would be more frequent use and movement of people to encourage 'natural surveillance'.[97] In Lisbon allotments have been incorporated into public parks (which have also helped parks to improve poor reputations) and in Austria, Denmark and Germany allotments are required by national and local regulations to be open to the public – German associations even have to provide opening times.[98] Taking such an approach would be a radical step in Glasgow, where a long history of vandalism has made plotholders anxious and even fearful of outsiders getting in but it is clear that high fences and walls are not a deterrent.[99] Opening sites would embed allotments in the local area, welcoming the outsider in and allowing the surrounding community to take ownership of the site. It would be seen by many as a risky move, but opening sites rather than putting up barriers could decrease vandalism.

Allotments do not only connect places for people, they also connect places for plants and animals. Unlike much of modern agriculture, allotment plots are not monocultures and the

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[96] Denis Barrett.

[97] Antoine Zammit and Ina Šuklje Erjavec, 'Allotment gardens as a challenge for an urban designer', in *Urban Allotment Gardens in Europe*, eds. Simon Bell et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 271.

[98] Costa et al., pp. 206, 210.

[99] Mollison et al, p. 56

variations in gardening from plotholder to plotholder increase the availability of food and shelter for wildlife. Many plotholders now have small ponds for frogs and toads, use companion planting to attract pollinators and leave wood or leaf piles for insects.[100] Although scruffy plots can attract criticism, as described earlier, they provide 'places for pioneer plant species and add value to biodiversity'.[101] Allotments even act as gene banks as plotholders grow traditional varieties that have fallen out of favour with farmers. For example, the Musselburgh leek which is not sold commercially as a vegetable is grown by plotholders in Glasgow as it is well suited to the Scottish climate. Growing crops which have fallen out of favour commercially on allotments increases the resilience of ecosystems.[102] Kathryn Venart explained how she attracts wildlife to her plot:

> I've got my poached egg, I grow it, see it over there? It's all going over now but that's my poached egg plant. That's for the bees. They love that. And they laugh at me because it takes over the paths and everything over there. It just like ends up a sea of yellow and white. Like a couple of weeks ago it was amazing. But the bees, you can be picking your strawberries in a bed down and you can hear them buzzing away... I try to always make sure that I've got things for the bees. And if the butterflies like it, well, fair enough… And I'm quite happy with the wee birds, you know what I mean, when you dig over, I tend to dig over a patch and then I'll sit back and let the robins and the blackbirds and everything go in and have their wee munch. So I'm quite relaxed in that way, it doesnae bother me.[103]

Allotments provide habitats for wildlife that is otherwise threatened by the expansion of towns and cities and modern agricultural practices. Ideally, connected greenspaces allow the movement of organisms but even if they are not connected allotments still 'deliver local value by serving as ecological stepping stones'.[104] The charity Froglife describes allotments as 'historical safe-houses' for amphibians and reptiles; the oldest sites have provided a continuous habitat for wildlife whilst the city around them changes. As habitats become further fragmented, allotments provide a way for amphibians, reptiles and other

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[100] Mollison et al, p. 29.

[101] Costa et al., p. 219.

[102] Langemeyer et al., p. 131; Slow Food, *Musselburgh Leek,* <https://www.slowfood.org.uk/ff-products/musselburgh-leek-2/> [Accessed 24/02/2017].

[103] Kathryn Venart.

[104] Costa et al., p. 212; Johannes Langemeyer, Monika Joanna Latkowska and Erik Nicolas Gómez-Baggethun, 'Ecosystem services from urban gardens', in *Urban Allotment Gardens in Europe*, eds. Simon Bell et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 129.

animals to move around.[105] Of course, this is also desirable for plotholders, such as Harry Scalley on Budhill and Springboig Allotments, as amphibians will eat the slugs that threaten their produce:

> But I have a lot of frogs as well and they tend to eat a lot of slugs. And I've got a pond, I've got two ponds. One for the goldfish and one for the wildlife. And they tend to sort of have a lot of frogs on my place and they eat the slugs and in fact I just lifted some covering that I had on a part of my plot and I think there was about six frogs underneath it and no slugs so they must have been eating it. That's why I more or less try and encourage wildlife to come on.[106]

Froglife encourage allotments to provide homes for amphibians by working with plotholders to create frog ponds. In 2016 Froglife ran a series of workshops for plotholders at Croftburn Allotments in the Southside of Glasgow to create a large frog pond. Alister Smith commented that 'Other people have made small ponds within their plots and there has been a lot of frogspawn this year… so maybe they'll help keep the slug population down'.[107]

In 2014 the first Great British Bee Count took place in which 23,000 people across the UK logged sightings of bees using an app on their smartphones in a twelve week period from June to August. Allotments were found to be the best habitat for bees. An average of twelve bees per count were spotted on allotments whilst there were ten in the countryside, eight in gardens, seven in parks and only four on roadside verges.[108] Dave Goulson, Professor of Biology at the University of Sussex, attributed this to a lack of mowing grass allowing more wildflowers to grow, whereas parks and road verges are kept well mowed.[109] Similarly, in the early stages of a three-year project on urban pollinators Professor of Ecology at the University of Bristol, Jane Memmott, said her initial results indicate that allotments are a particularly good habitat for bees: 'I thought allotments would be OK but they are really looking rather good. I think bees like the fact there is a little corner with

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[105] Froglife, *Wildlife Workshop*, <http://www.froglife.org/dragonfinder/event/wildlife-workshop-24/> [Accessed 24/02/2017].

[106] Interview with Harry Scalley, Budhill and Springboig Allotments, 10th June 2015.

[107] Alister Smith.

[108] Alison Benjamin, 'First Great British Bee Count reveals allotments make the best bee habitats', *The Guardian,* 28th October 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com > [Accessed 26/02/2017].

[109] Ibid.

thistles in, and the onions and carrots bolt occasionally and they are often wildlife friendly, planted with flowers that are good for bees.'[110]

As well as promoting diversity, allotments also act as a place for people to observe plants and animals. Learning about wildlife supports children in developing creativity, interest and attention; gardening has even been shown to help children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.[111] Even for adults, being amongst wildlife on their plot induces a sense of wonder. Maureen McKendrick gardens with her friend Margaret on Budhill and Springboig Allotments:

> Margaret found frogs today and, you know, so there's things happening all the time, you know. She was working away last couple of weeks, kneeling down at a bed and a fox ran beside her. It came in itself. So there's always loads of stuff happening up here that you're never going to encounter if you weren't running an allotment, you know, even in your garden I don't think you'd see things like that.[112]

Plotholders, including Judy Wilkinson on Julian Avenue, appear to be particularly fond of foxes (Figure 21) even though they are mischievous:

> The fox – I mean, I find it very amusing. I turn up and he looks at me and sort of asks me what I'm doing there 'cause it's his, I've disturbed his sleep… I mean a couple of times he'd stolen the gloves. Probably they got some smell in them but I've actually chased him around the allotment after my gloves yelling… And then there was one time when I was doing the back of the hedge and I'd got my basket again and he came and was looking through it and so I told him to go away and then I'd put down – I'd got a little saw about a foot, something like that, twelve inches – and I'd put that down while I was pulling out some branches and I looked round and the wretch had got it in his mouth! But he did drop it that time. I bellowed at him![113]

[110] Ibid.

[111] Langemeyer et al., pp. 134-5.

[112] Maureen McKendrick.

[113] Interview with Judy Wilkinson, Kelvinside Allotments, 14th June 2015.

Figure 21: A resident fox at rest on Croftburn Allotments (Image: By author)

However, not all animals are good news on allotments and, although some allotment sites are completely organic, there are others who still allow chemicals to be used against pests. Jeanette on Budhill and Springboig Allotments said:

> Slugs, I buy the slug pellets. I've no qualms about standing on them. It's me or them that get the fruit, I win every time, I'm bigger than them. There's not many things I'm bigger than but I stand on them! I put the slug pellets down. And my berries I cover with netting to keep the birds off, you can see there's quite a lot of pigeons around here and magpies and crows and they wait 'til you walk away, they sit on the fence laughing at you, and wait 'til you walk away then they're down. But the likes of peas and that, I try to cover as soon as I put them in, so they're not eaten.[114]

Other plotholders, such as Brian Timms who gardens specifically for biodiversity, only grow organically. Judy Wilkinson said 'I think if you grow, I do believe that if you grow organically then nature gets into a balance, you know.'[115] It is not only the plotholders who benefit from protecting and promoting biodiversity on the plots; the wider population

[114] Interview with Jeanette, Budhill and Springboig Allotments, 28th June 2015.

[115] Judy Wilkinson, Kelvinside Allotments.

benefits from food security, local climate regulation and water retention.[116] When compared to non-cultivated soils outside of cities, allotment soils have higher humus content, a better structure and are richer in nutrients.[117] Allotments also help regulate water cycles as root systems prevent erosion, stabilising the soil and decreasing local flood risks.[118] Johannes Langemeyer, Monika Joanna Latkowska and Erik Nicolas Gómez-Baggethun have argued that:

> Gardeners can therefore be described as stewards of ecosystem services, providing benefits for a large number of urban inhabitants. Seeing urban gardeners as stewards of ecosystem services and recognising their role in the management of urban green infrastructure may strengthen their stake in the policy and planning of urban land uses.[119]

As SAGS have argued for many years, allotments need to be connected in cities, to other green spaces, housing and infrastructure; this is of benefit to humans, animals and plants.

Conclusion

Influenced by the rising popularity of gardening in the media, Glasgow's allotments welcomed new plotholders during the 1990s and 2000s, increasing the number of women and children involved in Scotland's allotment movement. SAGS rediscovered its voice as an advocate for allotments but its role shifted, so the society did not merely advocate on behalf of plotholders but also encouraged the plotholders themselves to become politically engaged. SAGS succeeded in its campaigning for new allotments legislation, resulting in Section Nine of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, and giving plotholders much greater security on their sites. This new legislation protects the two major functions of allotments; the very fact that the legislation is included in a *community* empowerment act shows the government's recognition that plotholders are a community and the right to grow your own food is protected in the definition of the size of an allotment, the 250 square metres historically claimed to feed a family of four. For the plotholders themselves both the sense of community and the ability to grow your own food (although for various reasons) also remain the major reasons to have an allotment, but it has also been shown that having space to be on your own and to be creative – also

[116] Langemeyer et al., p. 136.

[117] Ibid., p. 127.

[118] Ibid., p. 128.

[119] Ibid., p. 136.

elements of the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed – are still needed and appreciated.

Gillian's Story

Gillian Little, aged forty-four, was one of the first plotholders on the reinstated Croftburn Allotments in 2013. At the time of the interview Gillian and her husband were in the process of adopting a baby. Gillian's story illustrates the long-term planning and design that goes into plots, as well as the hopes of a plotholder.

Figure 22: Gillian working her plot
(Image: By author)

I think I got kind of interested in environmental issues, I suppose, generally and wanted to do something more practical. I worked in a very – I suppose my job was theoretical – it was desk-bound, it was research, a lot of kinda research and I kind of really wanted to do something practically orientated and gardening – growing things – I'd always grown pot plants and things in the house – so that I suppose was part of the impetus and it just grew from there… I have a very small north facing garden which is a constant struggle. The ferns do really well, they love it. Everything else pretty much hates it. So I wanted a bigger space that I could try out things and grow crops to eat. My husband's a big cook and he loves, you know, seeing whatever comes through the door. I provide the produce, he does the cooking, so it works out quite well that way. Yeah. So I tried growing little bits and pieces in the back garden and it just wasn't working. I thought I'll put my name down, I won't get one for years but I'll put my name down now' and I think about six weeks later David sent me an email and I went 'Yay! I've got one!' I was very lucky…

Well, it's changed in a pretty short time, this is the third season and it doesn't look as if it's laid out with much thought to it. But I did have more individual beds at first and it was based actually on a garden I worked in with a beautiful veg patch and lots of the one by two metre beds so you can work from both sides and it works beautifully. However, unless you're able to maintain the paths in between incredibly well, which I couldn't, you know, working full time at that point, I realised you were going to spend more time weeding the paths then actually cultivating. So I made bigger beds. Essentially four big beds, so that works for the rotation and fruit round the side. So it's fairly simple, it's not particularly sophisticated but it kind of works for me. And I didn't want to get into all of that construction of raised beds. I didn't want to buy a lot of materials and lots of compost and things. I thought 'The soil's not great but over time keeping adding to it, it will become, you know, good enough, that it will work out', so that was my thinking.

I'm not happy with the volume of weeds! But I think in terms of layout it works because it's predictable that I know where things go next, so that the crop rotation works. The fruit is a bit of a nuisance and it's kind of out of control so I think I'm going to take my fruit out of the boundary and put it over there and put a cage over at that side. It's, you know, when things get big and mature - raspberries are a complete nuisance - and I should know this! But I've always been trying to squeeze things into small spaces so it's squeezing as much as possible in. Two big gigantic rhubarb plants are not the best idea for a tiny plot but, hey ho, I wanted rhubarb!

[I grow] the standard things. Beans, peas, I like a lot of broad beans, they work really well, they're very easy and very tasty. I've never really had much success with runners or climbing French beans but hopefully this year we'll have a few. Potatoes, onions, garlic... And some fruit, yeah, I like soft fruit. Raspberries, blueberries - that's my only bit of raised bed because somebody gave me one but that's quite handy because they like it very acid. And probably a fair amount of flowers compared to some plots, I like a lot of flowers. And actually I would like a kind of boundary of flowers and partly this bit of the front isn't looking great at the moment but it helps to hide some of the true horror behind it! So it's quite good. I grow tulips as well for a bit of early colour because I like a bit of colour as well as the produce.

What does it mean to me? A lot of frustration probably. I do lie awake at night sometimes thinking 'Oh no, I need to go and do that'. No, I love being here. I love the potential, I think, and that's what I love about gardening, I think. Because no matter what happened this year,

there's always next year, you know, it doesn't matter. It can be a disaster, and I've kind of written off this year, I just think, look, we've got this little baby at three weeks old in March and since then I don't know if I'm coming or going. Frankly, if you know, I get to the end of the year without a letter from the committee telling me to sharpen up my act I'll be okay! And there's always next year and that will be, you know, that will be a new chapter because they'll hopefully be this little person coming and helping me and toddling about. So the next generation and that will be nice. So it's potential I think, isn't it? It's always what could be and, yeah, the next dinner even. So I'll take some peas and broad beans tonight and see what my husband comes up with![1]

[1] Interview with Gillian Little, Croftburn Allotments, 18th August 2016.

Conclusion

This story began on a sunny plot in the East End of Glasgow. Since then, and countless mugs of tea later, we have travelled from the east to the west and back again, visiting plotholders on the north and south side of the River Clyde, from as long ago as 1930 to 2016 – with the occasional visit to Edinburgh or Stirling. I had asked Emily what her plot means to her but now the story needs to be widened to take in the plotholders we have visited, in person or through the carefully collected papers of Victor Webb. Allotments hold as many meanings for their plotholders as there are plotholders; every plotholder is different, with a myriad of reasons for being there. Fiona spoke lovingly of her plants, the begonias and streptocarpus, whilst Roland dismissively described his hosta as a slug decoy for protecting his crops. Brian grew teasels and berries for finches to feast on, whilst Lisa, angry with the birds that ate her brassicas, declared 'Now I hate birds. I would never do anything to hurt them, but in my heart I hate them!'[1] Despite these differences, plotholders are in communities on their allotments sites. Not everyone will always get along, of course, but the practice of gardening, even if their reasons for doing it are different, unite them.

In my introduction I included a comment from Caitlin DeSilvey about the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society's petition to Parliament in 2000: 'the collective representation included so many assertions of allotments' benefit to society that it was easy to get disorientated'.[2] Writing my conclusion I can sympathise with this feeling, which I think SAGS may also have suffered from in their mixed messages of the 1950s and 1960s. It is dizzying to think of all the functions of an allotment – food production, education, improving mental and physical health, forming communities, protecting biodiversity, even flood management – but it is also impossible to disentangle these functions. These functions are what make allotments integral to the need of a city; allotments are spaces that are unique in their ability to provide for the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities, plants and animals. During the Second World War, the government focused solely on the production of food and the needs of the individual on allotments. Plotholders denied this focus and continued to express their creativity and form communities on their sites. During the 1950s and 1960s, SAGS and the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed Joint Committee focused on allotments as a place of recreation for older men

[1] Interview with Roland Albiker, Kennyhill Allotments, 10th July 2015; Interview with Lisa Clifford, High Carntyne, 27th July 2015; Interview with Fiona Sutherland, New Victoria Gardens, 4th August 2015; Interview with Brian Timms, Westthorn Allotments, 5th July 2016.

[2] Caitlin DeSilvey, 'Cultivated histories in a Scottish allotment garden', *Cultural Geographies* 10 (2003), pp. 442-468.

but during the 1970s new plotholders made a return to the role of food production, whether through environmental concern or economic need. It is impossible to separate the benefits of allotments to society, they are as entangled and productive as brambles growing on a plot in September. To summarise these functions and their development, I will return to my research questions.

What is the purpose of an allotment within the city? How has this changed and developed from 1930 to the present day?

I started from a suggestion that allotments are not apart from the city, a place of rural retreat, but a part of the city. Looking at the changing functions of allotments has shown that for SAGS, or the Union, this has been true but not so for both local and national government. For the government, the function of allotments from 1930 to 1945 focused almost solely on the production of food. There was support for the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed as it sought to give the unemployed a way to feed their families during the Great Depression. Then, during the Second World War the government took control over the allotment movement as part of the solution to the national food shortage faced by everyone, not just those out of work. For the government, the allotment was a short term solution to crisis. After the war ended their work turned to the next emergency, a housing crisis, and for them allotments became obsolete. This was not the case for the allotment movement. Although the Union and the Friends also regarded allotments as a response to crisis, they believed the function of the allotment was much wider than the production of food. The unemployment scheme promoted the allotment as a way to improve the mental and physical health of the plotholders and during the war it became a place of refuge for families; a physical refuge from air-raids, as shelters were built on plots, and a mental refuge from sadness, a place to grow flowers amongst the much needed fruit and vegetables. Local authorities encountered two problems in creating wartime allotments: allotments were not cultivated if sites were too far away from plotholders' homes and not all available land was suitable for cultivation. These problems prompted the Union to begin their campaign for allotments to be included in town and city planning. For sites to work effectively they had to be long-term projects; plotholders needed sites close to their homes with full security of tenure to put enough resources, both of time and money, into their plot and for this to happen sites needed to be permanent and not a temporary solution. There also needed to be a recognition that it can take many years of work, of removing rubbish and adding nutrients to soil, for a site to be entirely suitable for growing food.

In the 1950s and 1960s the idea of allotments as the 'heritage of the tenement dweller' became deeply rooted for SAGS. Their idea of the function of an allotment changed to that of a recreation, although the society never seemed entirely happy with admitting that allotments were not a necessity for growing food. During this period they campaigned for sites to be protected, or at least relocated, and repeatedly emphasised that allotments should be included in town and city planning in the same way as other recreational facilities, such as parks or football grounds. SAGS argued that allotments were needed as the only access to outdoor space, both for tenement dwellers and the new residents of high rise flats, which were built with few social facilities. The society were joined in their argument by sociologist Pearl Jephcott and geographer Harry Thorpe who both argued that a function of allotments, or other shared gardens, was to form communities. For the government though allotments were outdated and no longer useful.

A change began to take place in the 1970s, that had a slow influence on Glasgow's allotments. Although the environmental movement does not seem to have had as much of an immediate effect on Scottish allotments, as it did in southern England, changes can still be seen. On the Kelvinside Allotments plotholders used a relocation to develop the function of their allotment site further towards building communities. By including facilities needed by older people, women and children, as well as for those who lived further than a short walk away from the site, plotholders could stay on the new site for an entire day, allowing them to spend more time together as a community. Through their campaigning, as well as Gert Lory's fight to save Kennyhill Allotments, Glasgow City Council began to see the value of allotments beyond a solution to a national crisis. Letters from Kelvinside plotholders emphasised allotments as the heritage of the tenement dweller; everyone needs access to an outdoor space and it is not enough to passively visit a park, people need space for their own creativity and the ability to influence their own surroundings.

This function has also been revealed through the oral history testimonies of current plotholders, many of whom live in flats and have no access to a garden other than an allotment. However, a new function was added by these plotholders, born of the environment movement, that allotments are a place to protect biodiversity in our cities. Plotholders, both consciously and unconsciously, provide habitats for birds, insects, mammals and amphibians. For some plotholders, as shown in Brian's story, this has become the main function of their plots. The conservation of plants and animals has been an accidental function of allotments since the beginning of the movement. The oldest sites

have provided static habitats whilst the built-up areas around them have developed and changed; this has proved particularly vital for frogs, newts and reptiles. Because of the often messy approach plotholders take to gardening, allotments have also been found to be an important reserve for bees, as nectar rich wildflowers bloom where grass does not have to be kept in check. This function too relies on allotments to be protected and planned into urban areas; plants and animals thrive on older sites and for newer sites it will take time to attract wildlife through thoughtful planting and creating ponds.

Allotments have developed from the 1930s to become an integral part of the city of Glasgow, making our dear green place all the greener. Allotments began with the function of growing food but today their function is recognised as being much wider, providing outdoor space for people who live in tenements and flats but also a home for wildlife. For this function to continue allotments need to be regarded as a part of the city, rather than an escape from it, so that they are protected and included in long-term planning.

What is the role of the allotment in sustainable food production? Is this still relevant today?

The allotment developed as a place for home food production. This was most apparent during the Great Depression and the Second World War, as described above. During the 1930s government also saw the allotment as a way to improve the Scottish diet, as they were worried that Scots did not eat nearly as many vegetables as the English. This idea was also present during the Second World War when the government tried to limit the amount of potatoes grown on plots and promote the cultivation of leafy greens, such as kale, to introduce more nutrients into the Scottish diet. It is not clear from this research as to why the Scottish diet is, or was, perceived to be poorer than the English diet; the only, perhaps slightly sketchy, reason suggested was that the climate makes it harder to cultivate leafy crops or salad leaves. There were also restrictions on what could be grown on wartime plots; asparagus or rhubarb was not allowed as it takes three to five years to get a good crop from these plants and the government were focused on fast growing crops to produce enough food.

During the 1950s and 1960s SAGS turned away from food production as a function of the allotment and instead focused on allotment gardening as a recreation. This was never entirely convincing as an argument but appeared to be more of a political move to meet the government on their own terms. The government had ceased to see the allotment as a necessary part of food production and as supermarkets became popular, selling easily

stored and prepared food in tins, it was also difficult to persuade the general public that they needed to grow their own crops. However, even though it was not necessary, plotholders never stopped growing fruit and vegetables. If food production had truly been lost as a function of the allotment, plotholders could have turned to flowers and lawns; instead, they continued to grow their own food.

In the 1970s SAGS became interested in growing food organically, as evident through the speakers they invited to their conferences. It took longer for this trend to filter down to the plotholders but, as shown through the plotholders quoted in Chapter Six, it is clearly important for many today. The nature of food production on allotments has changed but it is still relevant. Plotholders no longer grow food as a necessity as they did during the Second World War and the Great Depression and the reasons to grow your own food have become varied. For some plotholders it is a financial issue; they grow their own food to save money, especially on food that is expensive in supermarkets but easy to grow, such as strawberries and herbs. For others it is to have control over how their food is grown, to avoid using pesticides and to understand how food is produced. For others still, it is for the enjoyment of being able to eat a meal for which you have had complete responsibility for the ingredients.

I wrote in the introduction that only nineteen per cent of Scots eat the recommended daily five portions of fruit and vegetables and that vegetable consumption has not increased since 2003.[3] The worries of the government over diet in the 1930s persist to this day. Allotments cannot improve this situation on their own but they can be part of the solution, together with other food growing initiatives such as community gardens. Today, allotments are a place to learn about healthy eating, either individually or through groups such as the North Glasgow Community Food Initiative. It is not just plotholders who benefit from the crops they grow, but also the friends and family they share food with – plotholders are ambassadors for eating fruit and vegetables. Changing the Scottish diet will be a long-term process so this function of allotments also relies on sites to be long-term. It is possible to be self-sufficient in fruit and vegetables from an allotment but this requires planning and safety in the knowledge that your plot is yours for as long as you need it.

[3] Jenny Mollison, Judy Wilkinson and Rona Wilkinson, *Raising Spirits: Allotments, well-being and community* (Edinburgh: Argyll Publishing, 2015), p. 18.

How has the allotment movement advocated changing purposes and roles of allotments from 1930 to the present day?

In the 1930s the Union and the Friends advocated on behalf of plotholders. It is difficult to make out the plotholders' voices, only glimpses can be seen through the words of others. The Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed was paternalistic in its nature; plotholders were helping themselves but there was a sense that they could only do so with the guidance of the Joint Committee. Through the 1950s and 1960s SAGS continued to advocate on behalf of plotholders, campaigning for new allotment legislation to protect sites. This resulted in the ultimately unsuccessful Allotments (Scotland) Act 1950. During this period the society did try to encourage plotholders to also campaign for themselves but they often met with apathy from site associations. This began to change in the 1970s, shown through the examples of Gert Lory fighting to save Kennyhill Allotments and Moira Vickerman in the creation of Julian Avenue. Diminishing membership and financial struggles meant that SAGS lost its voice but this did perhaps partly prompt plotholders to take on advocacy for the allotment movement themselves; their determination helped to positively change the way Glasgow City Council regarded allotments.

Today SAGS are a strong voice for the plotholders of Scotland. This century, their continued campaigning for new allotment legislation led to Part Nine of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which will provide better protection for plotholders. SAGS' method of advocacy has changed; through the re-introduction of the June conferences, their newsletter and use of social media the society now does more to support and encourage plotholders in their own advocacy. SAGS have also encouraged plotholders to engage with each other on a local level, becoming involved in the establishment of the Glasgow Allotments Forum in 2001. Plotholders have a stronger voice when they work together and now advocate on their own behalf, both locally and nationally.

How have allotments developed as places of community?

Through this research I have found that allotments have developed as much as a place to be on one's own as a place to be in a community. This dichotomy of allotments was encouraged and shaped by the Scottish Allotments Scheme for the Unemployed in the 1930s; there was a belief that both time on your own and time with others was good for mental health. Individual working of a plot gave plotholders, possibly lacking in self-esteem through unemployment, a responsibility, purpose and determination. An individual plot also gave plotholders the freedom to garden in their own way and develop their creativity. However, at the same time the Joint Committee organised their sites to allow

communities to develop, using low boundaries to encourage conversation as well as communal huts, meant for both storage and social events. During the Second World War the government emphasised the role of the individual on allotments by attempting to clamp down on the sharing of produce. The plotholders themselves maintained a sense of community by continuing to give away surplus crops and even using plots to shelter with other families during air-raids. The war expanded communities on allotments to include workers as well as the unemployed.

From the 1950s and into the early 1980s the communities formed on allotments changed. As allotments began to be thought of as a recreation rather than a necessity, SAGS promoted the movement mostly as a way to keep retired men fit and healthy. Women and children, as well as people of other nationalities and religious denominations, almost disappeared from Glasgow's allotments. This does not mean that there was no community - Chapter Five showed how the men supported each other on Croftburn and High Carntyne - but they were exclusive rather than inclusive communities. For others that joined the site, such as Alister Smith, working an allotment was a lonely experience as he was not welcomed by the other men. At this time the dichotomy of being together and being alone on an allotment had broken down to become one or the other. However, in the 1980s to 1990s this trend was reversed, as evidenced by the stories of Fiona Sutherland and Eve Tucker. Television and magazines encouraged new plotholders to join sites and although this caused some problems, as described by Denis Barrett and Robin Bower, allotments in the twenty-first century are once again communities made up of men and women, adults and children. The interviews used in Chapter Six demonstrate how valuable community is on Glasgow's allotments; many of the plotholders commented on the friendliness of associations when they joined, often as beginners who learnt from older plotholders' advice and gifts of vegetables. But these interviews also picked up on the importance of having your own space, peace and quiet and time to switch off from the stresses of life.

The ability of an allotment to provide plotholders with both solitude and company is easy to understand if you are within that community but from the outside it can appear to be shut off and unfriendly. Many sites have high fences or hedges that have built up as a reaction to the decades of vandalism that have worried and threatened associations. There is also a problem with waiting lists; nobody wants to wait five years to join a community if their need is in the present. This too leads back to the argument that allotments need to be fully embedded in their local communities; for allotments to survive, physical and cultural barriers need to be removed.

What does an allotment mean to the individual plotholder?

Two themes have developed from this question; attachment and creativity. It is difficult to know what allotments meant to the plotholders involved in the Scottish Allotment Scheme for the Unemployed as their voices are absent; we can only infer how they might have felt from their actions. Firstly, there is a hint of creativity in the growing of flowers; they can be seen in photographs of the plots and suggest that plotholders were encouraged to relax as well as work on their allotments. Secondly, the government expected that plotholders would give up their plots once they were in employment again but many stayed on their allotments. This suggests a sense of attachment, as cultivating a plot as well as working full time is a large commitment of time. During the Second World War, although plotholders' voices are still largely absent, there is a sense of this attachment in the construction of air-raid shelters on allotments; families felt safe on their plots even when they did not feel safe in their homes.

From the 1950s creativity on plots began to be curbed by the need to be 'tidy'. The trend for 'tidiness' has continued to the present day so that an idea has developed of what an allotment *should* look like and plot inspections have become a thing of terror for plotholders. The idea of keeping plots tidy evolved through the threat of site closures and it continues today; there is a feeling that if allotments are not obviously fully cultivated, sites will be lost. This means there is not always enough acceptance of plotholders to garden a little differently, for example, letting plants go to seed to feed birds, and not enough patience for plotholders who are struggling, for example, with an illness or a particularly busy time at work. Again a long-term vision is needed for plotholders to feel comfortable in their security of tenure and allow each other the freedom to be creative. Differences need to be accepted for both plotholders to thrive.

The sense of attachment to plots is noticeable in the words plotholders use to describe what their plot means to them; their sanctuary, their space, or in James Speirs' words 'it means everything. It's a place for me to just go away and hide and gather my thoughts'.[4] Throughout this thesis there has been a sense that we *need* an attachment to land, we *need* to take part in stewardship and have the opportunity to shape the world around us. In a city like Glasgow where few have their own garden, allotments fulfil that need.

[4] Interview with James Speirs, Vicarfield Allotments, 25th June 2015.

Contribution and further research

Throughout this thesis I have tried to include the voices of plotholders themselves wherever I can. So, it seems appropriate to include in the conclusion the words of Emily Chappell, with whom this thesis began, when I asked her how it felt to be on an old allotment: 'I think it's lovely and if you think that people were here a hundred years ago doing similar things to you that kind of makes you look in the future'.[5] By knowing and understanding the history of the allotment movement, plotholders are better equipped to promote and protect the future of allotments.

This thesis has significantly contributed to that understanding as well as to the green history of Glasgow, which has until now been dominated by parks. It is a document for SAGS to use in their advocacy and campaigns, to learn from the history and stories of their society. There are a number of ways in which this research could be taken further. Firstly, the history of allotments in Scotland before 1930 remains largely unexplored; there is a question over whether Scottish allotments developed independently to English allotments or whether it was an idea that was introduced over the border. Research could also be broadened to other Scottish cities. A large part of Victor Webb's papers are concerned with post-war development in Edinburgh, a city that responded to the post-war housing crisis very differently to Glasgow; therefore, it could be expected that Edinburgh Corporation also dealt with its allotments in a different way. Gender divisions on Glasgow's allotments have been included in this research but there is still much work to be done; were these divisions peculiar to Glasgow or was there a similar story across Scotland? In particular it would be interesting to further explore the effect of supermarkets on allotments; if men were cultivating plots but women were still the main cooks in families, were men growing what their wives needed or was the produce from allotments even used at all? If not, why did men continue to grow vegetables? Glasgow's allotments also remain very white; there are few gardeners from ethnic minorities yet on some community gardens this demographic pattern is reversed. Finally, the material culture of allotments could be further explored. I touched upon allotment sheds in Chapter Five but these are an iconic part of allotments that need to be further explored and understood.

Through exploring these research questions, I have found that there are two strong themes; firstly, that allotments are places of both individuality and community and secondly, that for allotments to fulfil their varied functions in society they need to be part of long-term

[5] Interview with Emily Chappell, Kennyhill, 25th September 2015.

urban planning. Allotments have and can be used as sites for both producing food and learning about its production; as places to protect biodiversity and conserve the environment; and for spaces that improve people's mental and physical health by both giving them the opportunity to be on their own and to join a community. These functions appear 'disorientating' when presented as a list, but by looking at the development of the allotment movement in Glasgow and Scotland from 1930 to 2016 it becomes apparent that these functions are intertwined and inseparable; they have developed as a response to the needs of Scotland's tenement dwellers. Allotments are not places where we turn our backs on the city but places that enable the city to function, giving humans, plants and animals a place to thrive.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Interviewees

Roland Albiker

Roland was interviewed on his plot at Kennyhill Allotments, in the East End, on 10th July 2015. He was born in Freiburg, Germany, on 12th September 1960 and had been a plot holder for two and a half years. Previously he had shared a plot on Kennyhill with another plotholder.

Denis Barrett

Denis was interviewed on his plot at Budhill and Springboig, in the East End, on 10th June 2015. He was born in 1947 and had been a plotholder since 2009.

Donna Blake

Donna was interviewed on her plot at High Carntyne, in the East End, on 5th August 2015. She was born in Broxburn on 19th July 1979 and had been a plotholder for seven years.

Robin Bower

Robin was interviewed on his plot at Queen's Park Allotments, in the Southside of Glasgow, on 25th June 2016. He was born in Paisley in 1957. Robin has had his allotment since 1993.

Emily Chappell

Emily was interviewed on her plot at Kennyhill on 25th September 2015. She was born in Manchester in 1983. Emily began by sharing a friend's plot but after her friend gave up due to health reasons, Emily continued as the sole plotholder.

Lisa Clifford

Lisa was interviewed on her plot at High Carntyne on 27th July 2015. She was born in Airdrie in 1975 and had been a plotholder for three years.

Joyce Gibson

Joyce was interviewed on her plot at High Carntyne on 29th July 2015. She was born in Glasgow on 2nd October 1958. Joyce went to her father's allotment as a small child at Haghill and later at High Carntyne. When her father died in 1999 she was asked by the committee at High Carntyne to take over his plot.

Jeanette

Jeanette (who only gave permission for her first name to be used) was interviewed on her plot at Budhill and Springboig Allotments on 28th June 2015. She was born in Bridgeton, Glasgow, and had been a plotholder for around nine years.

Gillian Little

Gillian was interviewed on her plot at Croftburn Allotments, in the Southside of Glasgow, on 18th August 2016. She was born in East Kilbride on 24th January 1972 and was one of the first plotholders on site when Croftburn Allotments was re-established in November 2013.

Maureen McKendrick

Maureen was interviewed on her plot at Budhill and Springboig Allotments on 27th June 2015. She was born in Glasgow on 23rd February 1961 and has been a plotholder on the site since November 2014. Previously she had had a raised bed on Kennyhill Allotments.

Kellieanne McMillan

Kellieanne was interviewed in the communal hut at Vicarfield Allotments, in Govan, on 31st July 2015. She was born in Coatbridge on 6th August 1980. Kellieanne was amongst the first plotholders on site when Vicarfield Allotments were opened by the Govan Housing Association in November 2013.

Harry Scalley

Harry was interviewed on his plot at Budhill and Springboig Allotments on 10th June 2015. He was born in Glasgow on 21st May 1934 and has been a plotholder for around twenty-five years.

Alister Smith

Alister was interviewed in the communal hut at Croftburn Allotments on 27th June 2016. He was born in Glasgow on 13th February 1953. Alister had been a plotholder on Croftburn Allotments since the site re-opened in November 2013. He had previously had an allotment at Croftburn in the mid to late 1970s, before the site was closed in the 1990s.

James Speirs

James was interviewed in the communal hut at Vicarfield Allotments on 25th June 2015. He was born in the Gorbals on 9th October 1959. James was one of the first plotholders on this site, along with Kellieanne, and has had his plot since November 2013.

Fiona Sutherland

Fiona Sutherland was born in Glasgow on 15th May 1957. She was interviewed twice on her plot in New Victoria Gardens, Pollokshields, where she has been a plotholder since the mid-1980s: on 4th August 2015 about being a plotholder and on 11th July 2016 about her involvement with the SAGS committee in the 1990s.

Alison Swanson

Alison was interviewed as a member of SAGS in her home in Stirling on 13th October 2015. She was born in Glasgow in 1963. Alison's plot is in Bridgehaugh, Stirling and she had been a plotholder for thirteen years.

Brian Timms

Brian was interviewed on his plot at Westthorn Allotments, in the East End of Glasgow, on 5th July 2016. He was born in Liverpool in 1935 and had been a plotholder since 2006.

Eve Tucker

Eve was interviewed on her plot at New Victoria Gardens on 15th October 2015. She was born in Penang, Malaysia on 30th November 1950 and has had her plot since 1980.

Kathryn Venart

Kathryn was interviewed on her plot at Budhill and Springboig on 28th June 2015. She was born in Glasgow on 27th September 1963 and had been a plotholder for nine years.

Judy Wilkinson

Judy Wilkinson was interviewed twice in her home in the West End of Glasgow. She was born in Mill Hill, London, on 4th July 1940. Judy, who has been a plotholder since 1974, was first interviewed about her plot in Julian Avenue on 14th June 2016. She was also interviewed on 13th July 2016 about her involvement with SAGS.

Andrew Young

Andrew was interviewed in his home in the Southside of Glasgow on 11th July 2016. He had been a plotholder at New Victoria Gardens from 1987 until 2014. Andrew was born in Glasgow in 1927.

Appendix Two: Participant Information

Information Sheet for Participants

I am carrying out oral history interviews for research investigating the heritage of Glasgow's allotments. This is for a collaborative PhD between the Department of History and the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences of the University of Glasgow and the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS). The interviews are a continuation of a previous SAGS project called the Glasgow Allotment Heritage Project. For more information see www.gah.org.uk

Through these interviews, fieldwork and archival research I hope to answer the following questions:

- When, where and why were specific allotments founded, and to what extent have they been connected with one another across the city?
- How have allotments and their intended uses developed over time?
- What kinds of horticultural, social, political and economic communities have emerged within and across the city's allotments?
- How do differing communities interact with and adapt local gardening habitats?
- What is the heritage of these allotments, in the eyes of both plot holders and the broader public?
- How can this heritage be harnessed to ensure the future of both specific allotment sites and the broader allotment movement?

An oral history interview generally lasts about an hour and takes the form of a series of questions. I will use a small recorder to record the interview which will then be transcribed and used as part of my thesis. A copy of the recording and transcript will be provided to all participants.

It is also possible that SAGS, GAH or the Glasgow Allotments Forum will wish to also use the information you provide during an interview. The interview cannot be used in any form without your permission, it is therefore very important that you fill out a consent form and tick the boxes for ways in which you are happy for your contribution to be used. It is okay to tick yes for some things and no for others.

Your name will never be used without your permission and your personal details will never be given out to anyone not involved in this research.

For further information please contact me on *xxxxx xxxxxx* or *h.baxter.1@research.gla.ac.uk*

Or contact one of my supervisors if you have any concerns:

Dr Marina Moskowitz, Department of History, 0141-330-2962, Marina.Moskowitz@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Hayden Lorimer, School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, 01413302509, Hayden.Lorimer@glasgow.ac.uk

Thank you for taking part!

Hannah Baxter

Appendix Three: Consent Form

COPYRIGHT ASSIGNMENT AND CONSENT FORM FOR ORAL HISTORY RECORDINGS

This data is being collected as part of a project researching the heritage of Glasgow's allotments by the Department of History and the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences of the University of Glasgow in collaboration with the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society. The purpose of this assignment and consent is to ensure that your contribution is added to the Glasgow Allotments Heritage Project archive in accordance with your wishes. A second copy will be deposited with the University of Glasgow Archives Services. The information is processed by the University in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. Your personal details will be kept within the Glasgow Allotments Heritage Project archive and only be used for the purposes of this oral history project, and will not be passed to any third party.

Can we use your contribution in the following ways?

- To present within a PhD thesis Yes ☐ No ☐
- For educational use in schools and colleges Yes ☐ No ☐
- For public performance, lectures and talks Yes ☐ No ☐
- For use in publications, print and CD ROM Yes ☐ No ☐
- To deposit in libraries and archives for future use Yes ☐ No ☐
- For broadcasting on radio and television Yes ☐ No ☐
- For publication on the internet Yes ☐ No ☐

Can we mention your name? ----------

Signed ---------- Date ----------

Name ----------

Address .....

Allotment Site ---------- Plot Number --------

Telephone ---------- Email ----------

Signed on behalf of the Glasgow Allotments Heritage Project

---------- Date ----------

Appendix Four: Sample Questions

When did you get your plot?

Why did you want a plot?

Were you on a waiting list?

What was it like to arrive and settle in?

Had anyone in your family had a plot?

What do you grow and why?

Has what you grow changed?

Do you make plans for growing?

Do any particular plants have a story?

How do you deal with pests?

Are there any animals you encourage on your plot?

Did you build your shed?

What is your shed used for?

How big is your plot? Is the size important to you?

How has the site changed whilst you've been here?

Are there any community activities on this site?

Is there any vandalism on this site? If so, how do you deal with it?

What do you think the future is for allotments in Glasgow?

What does your plot mean to you?