



HENLEAZE GARDEN CLUB

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NEWSLETTER

January 2022

Hello Members! **HAPPY NEW GARDENING YEAR!** Welcome to Garden Club 2022 and a very special welcome to our 26 new members. I hope you all had a happy and healthy Christmas and were able to take part in the Christmas Day flower count. At first glance outside I expected my numbers to be down on last year but was pleasantly surprised. *Galanthus elwesii* 'Mrs McNamara' particularly delighted me by just making it into my count as she came into bud on Christmas Eve. You can read more about the total count in Sue Knight's report on page 4. Congratulations to the competition winners.

Although it's not within my purview to predict what 2022 has in store, I know that it is getting two minutes lighter each day, Spring **will be** here soon and there **will be** plenty of things horticultural to look forward to.

We had expected that January would be our last meeting by Zoom before returning to live meetings so when the opportunity arose to book Adam Frost we decided to "zoom out" on a high. We will be increasing our Zoom capacity for this meeting so that every member who wishes to participate is able to "get a seat". Given the increased capacity, we will be offering tickets via Eventbrite to non-members in the locality at a price of £5. We are making this known via The Henleaze Society and The Friends of the University of Bristol Botanic Gardens. If you have a non-member friend who would like to buy a ticket, please ask them to contact Christeen Davis at henleazegardenclub@gmail.com for the Eventbrite link. Members will receive the zoom link in the usual way a few days before the meeting.

FROST IN JANUARY 19 January 2022 – Zoom Talk "Adam's Journey"



"Adam Frost has a passion for horticulture and design and uses his own life experiences for inspiration. Some of his earliest childhood memories are of being outside, helping his grandparents on their allotment.

Creative by nature, Adam loves to connect each garden design to its natural landscape and surrounding architecture as well as to the people who are going to enjoy it.

Since establishing his own garden design and landscape business in 1996, Adam has designed gardens across the world; in addition to winning seven gold medals at RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

In 2017 he set up The Adam Frost Garden School at his home in Lincolnshire where he hosts informal workshops to gardening enthusiasts."

Adamfrost.co.uk

NEW MEMBERS

We are looking forward to meeting our new members in person. In January 2020 I held our inaugural New Members' coffee-morning and such was its success we decided this would become an annual event, but sadly it lapsed in 2021 due to lockdown. Please rest assured we will arrange a suitable event as soon as it is feasible.

SOW, GROW, BUY

As mentioned in the last edition of the Newsletter, it is our firm intention to hold at least one plant sale in 2022 – hopefully we will be able to have one in mid May and perhaps a second one later. To do this we need a good supply of quality plants. Please help to make this a **BIG EVENT** by growing with the plant sale in mind.

GETTING BACK TO LIVE MEETINGS

The most pressing matter for your Organising Team during 2021 was trying to get back to live meetings as soon as possible, the main purpose of the Club always having been to provide good quality monthly talks. This has not been an easy task. Back in May 2021 we had resolved that we would recommence meetings in the Hall at St Monica's in September. That did not prove possible due to a reduction in the hall capacity which remains in place – the limit is currently only 80.

We then looked for suitable alternative premises. A venue needs to meet the needs and requirements of the Club without imposing onerous contractual liabilities on the Organising Team and consequentially the membership. Our needs and requirements include a sufficient capacity for at least our average audience with space for social distancing if required, high quality projection and audio facilities, a reasonable amount of car parking in close proximity and a commitment on the part of the venue to offer a regular monthly slot. We compiled a short list of venues to approach – some could not offer availability, some had no parking, some had no audio/projection equipment. We considered buying our own, but that was expensive and would have transportation and storage logistics. Then we visited a venue that seemed to tick most of the boxes. We were very excited at the prospect of booking this venue for the February meeting as a trial run for March when we hoped a large audience would welcome James Alexander Sinclair and then continuing thereafter. Very disappointingly not only was that venue not prepared to offer a regular monthly slot, but the terms of the hire agreement were onerous and non-negotiable so your Organising Team decided that we could not sign it on behalf of the membership. We had resolved to trial a hybrid live/zoom meeting at St Monica's when Omicron took hold. We will pursue this as soon as things settle down.

UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

168 members have renewed and 26 new members have joined us. We remain a thriving Garden Club. When we embarked upon membership renewal we fully expected to be holding live meetings from February onwards.

It is disappointing that zoom participation seems to have dropped off a little since June. Notwithstanding some excellent talks, we are now averaging around 70 participants per meeting whereas last May we reached 100.

February Speaker NEIL ROSS – X FACTOR

Members who attended the Club's November 2019 meeting will remember Neil entertaining us so well with his "Gardening Disasters".

This time he will be giving us 10 tips to take an average garden and make it memorable. It will be a fun talk covering garden design basics.

December talk – Troy Scott-Smith – The Delos Garden

Of course, I have my own horticultural opinions but as a mere Garden Club Chairman, who am I to express criticism of world-famous gardens? However, after Troy Scott-Smith's excellent talk on The Delos Garden at our December meeting, I feel able to admit that when I first visited Sissinghurst Castle Garden in 2013, I was disappointed. I wondered why all the fuss? – even The White Garden didn't do it for me and then at our zoom meeting Troy showed us some of the old black and white photos including Vita's beautiful rose arch and I was already appreciating what a wonderful, romantic garden it was. The horticultural order that I had seen was worthy of a public garden but didn't reflect Vita and Harold's personal space.

The National Trust walks a very difficult line in trying to achieve "Spirit of Place". When Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson holidayed in Delos in 1934 they were inspired to transport a part of it to their beautiful garden in Kent – just as, in a much smaller way, I am infused with ideas from holidays and visits as I'm sure you are too – for example my Mallorcan inspired "hacienda" painted courtyard (or as some would say "that orange wall") that brightens the view from our very dark kitchen. Realistic or not? Sadly, Vita and Harold's attempt wasn't successful – the Kentish heavy clay and the northern aspect didn't suit the Mediterranean planting and by the noughties it had been through various incarnations and looked rather poorly.



2013 wasn't only the year of my first visit, but also saw the return to Sissinghurst of Troy Scott-Smith, now as head gardener, with a 7 year programme of renewal. Together with the help of designer Dan Pearson, Troy and his team have brought Vita and Harold's dream to fruition using modern design principles, clever landscaping including changing the direction of the original slope, introducing much needed drainage and a wider selection of planting. At the same time, they have made a garden that has been carefully choreographed to try to meet the climate challenges that face us. Whether or not a Greek garden can or should exist in Kent, for me it evokes the spirit of Vita and Harold, and I can't wait to revisit Sissinghurst. It is in very good hands.

If you are considering your own little bit of the Med/dry/gravel gardening, the Delos lead gardener gives some tips: https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst-castle-garden/features/recreating-delos-at-sissinghurst-?fbclid=IwAR07ekpaRA_i-uTeN4pC2ckNs8uRXNnOspoQBubb4cbkCu

Christmas Flower Count 2021

What a difference a year makes!



Helleborus x hybridus
Boxing Day 2020



Rosa 'Fellowship'
Boxing Day 2021

This is the second year that we have run this competition. In 2020, I was hugely surprised by the sheer numbers of plants that were in flower on Christmas Day; in 2021, it has been the differences between the two years that has been striking.

Fewer of us took part this year, 16 as opposed to 30. Last year, we averaged 18.8 plants per entrant, this year 22.5. Our total plants-in-flower count was 360 as opposed to 565 last year, explained by the lower turnout. We also added 43 new genera to the list, although not all of 2020's flowered at Christmas in 2021. The top five, in terms of the number of within each genus counted are:

2020	2021
<i>Helleborus</i>	<i>Rosa</i> 27
<i>Rosa</i>	<i>Salvia</i> 17
<i>Cyclamen</i>	<i>Penstemon</i> 15
<i>Erigeron karvinskianus</i> (Mexican fleabane)	<i>Helleborus</i> 14
<i>Penstemon</i>	<i>Campanula</i> 10
	<i>Erysimum</i> 10
	<i>Viburnum</i> 10

We have had a mild winter so far so this may well account for the numbers of unseasonable showings. The full list has been posted onto the HGC website. For those who like a bit of number crunching, enjoy!

The members who counted the most flowers in bloom over the three days of Christmas in 2021 are:

Val Revell 34
Chris Purvis 31
Patricia Gordon Duff 30
Well done! Garden vouchers are on their way.

The great joy now is seeing the green shoots of early bulbs spearing through the earth; is there anything more hopeful on a dreary winter's day.

May you all have an excellent gardening year in 2022.

Sue Knight



Well, that's it from the Newsletter 'til March except so say how beautiful the Winter Solstice was! Many thanks to Myrah Panes for the photograph.

The usual monthly pre-meeting e-mail will be sent towards the end of January. In the meantime, if you have any feedback please do get in touch.

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