

10th Anniversary Year!

April 2017 issue 41



How did it start?

In May 2007 a meeting was held at Battsford Community Centre to discuss the formation of a 'Horticultural Society'. 37 people came along and the idea was well supported. It was decided to appoint a Committee - amazingly 7 people volunteered.! 'Horticultural Society' seemed rather a grand title so it was decided to call it Battsford & District Gardening Club.

Shortly after the website was created, our logo chosen and the first newsletter was published, mainly thanks to Val Gould

Over the years: we have had getting on for 60 speakers, 30 visits, 9 Shows, 10 post Christmas meals, 2 gardeners question time, 9 quizzes, several plant sales, 40 newsletters, and approx. 3,000 members have attended events & visits . We have had special celebrity events with Peter Seabrook, Bob Flowerdew and Jim Buttriss, and we are looking forward to organising more in the future.

Here's to the next 10 years!



Excerpts from the very 1st newsletter published August 2007



3rd September

The Good, The Bad & The Ugly

MEET 7.30 PM IN COMMUNITY CENTRE

Bring along a specimen from your garden.

JUST FOR FUN

Have you a prize bloom or a prize bloomer?

Unusual bug? Saucy veggie even? Have you a proud success or an embarrassing failure? Bring it along for a bit of fun and reveal your secret of success or find out the reason for your failure.

ALSO this is your chance to have your say. What do you think of it so far ???

Are we providing what you want? Do you have suggestions for future activities?

See the PHOTO DISPLAY of recent events of where we have been or what you have missed

HEAR from your committee members what they have been busy doing in their new roles



**RAFFLE PRIZES
ALL DONATIONS
GRATEFULLY
RECEIVED ON THE
NIGHT**

A Resounding Success



Lucy Redman Visit-

On 6th August we visited the Lucy Redman School of Garden Design in Rushbrooke.

The gardens are an inspirational delight with shrub borders, a woodland area, purple meadow, circular veggie garden, turf seat around apple tree, willow tunnel, sedum roofed pavilion - where we had tea and home made cakes - and much more. There are also various sculptures amid the foliage.

Quick Quiz

What will the leaves of a tomato plant look like if they are lacking in phosphorus?

- A. Purple ?
- B. Red?
- C. Thin?
- D. Shrivelled?

answers on back page



Wreath making workshop

26th November 2016

Battisford and District Gardening Club held their annual Christmas Wreath Workshop on Saturday 26th November. The event was well attended and managed to kick start the season with a festive community spirit, enhanced by Christmas carols and mince pies. Once again the morning was a success with finished wreaths ranging in style, from sophisticated grandeur to rustic charm, each equally as endearing as the next.

A big thank you to Linda Clark, Caroline Wicking and Jackie Collings who organised and supplied materials, of which there was abundance of choice. Advice was provided by Jackie Collings and volunteers were at hand to make the morning both enjoyable and productive.

Adrienne



Hard at work!



A finished article heading for a front door!

The Quiz

December 2016



Where would you find Ridiculous Allsorts of Loose Women in a Hotch Potch of Wild Garlic, Poinsettias and Tumbleweeds? - at the BDGC December quiz of course. 40 members attended the 2016 quiz which was once again six rounds of cunningly connected and curious questions set by the master quizmaster George Bethell. Throw in a sumptuous free buffet and generous prizes donated by George, and everyone goes home a winner after a most enjoyable evening.

Bill Baldry



A picture of concentration!

New Year Meal at the Barn Cafe

On 20th January, 36 Club members gathered at the Barn Café for another happy evening. The food was very good again and we are beginning to feel truly at home in the restaurant. It is good to have a social event to look forward to after the Christmas period. The menu caters for all tastes and we would encourage any members who have not yet come along to join everyone in 2018. An added bonus is no (or hardly any) speech from Bill or a raffle to interrupt the talk. Many thanks to the organisers who do a great job every year.

Jane Pope



The Dry Garden at RHS Hyde Hall

Ian Bull

February 2017

On Monday February 6th 2017, the RHS Hyde Hall Garden Manager Ian Bull, came to talk about the dry garden on the largest of the RHS sites near Chelmsford. The talk proved to be an informative guide to the recent history of dry gardens in Essex and a real encouragement to members to join the planned club visit to Hyde Hall in June. Hyde Hall started as a 'garden on top of a hill', which has spilt over onto the surrounding land over the years, changing from a formal to informal landscape with naturalistic gardening as knowledge and fashions developed. This year Xa Tollemache from Helmingham Hall will design their new vegetable garden.

Ian started by talking about the influence of Beth Chatto, whose dry garden in Elmstead Market, Essex is an inspiration to gardeners. Beth's mantras of "right plant, right place" and "work with what you have", led her to design a garden with different habitats, making the most of the undeveloped site through ecological gardening. Although the garden has streams, shady walks and perennial borders, it is the dry garden which has made Beth and her philosophy famous and respected. Ian showed photos of the dry gravel garden, which grew out of the car park. Beth vowed not to water the plants once planted. The beds were shaped with hose pipes and then planted up with her plan of firstly the dominant plants, (e.g. a juniper) to provide structure, secondly the feature plants (e.g. cardoons), third infill, the bulk of the planting (e.g. nepeta, euphorbia) and fourth, ground cover, weed suppressant, moisture retentive plants, which would give no hard edges. The plants should provide colour all year and be drought tolerant.

The gardening team at Hyde Hall has followed this model since the dry garden was opened in March 2001. They wanted to show the sustainability of the dry garden, which was chosen for the challenging aspects of the site; strong sun, drying winds and poor soil. The vision was to represent a rolling, rocky landscape, so they brought in 800 tons of hard core and rubble to form the mounds and create drainage. 250 tons of boulders, known as 'erratics,' chosen for their shape and colour, were transported from Aberdeenshire, Scotland, to be backdrops to the planting and they provide a focal point and viewing area for the garden.

One of the main challenges was the water retentive clay soil, so the soil is now 40% sandy grit. The paths were created from crushed granite, which is permeable. Then the planting began.

Ian noted that they did not use a plan, but instead did their homework about which plants should work and then sourced them, using plants from dry hot areas, such as Spain, France, South Africa and California. They used Beth's 1 to 4 planting plan and planted 4,500 plants on the site. Then they forked it over to give air and structure and finally mulched it with stones. Simple!! At first there was a negative response from the public because it looked so bare, but as the salvias filled out and the verbenas, perennial wallflowers, alliums, irises, sedum and cistus grew and provided colour, its beauty became apparent.

Ian gave a list of the plants they use, but you can see them for yourself on the Club trip. The garden is at its best in early June, which happens to be when the trip is organised, so go along on Saturday 17th June and think about all the effort that has gone in to creating the dry garden at Hyde Hall. Jane Pope.



Ian Bull



'Weird & Wonderful Plants'

Barry Gayton March 2017

It was a full house at the March meeting of the gardening Club for Barry Gayton's talk "Weird & Wonderful Plants". He started his talk by showing a list of the titles of talks he gives, there appeared to be over 30 and he said he gave about 120 talks a year. It had taken him over 30 years to compile Weird Plants talk as some of the plants featured took that long to grow or bloom.

He has been an enthusiastic gardener since the age of 7, when he asked for a greenhouse for his birthday. He and his father erected it and he started buying seeds from his local Woolworths store. After a couple of years the manager of Woolworths said Barry must have a lot of plants, would he be interested in supplying his local Woolworths. This he did for the following 4 years. With the money he earned he bought another greenhouse which is still in use to this day. Barry explained he grows almost all his plants from seeds, and had brought a large selection of plants for members to buy. Over the past 60 years he has also accumulated 50,000 cactus.

One or two interesting facts, if you were to eat 30 apples and crunch the pips you would die as the pips contain cyanide, also the seeds of the castor oil plant, readily available to buy, contain a deadly poison. The magnolia was the first flowering tree and Barry has over 70 varieties in his garden. They may well be in bloom when Barry opens his garden to the public under the NGS scheme on Sunday April 16th and Monday April 17th. It is also open on Sunday 2nd July, or by appointment.

DESERT WORLD GARDENS. THETFORD ROAD (B1107) SANTON DOWN-HAM IP27 0TU
Jackie Collings

Help please!

Guess who's been asked to run the cake stall again at the fete on July 1st? So could I ask members of the gardening club if they could possibly make a cake for me to sell please.

You can leave them with me at Woodstock, Park Road, Combs, or bring them to the fete on the day, If unable to do either, Stuart will collect them (he doesn't know he's volunteered yet!)

Thank you in anticipation. Jackie Collings.

Bird Boxes for Charity

My grandson is into making designer bird boxes to sell for charity. They are coming off the production line thick and fast. If anyone is interested in buying one, please have a word with me, Jackie Collings 01449 613494 or call at Woodstock Park Road, Combs. They are £10 each. all the money going to charity.

Here is an example of his work



Fibonacci in a succulent—the spirals go in different directions for maximum sunlight



Barry Gayton

January Break

Mike Warren

As I write this, the sun is shining, the sky is blue and it is around 25c with a light breeze, no, I am not in Ipswich where I understand it is freezing cold and the parsnips and leeks are difficult to get out of the ground (although the parsnips should taste good after a frost on them). I am in my Winter retreat on the Island of Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands, the oldest Island and the second largest in the group.

It is Winter here where the locals wrap up well. We have recorded our lowest Winter temperature at night this January, 14c that's +14c so not too bad !, it's all a matter of relativity.

So what can I see outside, well the Bougainvillea is still flowering and my neighbour's monster is still discarding bracts that land everywhere, my Ficus benjamina 'Variegata' tree looks a bit pale and the Solanum rantonetii is covered with violet flowers. A large Echinocactus grusonii "Mother-in-Laws Cushion" just sits there getting fatter each year, a gift from my neighbour when he revamped his garden. Just up the road, a French lady planted her garden with fruit trees last year, already there are two Banana plants bearing fruit, a Nectarine, Fig and PawPaw flourishing. Down the road Passion fruit are ripening (*Passiflora edulus*).

Please don't think I come here to enjoy myself, my laptop computer has loads of work on it, when I get around to it, after I have finished putting together a presentation for the Felixstowe Allotments Association, which reminds me of all the talks booked for soon after I return in February not to mention the list of tours Brightwater have asked me to lead later on. Anyone fancy joining me to Guernsey, Berlin or gardens of the Loire ?

Michael Warren



Banana Plant (*Musa*)

Did you know?

- That bananas grow in the Canary Islands?
- Bananas don't grow on trees
- Bananas can get sunburnt and like to grow in clumps to shade each other
- That the bananas you buy are actually called hands not bunches
- They come from South East Asia
- You can't grow them from seed
- Each plant only produces one bunch of bananas
- They start life pointing downwards
- The banana is doomed by a fungus called Panama disease
- You can eat more than the fruit—the leaves are fed to cows and goats and in Burma they curry the heart of the stem. In the canaries they make Banana wine



Passion Fruit (*Passiflora edulus*)

A Visit to Windsor Great Park by Linda Clark

Ian and I lived in Berkshire before we moved to Suffolk. Much as we enjoy and appreciate the pleasures of living in Combs, something that we both miss is being close to Windsor and the Great Park. So next year we are planning a long weekend in Windsor to re-visit some of our old haunts.

Windsor Great Park is 4800 acres of sweeping parkland, award-winning gardens, ancient woodland and forest trails. It is home to an impressive collection of plants and flowers from around the world, which offer astounding displays to admire and photograph throughout the seasons. <http://www.windsorgreatpark.co.uk/>

Encompassing The Savill Garden, Virginia Water, The Valley Gardens and the Long Walk and Deer Park, Windsor Great Park offers something for everybody. You can even time your visit to take in the Royal Windsor Horse Show (May 10th-14th, 2017) or watch a polo match at the Guards Polo Club on Smiths Lawn.

For gardeners the highlight has to be The Savill Garden. The thirty five acres of interconnected gardens include the Hidden Gardens, Spring Wood, the Summer Gardens, the New Zealand Garden, Summer Wood, The Glades, Autumn Wood and the Winter Beds.

For the energetic, there is the Long Walk. This impressive three mile long tree-lined avenue begins at the George IV Gateway at Windsor Castle and ends at the magnificent Copper Horse statue. Alternatively, you can walk around the lake at Virginia Water or tackle one of the many other different trails and routes on offer.

Windsor itself is an ideal location for a long weekend. Visit the historic castle, take a boat ride or a walk along the Thames, or cross the bridge into Eton to browse in the antique shops. Or if you prefer, use it as a base for a trip to London to hit the shops or take in a show. Fast trains run from nearby Slough to Paddington, or you can take a ride on the more leisurely stopping train between Windsor and Waterloo. Due to its proximity to Heathrow, there are plenty of hotels in Windsor and nearby with great deals if you book early.

So what are you waiting for? Go online, check out the detail and book now.



The Savill Gardens

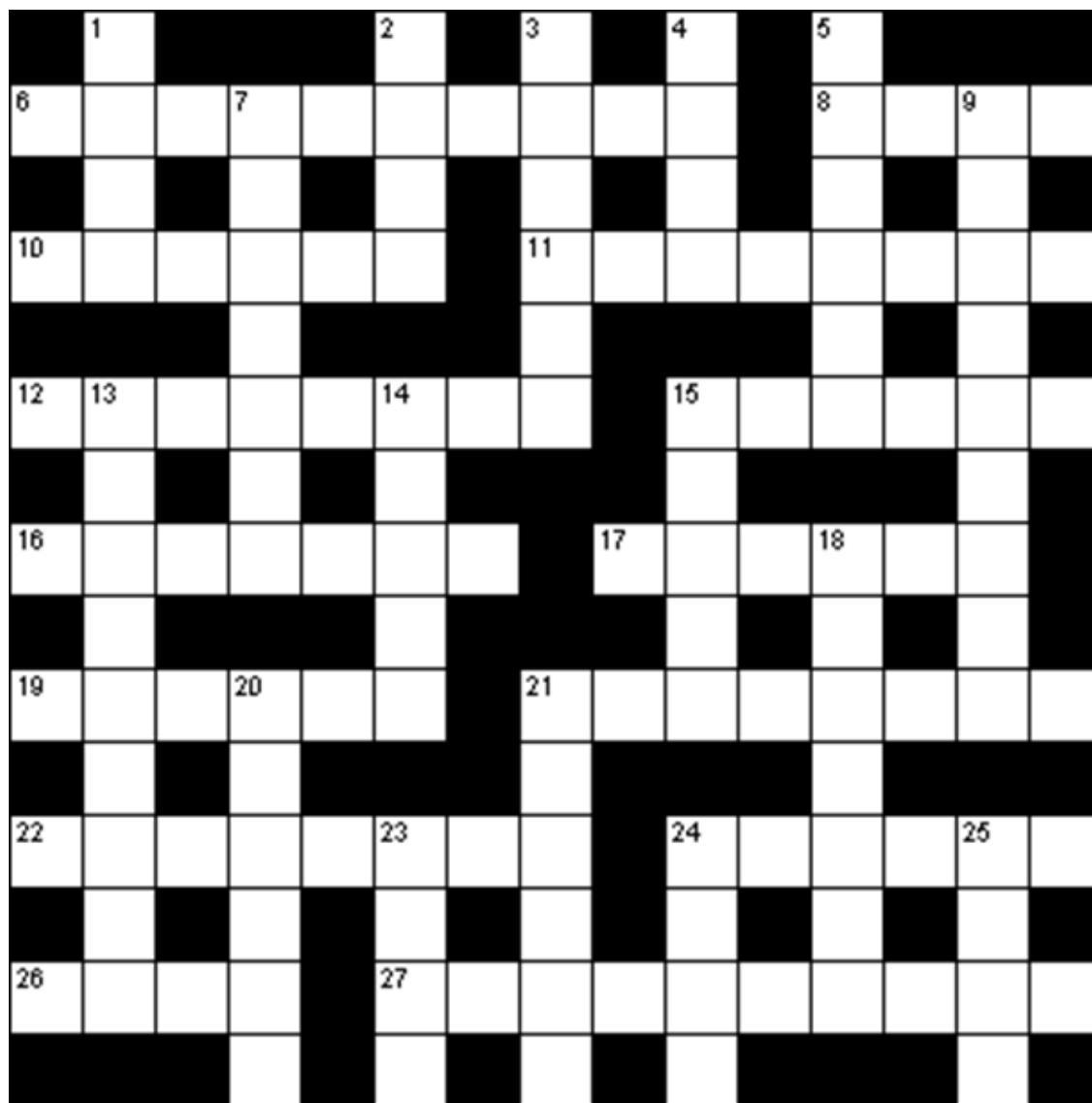


The Long Walk & Deer Park

Did you know?

- Windsor Castle was part of William the Conqueror's plan to subjugate Britain
- It is the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world
- Edward 111 transformed Windsor from a military fortification to a gothic palace
- It has 1,000 rooms
- More than 500 people live & work there
- The name of Windsor comes from Old English 'windles-ore' ('winch by the riverside').
- The clocks in the kitchen are always 5 minutes fast to ensure the food arrives on time

Linda is organising the coach trip to Hyde Hall (see last page)
If you wish to go contact her at: lindaclark55@btinternet.com or call 01449 775193



Across

- 6. A winter flowerer, which, we hear, has green-brown hue (10)
- 8/24. Engaged girl's popular summer bedder (4,6)
- 10. This weed can irritate the unwary gardener! (6)
- 11. Down-to-earth propagation technique? (8)
- 12. AA Travel can supply shrub with hollyhock-like flowers (8)
- 15. One sign of a worm and the French build a fortification! (6)
- 16. Half-hardy annual held by Jane, me, Sian (7)
- 17. White powdery coating of fungi, harmful to plants (7)
- 19. Hilda a variety of this showy perennial! (6)
- 21. Collection of stony figures in a formal garden (8)
- 22. Tool for the pushy sort of weeder? (5,3)
- 24. See 8
- 26. Small island hidden by arabis leaves (4)
- 27. Like leaves of e.g. *Euonymus fortunei* 'Silver Queen' (10)

Down

- 1. Deciduous tree – spread on the brassica plot? (4)
- 2. Footwear ruined by hose! (4)
- 3. Rhododendron, strictly speaking (6)
- 4. Heavy, sticky soil (4)
- 5. One *Ribes* variety is Candytuft! (6)
- 7. Modest countryside home giving its name to an informal type of garden (7)
- 9. Just one of Van Gogh's famous bloomers! (9)
- 13. Summer bedders make a mug stare (9)
- 14. Heather – or another girl (5)
- 15. This eastern country helps make mulch in abundance! (5)
- 18. Deciduous shrub: the species *gracilis* has pure white flower clusters (7)
- 20. With which rocks may be spotted (6)
- 21. Asher's broken trimmers (6)
- 23. A source of honey, some chives (4)
- 24. Vegetable grown to win prizes in Staffordshire? (4)
- 25. Holly's in Brazil, exploring! (4)

Future Events

Monday 3rd April, 7.30pm

'Tulips from Amsterdam'

Springtime in Holland, Keukenhof,

Flower auction and much more!

Mike Warren

Monday 8th May

Visit to Steve Pryke's garden in Buxhall

1 Redbricks, World's End Lane, IP14 3ED

Open—4pm—7pm. Cost £3.50 Refreshments

Parking is limited so try and car share

Monday 5th June 7.30pm

'Growing veg. in small spaces & containers'

Pauline Harper

Saturday 17th June

Coach trip to RHS Hyde Hall

£12 including admission

Places still available

Coach leaves BVH at 9am and Hyde Hall at 3.30pm. Please meet 10 minutes earlier

Saturday 1st July—Show

Monday 3rd July

Visit to Polstead Mill, Polstead, CO6 5AB

By kind permission of Lucinda Bartlett

More details later

Later dates

7th August 'The Perennial Mr Potter' Bryan Thurlow

4th September Mini show & social evening

2nd October 'Medical Herbalist' Desiree Shelley

6th November 'Slugs' ! Ian Bedford (John Innes)

4th December Quiz George Bethell

The Show 1st July with Combs Fete

I hope you all know the date of the Show by now and have your schedules. (available at the meetings or from me or Bill)

Anyone who enters a new class this year will earn brownie points! Prize for most individual entries!

The T & M petunias and potatoes were available at the March meeting and the rest on 3rd April.

Please get in touch with me with any questions.

Ant 01449 675161

anthej@btinternet.com

GET GROWING, PLANTING, SEWING, BAKING ETC!!

Combs Fete

Please try and support the Combs Fete events—they pay for the marquee we use.

Friday 19th May, Fish (£10) or sausages (£5) & chips

Friday 30th June, 7.30, Swing band & dancing (£10)

Clive's Clock

Clive Harris likes making clocks and has created them with all sorts of hand painted surrounds. He made the BDGC one (photo) and this was raffled off at the November and December meetings with the proceeds going to the Children's Air Ambulance. £50 was raised by the draw, which was won by Glenda Ion, and BDGC have matched that amount from funds for Clive to pass on to the charity. Many thanks to everyone for your support.

Bill



Carrot quiz— A & C