

AMERSHAM GARDENING ASSOCIATION OCTOBER 2014 NEWSLETTER



FROM THE SECRETARY

I hope you have all enjoyed the summer and have had success with all aspects of your gardens as it seems to have been a good year. So we were disappointed that more members did not enter the Autumn Show. We may only hold one show next year and this will be at the Amersham Town event on June 27th, where we have been asked to stage a Horticultural Show. We do hope members will support this event.

There has been a suggestion box at meetings for some months now, and I also requested feedback on the Newsletter. Please give your comments and feedback to any member of the committee. The Christmas meeting will be held on December 18th, when an interesting video of the holiday to Suffolk will be shown. We hope many members will attend and wish all those that cannot make it a very happy Christmas and all the best for 2015.

Jean Bowling

ESSEX GARDENS VISIT SEPTEMBER 11th

On Thursday 11th.September we visited two very different gardens in Essex. The coach was fully booked and we set off at 9 a.m. for our first garden in Ulting, near Maldon.



Ulting Wick was featured in Country Life in 2012. Philippa Burrough moved there in 1996 and has created 4 acres of garden, 4 acres of fruit orchard and 3 acres of woodland, which she opens under the N.G.S. She has decided to concentrate on two major displays, one in spring and one in late summer.



Mrs. Burrough greeted us on our arrival with her full time gardener who was on hand to answer any questions we might have during our visit. She gave us a short introductory talk before she served us all with coffee and delicious home-made cakes.

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For the spring she plants about 2,500 tulips, but in September we were treated to hot beds of colour with wonderful dahlias. There was also a lovely Pink garden and a secret White garden. We were made very welcome and thoroughly enjoyed our time there.



Our next visit was to Marks Hall in Coggleshall. This was a new garden for everyone it seemed, and was full of unexpected surprises. Known as Mercheshala in Saxon times,

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Marks Hall was occupied after the Norman Conquest by the Merkshall family who took their name from the Estate. In 1605 it was bought by Robert Honywood whose descendants owned the Estate for nearly 300 years and gave their name to the famous Honywood Oaks. Following a dispute over the inheritance, the Estate was sold at auction in 1898 to Thomas Phillips Price who had a great love of the trees and woodland at Marks Hall, and on his death in 1932 he left the Estate to the nation for the advancement of agriculture, arboriculture and forestry.

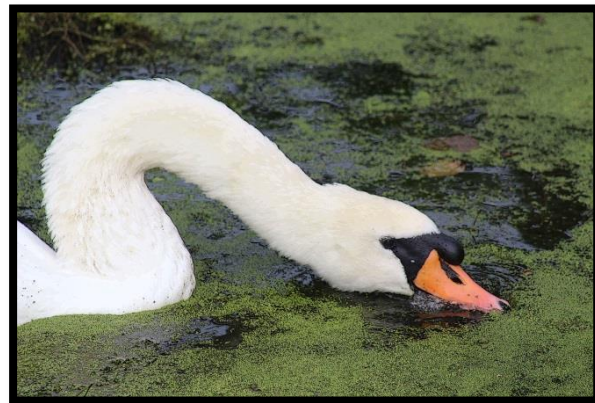


The Estate covers some 200 acres with a wonderful Walled Garden, opened in 2003 by the Duchess of Devonshire. Its 2 acres contain a double border some 450 ft. long and the garden tells the story of life as you walk from one end to the other.



We enjoyed seeing pigs roaming in the forest and Gondwanaland (name given to 500 million year old merging of African, Antarctic, Indo-Australian and S. American tectonic plates) – a huge area where Eucalyptus, Wolemi Pines and masses of Pampas grass make this area a unique place to visit

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With lakes, rumoured as having been dug by Cromwell's troops, a long Millenium walk, the Taxodium Swamp and much more, it is certainly a place worth a return visit.

Irene Glyn-Jones

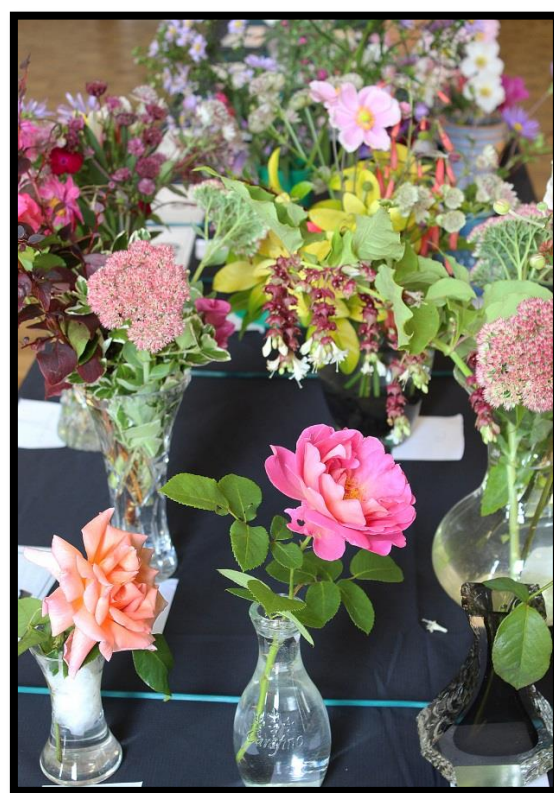
AUTUMN SHOW 2014

Saturday 13th September, having had a mad early morning dash, it was lovely to find Ronit, Ken and David at the hall at 8.30, ready and eager to get set up. By 9.00 we were all done and the first exhibitors were there with their fruit, flowers, cakes and photos. All these early birds were new exhibitors which was most encouraging. However there was then a lull until around 11.00 a.m. but then the second wave came, the old hands as it were. Unfortunately several of our stalwart "showers" were away on holiday so exhibits were not as prolific as they might have been.

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The season, as usual, had not been kind. Sweet Peas were over, as were Gladioli, however there was a good entry in the Fuchsia flowers class, with some beautiful flowers and lots of promises of cuttings were made.



The domestic classes were well supported with some scrummy looking Swiss rolls – there must be some very well fed husbands in Amersham. I was also pleased that the craft section attracted more than the usual single entry - 4 in fact. My favourite was the cross stitch of garden items. There was a poignant photograph of the poppies around the Tower of London, and a sweet one of cats around a garden seat.



I was very pleased that some of our new exhibitors won cards, which were truly deserved as our judge appeared to have had learnt the RHS manual off by heart. He was eagle eyed at spotting flaws and refusing to award a certificate if an exhibit did not come up to scratch, which is as it should be. Thank you to all who made the effort to enter and also to those who set up, cleared up, made teas and coffees and did the judging. (Judges are always some of our members at this show)

Susan Jeffery

WINTERING STRATEGY

The first frost in Amersham seems to be around bonfire night –i.e. the first week of November so any time now.

So why do some plants go black and others not? Freezing causes damage to plants as the cell sap inside the cells turns to ice and expands rupturing the walls of the cells and causing the collapse of all cell structure. Plants that can survive low temperatures are capable of cold hardening which is triggered by shortening day length. This means increasing the concentration of certain sugars and amino acids in the cell sap. These chemicals act like antifreeze –lowering the temperature at which the cell sap will freeze. Those plants that blacken and die do not have the ability to do this and tend to be plants that consume large quantities of water and have large cells like Dahlias, Cannas and runner beans.

Amazingly some plants that are native to Arctic regions have the ability to force the sap out of their cells and hold it between the cells where it can freeze without causing damage. Once the temperature is below freezing strong winds can “scorch” foliage however, it is actually a drying out of the leaves as the wind is blowing moisture away from the leaf faster than the plant roots can replenish it. This may be noticeable at the leaf margins or cause spots on plants like Photinia.

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If we get a really deep freeze for a prolonged period like three winters ago, shrubs die from dehydration – which you probably don't notice until spring – as there is no free groundwater for the roots to take up. However the wind still removes water from the leaves –albeit slowly in these conditions. So wrap up anything you treasure, it can get cold but stopping the wind may well save it.

Susan Jeffery

KEEPING A FULL RECORD

An instant camera keeps the best record of what is flowering and when in your garden. Take a series of shots over the seasons to use when planning what changes to make. Before you make any decisions, spread the photographs out and place on them illustrations of promising plants (cut from catalogues). This gives a good idea of what a new plant will look like in a certain position.

Irene Glyn-Jones

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Can we please have applications for the position of Chairman and also for President ready for the election at the AGM in March 2015. Anyone who is interested should let Jean Bowling know so that she can arrange for a voting slip to go out with the next newsletter, which is due to go out in early January. This will contain a Membership renewal form, which hopefully members will complete at the January meeting.

MONTHLY TALKS FOR NEXT YEAR

Below is the talks programme for 2015. You will get your printed card when you renew your membership.

22 Jan	Quentin Stark	Hole Park through the seasons.
26 Feb	Nick Bailey	Chelsea Physic Garden – past, present and future.
26 Mar	AGM Charlie Powell & Sian Chattle	Lindengate therapeutic gardening charity.
23 Apr	Kathy Brown	The Manor House Garden, inspiration and creation.
28 May	Leila Jackson	The versatile world of salvias.
25 Jun	Antony Powell	The scented garden.
23 Jul	Edwin Rye	David Austin roses.
24 Sep	Barry Newman	The modern kitchen garden.
26 Nov	Andrew Halstead	Pests recently new to Britain

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Quentin Starke, our speaker on 22 January, is Head Gardener of Hole Park Garden – a garden that is often described as one of England's best kept secrets. The garden is spread over 15 acres and is situated in the heart of the Kentish weald. He will be telling us about the day to day running of this lovely garden that opens to the public on a regular basis. Quentin, a keen member of the Kent HPS, has a special interest in snowdrops, and hopes to bring a selection with him.

On 26 February our speaker is Nick Bailey, Head Gardener at Chelsea Physic Garden. Nick has a degree in horticulture and studied garden design at the University of Greenwich and Hadlow College. He has managed and created gardens in Britain and overseas, including the Wicken Estate in Norfolk and Brenthurst Estate in South Africa. His talk will encompass the Edible and Useful Garden and the new Garden of Medicinal Plants at Chelsea.

Anne Webb

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Nov	21	Caracol Coffee Morning 10.30-13.00 12, Lye Green Rd. Chesham HP5 3LN Christmas presents and cards, potted hyacinths, raffle Liz on 01494 784913 libbym6740@gmail.com
Nov	27	Orchids for Everyone – Steve James Monthly Talk
Dec	18	Christmas Meeting

COMMITTEE 2014

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Raffle	Christine Prizeman & Laura Bennett		
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