



Battisford & District Gardening Club Newsletter

Issue 46



John Milton's mulberry tree, Christ's College, Cambridge

This tree was planted in 1608, the year of John Milton's birth and later named in his honour as he studied under it when a student at Christ's. James 1 wanted to encourage silk production in the UK, and asked his advisor, William Stallinge to order 10,000 mulberry trees, the food of silkworms. Christ's bought 300 trees . Unfortunately Stallinge ordered the wrong sort of trees so the project never got off the ground. This tree, the only survivor, is thought to be an offset of the old tree, having grown up from the roots as the original trunk died off. The branches are held up by several props and after the old roots were exposed during the great storm of 1987 a mound of earth was built up round the base of the tree to cover them. Apparently mulberry jam is still made from its fruits every year. The Queen has one of these trees in the gardens of Buckingham Palace.

Monday 5th February

Cambridge Colleges and their gardens

Rodney Tibbs



What must be one of the largest number of Gardening Club members and their guests came to hear Rodney Tibbs fascinating talk about Cambridge Colleges and their gardens. Who knew that there are so many hidden treasures behind the high walls of the Cambridge Colleges?

Rodney has been a journalist and writer for many years. After winning a travelling fellowship for scientific writing, Rodney visited the Antarctic with the British Antarctic Survey which has its headquarters in Cambridge. He has retired from journalism and devotes his time to writing, gardening and horticulture. Rodney's talk followed a route through the beautiful College gardens, with historical and biographical information about the Colleges and their alumni along the way.

The Colleges are independently run, with their own opening times and charges, so look on the College websites or check with the Tourist Information Office when planning a visit. All the Colleges are a few minutes' walk from Cambridge town centre. Included is a walk along 'The Backs', which is especially pretty in the spring with a display of daffodils and other spring bulbs. This leads to the beautiful view of Kings College Chapel across the Cam.



Clare Bridge (1640), the oldest across the Cam, is decorated with globes on plinths. Look carefully and you will see that one of them appears to have been eaten away. It was the architect's way of making his point that he had been underpaid or maybe it was to avoid a tax. Things don't change.



Peterhouse is the oldest College, established in 1314. It has a Victorian Courtyard and acres of grass with daffodils in the spring and interesting borders to explore. Gray (of Elogy Written in a Country Churchyard) and William Pitt the Younger both studied at Pembroke. Here there are small garden 'rooms', some with collections of Japanese trees and more traditional English planting. The tulips in the garden and hanging baskets are very pretty in the spring.

May would be a good time to visit Christ's College, which has a 300 year old wisteria growing against the Master's Lodge. Lady Margaret Beaufort founded Christ's in 1505 and she is represented by a marguerite on the College arms on the impressive entrance. The Fellows garden is worth a visit. There is a 17c swimming pool and John Milton's mulberry tree in the 4 acre garden. Darwin studied at Christ's and his rooms are open to the public. Emmanuel has a large garden of many acres, with a lovely lake and a chapel designed by Christopher Wren. Nearby is the famous Anchor Inn by the Millpool, one of the points to hire a punt.



Darwin College is 20th century, made up of Regency houses by the Cam and is interesting for the buildings and the gardens. Nearby is the wooden Mathematical Bridge by Queens. (left)

Kings College has beautiful meadows, grazed by cattle, the signature design of Capability

Brown, bringing the countryside to the building or into the heart of the town.

St. Catherine's does not have a garden, instead look out for the Catherine wheel emblem on the College entrance arch.



Corpus Christie was founded by the townspeople of Cambridge and it has large courtyards and tiny quads. It is pretty and secluded, possibly intended for quiet contemplation after a night on the town or a day of study. Christopher Marlowe studied at Corpus Christie from 1580 -87. Look for the Datum Points at Trinity Hall and at Trinity College the statue of Henry VIII, holding an orb and a chair leg. There is a reason, have fun finding out what it is. Trinity also has an ancient apple tree, a descendent of the one at Woolsthorpe Manor in Lincolnshire, whose falling fruit prompted Sir Isaac Newton's theory of gravity.



The Bridge of Sighs (above) is on the way to St John's, nicknamed 'the wedding cake', which has lovely herbaceous borders .

Then it is Rodney's favourite, Clare College, which apparently has an erratic charging system, so check before you go. The Fellows Garden is open 2 or 3 times a year under the NGS. It is a 'stunning garden with breath taking borders', with modern sculptures and a sunken water garden from the 1930s, when they were very fashionable in garden design. There is also a tropical garden and formal walkways with borders.

Finally, Rodney recommended the Botanic Gardens, which are separate from the College gardens and are 44 acres of fascinating gardens between Trumpington Road and Hills Road.

Jane Pope.

Monday 5th March
A Complete Guide to Clematis
Peter Skeggs-Gooch

Thorncroft Clematis Ltd in Norfolk is a real family affair. It was opened by Peter's parents in 1989 and handed over to him in 2013, with a number of family members having roles in the business. It has evolved into a renowned clematis nursery specialising in around 34 cultivars with special features, such as length of flowering, colour, form and quality of blooms, and with strength of growth that deserve a space in anyone's garden. The nursery has been awarded gold medals for the last 10 years at Chelsea. Peter showed us the wide variety of clematis available at the nursery and gave us good advice on planting and care.

The nursery grows well-known cultivars, evergreen and herbaceous clematis as well as some of the less common species but they are most well known for having many of the new clematis from around the world several of which they have helped to introduce.

The cultivars they stock have been selected for their special merits - e.g. length of flowering period, colour, form and quantity of blooms, strength of growth and generally because they are 'good doers' and worthy of space in anyone's garden.

The nursery is not open to the public - see their website for information on how to order www.thorncroftclematis.co.uk



Peter Skeggs- Gooch
Owner & Director
Thorncroft Clematis



Clematis Taiga
Short-listed for Plant of the Year
Chelsea 2017

March 2018

Bluebell planting at Battsford Village Green

Bill Baldry

At the back of end of 2016 the club planted more than 2000 daffodil bulbs around Combs and Battsford, and they are generally doing well again this spring. These were bought with the profits from the bi-monthly bird seed order that Tori and John Davey organise.

This year we were given some more money back from that source and your committee chose to buy 1000 English bluebells "in the green". These were planted at Battsford Village Green, where, once they get established, they should be visible and enjoyable for those using the play area or just travelling along the road.

Thanks to Tori for collating the bird seed orders, those that take part in the scheme and those members that did the bluebell planting. It is all part of BDGC doing its bit for the local community.

Monday 9th April

Visit to Bays Farm

Forward Green

22 members braved an overcast, wet evening for this year's first trip out, which after the long cold winter and lack of spring (so far) resulted in the gardens looking very much like our own - not as good or colourful as they might be, given better weather. The blossom on the almond tree in the orchard tried to light up the leaden sky but the ornamental ducks by the attractive water feature summed up the mood rather better. The gardens are very well designed and laid out and, I am sure, will be full of colour later in the year.

After many years of opening for specific dates for the National Garden Scheme Richard and Stephanie now open just for group visits - but they are happy for just 2 or 3 people to constitute a group. So if you did or didn't venture out this time and fancy making a visit to see this attractive garden contact Bay's Farm on 01449 711286 or go to their website www.baysfarmgardens.co.uk . Bill

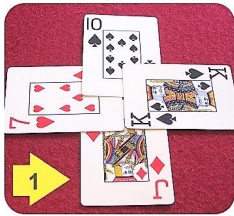


The Ducks didn't mind the rain!

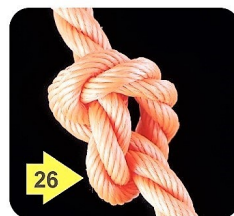
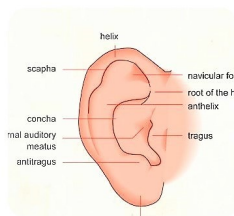
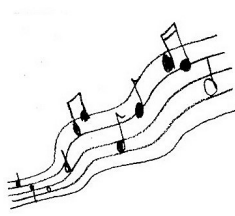
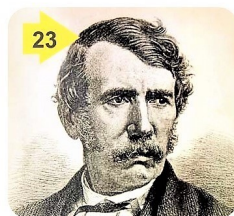
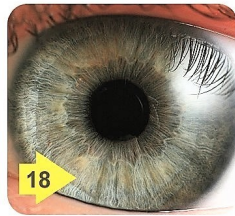
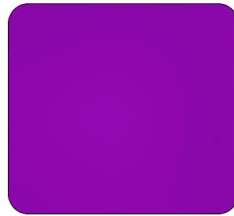
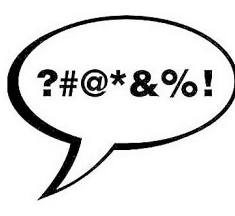
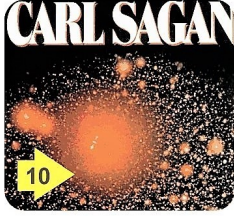


Quiz on next page - can you work out the common garden plants from the pictures? To help you - the answer to question number 2 is 'hebe' picture is of a male bee! Good luck!

Answers next time



Sew
....?....
Tea



Preview of Chelsea 2018

Health & Wellbeing

One of the key themes at this year's Chelsea is Health and Wellbeing and how gardens can improve lives and give people a sense of normality and calm. It has been proven that being in a garden or green space can make you feel happier and healthier.

In 2016 the National Garden Scheme commissioned the King's Fund to write an independent report on the benefits of gardens and gardening on health; the aims being to collate and summarise the evidence on the impact of gardens on wellbeing across life, to demonstrate the important place gardening interventions have in the wider health and care system and to make the case for the further integration of gardens and health into mainstream health policy and practice. The recommendations included that the NHS and other health bodies should consider the health benefits of gardens in their future planning.

RHS Feel good garden

The RHS have commissioned Matt Keightley, twice-winner of the RHS/BBC People's Choice Award at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show to design a therapeutic and contemporary space to encourage show-goers to sit back and soak up the benefits that gardening can bring



The Lemon Tree Trust garden

The Lemon Tree Trust supports the development of urban agriculture & greening innovation for refugees and displaced people, promoting food production, well being and community.

The garden at Chelsea, designed by Tom Massey, has involved the Syrian refugees from the Domiz camp in Northern Iraq and shows their incredible ability to make the most from the harsh landscape and living conditions. Showcasing a drought-tolerant planting scheme typical of the region, trees laden with fruit provide scent and crops to harvest. The garden includes edibles and herbs used in Middle Eastern cooking, some of which will be unfamiliar to us, along with cultivars of the Damask Rose - thought to originate from Syria – renowned for its heady fragrance. Ingenious vertical planting, inspired by refugee' use of everyday objects, provides visitors with ideas for growing in limited spaces, while the importance of the reuse of grey water is acknowledged with recycled water emerging from an Islamic-inspired fountain in the centre of the garden. The garden is filled with reclaimed, reused, repurposed and upcycled materials. From reclaimed brick walls, to plastic bottles used as planters; the ideas, although sourced directly from refugee gardens in the Domiz camp, are equally relevant for gardeners with small plots or limited space in the UK.



A competition is held every year to promote and encourage home gardens & food production

Winner of best garden 2017 - above

Winner of best innovation garden 2017 - left

Gardening & Health Benefits

Is gardening good for you?

Of course it is!

Now spring has arrived - so no excuses!



Calories used in half an hour

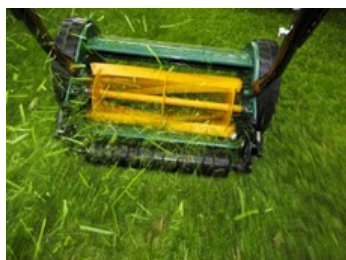
Digging 250

Mowing the lawn 195

A push mower is even better!

Weeding 105

Raking 100



Gardening tones you up!

Hedge trimming shapes your biceps

Raking, forking and mowing strengthens your arms and shoulders

Digging helps tone your thighs

Getting slightly out of breath gardening increases your heart rate and helps protect your heart



Gardening relieves stress – working in the fresh air improves your sense of being. Looking at plants and trees has been proven to lower blood pressure and relax your muscles.



Gardening stimulates the senses. Therapists have found that for elderly patients in particular, gardening provides interesting sights, sounds, textures, tastes and scents, stimulating memories and connection with the past.

Gardening gives you a sense of achievement and responsibility for other living things

3 hours of gardening is equivalent to a 3 hour intensive gym session.

Gardening for children

A 2010 study commissioned by the RHS found that children in schools that encouraged gardening gained enormous benefits.

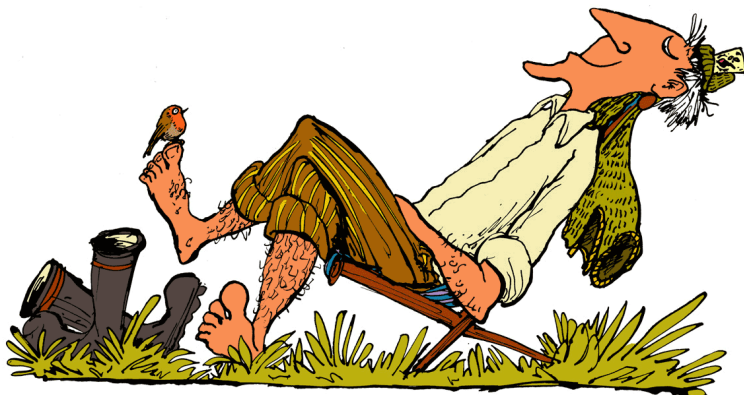
- They became more resilient, confident and eager to learn
- They developed healthier life styles
- It had a positive impact on their literacy & numeracy skills
- It led to a more active, inquisitive approach to learning
- It improved their problem solving skills and enhances their ability to plan and organise

And most important of all they enjoy it!



And how to avoid that aching back!

- Warm up by doing some stretches
- Alter your position regularly
- Put your bin away from where you are working so you have to walk backwards & forwards to it
- Take a regular break and keep hydrated
- Don't lift heavy objects - if you have to bend your knees to lift.
- Use a kneeler
- .If you have back problems consider having raised beds



Future Events 2018

Monday 14th May (2nd Monday)

Visit to Fuller's Mill Garden, West Stow, Bury,
IP28 6HD All arrive for 6.30pm

Monday 4th June

Visit to Woolpit Nurseries, Woolpit, IP30 9QS
All arrive for 7pm. Free. No refreshments

Saturday 16th June

Coach trip to Peter Beales Roses
(refreshments)& Sea Mere Gardens, Higham,
Norfolk, NR9 4LP (no refreshments) Leave Battis-
ford Village Hall, 9.30am, return from Sea Mere

Monday 2nd July

The Orchard Barn project (5 years on)
Sarah Partridge

Saturday 7th July

The Fete & 11th Annual BDGC Show

Monday 6th August

Visit to Drinkstone Park, Bury St Edmunds
IP30 9ST All arrive for 7pm

If you would like information about Battisford &
District Gardening Club please contact Bill Baldry

12 Tannery Road, Combs, IP14 2EL. 01449 672168

Or go to our website:

www.battisfordgardeningclub.org.uk

Fullers Mill Gardens



Sea Mere Gardens, Higham, Norfolk

