



# HENLEAZE GARDEN CLUB

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**No 65**

**NEWSLETTER**

**January 2021**

Hello Members! Welcome to Garden Club 2021! 2020 must be the most difficult year that most of us will have experienced at all levels. We have had to adapt to a previously unthinkable set of circumstances but, amongst the gloom, gardens offer us solace and hope – I remember the morning after my mum had suffered her stroke, just slowly walking around our garden and feeling better and oh what a joy it was on a beautiful sunny Christmas morning noting the plants that were in flower for our competition.

Although much of our programme had to fall by the wayside, the Club nonetheless moved forward in 2020 with our new website and our Zoom meetings. We were one of the first garden clubs to hold a meeting by Zoom and now have regular attendances in the high 80s. We are very grateful to Alan Down for persuading us to give it a go and getting us started. I'm sure we all hope that his Monte Carlo or Bust trip goes ahead this year. I will ask for an update nearer the time – some of you mentioned to me that you would like to sponsor him to raise money for the Greenfingers' Charity.

The success of the Zooms has in part been the choice of speakers, but is also due to the feedback and encouragement that you have given the Organising Team. We will be continuing with these until it is possible to return to St Monica's Hall. Details of the next couple of meetings are shown on page 2.

Thank you all for supporting HGC including those of you who are on the waiting list. Although we start the New Year with ever increasing restrictions even on meeting outdoors, fingers crossed that we can socialise again by the late spring/summer and admit our new members. I'm looking forward to the New Members' Coffee Morning. Keep the feedback coming!

## BEHIND THE SCENES AT NATIONAL TRUST GARDENS

Given the weather, I think members and the speaker were happier staying cosy indoors than venturing out for Wednesday's talk. Mike Beeston, who is the Garden Consultant for National Trust gardens in the south west told us of the challenges the Trust faces every day and especially now that Covid has upset plans and severely reduced income.

Decisions have to be made on whether to keep gardens true to their origins or change them to bring them more up to date and suitable for visitors all the while complying with the wishes of the donors of the gardens. Add to that new pests and diseases, especially box blight, the impact of climate change and increasing visitor numbers causing wear and tear on paths and this brought home to us just what a lot of effort goes into making National Trust gardens so appealing. On a positive note, Mike emphasised that what could be seen as a problem such as the forced removal of diseased plants, storm damage and the severe pruning of overgrown trees can provide an ideal opportunity for redesigning gardens and introducing new planting. The National Trust is also committed to training up the next generation of gardeners. Mike finished his talk with a super slide show of National Trust gardens in the south west through the ages starting with Montacute, and finishing with Tintinhull. And his favourite? Hidcote. Mike generously donated his fee to The Courts, our proposed garden visit in 2021.

**Pat Dury**

## NT The Courts



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| <p><b>WELCOME CHRISTEEN!</b></p> <p>I am delighted to report that Christeen Davis has joined us as a full member of the Organising Team – making us the Magnificent Seven! Christeen designed our new Website and has also been assisting Ian Sturland and me hosting the Zoom meetings.</p> | <p><b><u>RESIDENTIAL TOURS 2021</u></b></p> <p>The two residential trips are still scheduled to run in 2021. A decision with regard to going ahead is likely to be made in early March for the Isle of Wight trip and early April for the Gardens of Yorkshire. Of course, this will be dependent upon the Government's Covid guidance on travel, visitor attractions and overnight stays in hotels.</p> | <p><b>CHRISTMAS WREATHS.</b></p> <p>Thank you to the 11 members and one non-member who purchased wreaths. A net £145 has been added to Club funds</p> |
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## **NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS**

In his book '**Thoughtful Gardening**' Robin Lane Fox writes:

'My new year is full of good intentions which it would be optimistic to call resolutions. In the garden I will be more punctual. I will remember to feed everything in pots, even in the middle of their growing season. I will not leave flower bulbs unplanted in brown paper bags. I will try to stake in time, not on the morning after a collapse. I may even check for earwigs. I will not walk on the lawns during heavy frosts. I will remember to sow Sweet William seeds for flowers in the following year and I will do the job in the first week of June. I will not throw stones at squirrels.'

**Pat Dury**

Thanks Pat ..... I'm off to rescue that little brown paper bag from the workshop!

## **Coming up next on Zoom ...**

### **3rd February: Ian Bedford: 'Garden Bugs: Cohabit, Control or Conserve'.**

After a career in Research Entomology at the John Innes Centre in Norwich, Dr Ian Bedford now gives advice to companies developing environmentally safe plant protection products and will be giving us much needed information on how we deal with insect visitors to our gardens.

### **3rd March: Andy McIndoe: 'The Creative Shrub Garden'**

A welcome return (albeit remotely) for this entertaining and informative speaker who will show us how to combine shrubs to make a colourful and interesting garden throughout the year. As a garden designer and consultant, Andy will be giving us the benefit of his wide knowledge and experience with plenty of humour thrown in.

**Don't forget you can look at the Club's website for up to date details of future meetings**

## Christmas Day Flower Survey / Competition

This has turned out to be an absolute eye-opener. Thank you very much indeed for taking part and submitting your findings so clearly. I was surprised by the number of flowers I found in my own garden on Christmas Day but analysing the results has amazed me.

For those of us who took part (30), we averaged 18.8 plants in flower in each garden (I did not count berries as, strictly speaking, they are fruits not flowers). Put another way, we counted 565 flowering plants, in mid-December. More astonishingly, they came from 125 distinct genera. The top five, in terms of the number within each genus counted are: Helleborus, Rosa, Cyclamen, Erigeron karvinskianus (Mexican Fleabane) and Penstemon

### A selection of your photographs



Some are harbingers of 2021 and others are late players from 2020.

I am aware that there are many different ways you could analyse this data and statisticians amongst you may be unimpressed by my methodology. The full list will be put on the Club website and is attached to the email version of this newsletter so you can number-crunch to your heart's content. You will notice that I have left room for a 2021 column as I would be very keen to repeat the exercise next Christmas Day.

The members who counted the most flowers in bloom on 25<sup>th</sup> December 2020 are:

**Chris Purvis (33)**

**Jon and Nikki Press (31)**

**Jinx Newley (30)**

Well done indeed but well done to everyone who took part. Weather-wise, we were blessed with a lovely day to do the count and the comments that appeared in nearly every email that I received all ran along the lines of how enjoyable members had found it to spending reflective time in the garden and also how amazed they had been at what they found. Use of multiple exclamation marks and comments such as "honestly" and "I couldn't believe it" were a plenty.

**Happy gardening in 2021.**

**Sue Knight**

## Local Snowdrop Garden open under National Garden Scheme

Currently regulations permit NGS gardens to open to visitors who live in their local area for exercise  
Pre booking required via NGS website: [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk)

**Sunday 7 February**

**Greystones, Hollybush Lane, Bristol BS9 1JB**

Talking of snowdrops, last February John and I visited Colesbourne in search of Sir Henry Elwes. I chose a pot containing three snowdrops in the green as my souvenir of the visit – a little treat I thought at £37.50! *Galanthus elwesii* 'Mrs McNamara', which Sir Henry advised me was a strong early variety. I am delighted to say that Mrs McNamara was included in my flower count on Christmas morning.



Val Bourne, our speaker for this coming April, has an article in The Daily Telegraph today (11 Jan) "The top 10 snowdrops varieties to plant in your garden". First on the list is Mrs McNamara! Apparently she was Dylan Thomas' mother in law. She had a difficult relationship with Thomas and is thought to have burnt his notebooks after his death. Now I just need to research Val's other recommendations.

**Chris Radford**

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