

# NEWSLETTER

Issue 62

Autumn 2007



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## Letter from the Chair

Dear Members

I have just returned from the Lambeth Country Show and I have started to write late on Sunday night. It is probably a good time to recall such a good week-end with memories fresh in the head.

There are so many good things to recall that it is difficult to know where to start. Firstly, I need to thank the members who came forward to help run the whole week-end. However, I have to take the cowardly and inefficient way out of thanking everyone for helping through this letter and not thanking you all individually. It is, however, just as sincerely meant. I did a rough tally and the show depends on up to 50 different people to put it together, run it for the week-end and then take it all apart again and every role is of great importance. So thank you one and all. As to the show itself it was one of our best - even the weather helped us out and ensured a packed crowd on both days. This was due on the first day to the three heavy downpours that sent many visitors running for cover into all the marquees including ours. We probably had our best Saturday attendance for many years. Sunday was also a good day and there was a steady number of visitors throughout the day. It gradually built up to a very crowded few hours just before five o'clock when we start to close the amateur show. Seems to always happen like that but visitors are always very accommodating and move to an exit very quickly.

There were a number of wonderful exhibits which people had been able to muster considering the recent weather. Notable, I think, were some lovely redcurrants - they were a good size, very shiny and of excellent quality. I also enjoyed looking at a brilliant display of orchids in the General Flowers Classes as well as a really varied collection of cacti and succulents. The Domestic Classes were also well-supported which gave the judge a very difficult job trying to award the winners. I think all the exhibits were hugely appreciated, so to all the members who managed enter any of the classes, a big thank you. One class I think deserves a worthy mention is the Vegetable Animal Class, not the one in the Children's class but an adult one. It all started one year when a Vegetable Class was mistakenly printed twice, once in the Children's Section and also in the Floral Art Section. At the time I thought it was just a typo and would be ignored. Staging started and the exhibitors brought in their exhibits. A couple of exhibitors turned up asking where the Vegetable Animal Section was. I was very surprised but made space for them and asked a judge to look at them and award appropriate

prizes. When the show opened a lot of interest was shown towards this class and so I thought, let us make this a regular part of the show. Since then we have had a couple of entries each year but this year it was extra-special. During staging we had a couple of excellent entries which were duly judged but halfway through the afternoon about another six entries arrived and were placed on the show bench. I explained that they were welcome to put their exhibits on the table but they could not be judged. The exhibitors understood and explained they had been misdirected. Once these Vegetable Animals joined the existing ones it certainly became a talking point throughout the time of the show. Do look out for a repeat performance at our own Summer Show.

It was great to see our own display receiving recognition from many visitors, as well as winning the Best Society Stand Award. It was a very close-run competition between us and the display created by Mr David Green. He is a plant collector who has been to most of the countries in South America collecting species fuchsia and related plants. Our display was created by Virginia Kennedy supported by Anthony Tuite and Jim and Debbie Hill. Plants for the display came from our garden and Peter Shaw's. It was a brilliant concept, displaying a wonderful cottage-style garden still being cultivated, even though the cottage has long been derelict. It told a story of a bygone era using various materials to recreate a striking contrast between a cultivated garden and an area which nature has started to reclaim as her own. It was beautifully and expertly created by all those involved.

Our campaign to recycle pots gathers pace. I have spoken to the nurseryman who supplies our bedding plants and he would be prepared to take back the pots that contained his plants as long as they are cleaned and washed. So if you bought any patio or trailing plants from the Trading Hut and no longer want the pots, do return them to the Trading Hut for recycling. Do remember that we also have lots of pots if you need to do any potting up.

In response to my appeal in the last newsletter, a couple of members have offered to share their entertaining skills at our Social Evening in October, and we thank them for agreeing to entertain us. We still have space for other volunteers, so if you can sing or play an instrument and would be willing to share it with fellow members please get in touch before the end of September so that we can finalise a programme.

The success of our Society is based on the willingness of people to volunteer their time, so if you have any time to offer we would be very grateful. In particular we are looking for volunteers who are available to unload deliveries that are made about every six weeks and are usually on a Saturday morning but could also be during the week. We also need volunteers who can make a commitment to helping at the Trading Hut whether it is once a week, month or on an ad hoc basis - please let me know.

Well, it is late in the day and plants need putting away early tomorrow.

Happy gardening, and look forward to seeing you at our Summer Flower Show!

*Tony Pizzoferro*

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## EDITORIAL



Has anyone seen summer? Last year we were baking in a drought, with a hosepipe ban and facing water restrictions. This year we have constant rain – rather like the old-fashioned English Summer used to be. Nice though it is not to have to urge you all to save water, I think we should spare a thought for those who really are suffering from flooding, and whose gardens – and houses – will never be quite the same again.

Can we blame global warming for this? Apparently flooding was just as bad in 1947. Look to your insurance policies!

Luckily, The Hut is well stocked with seeds, plants and hardware to combat most vagaries of the climate. (The Hut opening hours up to Christmas are on the back page).

If, like me, you are now on your fourth planting of runner beans (at last they have reached the top of the wigwam) you would be glad of the vegetable seed stocks, and the many things which can help fend off slugs and snails. Trying to stay organic, I have found that copper tape does help a lot – especially the sort with a jagged edge – and planting the beans in large bottomless plastic pots (another use for those pesky pots) with a ring of copper tape around them has been effective. Constant vigilance is still necessary, though, particularly after rain, to remove the invading hordes – slugs get the chop from a sharp trowel, and snails are drowned in beer (and ecstasy, I hope). Why doesn't The Hut sell cheap beer? Whatever you do, don't go out in the garden at night with a torch – the sound of chomping will break your heart!

If you are a current LHS member, you will receive the Spring Newsletter in late January 2008 as part of your subscription. In that issue will be a reminder to renew your membership, which will then enable you to have the following Summer, Autumn and Spring issues, as well as access to The Hut and all its competitively-priced stock, and advance information on the coach outings, open gardens and free monthly talks. Wow – all this for only £5!

The deadline for submissions to the Spring 2008 issue is Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January. We welcome articles and snippets of information on all gardening-related topics – please keep them coming in, to maintain our vibrant, cutting-edge publication!

Fingers crossed for good weather for the rest of the year. Happy gardening!

*Val Hunn*



### **THINKING OF PAVING OVER YOUR FRONT GARDEN?**

There has been much in the press recently about the problems associated with covering driveways and even whole gardens with surfaces impervious to water. While gardens can soak up rainwater, paving, tarmac and concrete cannot, leading to a 50% increase in water runoff, which usually flows into street drains and thence to local rivers, or, in London, the sewerage system. The drainage systems can't always cope with the excess water from a storm, which can burst back out of the drains and cause flooding of drives, gardens and even roads and houses.

Another problem of removing vegetation from gardens is that the ambient temperature rises – hard surfaces absorb heat in the day and release it at night. This can make it hot and difficult to sleep at night, and also cause poorer air quality and localised thunderstorms. Grass verges and trees trap dust, which otherwise lowers air quality and enters houses, and there are fewer nest sites and food-providing plants for birds and insects.

The RHS, in its new "Garden Matters" series, has a booklet entitled "Front Gardens" which outlines the many ways in which front gardens can be used for parking without causing water runoff or vegetation loss. There are ingenious new hard landscaping products and clever planting ideas. The booklet is available from the RHS (as is its sister title, "Water in the Garden") or it can be downloaded as a PDF document from the RHS website.

So, if you are thinking of paving your front garden – DON'T – until you have read this booklet!

**Talk: *PARK HILL- THE HOUSE AND GARDENS, HOME OF HENRY TATE*  
by Brian Bloice, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

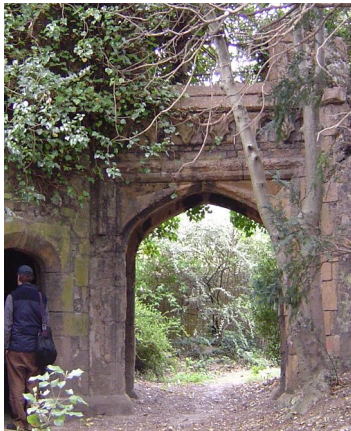
The house Park Hill on Streatham Common North was designed for William Leaf by John Buonarotti Papworth in 1829. He was a renowned architect and one of the founders of the RIBA. The house was built between 1829 and 1835.

Tate was originally based in Liverpool running his sugar import business, and came to London to establish a factory at Woolwich. He decided to live in the south, so bought Park Hill in 1880 and lived there for over 20 years.

One of the additions he made was the billiard room, also used as his art gallery. He donated much money to charitable causes, and founded the Streatham and Brixton Libraries. He wanted to donate his art works to the Nation, so to house them he built the Tate Gallery in London. When he died at Park Hill in 1899, he was interred in a mausoleum at West Norwood Cemetery. The designer of the mausoleum, and of the Tate Gallery, was Sydney R S Smith.

Photos of the house show a rich variety of architectural detail. The interior has high ceilings, ornate plasterwork, pillars, grand fireplaces, and patterned mosaic tiles in the entrance hall and stairwell. Some of the features in the gardens were: a conservatory, a terrace with sphinxes and urns of flowers, a fern grotto, a lake, and a folly built like a castle gateway which could be climbed for a view of the surrounding landscape.

After the death of Lady Tate in 1921, the house and grounds were sold and St Michael's Convent was established there. This religious order extended the buildings to house a chapel, laundry and residential accommodation for the displaced girls they cared for. The girls worked in the laundry, house, garden or the farm which existed until 1959. Over the years the land was sold off – some for housing, and some for the Bishop Thomas Grant school – leaving 5½ acres attached to the house.



*The Folly*

Since 1999 it has been in private ownership by Barretts and CPS, who have developed the site. The house has been divided into several apartments, with additional homes in the grounds and outbuildings. The grounds are open to the public on two days a year, giving the visitor a chance to see the estate and imagine its past splendour.

*Betty Cox*

**VISIT PARK HILL GARDENS!**

A number of members who heard Brian's talk on 25<sup>th</sup> April went along to the first of this year's two Open Afternoon tours of the gardens, on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May, run by the Streatham Society. We had an extensive and well-informed guided walk around the grounds, and were able to see the exteriors of the original house, chapel, and the new developments. From the terrace, with urns and sphinxes, we passed the orchard on the way to the winding sunken fern grotto walk with its Pulhamite rocks, lake and mediaeval castle folly.

***The next Open Afternoon is on Saturday***

***October 13<sup>th</sup>***. Just turn up in good time for the 2.30

or 3.30pm tours at the lodge gates of Henry Tate Mews, Streatham Common North (just a little way from Leigham Court Road, where you can park). Buses 249 and 417 run nearby. Wear strong shoes, as the ground is very uneven in some areas.



**Talk: GREEN WOODWORKING AND THE WINDSOR CHAIR INDUSTRY by David Wheeler, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2007**

We heard a well-researched talk about the Windsor Chair industry and green woodworking, before its decline and demise.

We were taken through the stages of producing a chair. At the bodgers' camp suitable beech trees were felled. The trunk would be trimmed and then cut into lengths appropriate for chair legs. These pieces were then split into sections by driving a wedge into the billet. These pieces were made into an approximate chair leg shape with a side axe, and then shaped more with a two-handed draw knife. They were then ready for the final stage of shaping on a pole-lathe. This was powered by the man's leg working a treadle, bending an ash pole to create movement to turn the wood. The green stretchers and legs were then piled into stacks where they could dry and season. When ready, they were taken to the factories in High Wycombe. There the seats had been made, usually from elm, the plank being shaped with an adze and a draw knife. The chairs may vary greatly, and we saw a range of designs, but all Windsor chairs have one thing in common – every leg, splat and back fits into the seat.

Different trees provide wood for various purposes: alder – clog-making; hornbeam – cogs of water mills; lime – woodcarving; sycamore – turned bowls; sweet chestnut – split paling fencing; willow – basketry.

We were shown how trees could be grown and managed so that the wood was suitable for various uses. A fascinating link with the past was seen in the saw pits which were scattered through the woods – one man down the pit, one above, using a two-handed saw. These long-abandoned sites now show up as small sunken dells in woodland.

We saw a modern wooden-toothed rake, made by our speaker. The head of the rake is of green wood, which dries after the pegs have been fitted, shrinking and gripping the teeth more tightly. There was much more about a lost industry that had given work to farm labourers in winter for out-of-season employment. We saw many tools and their uses, including factories with workers in their overalls with a wooden breast bib to take the pressure of the brace – hence “bib and brace”.

Although this age has passed, still there are a few people carrying on these traditional parts of our rich past – our speaker being one of them.

*Betty Cox*

**EMMAUS**

Our Society received an invitation to the opening of the Emmaus Furniture Warehouse in Knights Hill Square. This is an addition to the Emmaus shops. The Mayor, Andrew Gibson, was there to make the official opening. A reception was held in an upstairs room, the walls of which were decorated with pictures for sale.

Before the ceremony, we heard short talks from members of Emmaus about its beginnings and aims: this is to help homeless people by giving them their own living space and work within the community. The Companions aim to become self-sufficient by the renovation and sale of goods in the warehouse and shops. This helps them to become responsible for their own lives, and also to help others in need. “Serve first the one who suffers most”.

By the autumn, residential accommodation will be ready to give a home to 25 companions. After this insight into the aims and way of life we all went downstairs for the official cutting of the ribbon by the mayor; then upstairs again to socialise and enjoy the refreshments.

So, if anyone has unwanted furniture, goods or quality plants, please donate them to this worthwhile charity.

[www.emmaussouthlambeth.org.uk](http://www.emmaussouthlambeth.org.uk)

*Betty Cox attended this event on behalf of the LHS*

## LETTER from our NORTHERN CORRESPONDENT

Dear Friends,

This was originally written on the 6th December 2006 when the winter weather had just begun. It wasn't until then that two weeks of high winds had finally cleared all the leaves from the trees in the garden.

At that time the garden was still fairly green and we had only had one frost and one day when it hailed on and off all day. One apple tree still had apples on the branches despite the winds and these we eventually collected a week later, mainly by using my long-arm cutter. This apple tree is the only one which was in the garden from the start. It is in a really strange spot being halfway up our steep rockery bank. We didn't lift the dahlias until the first week of December when they were still green and with buds since there had been no frost to blacken them, but we thought we might lose them if we left them in.

Once again some of our precious gardening time had to be used up on repairing the field fence where either a horse or a cow had broken down the top bar when reaching in for delicious mouthfuls of my shrubs.

We went to both the Spring and Autumn Harrogate Shows in 2006 and we have been to the 2007 Spring Show. In the 2006 Spring Show we bought ourselves a new, tall Access Frame to replace a very old metal one (rescued from the London Allotment) as we had had a low Access Frame for many years and been very happy with it, but lilies and chrysanthemums very quickly grow too tall for the latter. The old metal frame along with two other slightly smaller metal frames, which we normally only assemble in the spring to take trays of seedlings, are now positioned on the veg patch and filled with a soil and compost mix as we intend trying raised beds for some of our veg. (Isn't it strange how increasing age makes the ground seem further away?)

The veg crop in 2006 seemed to be more or less a balance between success and failure. (So what's new? I hear you saying). We actually had lettuces, peas, cabbages, calabrese, broad beans, garlic and turnips, but the onion sets scarcely grew any bigger and I haven't cracked

the secret of germinating carrots yet. I put in climbing French bean seeds as they did so well in 2005 and added a few runner beans just for luck, as they only grow one year in four up here. The French beans didn't germinate, but the runners did well, although I wished I had put in more as there were so few plants. Finally the tomatoes were a success, possibly thanks to the taller cold frame where they got a good start. I tried three new (to me) varieties – Sub-Arctic Plenty, and Red and Yellow Minibell. Sub-Arctic was a "normal" outdoor tomato, but the Minibell plants only grew to 10" with a mass of tiny tomatoes on them. All the plants were kept in pots, and it was the first year I can say I really had a crop of tomatoes. I put more tomato seeds in this year (2007) of the same varieties, plus Gardener's Delight and Tumbler but the germination was poor, and then most of the survivors damped off so it doesn't look as though 2007 is going to be as good as last year.

The cherry tree did very well last year but since it has grown very tall the birds got almost all of them as only one branch is still within reach to cover and pick from. Apples, quinces and soft fruit also had good crops. I have my fingers crossed that the mulberry tree will oblige with some fruit any year now since it has been in for 12 years or so. There were no plums despite there being plenty of blossom, nor any crab apples, and if these two trees continue to be fruitless they may well be for the chop!

We escaped a hosepipe ban as our Spring in 2006 was long, cold and wet, but that may well not be the case this year as we have had weeks without rain and it has been unusually warm.

One thing dominated our year from February 2006 when our nice neighbours moved out from the house next door and the builders/developers moved in!! Beginning in February they gutted the house and built a large extension on the front. For a whole year we suffered a continual stream of large lorries and heavy equipment scraping past the house and occasionally colliding with my pots of plants, not to mention the noise and dirt they generated. The culmination was the arrival on the terrace of a digger which cleared the surface, and then a team of road-men from the

local council accompanied by a huge lorry loaded with asphalt, a full sized asphalt spreader and a full sized steam-roller - all bearing the legend 'Calderdale Council Highways Maintenance'. They spent a whole day on the terrace laying asphalt and when they had gone there wasn't a picture hanging straight nor an ornament in the right place, they had caused so much vibration to the house. I'd have gone out for the day if I had known what was going to happen but they arrived early in the morning and once they were there we couldn't leave the house. The completed house was put up for sale in January and new neighbours moved in three weeks ago. Much to our relief they are really nice people. We did wonder whom we might get, there is no division between the houses and we feared we might have to contend with large dogs or a big family of boisterous children.

This past winter we only had one week of snow when there was some damage to my conifers; plenty of very high winds and quite a number of rainy days, but fewer really hard frosts and I think we are a good two weeks ahead of previous years in the garden (not with what wants doing, I'm sorry to say, but just in blossoming times!).

Wishing you all as good, if not a better, year in your gardens this year.

*Audrey Luff*

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## **Thankyou!**

Lambeth Horticultural Society acknowledges the generous support of Bartleys Flowers Ltd in supplying replacement vases for the LHS Flower Shows.

Bartleys Flowers Ltd  
82 Dulwich village  
London SE21 7AJ  
020 8693 3048  
[www.bartleysflowers.com](http://www.bartleysflowers.com)

## **AS THE OIL BEGINS TO RUN OUT....**

The Soil Association is encouraging people to plan for a life with less oil by making their own community more sustainable, as part of their One Planet Agriculture campaign. Practical ideas for a green future are shared between individuals, local councils, and sustainable practitioners, such as organic growers. The resulting areas are known as Transition Towns, and currently there are over 100, including, in the UK, Lewes, Falmouth and Bristol. Anyone with growing experience will be useful here, especially allotment holders. Fancy being part of Transition Lambeth? See [www.transitionculture.org](http://www.transitionculture.org)

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## **ROOTS and SHOOTS OPEN DAYS**

The Apple Day and Open Market take place on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October, 11am-4pm. See over 50 varieties of apple from The Brogdale Trust in Kent, and watch apple juice being squeezed in the traditional way. Amongst the many stalls will be The London Beekeepers Association and bulbs from the Lambeth Horticultural Society! The Christmas Market is on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December, 11am-4pm. Details from: Roots & Shoots, Fitzalan Street, London SE11 6DN; 020 7587 1131

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## **LONDON'S CHARITY POTATO FAIR and SEED EXCHANGE**

This annual event is on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2008, 10am-4pm, at: Harris Girls' Academy, Homestall Road, London SE22, admission £1.50 (under 16s free). Over 100 varieties of seed potato are available by the tuber, and other seed by exchange - bring your own spare seeds! See [www.potatofair.org](http://www.potatofair.org), or contact Lindsay Wright on 020 8699 6071, or 07762 323 812.

## LHS OPEN GARDENS SCHEME 2007 - the story so far

Despite the very variable weather, the Open Gardens events held to date have been very successful, both socially and financially.



We started off very early in the year, on Sunday May 6<sup>th</sup>, at the lovely spring garden of our Secretary, Rhiannon Harlow Smith, open for the first time. Weather-wise, this was the best day of all! Rhiannon had done some serious networking, and had 108 visitors! The support team on the refreshments and washing-up worked their socks off, helping to make this a very successful afternoon.

*Rhiannon wondering who all these people in her garden are*

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> June was one of the hottest days of the year, which perhaps did no favours for the four small gardens in Pymers Mead. Visitor numbers were slightly restrained, but a good time was had by all who took part – and it is always fascinating to see how people can interpret very differently a similarly-sized, small space as a garden.



*Three wise gardeners admire modern technology*

Our third garden, on Sunday June 17<sup>th</sup>, was that of Julie Brand in Tulse Hill, another first-time opener. The weather was distinctly iffy, but a good supply of umbrellas ensured that it didn't rain much at all. People were obviously keeping an eye on the weather, as there was a late rush of visitors. The tea-and-cakes department worked heroically, the frogs in the pond popped up, the fruit trees were impressively large, and lots of flowers were out against a backdrop of different shades of foliage, making it a very satisfactory occasion.

*Julie: Do you think anyone's going to turn up?*





Doreen Mackie's garden-opening on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> June was somewhat smitten by rain. In spite of this, there was a reasonable turnout, but still people don't realise what they are missing by not seeing this garden. Doreen is an expert plantswoman and always happy to discuss why she has used a particular plant in a particular place. She would like to say that the plant with the pink and white bracts, which people were enquiring about, is *Amicia zygomeris*. She is planning to open again for the autumn colours – details below – don't miss it!

*Doreen is waterproof, unlike the rest of us!*

The most recent event, on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> July, was Brendan Byrne's tiny, half-vertical garden, packed with flowers, in West Norwood. This was the most seriously wet day so far – the team taking the entry money, selling plants and dispensing liquid refreshment found itself standing under two golf umbrellas, with Brendan and a visitor, unable to move for about 20 minutes while a thunderstorm raged and rain fell in stair-rods. Luckily we were tucked into the alleyway, but forked lightning was seen just up the road! Time was not wasted, however, as the visitor has agreed to open her garden for us next year, and it sounds like a good one. (Aren't they all?). Despite the downpours, we had a good number of visitors, and some potential new members.

**There is still one more garden to open this year – that of Tony and Virginia Pizzoferro at 167 Rosendale Road, SE21, on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2-5pm. They have often opened for the NGS, but this time only the LHS will be visiting – so there will be time to wander and room to sit, and Virginia to enlighten us on her design principles. Don't miss it!**



### **AUTUMN COLOURS GARDEN OPENING**

Doreen Mackie, who opened her lovely garden in Streatham Hill for the Society on 24<sup>th</sup> June, has agreed to open again in October to show off the autumn colours of her many trees, including a Liquidambar.

Clearly, with the weather behaving the way it does these days, we can't predict the best day. If you are interested in seeing this wonderful sight – which will probably be during the second or third week of October – please let me know your telephone number or email address. When Doreen gives me the nod, I will let you know the date and time. There will be a small fee!

*Val Hunn, Open Gardens Co-ordinator (contact numbers on back page)*

## Talk/demonstration: **FLORAL ART and PLANTING UP A HANGING BASKET** by Tony Pizzoferro, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2007

In place of the advertised speaker, and at very short notice, Tony stepped in and entertained us with his usual wit and verve, and much useful information. It can safely be said that by the end of the evening most people had, perhaps unexpectedly, learned something new. Surrounded by vegetation, Tony started with his first Flower Arrangement: "In the garden". All the raw material could come from a garden, hence not being prohibitively expensive. Using a heavy white pot – so that it wouldn't overbalance – his first tip was taping over the chunk of Oasis with florist's tape to secure it, but with the tape off to one side so that the first piece of vegetation could go in the centre. Starting with a framework of gladioli (easy to grow, both flower and foliage useful; *G. byzantinus* best), he continued with ferns (very useful for filling in at the back of the display, and providing different shades of green). Next were phormium leaves, to add drama and movement, variegated hosta leaves, and eryngium for a spiky blue tinge. In went buddleia flowers – choose from many different colours - followed by lilies (the anthers can be removed if pollen is a problem). A tip passed on from the late Joan Axon – always cover the back of the display, in case it is placed in front of a mirror; it is good to use euonymus for this, green or variegated. Tony finished the display with *Verbena bonariensis* – another Joan Axon tip was "Ensure butterflies can get through the display". The final result was stunning.

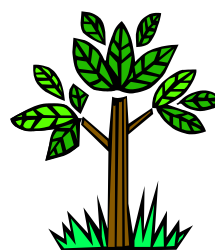
After this *tour de force*, Tony embarked on "How to pot up a hanging basket". A quick review of basket types, liners and compost (multipurpose with slow-release fertiliser granules and water-storing crystals added) provided an opportunity to remind us of the terrific range of stock at The Hut. The range of suitable plants is huge, including ivy-leaved trailing pelargonium, annual verbena, ipomoea, petunia, bacopa and lobelia. Tony then showed us the best way to fit the plants into your chosen basket: decide where each plant will go;

half-fill the basket with compost; take the plants out of their pots and arrange the pots in the relevant places, surrounding them with compost; take a plant, ruffle the rootball a bit, and exchange it for its own pot – it will fill the space exactly! Lobelia can be tucked into the spaces between plants. A final tip – if lining your own basket with plastic (eg an old compost bag) – poke drainage holes in the side, rather than underneath, to keep a reservoir of water in the bottom.

The second Flower Arrangement was: "Exotic". All these flowers had been obtained from a florist. The display was arranged in a terracotta pot, with Oasis secured as before. The arrangement was designed to be tall, asymmetrical, full of depth and movement, and with a hot orangey appearance. Phormium was featured again, pink/green and green/claret stripes; foxtail lilies were used for height, green-yellow and orange; orangey pin cushion protea concealed the Oasis and tape; Canna lilies – white zantedeschia or orange - and green ferny foliage completed the display. The result was, again, fantastic.

Both arrangements were hotly fought over as raffle prizes. Below is a suggestion that Flower Arranging classes might be started – perhaps Tony will be the first speaker!

Val Hunn



## FLOWER ARRANGING CLASSES

Several people have expressed an interest in classes for Floral Art. If anyone would like to take this further, please contact Brenda Selwyn on 077880 805 730. Classes would possibly take place once a fortnight in the West Norwood area.

## COACH OUTING: LEONARDSLEE

Saturday June 16<sup>th</sup> 2007

Lambeth Horticultural coach outings are always interesting and exciting. When visiting privately-owned Gardens there is a feeling of something special about them. In the case of Leonardslee we were welcomed by the present owner's son, Tom Loder, who explained his family's late-Victorian connection with the place and highlighted points of interest in the garden which we should not miss, before we started on the 9-mile pathway tour of this magnificent garden.

Tom was surprisingly pleased with the Great Storm of 1987. Despite losing between 2,500 to 5,000 trees, he felt the vista to the 240 acre Valley had been opened up, and many of those rotten trees, that had deteriorated over the years, no longer required difficult planning permission to remove. Moving off after this talk we were treated to a sea of Hydrangeas, and we were fascinated by the single *Cornus* "Eddie's White Wonder" (dogwood), which stood tall amongst them. At the time we did not know what it was, but an extremely helpful member of staff enlightened us, and on the existence of another four specimens in the grounds.

We were fortunate to visit the Glasshouse, close by the entrance. It had a remarkable banana plant, bigger than any at Kew Gardens, and a suitable Jurassic fern in the form of a *Dicksonia antarctica*, which was breathtaking in its simplicity. For those of us relying on plants in containers, we were treated to delightful flowering hanging baskets and half barrels, which consisted of fuchsias, petunias, pelargoniums and bidens set in a magnificent display, alongside the Restaurant.

The highlight of our Tour was the various lakes, which had been used as a water source for local iron production, all those years ago. Each lake had an individual flavour. The Engine Lake had atmospheric water lilies and the Middle Lake a massive Gunnera. On various banks we were treated to lush wild cow parsley, oxeye daisies and foxgloves. There were backgrounds of willows, ferns and it was nice to see controlled *Leylandii* for once.

The Rock Garden to me was very impressive, as it was built with Pulhamite-style rock, which we had seen previously in Henry Tate's Garden on Streatham Common. Don't forget education is for life and LHS readily offers it.

The outstanding unexpected highlight of our tour was the visit to the Dolls' House exhibition ("Behind the Dolls House"). It was a representation of an Estate life in 1900. The human scale was 1/12 and the figurines and Estate were like a glimpse of the film set to "Upstairs, downstairs". The use of humour was well placed, for example schoolgirls having their pony-tails pulled and a clever dog stealing sausages from a butcher.

A fantastic visit, and thanks to those loose Wallabies, their munching kept the grass cut and we could not but marvel at their albino offspring. Altogether a perfect day.

*Antony Glaser*

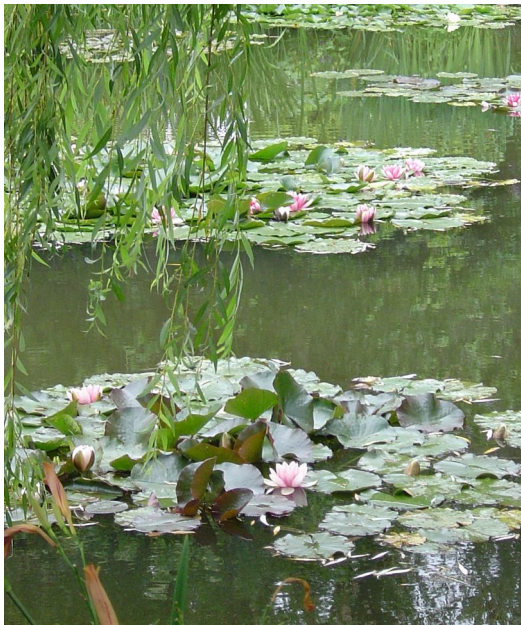


## MONET'S GARDEN AND THE GARDENS OF NORMANDY

6.45am on a damp, early June morning in Westminster; a crowd of bleary-eyed people (including three LHS members) wait for a coach; a coach arrives; people get on; five minutes later they get off – it is the wrong coach; the 7.00am departure time comes and goes; another coach arrives – the right one; we load up quickly and head through increasing traffic to Dover via the second pickup at Gatwick; we get to Dover late; we miss the ferry and take a later one; we drive for hours through France to Chantilly; dinner is postponed for us.

These were just the first of a series of domestic crises which beset our 4-day trip to see Monet's garden. The driver kept getting lost despite Sat-nav; he also, reportedly, had some unusual driving habits! Glad we were sitting too far back to see. We had a revolution over lunch one day due to curled ham sandwiches and a lack of coffee (we won). The kitchen key was lost one morning so there were no hot breakfasts. However, amongst these events, which provided good chatting material as we traversed endless flat Normandy roads, we did see some superb paintings and fantastic gardens!

We arrived early at the Musée de L'Orangerie in Paris to see Monet's paintings of waterlilies (Les Nymphéas) in peace and quiet – they were amazing, enormous, only four to a room, each occupying a wall. This whetted our appetite for seeing the real waterlilies. The gallery also displayed several other Monet paintings amongst their Impressionist collection. A coach tour of Paris was very enjoyable, the sun shone, and it continued to shine the next day when we arrived in Giverny, where Claude Monet lived and painted for many years.



*Waterlilies at Giverny*

There was really too much in Giverny to see in one day. Monet's house was wonderfully rustic, had many paintings, familiar and unfamiliar, on display, and was covered outside by climbing roses. The flower gardens in front of the house were out of this world – so many poppies, lupins, delphiniums, peonies; roses and clematis climbing over arches, pergolas and obelisks; pelargoniums in huge drifts of scarlet; lilies, geraniums, loosestrife – in fact, most of our common garden flowers, but in such profusion that they seemed suddenly exotic. The series of lakes with waterlilies edged with astilbe, lilies, foxgloves, grasses and sedges were spectacular, but sitting down to view them in quiet contemplation was not possible, as the crowds of visitors swelled; but one could imagine Monet there a century ago, sitting painting as the gardens developed around him over the years. The village of Giverny was beautiful – we had lunch in the inn which was once a boarding-house for Monet's art students. Many of his admirers were Americans, and the American Gallery and Museum, with lovely gardens, would repay further investigation. Many little shops, cafes and galleries lined the lane leading up to the tiny church where Monet and his family lie buried in the churchyard. There also are buried the 8-man crew of a Lancaster bomber, shot down in the Second World War. Everywhere the verges and gardens were full of flowers and bees – and near the car park, in a little stream, were amazing purple-blue Demoiselle flies, related to dragonflies, and rare in Britain. We could have spent a second day at Giverny.

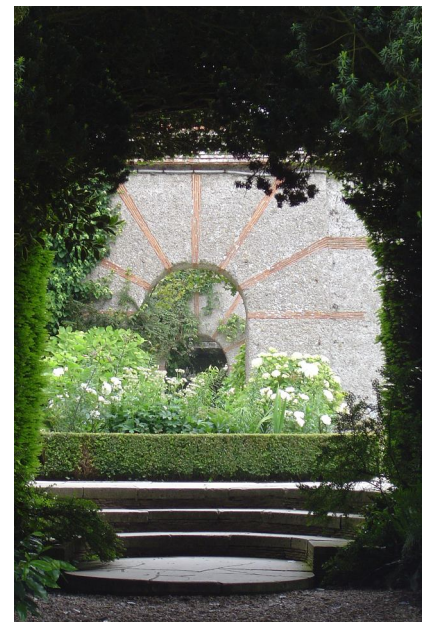


*Pool frog*

On the last day, we drove to Calais, visiting two other gardens en route. Le Clos de Coudray, north of Rouen, is a garden developed over the last 16 years by Jean le Bret, in a valley surrounding a stream. The collection of over 5000 species and varieties of plants from all over the world is amazing. There are many different gardens – rose, dry, autumn, waterside, rock, source, white, hosta, primula – and yellow, pink and blue borders, a vegetable garden, and many more. By each garden was a board with advice on planting and design relevant to that garden, in French and English. We were delighted to find pool frogs in the stream, busily croaking and puffing out their cheek pouches. The nursery shop did pretty well out of our party!

On the northern coast near Dieppe we visited Le Bois des Moutiers – and found to our surprise a house by the young Edwin Lutyens, created for Guillaume Mallet in 1898, and gardens designed by Lutyens in collaboration with Gertrude Jekyll. Formal gardens surround the house, with walls or yew hedges, and include the white garden, pergola, sundial garden rose garden, terrace and mixed borders. The park covers 12 hectares, and unfolds in a series of glades. Plantings of successional-flowering shrubs leads to year-round interest, as magnolias give way to azaleas and rhododendrons, followed by roses and hydrangeas before the spectacular autumn colours of the maples. Needless to say, in a garden of this size we could not see everything before we had to leave for our journey back to London. The huge distances between places in France was a surprise to many – we are very lucky in Britain to be able to get to so many places of interest in a relatively short time. Will there be a return trip to Giverny? Well – you can get there from Paris by public transport in less than two hours – that might well be a possibility!

*Val Hunn et al*



*Le Bois des Moutiers*

## **WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY - A WILDLIFE PARADISE**

Churchyards are increasingly becoming refuges for wildlife, both plant and animal, as our city environment becomes more built-up. Lambeth has over 20 small churchyards and three large cemeteries. As well as being places to remember the dead, they are areas in which we can celebrate the diversity of wildlife.

West Norwood Cemetery is one of London's original "Magnificent Seven" cemeteries. It has become a paradise for wild plants and animals such as bats, woodpeckers, reptiles, foxes, butterflies and even owls. Some of the wild plants and trees are typical woodland species, such as wood anemone, dog's mercury and common oak. These may have been in place since before the cemetery was built, as the land around here was once part of the Great North Wood (Norwood) which covered much of Surrey and South London. Many birds here are also typical woodland species. If you would like to find out more about the cemetery, the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery conduct regular monthly tours, on the first Sunday of each month: April-October 2.30pm, November – March 11.00am, donation £1.

## ALLOTMENT CORNER: The Beginner

I am at last an allotment holder. Having recently signed up for a plot at the Rosendale site, it is a wonderful thing. In January I got The Phone Call and eagerly scurried up to claim my site and was given a choice of two – one desolate and fallow, but close to water and the other just below with a fruit tree, and evidence of previous planting, just that bit lower down the slope, but overshadowed by a neighbouring plot. The Plan of the plot had been in the top drawer for a few months, or was it years (?) so I plumped for the water tank one, and, when it wasn't snowing, hailing, raining, sleeting or drizzling in those early months, I slid up and down the hill with my fork and sacks of manure and dug, dug, dug. It wasn't so much the size of the stones which surprised me, which straddled the width of the fork, nor indeed their weight, as the colour of the soil when I went down below 2 inches. This was the purest clay seam in the whole of SE21 and it was here, in my plot. I was tempted to start up sculpture classes with this natural product, but realised that would be too distracting, and it dawned that it was just me, just the elements and just my fork. Then came the body-building exercise of "improving the soil". You're always told this, aren't you? But 75 litres of anything in a bag takes a lot of effort and will power to get it up that slope. My frail little carcass squeaked and squawked during transition, but now, though, pah! Triple digging anyone? February saw me carving out little boxes of bare earth and sinking in the good stuff, strengthening my back (or was that straightening), working out a digging posture. And then came March – the house awash with little pots of soil and seed and hope. Bemused Husband asks if supper will be ready before harvest. Then came April and Easter and warmth and growth. Now it is May, and I have a modest blackcurrant bush, potatoes on the go, strawberries, raspberries, shallots, rhubarb, beans to climb poles, beetroot, spinach and my very own compost heap made out of pallets. So as the seasons progress and the soil becomes tamed, the whole scheme of planting for this year and next takes shape, different varieties of seed become an option and it's all starting to look much more settled. I might even get a pipe and a hammock and hum contentedly all summer long .....

*W.E.L.Barrow*

### **HELP MAKE THE NEW SCHOOL ELMGREEN !**

Does your garden need a clear out? Have you any surplus plants or shrubs? Can you help us? Would you like to sponsor a shrub or tree?

This September a brand new secondary school will be opening in West Norwood - The Elmgreen School. It will cater for local children and will grow each year until it reaches full capacity in 2013 with 1100 students including a sixth form. The School will take up residence in its final site on Elmcourt Road in 2009. Until then it will be housed on Gypsy Road (at the old Norwood Park Primary School site).

The Parent Promoters Foundation is the organisation jointly responsible for establishing the school with Lambeth Council. We are a group of local parents who are committed to supporting the school and engaging in our children's education. We will be holding an action day towards the end of August/beginning of September to fill the outside play space with shrubs and plants.

If you have any spare plants and are prepared to donate them to us please call:  
**Tony Pizzoferro 020 8766 7846** or the **Project Manager, Kate Scrase 020 8678 9181**

## Dates for 2007

August 22<sup>nd</sup>      Talk: The birds around us  
Roger Tomlinson (RSPB Speaker)  
*A chance to hear one of the RSPB's own expert speakers on the birds we might expect to see in our gardens or on our holidays.*

September 1<sup>st</sup>      **LHS Summer Show**

September 26<sup>th</sup>      Talk: "Bug eats bug"  
Steve Bradley  
*Steve is the Gardening Correspondent of The Sun newspaper, and has a wide interest in horticulture and biodiversity.*

October 24<sup>th</sup>      **LHS Prize-Giving and Social**

November 28<sup>th</sup>      Talk: Roots and Shoots  
Linda Philips  
*Much work has been done, on the buildings and in the gardens, at Roots and Shoots over the last two years. Manager Linda will be bringing us up to date on the happenings at this very well-regarded establishment.*

**All talks take place in the Nettlefold Hall at the West Norwood Library Centre at 8.00pm (doors open 7.30pm)**

**Entry is free and non-members are welcome!**

## AUTUMN BULBS

As well as the traditional narcissus, crocus, hyacinth and tulip bulbs which can be planted in the autumn period, there are a number of easy bulbs under the Alpine heading which give excellent value for money. They can be planted in the garden, or in pots or containers. Some can be planted in early autumn and flower the same year, eg *Crocus medius* and *Colchicum autumnale*. Others flower in the following winter and spring, and are superb for early colour in the garden eg *Allium moly*, *Fritillaria meleagris*, *Tulipa tarda* or *Scilla sibirica*. These bulbs can be bought any time from July onwards. Buy early to get the widest choice, the healthiest bulbs, and to plant some early, so that good root systems develop before winter.

Planting is easy, dig a hole and pop the bulb in, ensuring that the base of the bulb has no air space under it. For depth, the rule of thumb is that the soil above the bulbs, when the hole is refilled, should be 2-3 times the height of the bulb.

Many autumn bulbs are on sale at **The Hut** already, so be sure to stock up early. Most bulbs will increase in number over the years, which has got to be an excellent incentive to planting!

## **TRADING HUT**

The TRADING HUT is well stocked for the autumn – prices are competitive and the advice is free!

Cedar Tree Close (off Lakeview Road, Knights Hill, London SE27)

### **Opening times:**

Saturday: 2.00pm – 4.30 pm

Sunday: 10.00am – 12.30pm

**Closed Saturday 1st September – Summer Show (Nettlefold Hall, 2pm)**

**Last day open before Christmas – Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2007**

**Spring reopening – Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

## **AUTUMN BULBS**

The Hut has a wide selection of bulbs to plant this autumn, with compost appropriate for tubs and containers. Come early to get the best selection!

Stuck for ideas for Christmas presents? Try our pre-planted bulb baskets, or some of the other gardening extras which we keep in stock, such as tools or gloves.

**The LHS Summer Show is on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007**  
**You can help make it the best ever – why not enter something –**  
**vegetables, flowers, jam, cakes, handicrafts, floral art?**  
**Or try a class which you have not entered before?**  
**Don't be shy – you could win a prize!**  
**See the Show Schedule for details.**  
**Good luck!**

## **LAMBETH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OFFICERS**

Chair Tony Farrow 167 Rosendale Road London SE21 8LW Phone: 020 8766 7846	Show Organiser Bob Tydeman 58 Gipsy Hill London SE19 1PD Phone: 020 8766 6438
Secretary and Membership Secretary Rhiannon Harlow Smith 32 Chatsworth Way London SE27 9HN Phone: 020 8244 9317	Outings Organiser Brendan Byrne 10A The Pavement Chapel Road, London SE27 0UN Phone: 020 8761 5651
Publicity Officer Brenda Selwyn 07880 80 57 30  LHS Website address: <a href="http://www.lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk">www.lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk</a>	Newsletter Editor Val Hunn 33 Boughton Avenue Hayes, Bromley, Kent BR2 7PL Phone: 020 8402 0433 Email: <a href="mailto:valerie.hunn@ntlworld.com">valerie.hunn@ntlworld.com</a>