



HENLEAZE GARDEN CLUB

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NEWSLETTER

September 2022

Hello Members!

Welcome to Garden Club! I hope you've had a fabulous summer. When last I wrote to you in June I was relatively happy with this summer's gardening weather, but thereafter things changed! The huge downpours shortly before The Henleaze Society Open Gardens washed the photos off my plant labels and it was touch and go whether the grass could be cut in time for the event. It hasn't been cut since! Less than two weeks later, whilst wielding the hose, I was reminiscing of nights spent sleeping outside as a teenager in 1976. During the second heatwave I concentrated on watering the new shrub border but, for sustainability reasons, have let the cut flower garden go. The latter is disappointing but, fear not, morale is maintained – there are lots of cuttings on the go!

Whilst not a Club event, THS Open Gardens was a huge success and it was lovely to see many members visit.

In between that, the Club went on its day visits. I led the first to The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Everyone enjoyed their day even though it was a little warm and Kew annoyingly shut their café early thwarting those who were thirsting for a last minute ice lolly. The coach was state of the art – not only did it provide the reassurance of an on-board loo, but there was a button enabling seats to be moved towards the aisle to get away from your fellow passenger if required – as I was sitting next to Club Treasurer, Richard Kochanski, this was obviously unnecessary! The two and a half hour journey exceeded expectations – we arrived precisely on time and got back about 20 minutes early. I enjoyed my day so much I signed up for the American Museum/Courts visit. Val Ravel and her sister certainly made the most of their time – you can read all about their full-on day in attachment 2 with this Newsletter. There had been an informal Club “rule” that, for comfort, coach travel should not exceed 2 hours but given the success of Kew I am hoping we can offer one journey of similar length in 2023. Sue Haslingden led the second visit to the Gardens of Usk, which we reported on last year. From the feedback I have received the highlight was six terraced houses which opened their gardens as one giving 15 gardens for the price of 10!



After we had booked the coach and The Courts, the American Museum advised us that its garden might not be up to scratch due to a festival the weekend beforehand. So we negotiated reduced price entry. Then only two weeks before the visit, we were advised that the Local Authority had closed the road to AM so the coach could not gain access. Brian saved the day! In less than 24 hours he had arranged for us to visit Iford Manor (left) in place of the American Museum gardens. Although the Club had visited Iford in 2019, at only a few minutes drive from the Courts, the schedule was able to go ahead as planned thus saving a huge loss to the Club. Again the coach journey was perfect. For me, not having visited before, the Courts was a find – my type of garden. Sue Knight's review of this visit appears on page 2.

Visit to Iford Manor and The Courts Garden 7 July

Sue Knight

The weather was beautiful, sunny and warm, hot by the afternoon, and the two gardens were looking lovely. If you reflect upon the date of the visits, early July, the drought had not yet shown its true colours and so the grass was still green, and the plants were still perky, with roots able to access damp soil. A month later, and it would have been rather different!

The first very pleasant surprise as we arrived at Iford Manor was to find a newly (and beautifully) built café and restaurant with terraced outdoor seating and an interesting menu. Diligent as always, HGC members rose to the challenge of putting it to the test during our visit.

The joy of Iford is the hillside setting with its mixture of terraces, old buildings, fragments of ancient masonry, wide views and small, intimate spaces. There is both light and shade, in every sense, with plenty of places to sit and enjoy the garden's many aspects.

The Courts Garden (below) makes a good contrast. It is flat and more obviously divided into separate areas: the magnificent water garden, the arboretum, the vegetable garden, the sunken garden, all linked with paths, lawns and fine herbaceous borders. It too has statuary and pillars but used quite differently from those at Iford. It was interesting to reflect on how a garden is shaped not only by the people who create it but also by the physical characteristics of its location. I realise that this is not a new or startling idea but we had a wonderful opportunity to observe its truth in these two gardens.

Sincere thanks to the organiser for this splendid day.



7 September meeting

LIVE AND BY ZOOM – doors open 7pm for 7.30 at St Monica's

Fergus Garrett - Succession Planting

Great Dixter's CEO and Head Gardener is travelling down to talk to us in person and will, hopefully, let us into the secrets of successful succession planting for which Great Dixter is famous.

The pre-meeting e-mail will be circulated at the beginning of next week when we will be asking members to indicate whether they can attend in person or join by zoom to enable us to manage the meeting.

ZOOM UPDATE

Our zoom meetings worked very well when they were being run from home. But unfortunately on our return to St Monica's zooming from the Hall, whilst running a live meeting, caused some problems. The zoom was less good than previously and the slides froze at both the May and June meetings causing stoppages during the talk and inconvenience to our speakers.

We have been doing everything we can to understand and resolve these problems. Improvements have been made (shutting down all unnecessary apps running, freeing up memory where possible ...).

On 28 July we returned to St Monica's using Philip Aubury's presentation which had seen some problems during his talk. Everything worked perfectly for over an hour and a half. We are as confident as we can be that we can deliver a hybrid meeting on 7 September.

We would welcome anyone with technical knowledge/experience to join us to ensure meetings run smoothly. Please contact Chris Radford if you can help.

SPRING IN MINIATURE by Chris Purvis

Last year I made the decision to focus on dwarf tulips rather than their large blousy counterparts. In the past I have grown a really good variety called *Tulipa 'Van Eyck'* which always flowers well every year, starting off as reddish but fading to a more pink tone. Their big disadvantage however is the size of the huge leaves which fade in a very unattractive way. I always plant my bulbs in a large pot and then sink the pot into the ground so that I can lift the bulbs out of the space when the leaves are still photosynthesising but the flowers are spent. The trouble is to find a space for this all-important process which should be for at least 6 weeks.

Many dwarf tulips do not have the spathe-like shape of leaf but rather possess strap-shape ones which take up far less room. Most of the ones I grow are only 6" high at most and are really exquisite. *Tulipa 'Waterlily'*, a pale yellow, is the first to flower, followed by "Little Beauty". One I really like is called *Tulipa 'Persian Pearl'* (below left) but sadly their flowers, deep pink with a striking yellow throat, were pecked off by the pesky wood pigeon.

Fed up with the rain and wind battering down the heads of traditional daffodils, I applied this 'miniature' principle to my daffodils and only planted dwarf varieties. In my opinion, the gardening world was truly blessed with the arrival of *Narcissus 'Tête à Tête'* which brings such a ray of sunshine and flowers consistently every year (provided of course that they haven't been attacked by narcissus fly, the grubs of which burrow down into the soil and up into the base plate of the bulbs, munching away the very heart). Of course the paler native daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* so fêted by William Wordsworth, is much shorter but is not always easy to find in garden centres. I remember a memorable spring weekend in Grasmere where I had visited his house. The local garden centre had none in pots for sale, selling that variety in bulb form only in the autumn. I told him he was missing a trick especially as most customers impulse buy and would love to take home a wonderful souvenir of such a beautiful area!



Last year, I tried some normal height daffodils but with smaller heads that stay more upright and tidy. The winner for me has been *Narcissus 'Tiny Bubbles'* (above centre), a fantastic new hybrid (*N. kibitzer x jonquilla*), raised by specialist Brent & Becky's Bulbs in the US. The flowers are bright yellow, with swept-back petals and produce 2-3 scented flowers per stem, 4+ stems per bulb. A close second was *N. 'Quail'* with slightly larger flowers but again very upright and often double-headed.

How do you feel about cream or white daffodils? I love them as they can light up a dark corner. One of my long-lived varieties is called *N. 'Tresamble'* which seems to do better than the daintier *'Thalia'* (above right) which I actually prefer.

The smallest daffodil in my garden is *Narcissus bulbocodium* commonly known as the hoop petticoat narcissus. I bought these exquisite daffodils as a reminder of the 5 years our family spent in Lisbon prior to settling in Bristol. The bulbs used to grow in the turf along the cliff tops near one of our favourite beaches, Guincho. I used to get incensed when the gypsies picked armfuls of flowers to sell in the markets thereby robbing the area of seeds to increase the stock. Although daffodils are in the Amaryllidaceae Family, this little gem is tiny in comparison to the large flowers of that popular Christmas present. According to Mr Google, there are some 13,000 varieties of narcissus. I wonder what the record is for growing the largest number of varieties and what William Wordsworth would make of that?

October Meeting

CHANGE OF DATE

12 October

ANDREW TOLMAN

“STUMPERIES, FERNS AND SHADY FRIENDS”

Due to non-availability of the Hall on our usual first Wednesday of the month, the October meeting will take place on 12 October.

Our speaker, Andrew Tolman, kindly agreed to reschedule his talk – and not for the first time! He was originally due to speak in 2020.

2 November Meeting

Steven Desmond

“Within these Walls – the Country House Kitchen Garden”

We have all visited properties grand enough to have a kitchen garden and maybe looked with envy on the quantity and variety of produce grown there. Steven is a landscape consultant who writes for Country Life and so is well placed to enlighten us on what goes on within those walls.

7 December Meeting

Nick Macer

“Confessions of a Plant Freak”

Globe-trotting plant hunter and owner of the celebrated rare plants nursery Pan Global Plants in Gloucestershire, Nick will be telling us what ‘turns him on’ about the plant world. Uninspiring stock at garden centres, dull planting schemes and dumbing down of gardening programmes are all targets for his criticism, so be warned!

Autumn Bulb Sale



***Scilla sibirica* ‘alba’**

One of the bulbs ordered

Once again, we have ordered bulbs from a wholesaler and they should arrive in early September. We will have a variety of daffodils, tulips, alliums, crocuses and more and we hope you will be pleased with the selection. Since it is never certain exactly when the order will be delivered, we have decided to start the sales process with the *click & collect* that worked so well in the past two years. This will begin in mid-September when you will receive an email detailing the bulbs we have available. You will be invited to email or text your order to **Sue Knight** who will then bag it up and let you know when it is ready for collection. Any unsold bulbs will be available to buy at the Sales Table at our October meeting (NB 12 October!). This seems a fair way to ensure that those members who presently prefer to attend meetings via Zoom have equal access to the bulbs.

Sue Knight

Organising Team Update



It may not have been the poster that did the trick, but we have made progress! Brian and Pat will remain members of the Organising Team until the end of this year, during which time there will be a handover process. But they will always be on hand to offer help if necessary. In 2023 Pat will introduce the speakers that she has booked culminating with her all time favourite, Cleve West, in November.

We welcome to the Team Sally Wilkinson, Chris Purvis, Kate Harvey and Sarah Davies. We will tell you more as their roles develop.

2023 Speaker Programme

We have created a programme which we hope will appeal to the interests and preferences of the membership. The pandemic has proved to be something of a watershed for speakers – several we approached had decided to retire, and several more, having experienced the advantages of zoom, now prefer not to travel even with their travelling expenses covered! Zoom has given us the opportunity to widen our net.

Sue Kent, who many of you will know from Gardeners' World or perhaps this year's Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, will undoubtedly brighten up our January evening. February's meeting will be by **ZOOM** only, although it is anticipated that we will zoom to the Hall so that members can choose whether to enjoy the meeting together or from their own armchair. Robin Parer has one of the largest collections of hardy geraniums in North America – her nursery, Geraniaceae, is just north of the Golden Gate Bridge in California!

Then in March we will have a **LIVE only** meeting for Rob Handy's innovative and interactive "Introduction to Forest Gardening" which will involve some audience participation.

You can view the list of speakers and the subject of their talks in Attachment 1 to the e-mail with this Newsletter. It will also be posted and kept up to date on the Club's website.

Day Trips 2023



We are currently working on a programme of Day Trips for 2023 and will announce these when all details have been finalised. We plan to offer three visits as usual each of differing length and on different days of the week. The coach will leave from Henleaze.

All text by Club Chairman, Chris Radford, unless otherwise attributed

Your feedback is welcomed

