



## Roaming Pen Roger asks if it's twenty-twelve or two-thousand-and-twelve...

**It's February, probably one of the most depressing months of the year and this year it's worse as it's a whole day longer, yes it's a leap year. Traditionally on 29th February women can propose to their boyfriends, in this enlightened age and here in Kemp Town it's more lightly that girls will be proposing to their girlfriends. Still only four weeks and one day and it will be March which means spring and all that it brings, flowers, lighter evenings and sometimes snow.**

Winter up on the Whitehawk Hill allotments means that it's time to prepare the ground for the new seeds and potatoes etc, digging is not the most glamorous job but strangely one of the most satisfying, anybody fancying a spot of exercise is most welcome – anytime! Allotments seem to be the latest 'must have', everyone wants one, where there was once acres or barren and rather scruffy downland now we have lots of cultivated plots, little sheds popping up like mushrooms and families gathering to dig and plant, only finding it harder work than they imagined. So they just bring the

kids and plan their summer picnics. The council allotment police, however, do not like that; it's part of the deal that you have to cultivate your plot and that means hard work. Many drop by the wayside after only a few weeks or months, so there are always available plots, come and dig your way out of the recession. Kemp Town is a fascinating place to live in, in the words of the now defunct News of the World "all human life is here", nothing or no one can surprise us. We have some quite amazing residents and I don't just mean the celebs. We usually glance and say "only in Kemp Town" where the unusual is usual. All of us, at least the great majority of us, live in terraced houses or flats. This means that we have neighbours, very close neighbours. It's good if you get on with them but more often than not there are problems. Currently we have a washing machine based on a first floor that vibrates our house at regular intervals. What can't be cured must be endured it seems. Then we have the fashion for wooden floors, lovely to

look at but transmit every footstep – not the same neighbours I should add. Then we have the bathroom lights, shining all night and don't get me started on inconsiderate parking. These are very small irritations but people do seem to be living in their own world these days. But I should remember that we are planning some changes ourselves this year which may have some impact too. Love thy neighbour? Tolerate might be a better word.

We all know by now that it's 2012 but have you noticed that we are having great difficulty knowing quite how to say the year? One hundred years ago it was 1912 and everyone called it nineteen-twelve so why, I wonder, does half the population say twenty twelve and the other half insist on the tongue twisting 'two thousand and twelve' goodness knows how they will cope with 2017 etc.

*Look forward to the daffodils and don't forget to enjoy yourself while you're still in the pink!*

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## News from the Coach House

### Tales from the Marmalade trees!

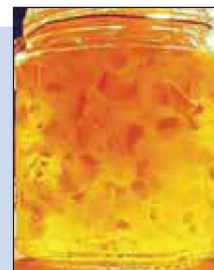
Recently I was asked to make some marmalade at a Green Aprons session. This meant sifting through books and the internet for some interesting recipes to entice the groups appetite for an evening of making and creating. "Pips and Pith! We do grow Marmalade trees in England!" Originally marmalade was made with quince fruit (known as golden apples) and honey from the bees - this was known to our Portuguese brothers as marmelo. Today's recipe using Seville oranges lemons and sugar is somewhat of a mystery how and when it arrived to our shores. Mary Queen of Scots ate orange jam when she was ill to aid her digestion, known as Marie Malade (Mary's ill). The herbalist would also contribute to this saying it 'warmed the stomach, digested, and broke the wind!' Citrus aurantium (bitter orange) used for marmalade making has high pectin and the flowers, fruits, leaves and peels were traditionally used for treating insomnia and gastrointestinal problems including indigestion and diarrhea. The high vitamin C content provides an acidic environment which is necessary for iron absorption and has been said to be helpful for anemia. The essential oil is expressed from the fruit and the flowers distilled produce neroli oil and orange water. It is therefore of no wonder that this delightful tree with its rich properties

reached us. Our local Kemptown green grocer will have some Seville oranges so why not prepare yourself for a batch of marmalade making.

### RECIPE FOR THE MARMALADE MAKER

- 1.3kg Seville oranges, 2 lemons (juice only), 2.6kg preserving or granulated sugar.
  - Put whole oranges and lemon juice in a preserving pan with 4 pints of water & bring to boil. Then simmer gently for 2 hours.
  - Remove oranges keeping the liquid. Cut oranges in half and scoop out pips and pith and add to the liquid reserved. Bring to the boil (6 minutes) pressing pulp through a sieve.
- Pour half liquid in to the preserving pan. Cut peel and add half the peel add half the sugar. Stir over a low heat. Bring to the boil rapidly letting it bubble for 15-25 minutes until it has reached setting point. Let it stand in the pan to cool down. Pot and repeat again with rest of ingredients.
- You can also add in the cooking process for example: limes, elderflowers, cloves, cinnamon, ginger, cardamom tequila or whiskey. *Your call!*

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