

Oldest allotment has 200-year-old roots



Plot thickens: Gardener Jill Shearer

Gardeners are celebrating the 'Good Life' on the oldest allotment in Britain - which has 200-year-old roots.

The plot was the first piece of land in the country made available for commoners to grow food, thanks to royal intervention.

It was created in 1809 when the Rev Stephen Demainbray asked King George III to spare part of his parish from the Enclosure Acts - which gave land used by peasants to the privileged.

The 50 plots in Great Somerford, Wiltshire, were to be allocated 'Yearly and every Year, on the Tuesday in Easter Week' - a tradition maintained today.

'I'm quite proud that this is where allotments came from - it's an important part of history,' said gardener Stuart Frayling, 65.

Jill Shearer, who has written a book about the allotment, added: 'This area was the birthplace of the modern allotment movement.'

The Rev Demainbray used his royal connections as the official chaplain to King George III to claim the land.