

AMERSHAM GARDENING ASSOCIATION MAY 2016 NEWSLETTER



FROM THE SECRETARY

We held our Plant Sale on May 7th, a report of which appears later in this Newsletter. This is an important event for raising money for the Association so we hope that members will give more support next year. Any seller/donator supplying plants for sale at the Plant Sale or at meetings must make sure that a clear note is shown for the purchasers or members selling the plant if the plant is poisonous or can cause any other potential health issues such as skin inflammation. Please also make sure that plants are correctly labelled.

Once again we request that if any members have articles that they think will be of interest to other members please send them to me to include in the next Newsletter.

The annual Gardening Association holiday will take place shortly. Joan Clark has organised these for 9 years and this will be her last. Unless someone comes forward to organise a holiday this will be the last one. Two people could share the task and Joan is willing to help anyone get started.

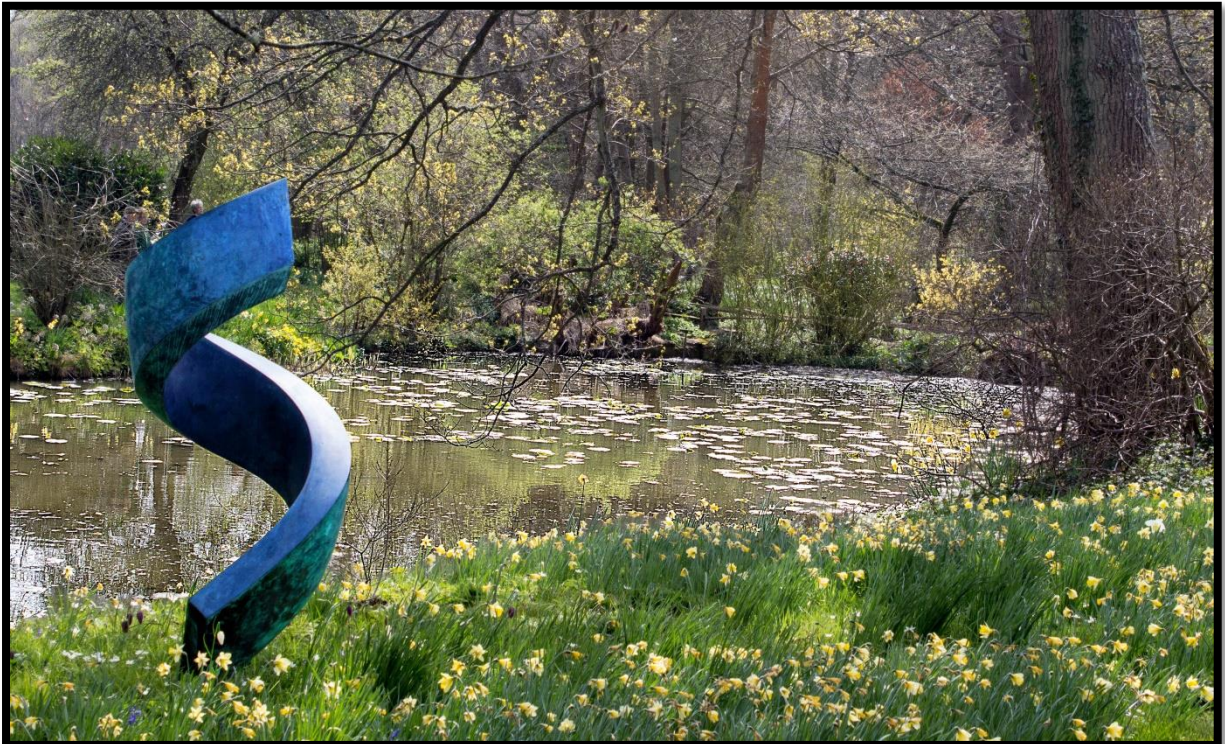
Jean Bowling

A JEKYLL JAUNT

On April 21st, 55 members of the Amersham Gardening Association set off to discover more about Gertrude Jekyll in the Godalming area. Our first stop was at Vann, a private garden now owned by Mrs Mary Caroe, who gave us an entertaining, introductory talk on the history of the house and garden, including the involvement of Gertrude Jekyll in building the Water Garden. We were blessed with warm sunshine, enabling us to enjoy coffee and huge homemade biscuits while sitting on the various seats around the garden. The garden itself was formed into a series of rooms, with a wild area alongside a stream and lake, covered in masses of daffodils and Fritallerias. It was a fascinating garden to visit.



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Our next stop was in Godalming itself, at the Museum. The group split into two, each one taking a turn in the tiny museum. Downstairs, we were shown artefacts that had belonged to Jekyll and many paintings attributed to her. It was a fascinating insight very well presented.

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Upstairs, we were shown some of her actual plans and workbooks. It was thrilling to handle her actual notebooks and see her meticulous lists and accounts of work done.

Our final stop was at Hatchlands Park where Jekyll designed a garden adjacent to the house. Sadly, this garden has had to be ripped apart due to Box Blight. However, there was plenty to see including a beautiful Bluebell Wood and house full of exquisite furniture and musical instruments, many of which had connections with famous composers - Beethoven, Chopin, Weber, Haydn.

We all had a wonderful day out - pity about the M25 on the way home!

Liz Moulton

SHOW – NO SHOW?

Flower, plant and produce shows are a traditional activity of gardening associations. As listeners to The Archers will know, they can arouse considerable passion in the community, and intense rivalry between gardeners, although as far as I know, none of our members has resorted to sabotage on a fellow member's garden or allotment. Some members treasure the certificates and miniscule monetary prizes awarded to winners (we disposed of the miscellaneous collection of cups and trophies some years ago); others find plant and produce shows incredibly boring.

Our last show was last summer, as part of the Amersham Town Festival. Susan Jeffery put in an enormous amount of work to try to drum up entries, and in the end we had a splendid show, although it was very hard work for the small number of people who helped Susan on the day.

Observant members may have noticed that we have not scheduled either a spring or autumn show for this year. There is a very good reason for this. After last summer's show, Susan felt that she could not continue to act as show secretary. Despite appeals at meetings, and at the AGM, no-one has come forward to take on the role.

We do not have to hold shows. The terms of our affiliation to the RHS are simply that we have to promote horticulture in our community, and our meetings fulfil this requirement. Nevertheless, shows are an excellent way of promoting ourselves to the general public. If you think that we should hold shows in future (the cost is minimal, just paying for the hall and honoraria for the judges), then please let the committee know that you are interested in the role of show secretary.

David Bender

IS INDOOR GARDENING GOOD FOR YOU?

We have heard a great deal in recent years about the health benefits of gardening – both for physical health and for a general sense of happiness and well-being. It seems this is not limited to outdoor gardening. *The Garden* magazine for April mentions a study by psychologists at University of Wales Trinity St David of 7 women with breast cancer. They were asked to cultivate and customise an indoor bowl garden for 3 months. A focus group at

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the end of the study showed that the women found this indoor gardening therapeutic on a number of different levels: reflecting their cancer journey, a source of positivity, making meaning through memories, and a sense of control provided by engagement with the intervention. Of course, this was a study of only 7 women who were in a breast cancer support group, and only lasted for 3 months, but it looks promising.

Phelps C et al. *ecancer* 2015, **9**:602 DOI: 10.3332/ecancer.2015.602 Sowing the seeds or failing to blossom? A feasibility study of a simple ecotherapy-based intervention in women affected by breast cancer

PLANT SALE MAY 7th



For once we had warm and dry weather for the plant sale on St Michael's forecourt. Sales were brisk, and we made a profit of £205.92 (having spent £292.86 on plants from a wholesale nursery). This is a lot less than last year, when we spent £288.72 and made a profit of £489.12. It may be that those marking up the prices were more generous than last year, but it may also reflect the fact that we had many fewer donations of plants from members (which are, of course, pure profit for the Association).

We did learn what attracts passers-by. Last year we found that people did not want yellow flowers. This year, pink and salmon geraniums sold rapidly, but not white. Pink bacopa, pink calibrachoa and begonias also sold rapidly, as did ready made hanging baskets. Sweet pea seedlings and red verbena lingered until most were bought by committee members.

SEEN ON SALE AT HATCHLANDS

Several people on the Jekyll Jaunt outing on April 21st were amused (amazed?) to see that the National Trust plant stall at Hatchlands had meadow buttercup plants for sale at £2 each. You are welcome to dig them up from my garden free of charge – if you collect enough I might even pay you!

David Bender



Attractive tulips in the garden of Frances Billington

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IN YOUR GARDEN SHED #8 - SEED PACKETS

We all have packets of seed kept in our sheds in drawers or containers to protect from mice or keep from getting damp but a fridge in the shed is ideal

Before the advent of packeted seed it was sold loose in local village markets, the largest in London apparently occupied 20 acres on what is now the site of the Royal Albert Hall and the area that now takes in the south Kensington museums

In 1797 James Cuthbert apparently walked from his native Scotland and ended up in the village of Southgate outside of London and set up a landscaping business and eventually with his sons created R&G Cuthbert and they digressed into supplying seeds in packets and eventually took over Carters seeds which had been established in the 1830's.

Cuthberts are now owned by a Swedish company

In 1806 John Sutton of Reading started his business mainly selling agricultural seed but by 1852 Suttons were selling seed in packets with just basic details but soon followed with more detailed growing instructions and they were the first company to introduce foil packets

William Thompson ran a bakers shop in Ipswich but had a small garden behind the shop and became interested in botany and established a seed business and as it grew he went into partnership in 1855 with John Morgan who had no knowledge of horticulture but knew a good business to invest in when he saw it.

Kenneth Bodman

AGA ANNUAL QUIZ

Following the success of last year's Quiz we will be holding another one on October 27th this year. Please support as not only is it good fun but also an important fund raiser.

MONTHLY TALKS

On **June 23**, nurseryman **Paul Green** is to talk about '**Plants of the Season**'. His nursery Green's Leaves is based in Newent, Gloucestershire and he will be bringing plants for sale. His focus will be on plants looking good in the garden at the end of June. He is a regular exhibitor at the Chenies Plant Fair.

David Hedges-Gower, who is reputed to be an enthusiastic speaker, visits on **28 July** when he will give us some practical tips in his talk '**The modern lawn**'. He is described as the UK's leading lawn expert who loves lawns and takes lawn care to a new level. He was a professional golfer in his teens when injury limited his future career. At this point he refocused and at 19 became the UK's youngest professional Head Green Keeper. This began his lifelong passion for lawn. He has his own lawncare company and is a regular contributor to BBC Radio Oxford, gives lecture series at locations like Waterperry and has even found time to write a book.

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On **22 September** award winning garden writer, photographer and lecturer **Val Bourne** will talk to us about 'Dahlias'. She gardens on a 1/3 acre site in the Cotswolds high above Bourton on the Water. Her grandmother encouraged her to grow plants at the age of 3. She gardens without chemicals and is described as the UK's Leading Natural Gardener. She is probably well known to all of us for her articles in the Daily Telegraph. She is judge for the perennial and dahlia trials at RHS Wisley and has authored a number of books.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

2016

| | | |
|------------|--------------|---|
| May | 25-28 | RHS Chelsea Flower Show |
| May | 26 | Role of Estate Manager – Mark Towsey talk |
| Jun | 3-4 | London Rose Show |
| Jun | 10-13 | Dorset Gardens Trip (currently fully booked) |
| Jun | 23 | Plants of the Season – Paul Green talk |
| Jul | 17 | Chenies Plant Fair |
| Jul | 20-24 | Tatton Park Flower Show |
| Jul | 28 | The Modern Lawn – Paul Hedges-Gower talk |
| Sep | 13 | Aston Pottery and Radcot House Trip |
| Sep | 22 | Dahlias – Val Bourne talk |
| Oct | 20 | Beale Arboretum Trip |
| Oct | 27 | Quiz |
| Nov | 24 | Self Seeders – Love them or Hate them – Gill Regan talk |
| Dec | 22 | Social |

COMMITTEE & CONTACT DETAILS

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|--|
| President | Tim Hillier | president@amersham-gardening.org.uk |
| Chairman | Colin Ross | chairman@amersham-gardening.org.uk |
| Secretary | Jean Bowling | secretary@amersham-gardening.org.uk |
| Treasurer | David Bender | treasurer@amersham-gardening.org.uk |
| Visits Secretary | Joan Clark | |
| Show Secretary | vacant | |
| Membership Sec | Clive Symes | membership@amersham-gardening.org.uk |
| Talks Secretary | Anne Webb | |
| Archivist | Carol Barratt | |
| Web Coordinator | David Bender | webmaster@amersham-gardening.org.uk |
| Committee Members | Frances Billington | |
| | Carol Daw | |
| | Irene Glyn-Jones | |
| | Liz Moulton | |
| Newsletter Editor | Neil Watson | newsletter@amersham-gardening.org.uk |

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BEALE ARBORETUM VISIT

THURSDAY 20th OCTOBER. 1.15 pm

Join us for an Outing with a Difference! A one and half hour conducted tour of **BEALE ARBORETUM** followed by a delicious **AFTERNOON TEA**

Beale Arboretum is in the grounds of **West Lodge Park** and has over 800 different specimen trees. It was founded in 1963 and now has several National collections. It is easy walking on paths or mown grass and we have chosen to go in October for the wonderful autumn colours.

We will split into groups and our very informative tour will be led by the Managing Director, Andrew Beale or the Estate Manager. After our tour we will have Afternoon Tea in West Lodge Hotel.

The Arboretum is only a 35 minute drive from Amersham so we will not be hiring a coach. It is only open to people who are visiting the hotel. It is very easy to get to – take the M.25 to Junction 24 and turn off for the A.111. At the roundabout take the fourth exit, A111 to Cockfosters. West Lodge Park is only 4 minutes from the motorway. Go past the first entrance to the hotel (deliveries) and take the next left turn. Immediately on your left is the entrance. Park in front of the hotel and we will meet in the foyer ready for our tours at 1.15. The tours start at 1.30pm. Please be on time.

I suggest we car share. Please organise yourselves and let me know if you need a lift and I will see what I can do.

The price for the tour and full afternoon tea is £21.50. The tour is excellent and the tea delicious!

Please send in the form below plus a cheque to book your tickets.

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BEALE ARBORETUM BOOKING FORM

Thursday 20th October. 1.15 pm at West Lodge Park

VISIT TO BEALE ARBORETUM AND AFTERNOON TEA.

Please tear off this slip, fill it in and send it with a stamped addressed envelope and your cheque made payable to AMERSHAM GARDENING ASSOCIATION (dated) to:

Irene Glyn-Jones, Little Orchard, 24 Weedon Lane, Amersham. HP6 5QT

Any queries: tel. 01494 727203 email. irenecgi@hotmail.com

Please reserve me places @ £21.50 per person. I enclose a cheque for £.....

NAME/S:.....

ADDRESS:.....

Email/tel. no. /