

Amersham Gardening Association

www.amersham-gardening.org.uk

November 2019 Newsletter

From the Secretary

Last year as I wrote my article for the November Newsletter the sun was shining, not so this year; it's raining. There is a definite feel of autumn and winter seems not far away. However there are things to look forward to, some more talks and the Christmas Social. If you have not been to this event before do give it a go as it has been a happy occasion in past years. Details of the food arrangements are detailed elsewhere in this Newsletter and the Association provides the drinks.

Also with this Newsletter are details and a booking form for the holiday. People on their own are welcome on this as it is very much a group activity and has always been enjoyable.

This year has been a strange one for gardeners, well I think so, going from drought to flood, though Amersham in Bloom have had great success. Let's hope next year will be a good gardening year.

Meanwhile the committee wish you all the best for 2020.
Jean Bowling

Time to renew your subscription

Together with this newsletter you have two forms. One is the booking form for the holiday (more details inside), and the other is the form to renew your membership for the coming year. The subscription is £17 for a couple at the same address, or £10 for a single member.

While we rely on the raffles, plant sales and a modest profit on outings to run the association, our subscription income more or less completely covers the cost of invited speakers. **Please remember to renew your subscription before the end of January.**

Amersham in Bloom – success again



We were awarded a Gold medal for the town as a whole.

We won Best Town in Chiltern and South Bucks.

The Memorial Garden was awarded a Gold and also designated best park in the region, plus a National Distinction.

The Bloom team were given an Outstanding Achievement Award which is given to groups who go over and above what might be expected.

Tombola at the Christmas social

This year there will be a tombola at the December social.

Please bring along your donations for prizes to the November meeting and give them to Irene Glyn-Jones.

Visit to The Plant Specialist, September 25th

The visit to [The Plant Specialist](#) at Great Missenden was very interesting. We were given a talk about the history of the nursery and how it was originally allotments which had fallen out of use. When the present owners (Keith Pounder and Sean Walter) took it on they inherited a Polish allotment holder and his animals as well as the land! They created a display garden with some truly spectacular grasses and prairie plants and started to raise all their plants on the site.

There is an excellent selection of plants and the staff are very knowledgeable, so I would highly recommend a visit. Unfortunately our visit started at 6:00 pm so it was too dark to purchase plants after our talk and walk around the nursery. The two owners work as landscape gardeners and designers as well as managing the nursery.

Felicity Vickery

Forthcoming meetings in the Drake Hall

28 November, Samantha Hopes: Winter in Bloom

Samantha initially trained as a geologist working on research projects at the University of Birmingham Her passion was geological mapping which soon found her distracted by the plants growing around the rocks more than the rocks themselves! This led her to becoming a student at Birmingham Botanic Gardens studying at Pershore College in the evenings. She moved to Wisley to specialise in rock and alpine plants and had a short stint at Kew and Great Dixter. After graduating she worked alongside John Massey looking after his hepatica collection at Ashwood Nurseries. This became one of her passions alongside specialist alpines and a

new breeding programme with Roscoae. She left Ashwood in 2016 to look after her new son. By this time she and her husband – who is also passionate about plants and works at Birmingham Botanic Gardens – were creating and building their own 10 x 30 m garden propagating and growing a range of unusual plants to sell at their talks.

Winter doesn't need to be boring in the garden. Samantha's talk will highlight a range of winter flowering shrubs, herbaceous perennials and bulbs to tempt you out in the winter months!

19 December: Xmas Social



This is your chance to socialise with fellow members, and for new members to meet and talk to other members. As usual, wine and soft drinks will be provided from the Association's funds, and the food will be "pot luck"; members whose surname begins with A – N are asked to bring along a savoury dish, and those whose surnames begin with letters O – Z a sweet dish or fruit. We will provide plates and plastic cutlery, but if you can, please bring "finger food". If you are bringing paté or cheese, please also bring bread and / or biscuits.

Please bring food along at 7:45 for an 8:00 pm start to the evening

There will be a table quiz, entertainment and a raffle.

23 January, Patricia Fox: Designing contemporary planting schemes

Patricia is passionate about creating stylish outdoor spaces. She has two silver medals from RHS Chelsea Flower Show, one for the highly innovative Rooftop Workplace awarded in 2012

Initially trained as a fashion designer she decided to extend her designing into the horticultural arena. This prompted her to study Landscape & Garden Design to degree level at Writtle College. In 2004 she set up her

landscape and design company Aralia and is a multiple winner of the BALI Landscape Design Excellence Award.

When not designing gardens Patricia writes for consumer and trade magazines and newspapers as well as giving lectures. She says she likes to be 'on trend' or ahead of it, so let's hope she surprises us with news of what is coming next for our gardens.

27 February Carole Petipher: Monet's paradise on earth

Carole was brought up in the Chilterns and initially embarked on a career in French steel. Becoming fed up with the fast lane of corporate life, she applied to take a sabbatical and found herself a passage on a French barge. She fell in love with the lifestyle and France and retrained as a guide and lecturer in French history and has worked in this field ever since.

She is an accredited lecturer for the Arts Society (specialising in impressionists) and divides her time

between leading tours abroad and lecturing in the UK. She has gained detailed knowledge of the gardens at Giverny having taken tours there over 15 years or more. Her talk focuses on how Monet became interested in gardens and how he then managed to create his garden from scratch with no previous knowledge of gardening. The area of the Vexin in the Seine valley is very similar geologically to the Chilterns. An English Head Gardener now maintains Monet's dream to create an artists's garden, but with a few twists.

26 March, Chris Thorne: News from the garden centre shelves

For over 20 years Chris managed a small garden centre in Cambridgeshire. He is now Retail Manager at Aylett Nurseries where he has worked for 18 years. He has been the Garden Expert on Radio Cambridge and written articles for local newspapers.

He says that products available to home gardeners are reducing in number all the time. He will update us on the latest situation and says that members can lead him up any garden path they like!

A new use for our hover mower

We had our back lawn replaced with artificial grass in the spring, and so far have been very pleased. The moss-killer treatment of the front lawn was less successful. At least, all the moss was killed, but the reseeding was a failure, and we are left with too many large bare patches. We have decided to have all the grass (such as it is) stripped off and create a gravel bed instead, widening the borders. This will mean that we no longer have a use for our trusty hover mower, and we were about to offer it to WorkAid, when I had an idea.

Come leaf fall time, our dozen lime trees and the neighbour's sycamores shed copiously. We have a leaf blower / vac which works well on paths and small areas, but is tedious to use on large areas. We also have a lawn sweeper, with rotating bristles that collects the fallen leaves so that we can bag them up for composting.



However, the lime trees also shed their seeds in late summer and into early autumn. These are more difficult to deal with on the lawn. The lawn sweeper does not capture them adequately, sweeping with a wide brush works, but is hard work, and the leaf blower / vac is still tedious to use on the lawn, and does not cope at all well with the seeds themselves. When the lawn was real grass, it was easy to remove them using the hover mower, whether the grass really needing cutting or not – after all, I could always raise the cutter blade.

I was not keen to use the hover mower on our (relatively expensive) artificial grass – after all, if I cut it off, it would not regrow!

Brilliant idea! Take off the cutter blade altogether, and use the hover mower like a wide vacuum cleaner. It works well, sucking up the seeds and other fragments into the collection bag, which can then be emptied straight into the green bin. We do not want the seeds on the compost heap, for obvious reasons.

Kenneth Bodman

4-day visit to North Norfolk, May 31st – June 3rd 2020

See the booking form with this newsletter

Hotel and Hunstanton Information

We will be based at the Le Strange Arms Hotel in Old Hunstanton for the duration of the visit. www.lestrangearms.co.uk. The village of Old Hunstanton has pre-historic origins (2000 – 1500 BC) and lies north of the “new” (1846!) seaside resort of Hunstanton. Both are pronounced “Hunston” by the locals.

The hotel is named after Henry Styleman Le Strange who was the man who had the vision to create the origins of “New Hunstanton” in 1845, jumping on the bandwagon for the “new fashion for sea-bathing”!

For the millennium, the “Boston Square Sensory Garden” was created to “stimulate the senses of sight, smell, hearing and touch” particularly for the disabled – but is regarded as a quiet haven for all visitors. It lies to the Northern end of “New Hunston”.

From the link you will see that the hotel is close to the sea, with plenty of space around it for those who wish to do a stroll after dinner on the beach or in the gardens. Interestingly “Hunston” is one of the very few places in Norfolk to face West, so sunsets are seen over the sea.

Sunday May 31st

Our first visit will be to an RHS Partnership garden, Fullers Mill www.fullersmillgarden.org.uk/ a 7 acre garden on the banks of the River Lark. It is a plantsman’s paradise of rare and unusual shrubs, perennials and marginals.

In the afternoon we shall visit Narborough Hall www.narboroughhallgardens.com a garden that includes colour themed borders and quirky hedges clipped to resemble dragons.

Monday June 1st

Pensthorpe [/www.pensthorpe.com](http://www.pensthorpe.com) is ostensibly a nature reserve, but it also has three gardens: The Millennium Garden designed by Piet Oudolf in 1999; the Wave Garden, designed by Julie Toll in 2005; and a Wildlife Garden, designed and planted with the help of organisations such as Butterfly Conservation and the British Dragonfly Society with the aim of helping visitors attract wildlife into their own gardens.

The afternoon presents a number of choices to the group. For those who wish to visit Sandringham www.sandringhamestate.co.uk with its Grade II Listed Garden of 60 acres as well as the museum, or who may wish to visit Sandringham House, the coach will drop off this group at Sandringham and take the remainder of the group back to the hotel to spend the afternoon at leisure. The coach will return later in the afternoon to collect the Sandringham group.

Tuesday June 2nd

We are fortunate enough to be offered a private visit to East Ruston Old Vicarage www.e-ruston-oldvicaragegardens.co.uk. As there are 15 areas of garden to explore within the 32 acres (plus a plant sales

area) to give everyone the opportunity to explore the gardens in depth, this will be an all day visit with the café open for lunch as well as coffees and teas (at own cost).

Wednesday June 3rd

Our first stop, in the morning, will be a short drive from the hotel at West Acre Garden and Nursery www.westacregardens.co.uk/ the opportunity to explore the gardens and buy from the extensive range of plants in the nursery.

We will then make our way to The Gibberd Garden www.thegibberdgarden.co.uk a Grade II listed garden created between 1957 and 1984 by Sir Frederick Gibberd, Master Planner of Harlow New Town. The garden is described as combining stunning design with whimsical humour. It is a garden to make you smile

Our fuchsias were looking good ...



I was reading the article on fuchsia gall mite in the September issue of *The Garden*, and looked out of the window. To my horror, several of our fuchsias were showing signs of gall mite infestation.



According to the RHS, fuchsia gall mite (*Aculops fuchsiae*) is a microscopic insect that is relatively new to the UK, having travelled from Brazil where it was discovered, to California, France and Germany. It was first reported in England in 2007, and is becoming widespread in the south.

Again according to the RHS, mites become active outdoors in May (at least mine waited until September to appear), when they infest new growth. The minute insects (0.25 mm long) are sap suckers, and secrete chemicals that prevent the normal development of leaves and flowers, leading to the development of the distorted galls seen on the left.

The mites do not kill the plants, just spoil their appearance.

There is no chemical control available; the mites are resistant to insecticides. The RHS says "cutting off infested shoot tips will remove many mites but regrowth is likely to become infested. Infected material can be disposed of in council waste, buried or burnt to reduce likelihood of spreading the mite."

"Being tiny animals, gall mites cannot travel far by their own means, but, while crawling around, can get blown by the wind to another plant. They can also hitch a ride on insects and other animals that alight on infested fuchsias."

If only our hardy fuchsias are affected, it is likely that cold weather will kill mites over-wintering under bud scales, but we may have more of a problem if the tender plants that we overwinter in the greenhouse are affected.

David Bender

Some requests for help

We always need people to meet and greet members and visitors at our meetings.

If you can help, please contact Felicity Vickery Tel: 01494 726284, email felicityvickery@yahoo.co.uk

We need people to help with the tea and coffee at our meetings. There is a rota so you are not expected to help at every meeting.

If you can help, please contact Liz Moulton Tel: 014494 784913, email libbym6740@gmail.com

Please remember the raffle at each meeting. The profit on the raffles makes a very useful contribution to our expenses; subscriptions alone do not cover the cost of meetings and speakers.

Publicity. If you know where you could put a publicity poster please contact david.bender@btinternet.com

At present we have posters in the following places:

White Hill Centre, Chesham
Robertson's butcher, Chenies parade
Van Hage garden centre
Little Chalfont Library
Amersham Library

Amersham Community Centre
Amersham Council Offices
Amersham Station
Coleshill Village Hall
South Heath Garden Centre

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Discounts for members – remember to take your membership card to claim your discount

[South Heath Garden Centre](#), Meadow Lane, South Heath, Great Missenden, HP16 9SH, offer a 10% discount on some items.

Gardening and outdoor ropes, buy online from <http://www.buyrope.co.uk>, and use the code Amersham10 at checkout for a 10% discount.

Past newsletters

There is an archive of past newsletters from May 2014 to the current issue on our website at

<http://www.amersham-gardening.org.uk/newsletter.html>

Local events

If you know of local garden events, open gardens, etc, please email newsletter@amersham-gardening.org.uk to let us know as early as possible, so that information can go out in the newsletter and on the website

Photos from outings

You can see lots of photos from our outings at <http://www.amersham-gardening.org.uk/outings.html>