



Derbyshire Group

NEWSLETTER



Spring 2021

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FROM THE CHAIR

Hello All

It's the time of year when we are starting to anticipate a new growing season and looking forward to getting back into the garden after our winter 'hibernation'. How nice it would be if we could couple this with the anticipation of our group meetings and events. The wretched Covid-19 situation decrees, however, that our optimism must be tempered by events over which we have no control. Still, we are hardy planters who survive whatever extremes we may endure, not annuals who wither at the first sign of frost. Thus, we can be positive and look back at what our group has achieved under difficult circumstances this winter and, tempered by realism, nonetheless relish the thought of resumption of our normal activities.

Zoom meetings have become the temporary new norm, of course, and our thanks must go to Celia for organizing speakers and Ann for mastering the technicalities of operating Zoom and controlling the meetings. Even I, with my magic finger which can send any IT function into a spin, have managed to negotiate entry to these meetings, so don't be afraid to have a go if you have not already done so. The talks have been enjoyable even if they cannot replace the 'atmosphere' and companionship of a normal indoor meeting and I feel sure that we are all ready to have the opportunity of sharing a cuppa and buying plants from our stall again. Having said that, my impression is that there has been great conviviality amongst attendees prior to the Zoom talks commencing. Despite the hiccups of 'shall we, shan't we' speak, it has been lovely to hear people being clearly concerned about the wellbeing of other members. Well done to all concerned.

Despite the lockdown, our newsletter editor Hildegard produced an excellent autumn edition and now a spring one without me having to badger you at Zoom talks for articles. How does she do it? My charm must be lacking!

At the time of writing, Zoom talks have been booked up to April, to coincide with what would normally be the end of our indoor talk season. We have yet to decide whether to continue the Zoom talks into the summer. If you have any strong views on this or any suggestions for improvement of the talks or of any complementary or alternative events, don't hesitate to let us know.

It would be impractical under current circumstances to hold our annual plant fair in May, as usual, but we are considering holding it in September, possibly outdoors, regulations permitting, so keep an eye out for a possible future announcement. We could even possibly organize a hastily arranged visit to a local garden (a member's one or otherwise), so keep your fingers crossed.

Ian has been busy and typically well organized in arranging day trips. Sadly, one planned for May has had to be cancelled as we clearly won't be free of restrictions by then. However, he has a trip booked to the new RHS Bridgewater garden for September, which should be a delight, so let's hope that we are able to go ahead as planned. Details of this trip can be

found elsewhere in this newsletter. At the time of writing, our June holiday to the gardens of Herefordshire is still on. We are keeping everything crossed that it remains so!

Our former trip organizer, Lynn Wood, has stood down from the committee since she does not now hold a specific role and due to more demands on her time for family reasons. We have enjoyed some efficiently organized, excellent trips under Lynn's jurisdiction, and, on your behalf, I wish to thank her for the pleasure she has given us. The good news is that Lynn will continue as a group member.

Just a word of thanks to our committee members too. They have held Zoom committee meetings to try and make the best of a difficult situation and shown considerable commitment and concern for the wellbeing of the group and its members. It has been so difficult to know what to do for the best in the prevailing uncertainties. We are lucky to have their commitment and input.

I hope that by the time I write my next newsletter contribution for the September edition we will be back to normal and 'raring to go'. How good it will be to meet again. In the meantime, I hope that you stay safe and have a successful and enjoyable summer both personally and garden-wise.

Happy gardening,

Nigel

EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to the autumn newsletter.

First of all, thank you for your various contributions to this newsletter. Unfortunately it is a bit 'thinner' than usual, but that is hardly surprising as we have probably all been marooned at home and so lacked contributions about new plants we have discovered on those exciting trips to far flung places. Luckily many of us do have gardens to escape into, and spring to look forward to.

You will again receive this newsletter electronically, but if you would like a printed copy, please let us know. We do print some copies for those, who do not use emails.

Please send items for the next newsletter to wiesehofer@btinternet.com. Please make sure you provide your complete name, as attribution is not possible without this

Cover picture:

The **daffodil** symbolizes rebirth and new beginnings. It became associated with new beginnings (and the coming of spring) because it is one of the first perennials to bloom after the winter frost. ... The Latin name for **daffodil** is *Narcissus*. It is believed to be named after the son of the river god from Greek mythology.

IN THE PINK

Have you found that the indelible ink markers which we use for plant labels to be a mixed blessing? Naturally they are fine when serving their initial purpose, but how frustrating when the associated plants die or the ones you used for germination identification or potting up purposes are no longer needed. I had slowly accumulated quite a significant stock of used labels and was reluctant to throw them away on grounds of economy and/or saving the planet, yet nothing seemed to remove the writing on them, despite my best endeavors. Then, more in hope than expectation, I tried using The Pink Stuff paste made by Stardrops. Hey presto, it worked. With a minimum of effort and an old cloth or sheet of kitchen towel, the writing quickly disappeared. Further good news is that I appear to be helping wildlife and the environment too as the product is said to be vegetable oil based and “endorsed by Naturewatch Foundation for the advancement of animal welfare”: and all for the princely sum of less than a pound! My only word of warning is to use a newspaper or old dry cloth under the labels as you clean them as a fine, black dry, powdery residue is produced. So, why feel blue when you can be in the pink? You know what to do now.

Of course, there is a downside to my advice, as there is with most things in life; Anne’s sales of plant labels from our sales stall could dip tremendously. I take no responsibility if we have to put up our subscriptions as a result of this. However, the commissions from my recommendation and the leap in value of my Stardrops shares could be used to offset this.

Nigel Needham

This tip would have been soooo handy before I set about my winter task of cleaning plant labels!

VIRTUAL MEETING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

March 20th, Jack Willgoss of Wildegoose Nursery in Craven Arms, 'The Wonderful World of Hardy Perennial and Scented Violas'

The Bouts Collection of Perennial Violas was established in 1978 by Mark and Stephanie Roberts of Bouts Cottage Nursery. When this couple retired in 2011, Jack and Laura Willgoss of Wildegoose Nursery and Garden took over the Collection to safeguard them. In addition to 160 varieties of Viola, they grow and sell a selection of other perennials and grasses. Wildegoose Nursery is listed in the top 100 Specialist Nurseries 2019. They have won RHS Gold Medals at Malvern and two Silver Gilt at Chelsea.

Join Zoom Meeting from 1.45pm for 2pm start.
Newcomers may join from 1.35pm if they wish.

April 17th, Simon Croson, 'Plants and Plant Hunting in Nepal'

Zoom logging on Details will be sent to members nearer the time

GOING NATIONAL

The National HPS newsletter is offering to provide a page on their website for local groups to advertise their activities. Our Derbyshire Group will use this facility to list our zoom talks and other activities. Such a facility will also provide us with information of the activities of other groups, so watch that space.

GARDEN VISITS

Ian Evans

I am sure we're all getting a bit fed up with only seeing our own gardens and are looking forward to making trips out again. Hopefully, we will be going on the Hereford/Monmouth weekend in June, and I am organising a day trip to RHS Garden Bridgewater on Thursday, September 9th. Bridgewater, as I'm sure you all know, is the 5th RHS garden, in Salford, and it was due to open in 2020. It is now, Covid permitting, opening in May this year. It will have had an extra year for the planting to mature, and a few months for any glitches in their visitor procedures to be sorted out, so it should be an interesting "first" for us to visit this year. I've agreed with the garden that Thursday would be a better day to visit than a Saturday, to minimise lunch queues and traffic problems; I apologise to those of us who have to work on Thursdays!

I have been following the development of the garden through the pages of "The Garden" over the past 2/3 years and I'm sure it will be a grand day out. Our coach will be provided by Roberts Travel and we will meet as usual at Alfreton Travelodge at 8.30 am, aiming to return there by early evening. Our affiliation to the RHS means that entrance will be free to members of Derby HPS, so we will only have to pay for the coach. The charge will be £20 per head (a bargain!)

If you would like to put your name down for this trip please let me know as quickly as you can so that I can judge the size of coach we will need. I will then contact you later concerning payment and detailed arrangements. Please call 01332 558194

NATIONAL SEED DISTRIBUTION

Seed orders-

These have started to be posted but unlike other years they will not be going out all at once, but in several batches over the coming weeks.

Discounted Seeds-

DHPS is an affiliated member of the RHS and thus receives its monthly magazine 'The Garden'. With the March issue of this magazine was an offer for discounted seeds from D T Brown, who specialise in vegetable seeds (they also offer a limited range of flower seeds). The offer is 99p seed packets for 50p (but not many of these), all peas and beans £1.50, and all other varieties £1.00 each. P & P is 95p. You can view the range and order online at www.dtbrownseeds.co.uk. Quote code D21GN7 at checkout for your discount to be applied.

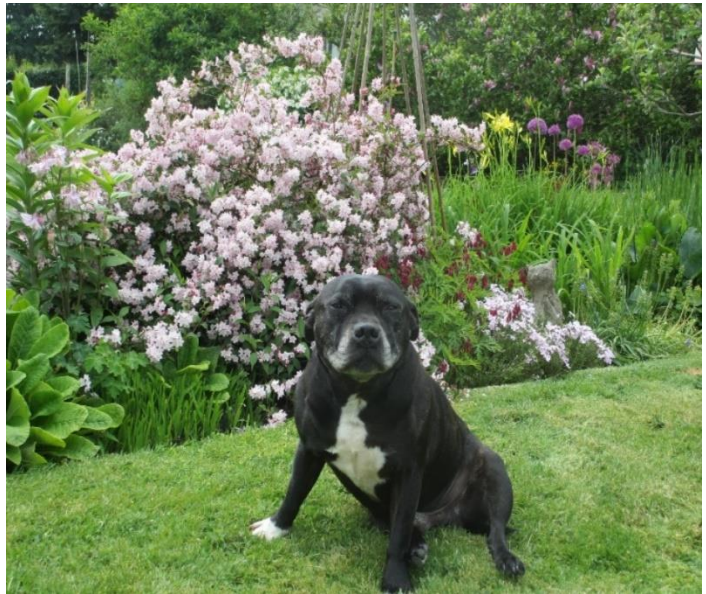
MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS

FOND MEMORIES AND A MYSTERY DEUTZIA

Mandy Wood

I am a member of the Derbyshire group of the HPS and was present at the zoom meeting at which Tamsin talked about her Life as a Garden Writer.

Following on from that and the section on how animals, and in particular, dogs, can help "sell" a magazine, I thought you may be interested in seeing Alfie, our rescue Staffie, in the garden. This photo was taken some time ago now, June 2013 showing him sat on the lawn in front of the small herbaceous border. I love the photo, especially as sadly we lost Alfie in July at 16 years old.



If anyone can identify the variety of Deutzia I would be grateful as I have never known what it is. Also, the yellow day lily insists on appearing every year, even though every year I try to remove it as it doesn't match the colour scheme and every year it turns up again !.

EASY LEAF MOULD – MAKE USE OF ALL AUTUMN’S BOUNTY

I have come to rely on a source of leaf mould for mulching Hellebores, Heathers and all ericaceous subjects, and also for mixing into the soil for planting them. It can be good mixed into compost for extra organic matter.

The traditional advice for making leaf mould is to collect the leaves into a cage of wire netting. If less room is available, to use old compost bags liberally forked to pierce them with air holes. Now that I no longer have the space for a dedicated cage, I tried the bag method; it takes years to produce anything remotely like leaf mould!

I came across a highly successful tip, obvious really, and that is to use netting bags such as those for carrots, seen at greengrocers. One year on and – hey presto! Leaf mould ready to use. (Maybe a few more months would be an improvement)

MY LIFE THROUGH GARDENS

Pauline Gibbs

So, where do I begin? Well, I am “Derbyshire born and bred” as they say.....and I have only ever lived in Derbyshire, but I don’t mind at all, so here goes.....

I was born on a farm, so for me as a child, there was no such thing as “gardening”I was helping on the farm with whatever needed doing. I remember walking through fields of barley, picking wild oats.....tiring work.....in later years driving tractors around after my Dad on the combine harvester. School summer holidays were spent in the heat, working, getting in the harvest that was so important for us.....hoping for rain the next day for a rest! (Sorry Dad!)



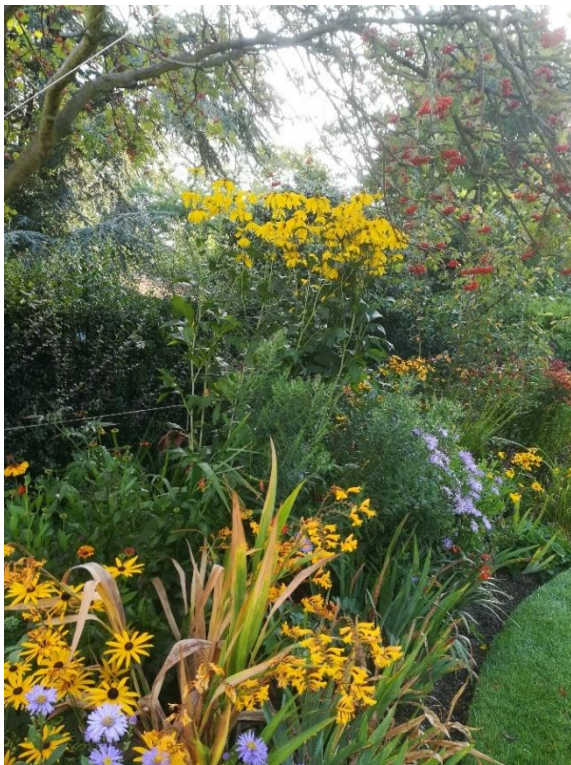
We did have a garden around the farmhouse, when I was very small it had lots of roses and apple trees. The farm is on the top of a hill, so very windy! My Mum tended the garden, as well as looking after all the family. She used to grow annual flower seeds and the garden changed over the years, as gardens do. It was lawned over, then she made some borders and filled them with colour in summer. A wooden greenhouse was built and we enjoyed tomatoes.

The first house I lived in when I moved from the farm had a large back garden, fairly flat and just grass, with a straight path down the middle. I filled half of it with annual flower seeds. At least it

cut down on the mowing of the grass! In the front garden there were some yellow Forsythia bushes.

Cuttings that I and my Mum took all those years ago are still at the farm, in the shape of a Forsythia hedge alongside a field that became a caravan site.

My second property was a bungalow. It was a new property, so no garden, just clay soil and wires showing the boundary of the land. Leylandii were planted at the bottom, in a row.....in the days when a lot of us did that for a quick way of giving us privacy – oops. The land was sloping, so it was made flatter. In fact, when the lawn was laid, my Dad came with a spirit level.....that was my Dad. I then proceeded to dig up lawn over the years and plant all sorts of things – bedding plants my Mum had grown (I didn't have the patience to wait for seeds to grow in those days!) shrubs and perennials.



My next property was a small house with a very small garden. I still made sure I filled it – digging up more and more of the tiny lawn over the years. Growing lots of bedding plants still, colourful Petunias, Busy Lizzies, in the days they were so popular, some in pots and even in plastic pouches along the fence. I was teased for planting everything in rows.....I didn't care, it was my little garden.

I then moved to a large garden – wow, I had to change my gardening style.

One thing hasn't changed though, I am still digging up more and more grass to grow plants..... I do let nature help me in the garden so much more than years ago though, and am rewarded by all the creatures that share it. I now have lots of patience with seeds – mainly thanks to the Hardy Plant

Society meetings – and talking with fellow gardeners – I even grow seeds that can take a couple of years to germinate, or wait for years for a Trillium to flower.....I started to volunteer as a gardener at a garden open to the public and through that have acquired even more knowledge and “expertise”.

So, in conclusion, I feel that whatever size garden, for me it is something that I shall always do. My garden will never be “finished”. Just seeing the changing of the seasons, realising that each year Spring comes (and don’t we all love Spring), then Summer (I personally prefer them not too hot!) then Autumn, with its different flowers, colours and yes, some dying plants. Winter isn’t all that bad either – even if it sometimes means staying in the warm reading gardening books because it is too cold or wet to do a lot. At least you can plan for next year!

So happy gardening, my fellow HPS friends. Let’s hope this year we will be able to visit some gardens that will no doubt inspire us, whatever the size.

BOOK REVIEWS BY ANN FRANKS

My bookshelves seem to be sagging under an ever-growing collection of gardening books, so I thought I’d share my thoughts on some of the best books I’ve read this year. I am often returning to old favourites such as Margery Fish, Christopher Lloyd and Beth Chatto, but as most of you will have read all these, I will write about some of the newer books I have enjoyed.

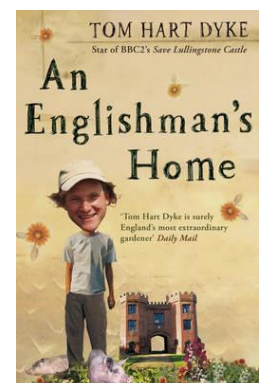


Scent Magic: Notes from a Gardener by Isabel Bannerman, Publisher: Pimpernel Press Ltd 2019, ISBN: 9781910258491

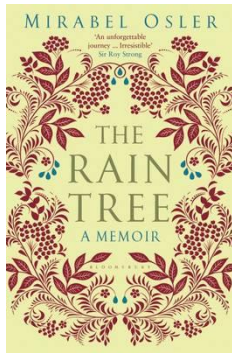
A luxurious coffee table book, which is so much more than that. For lovers of scented plants, it’s a beautiful book full of knowledge and information. Her writing style is enchanting, weaving her memories, plants, and facts into what is a wonderful portrait of a garden. I’ve already created a whole new annual seed section in my notebook of ‘plants I must buy’. This is a book that is worth its hefty price tag of £30 as I will keep revisiting it for years to come.

An Englishman's Home: The Adventures of An Eccentric Gardener by Tom Hart Dyke, Publisher: Transworld Publishers Ltd 201, ISBN: 9780552165723

Although published in 2011, I only actually got round to reading this book, this year, I’m was guilty of dismissing it as, yet another book produced by someone who is lucky enough to own a castle. While yes, he is indeed, the son of someone who owns Lullingstone Castle, in Kent, He is much more than this. He writes with an energy and enthusiasm very rare to find in gardening books. It was hilarious in places as Tom describes his antics as he strives to create ‘The World Garden’ and lives up to his title of eccentric gardener. One to curl up with in front of the fire during lockdown.



The Rain Tree by Mirabel Osler, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC 2012, ISBN: 9781408822210



Somehow my sister and I, both huge fans of Mirabel Osler 'A Gentle plea for Chaos' and 'A breadth from elsewhere', missed the publication of this book. Although she's a garden writer this isn't a gardening book as such but an autobiographical look at Mirabel's early unconventional family life and her own family and Shropshire garden. Her writing as always flows beautifully and her honest appraisal of her initial gardening skills and the mistakes she and her husband made is totally endearing and heart-warming. A lovely book to read at any time.

It would be great to hear about the books you are enjoying

Free to Good Home

Ian Evans has changed his printer and has the following unused original HP ink cartridges for which he has no further use. If any member would like them would they please contact him on 01332 558194 or 07890347446. They are available free of charge (unless he has to post them to someone!)

HP932XL(black) (x2) and HP933XL (magenta x3 cyan x3 and yellow x2) "

There's about £100 worth of ink there! Unfortunately there is such a variety of printers around, all of which seem to use different ink cartridges, so finding someone who has the right printer is unlikely. I'm just reluctant to throw them away. Printers which use these inks are the HP6000 and 7000 series OfficeJet.

PIECEMEAL'S FLOWERING SHRUBS – JUST A FEW!

Pauline Gibbs

Behind a row of 1830s cottages, in a tiny, south-west facing courtyard garden, lives a large collection of shrubs amongst a wide variety of unusual plants. Some are grown for their interesting foliage, both shape and colour, others for their flowers. Many are grown in terracotta pots - a good way of keeping them under control while giving each the conditions they prefer. In the borders of rich, loamy soil, some plants run riot!

A small selection is described here, listed in the order they normally flower each year. All but three are in containers, and most are evergreen and well over ten years old.



Piptanthus nepalensis. Planted in the main border and, as the name suggests, this originates from the Himalayas. As well as being the tallest shrub at over ten feet, it is the first to flower in the garden. Its yellow pea flowers appear in late spring and early summer, followed by clusters of long, flat seed pods which remain on the branches for most of the year.



Euphorbia mellifera. This architectural plant prefers dappled shade, and its honey-scented flowers in late spring are particularly attractive to insects.



Crinodendron hookerianum, known as the Chilean Lantern Tree, likes its compost on the acid side and grows in a sheltered spot with its roots in the shade. Its flower buds start to form each autumn, although the spectacular red lanterns don't appear until late spring the following year. In cultivation in the UK for over 150 years, it usually continues to flower into mid summer.

Kalmia latifolia 'Pinwheel'. Probably the oldest evergreen shrub in the main border, this outgrew its pot some years ago. Although it grows well in the ground, some years it will bloom prolifically and in others, produces only a cluster or two. Some say the flowers look like iced gem biscuits!



Cestrum parqui or willow-leaved jessamine. Another from Chile, bearing scented yellow flowers in June and July. Hardy in a sheltered, sunny position in mild areas.

Callistemon 'Pink Perth'. A compact bottlebrush with, as the name indicates, bright pink flowers. Up to four inches long, these are reliably produced every summer. The bees certainly love them! Although borderline hardy, it has survived many winters against a sunny, south-facing wall. Originally grown in the conservatory, it appears much happier outside.



Holodiscus discolor.

Sweetly scented, cup-shaped flowers form large pendant flowerheads in June and July. Also known as Oceanspray, it seems to thrive on neglect, currently in far too small a pot in the furthest corner of the garden! Must remember to repot it next spring!

The **desfontainea spinosa** started life here in a container and was transferred to the main border a few years ago, enjoying deep fertile soil in part shade. Underplanted with ferns, it has probably reached its full height at around eight feet. Another originating from South America, this year it has flowered continuously from July to October.



SNOWDROPS GALORE

Snowdrops for Charity- Nigel Parkes-Rolfe is selling snowdrops for charity. Please contact him on 07710 611836 or on the landline 01773 606883

Richard and Sue Bold were able to open their garden on 13th Feb 2021 under the NGS scheme. Unfortunately, the weather was awful, so many of their snowdrops from their collection of 550 varieties remain on sale. The availability list is below, but there are only small are only small numbers of each available and only one of some. To order please contact sue.bold1@gmail.com or 07866 696752.



Details and availability below.

Snowdrop Availability List 20/21

Price per bulb	£	Price per bulb	£
Abington Green	8	Lapwing	10
Alan's Treat	20	Lavinia	5
Allenii	12	Longdrop	7
Bagpuize Virginia	8	Madelaine	15
Bagpuize Walrus	15	Magnet	4
Barbaras Double	8	Margaret Biddulph	60
Blonde Inge	10	Melanie Broughton	8
Castle Eyeshadow	30	Merlin	7
Cliff Curtis	10	Miss Prissy	35
Clovis	40	Natalie Garton	6
Courteen Hall	15	Neil Fraser	7.50
Daphne's Scissors	8	Nerissa	8
Elworthy Bumblebee	15	Ophelia	5
Excelsis	10	Robin Hood	8
Fiona's Gold	20	Sarah Dumont	18
Fly Fishing	15	Selbourne Greentips	10
Franz Joseph	15	Sheriff	15
G71	8	Sibbertoft Magnet	10
Galatea	5	Sophie North	15
Georgina	10	Spindlestone Surprise	12
Ginns Imperati	5	Straffan	6
Glenchantress	25	Titania	7
Godfrey Owen	18	Trimmer	20
Grumpy	15	Trym Baby	35
Gunter Waldorf	20	Trymposter	15
Hippolyta	5	Wasp	12
Hill Poe	8	Wendy's Gold	15
Hoverfly	15	Woronwii	3

We also have a small number of pots of galanthus Mrs McNamara with 3 bulbs in each pot. These pots are priced at £10 per pot of 3 bulbs. If you would like to order any of these snowdrops, or would like an availability list mailing to you next year, please contact me at

Richard.e.bold@gmail.com

THE CAT IN THE GARDEN

Gillian Hill

My cat Molly arrived in our lives after rescue aged 8 months in January last year. Her background is unknown but is probably dark, and she remains a slightly wussy pussy!

One of her favourite occupations is to take me on a walk round the garden every day during which she snuffles the same bits of grass and jumps on the same little wall and generally sticks to her habits. I check out the plants en route so I thought perhaps I could answer the call for an article by taking you round with us.

Molly has of course rapidly taken over the ordering of the house and extends her Theatre of War to 3/4 of an acre of garden and to the many acres of field beyond. She spent most of her first few months decimating the resident shrew population much to my horror, but she is now so well fed that she doesn't seem to show much interest except for having an insatiable desire to 'play' with them. They don't seem to reciprocate this wish.

Molly likes climbing trees. She particularly likes peering down at all and sundry from the highest branches of the apple trees, which have been here since 1939. They were planted to give food to the then owner's horses. The trees are therefore 80 odd years old and as you can see have been beautifully pruned from the off, with open centres, and branches which have become gnarled and are lichen covered. We are trying to keep up with the same pruning regime. We have no idea what the variety is, but they make very good apple sauce as well as being a look out point for a cat.



Interesting plants in the garden for Molly in the middle of winter include *Stipa arundinacea* which is looking windswept and far from attractive but must be nuzzled each day. Cats are very inclined to form habits and Moll is no exception. En route to examine the mouse population in the now open stable she always stops by the *Ribes laurifolium* in full flower. A quick 'bong' by paw of the flower in passing seems to satisfy her as a 'kill' before proceeding to more tricky subjects. This is an interesting and unusual shrub, though somewhat unattractive in general growth due to elongated internodes, but it is a useful and attractive plant for gardener and cat alike when in full flower. It will be trained up the wall as it grows.

Molly processes the garden 'following' me but at warp speed... she then sits and waits for me impatiently. In the meantime, I'm looking at the developments daily and we really are becoming more spring like which is a great uplift for the spirits. The snowdrops in the garden are mainly Sam Arnott started from a small bunch in the green given me by Sue White from Blackthorn nursery in Hampshire. We have a very strong and prolific cyclamen coum which flowers bravely and early. When I'm in propagation mode I shall take the seedlings and cover the ground. I would not mix it with *C. hederifolium* however which is a very strong grower and would overpower the smaller coum in no time flat.

Hellebores we have in abundance having joined in with hellebore madness in the 1990's. We bought mainly from Robin and Sue White at Blackthorn nursery in Hampshire arriving at their opening time after a 3 -hour drive only to find that bus loads from Holland had been

allowed in before us!! But it was an inspiring and exciting time as Robin bred and produced some magnificent and beautiful Hellebores.

Iris unguicularis Mary Barnard is flowering happily at the base of the south wall. It hates winter wet and needs sun. This is the only place I know of that really suits this plant in our clay soil. They prefer stony, sandy, soils but always in full sun. Coming originally from Africa we are lucky it flowers here at all and adding to that the amazing scent of these little flowers you have a winner. Iris u. Walter Butt is a pale blue and most beautiful alternative.



Well, we have done the rounds and now Molly is exhausted. She has climbed trees and run circuits round me seeing parts of the garden I will never be in but at least it means she will relax happily for a while. After a nice snack she will settle down to sleep. It's a cat's life!

URGENT - FOR PEAT'S SAKE!

Christine Hibberd

“Protecting and restoring peatlands is one of the most important things we can do in the fight against climate change.” (quoted from the winter edition of the magazine of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust)

According to the organisation Plantlife, amateur gardening accounts for 69% of peat compost used in the UK. Three billion litres of peat are used annually in our gardens.

I recall gardening programmes in the 1980s in which Geoff Hamilton was vocal in decrying the use of peat-based composts and encouraging viewers to find alternatives. The wheels of change grind pitifully slowly but we are now becoming more forcibly alerted to the climate emergency, of which peat use is a part.

Here are a few facts:

- Peatlands cover only 3% of the world's land area yet hold nearly 30% of soil carbon. They store more than twice the carbon stored in all the world's forests.
- It grows by only 1mm per year. Commercial peat extraction can remove over 500 years of growth in a single year.
- Peatlands damaged by extraction release millions of tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere each year.

- Left undisturbed, peatlands play a valuable role as natural flood defences and help filter drinking water.
- Importantly, they are sites rich in biodiversity.

Even before the climate crisis reached the current critical stage, I made the change to peat free compost. It was a few years ago, after hearing a talk at Derbyshire HPS. Unfortunately, I cannot find the note I made at the time, so the speaker's name and the topic of the talk are lost! I recall that he was an established name in horticulture having had charge of various nationally known gardens. In an aside during his talk, he mentioned that we had all probably had difficulties with the commercially available peat-free composts. He said that the Melcourt range of peat-free composts were now becoming widely used by the many professional Horticulturalists, small specialist growers with an environmental conscience. It is the only compost used by the RHS.

I had to try it! I have been very satisfied and now will use nothing else.

I wonder if other members responded in a similar way.

The problem is getting hold of a supply. Blue Diamond garden centres are supposed to stock it, but in our area, the best value is found at the Derby branch. Apparently, they now stock it at Matlock and Chatsworth but without the best value multibuy.

Another source of good compost is GrowWell Horticultural supplies at Peasehill, Ripley. Their own brand of peat-free compost has no recycled waste in it, so it was a safe choice for use in our projects with the children at Lea school.



It would be wonderful if we could claim to be a Peat Free society.

Editor's Note

There are a number of other alternatives to the ones mentioned above and most garden centres now stock peat free compost. Not all of them are truly environment friendly, especially if they contain coir, which is shipped halfway round the world and so creates a considerable amount of pollution in its transportation. It also encourages mono-cultures in those countries that supply the coir.

A VISIT TO ANGELSEY ABBEY AND GARDEN

Hildegard Wiesehofer

Anglesey Abbey is a National Trust property in the village of Lode, 5 ½ miles (8.9 km) northeast of Cambridge. The property includes a country house built on the remains of a priory, 98 acres (400,000 m²) of gardens and landscaped grounds, and a working mill.

The garden is divided into a number of avenues, walks, vistas, and gardens, with classical statuary and flowerbeds and boasts a wonderful winter garden that is well worth a visit.



It was Lord Fairhaven who laid out the grounds in the style of an eighteenth-century park. He was responsible for replanting the rose garden and creating the dahlia garden, the herbaceous garden, the hyacinth garden and the Narcissus garden (so called because it has a statue of Narcissus in it) for seasonal bedding. In 1937, Lord Fairhaven planted an extensive avenue of trees with a crossing avenue at the far end.



I was fortunate to visit in March last year.

The glorious sunshine helped to highlight the careful planning of the garden with its many vistas, avenues, rare and common trees, pools, statues and river temples and the way in which huge areas of sky were used to balance symmetrical planting and the use of trees and shrubs to make groups of contrasting colour and foliage. The Winter Garden was opened in 1998 in Lord Fairhaven's memory.



In line with government guidelines, the car park, gardens, outdoor kiosk and toilets at Anglesey Abbey are at the moment only open for local people to exercise. They have introduced advance booking to keep everyone safe and maintain social distancing. Even when travel restrictions are relaxed after 29th March. You will need to book your visit in advance. You may be turned away if you arrive without a booking.

CLEMATIS TO DIE FOR

Chris Hibberd

Three Species Clematis, grown from seed:

Autumn Flowering Clematis *orientalis* -

The seed heads give joy throughout autumn and into winter.



Clematis rehderiana, the Cowslip clematis



Clematis flammula – A glorious Clematis
for an archway with masses of scented flowers



For winter flowers: *Clematis cirrhosa* 'Advent Bells'.
Flowering from mid-November.

SHARE YOUR GARDEN VIA OUR GROUP'S FACEBOOK PAGE

During a recent committee meeting, the idea of members sharing their wonderful gardens via short video clips was discussed. This would involve you taking a short film and forwarding this to us for inclusion on our group's facebook page.

There are a number of ways in which this can be done.

1. Using your mobile or tablet, record your favourite areas in the garden. Please tell us your name and where your garden is at the beginning. When you have finished your film, send it to one of the committee members as an attachment. They will then upload your film.
2. If you have difficulties sending your attachment because the file is too large, you might want to download a free app called Video Panda Compress. This lets you choose the email size option (other qualities are available) and compresses your file.

The National Garden Scheme (NGS) – Guidelines for visits during 2021

No doubt, most of us can't wait to get out to visit a garden or two this summer, to be inspired by ideas and to acquire more plants for our own gardens.

The National Garden Scheme, which raises money for many charitable causes, has adapted its visiting guidelines following the government's announcement on 22nd February. It will continue to ensure that all garden openings in the scheme comply with current government restrictions and guidelines to ensure the health and safety of garden owners, visitors and volunteers.

Current restrictions and guidelines are in place up to 29th March when they will post an appropriate update detailing any relevant changes. If you are planning to visit one of the ngs gardens, please check their website first. 01483 211535, or hello@ngs.org.uk.

HPS Members' Gardens open as part of the National Garden Scheme:



Sue and Richard Bold –
25 April 2021, 1 Highfield Road,
Nuthall, Nottingham
Opening time: 10 - 4

Hildegard Wiesehofer –
22 and 23 May, 12 Water Lane, Middleton- by-Wirksworth
Opening time: 11 - 5