

NEWSLETTER

Issue 72

Spring 2011



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EDITORIAL

Well, what a December that was – the coldest since records officially began, in 1910- or perhaps 1890, depending on which data you look at; certainly cold enough to make one wonder what will have survived in the garden – some things seem to have vanished, others are looking distinctly sad – and who knows what is yet to come, before spring growth can start? However, it can't be as bad as the winter of 1962-3, when (in Harrogate anyway) it snowed on Boxing Day and didn't thaw till Easter; great sledging in the Valley Gardens, and the *Gunnera manicata* by the stream, which collapsed totally, was as good as ever a few weeks later. No doubt most things will survive, but we may all need to visit the Bring and Buy Sale at The Hut in mid-April to fill a few of the gaps which will have developed.

The allotment hasn't fared too badly, apart from the Florence fennel, which was caught out and frozen solid, and didn't last as long after picking as I would have liked. I can thoroughly recommend the raised beds, which made it a lot easier to harvest things quickly and keep the plot tidy, and now much easier to nip round and mulch with manure or compost between bouts of frost, snow and rain. The garlic went in on the December equinox, and seems to be sprouting well, but I think a lot of vegetables are going to be started at home under glass, as the weather just can't be trusted!

The LHS enjoyed another successful year in 2010, despite the peculiarities of the weather. You will find inside reports on the coach outings, lucky till the last, and the Summer Show, only mildly affected. The Hut is full of the things one might need to combat the elements in 2011 – fleece, membrane, seed trays, pots, compost, manure, and of course seeds, both flower and vegetable. The volunteers at The Hut deserve our thanks for their selfless input through the year – and they would very much like you to join their ranks! See p16 for whom to contact.

There are contributions within from several members – two from our country correspondents, and one from West Norwood. It is always lovely to receive articles from members, and I would also like to thank my regular co-writers over the year, Antony Glaser, Jean Gray and Betty Cox.

We have as usual a full programme of talks, and I'm glad to say that Rhiannon has managed to re-book Dr Peter Brandham for August 24th, to give the talk originally arranged for November 2010.

The Spring Show will now be held on Saturday April 9th, not April 2nd as some of you might have heard. Bob Tydeman would like to emphasise that he has included Photography classes this time, the subjects being "Autumn, winter or spring scene" and "People in places"; a broad remit, so we hope to see lots of entries! We also hope that member Linda Jackson will be infusing herb teas and dispensing her wide knowledge of herbs.

Happy gardening!

Val Hunn

LAMBETH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY GARDEN COACH OUTINGS 2011

The gardens we have chosen this year are very exciting and the owners are making the Lambeth Horticultural Society very welcome. Most are privately owned, which makes it a privilege for us to visit. Prices have increased again since last year, unfortunately. Many garden owners need to know three weeks in advance how many are attending, so it will be very difficult to make refunds for those of you who cancel at the last minute, unless I have a waiting list.

Many gardens ask for pre-booking for refreshments, but most of those I have arranged this year will sell on a pay-as-you-buy basis. I have put a note on gardens where there might be a problem.

The coach will have toilet facilities, and we will make a comfort stop if time permits. The cost includes a tip for the driver.

Do come again, and new members - and members who have not been before - please join us!

Please contact me if you need any more information.

Brendan Byrne 020 87615651 brendan.byrne1@tiscali.co.uk

The following is a shortened list of our outings for 2011:

SATURDAY 7th MAY 2011 Cost £30

Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, Wadhurst, East Sussex *The garden room offers light lunches and teas. However, we will be visiting on the last weekend of the tulip festival and it may be a bit crowded, so it might be advisable for us to bring our own.*

Hole Park, Cranbrook, Kent *Tea and cakes or a glass of wine may be purchased at this garden.*

SATURDAY 18th JUNE 2011 Cost £33

Hampton Court Palace *The price also includes admission to the palace. Full catering facilities for lunch etc. are available.*

Wind in the Willows, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire *Tea/coffee with biscuits are included in the price.*

SATURDAY 9th JULY 2011 Cost £22

Penshurst Place, Penshurst, Kent (The Head Gardener, Cory Furness, will be our guest speaker at the Nettlefold Hall on April 27th) *There is a restaurant that provides lunches, teas etc, but Penshurst is a very nice village and you can sample the pubs which also provide food as well.*

SATURDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 2011 Cost £28

Mount Ephraim Gardens, Hernhill, Faversham, Kent *Light lunches, teas etc. are available in the restaurant.*

Marle Place, Brenchley, Kent *Tea and a piece of cake are included in the price.*

Please note: booking for these outings **IS ONLY ACCEPTED ON THE SOCIETY'S BOOKING FORM**, which forms part of the Coach Outings leaflet sent with this mailing. Members who receive electronic mailing will find that a booking form has been sent to them by email. The booking form is **NOT** available on the Society's website.

If you would like to join us on any of these outings, but are not a member and hence have no booking form, please get in touch with Brendan so that he can put you on his waiting list. Or why not join the Society? It is very good value at only £5!

STOP PRESS! SPRING SHOW CHANGE OF DATE!

The date of the Spring Show has changed from 2nd April to **9th April 2011**.

The Show Schedule is enclosed with this mailing. Please amend your calendars.

You will be pleased to hear that there will be **PHOTOGRAPHIC CLASSES** in this show – have a look at sections 63 and 64 in the Schedule. Happy snapping!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS and RENEWAL REMINDER

As you know, your membership runs for one year from spring until the following spring, when membership must be renewed. The Spring Newsletter is the final one included in a year’s membership, and contains the renewal form, below.

You will see on the renewal form that you can choose to have your newsletter and other leaflets sent by post, or by email link and weblink (the thrice-yearly Newsletter is too big a file to be sent directly by email). Please indicate your choice for the coming year on the renewal form.

Another service run by our excellent webmaster Peter Day is the monthly reminder calendar, which lists LHS events for the coming month. If you would like to take advantage of this service, please email Peter at newsletter@lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk

If, during the year, you would like to change the way you receive your paperwork, or, importantly, if you change your email address or your home address, please drop an email to:

Peter Day webmaster@lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk

and Val Hunn valerie.hunn@ntlworld.com so that both mailing lists can be kept up to date.

For most members this will be the last newsletter covered by your 2010 subscription.

Membership is due for renewal from January 2011. You can do this by post (**in which case please enclose a small stamped self-addressed envelope for your membership card**);

or in person when The Hut reopens on Saturday 12th February 2011, or at one of our talks.

The subscription, which entitles you to shop at The Hut, visit our Open Gardens and book onto our Coach Outings, is still excellent value at £5.00!

PLEASE be sure to use the form below when renewing.

✂

<p>LHS Membership Joining / Renewal 2011 I wish to join/renew my membership of the LHS. I enclose £5.00 cash/cheque (payable to LHS)</p> <p>Title..... First name.....Surname.....</p> <p>Address..... </p> <p>.....Postcode.....</p> <p>Telephone.....Mobile.....</p> <p>Email.....</p> <p>If you would like to receive the newsletter and other leaflets ELECTRONICALLY, tick here</p> <p>If you would like to continue receiving the newsletter and other leaflets BY POST, tick here</p> <p>If you are a couple at the same address paying a subscription each, would you like ONE or TWO newsletters by post? (Please circle)</p> <p><i>Lambeth Horticultural Society (LHS) undertakes not to disclose your details to any third parties. The information provided here by you is for LHS use only.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please return to: Rhiannon Harlow Smith, 32 Chatsworth Way, London SE27 9HN (Please enclose small s.a.e. for membership card)</p>

LAMBETH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY CALENDAR 2012

After the success of the 2011 LHS Calendar, we are launching a competition to find photographs to feature in the calendar for 2012

The competition is only open to members of the LHS and this year we are looking for pictures of gardens, parks, horticultural shows or even window boxes which reflect a particular month.

The deadline for submissions is 31st July, 2011.

The calendar will go on sale later this year and all proceeds will go to the LHS.



Annie with the 2011 calendar

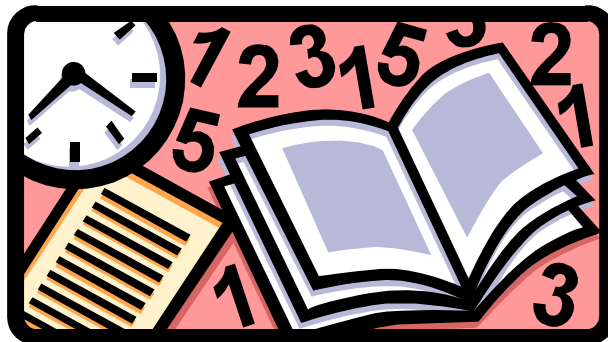
Please ensure that you read the terms and conditions for entry, which will be posted on the LHS website or can be seen at the Hut.

The terms and conditions also explain how you can enter and the minimum requirements for the image size.

Good luck!

Annie James

Membership form for 2011 is on the other side



LHS OPEN GARDENS SCHEME 2010 - 11

We have five gardens for your delectation this year – and, probably, five garden owners gazing at the snow-flattened wreckage in their gardens and wondering if they will ever be the same. I'm sure we are all feeling like this, but we must have faith in Mother Nature – she will come up trumps as usual, and if the odd plant has disappeared, we will all rise to the challenge of replacing it with something at least as interesting. So, garden owners, no matter how bad the winter may be, we will still enjoy your gardens when the time comes!

The Open Gardens 2011 leaflet is enclosed with this mailing.

Please remember that these gardens are only open to LHS members and their guests, and the member in each visiting group must show their membership card – don't forget to renew!

We saw a wonderful crop of gardens in 2010, including four new gardens and a herb balcony, as well as a return visit to Geoff Gent's famous bonsai garden. The gardens ranged from enormous to tiny, from wildlife-friendly to impeccably neat, and all with hospitable and informative owners. The weather was excellent throughout and the standard of teas and cakes was very high. What more could we ask for? Many thanks, all last year's openers.



Clockwise from top left:
Geoff, Glenn, Jane,
Linda and visitor,
Donald and Mary with friend,
Maggie

Thanks to the hard work of all concerned, £260 was raised for the LHS. As well as the LHS, charities which benefitted from the generosity of openers and visitors were: *RHS Campaign for School Gardening, Water Aid, Crossroads Care, and All Saints Organ Fund.*

Do come and join us in the 2011 Open Gardens – whether to soak up gardening advice, tea, the atmosphere or all of these – you will thoroughly enjoy the occasion.

If you would like to open your garden in 2012, I'd love to hear from you. (Contact details on p15)

Val Hunn, Open Gardens Co-ordinator

LETTER FROM OUR NORTHERN CORRESPONDENT

Dear Friends, it seems only yesterday that I was writing 2009 on my annual letter to you, yet here I am with another year gone by. This was to have been my Year of the Garden, the year when I sorted out some of the former planting mistakes, did everything in good time and kept up-to-date with all the jobs including some which had been waiting for a long time. Very sadly, like most good intentions, it hasn't happened. I know it is only 'the bad workman who blames his tools' for a botched job, but there were a couple of handicaps which helped to scupper said plans.

Firstly the weather really did not co-operate, and secondly there were some health problems. The cataracts in my eyes have been dealt with so that with some juggling I can more or less see what I am doing at last, but the very sudden appearance of osteoarthritis in both knees in March really has been a blow – lots of time hanging about waiting to see doctors and very slow progress when I do finally get out into the garden. On the plus side I have spent much more time on the pots, window boxes and hanging baskets on the terrace and these have rewarded us with a better display than usual. Between us we also rebuilt and replanted the little border at the top of the drive. It is only two and a half feet wide and some twelve feet long but it gets more sun than anywhere else and, beginning with crocus and daffodils, it has kept a succession of flowers all year. Even now there are patches of crocosmia, marigolds and hardy geraniums and one solitary hollyhock which was the only one to survive the winter.

As to the weather – well, October last year was something of an Indian summer and it seemed that we might be getting things done at the right time, but November came in with a bang. Day after day in November I wrote 'too wet to garden' in my notebook. The half dozen roses I'd ordered arrived and were bunged in a hastily-dug trench on the vegetable patch where 3 of them still remain!

[Ken has just come in with our **FIRST RIPE TOMATO** off the Tumbler tomatoes in the hanging basket in the greenhouse!!]. Early December wasn't really any better and the first snow arrived on 17th, enough in 24 hours to give Ken and I a 2-hour job to sweep the drive clear,

only for the job to be repeated, following fresh falls, almost daily until 17th January. The snow hangs on in our garden even when it has cleared elsewhere, but we were able to do a little work for a few days at the end of the month before it returned on 2nd February and stayed for another month. It was 4th March before we were able to get in the garden again and even then only half the garden was without snow. However, the rest of the month was like an average March – sun, rain, some frosts but reasonably workable weather and a chance to try and see what had or had not survived the long winter. I lost several roses, amongst them my *Rosa canariensis* 'Canary Bird' – always the first to flower and sorely missed. Two or three hebes departed and a couple of clematis but on the whole it did not seem too bad considering how very cold it was for so long. One very surprising survivor was the aspidistra cutting I had put in a big pot with some agapanthus; I had covered the pot with horticultural fleece to keep the worst of the weather off but was not expecting it to work against what arrived! For the rest of the year most of the 'real' gardening fell to Ken. I managed to keep up the seed sowing and pottering in the greenhouse and on the terrace but our garden is too much for one person, hence the unfinished work.

In April the family arrived for a day's work, and while son-in-law made a good job of repairing the stone steps to the garden the grandchildren set about emptying the pond and cleaning it out. Sadly there were the remains of 16 frogs in the mud at the bottom, frozen in for too long I can only suppose. A few more frogs did appear here and there during the summer but there was no frogspawn so I don't know if or when the garden will be repopulated. May was colder than it should have been and we had some snow showers, hail and frost which did the raspberries and loganberries no good at all. We got rhubarb, gooseberries, redcurrants and apples but what little other fruit there was the birds had, not us.

We thought we were in for a good summer when the weather perked up at the end of May (although even the hawthorn hedge did not come into flower until the end of the first week of June) but June turned grey, chilly and on the dry side quite quickly. July was more of the same only this time it rained most days. We thought summer would surely arrive in August but the sunny, warm

days were few and far between so the fine days this month were very welcome.

Some things enjoyed the weather of course; we are going to have a good crop of quince, the garlic was the best for years, there was a decent weight of potatoes; but peas and beans never got going. Now our gardening year is set to begin again. Ken went to the Spring Show at Harrogate on his own so came back nearly empty-handed, but our daughter Michele took us to the Autumn Show (many thanks for the Dahlia Society tickets!) so now, as soon as possible, I will be planting up a

trough with heathers, another container with winter pansies, and finding a home for a huge creamy hydrangea plus room in the greenhouse for 6 small cyclamen. There are eight more roses in the pipeline, arriving in November, and what seemed like huge quantities of bulbs arrived yesterday for planting into pots for spring as soon as I am allowed to begin working in the garden again. So I wish you all a happy winter planning your seeds and plants ready for next year.

Audrey Luff, 24th September 2010

GREEN THOUGHTS FROM NORWOOD

This year I decided to grow more vegetables. I have a fairly large patio, three floors up, with room for a table, chairs, a sun awning and a sun lounger. The patio is south facing, and gets very hot.

I love planting seeds and watching them grow, so I planted runner beans, tomatoes, peppers, coriander, basil and gourds, plus sweet peas, which are my favourite flowers.

Well, I have had mixed fortunes. I have plenty of tomatoes, but so far they are green, and show no signs of turning. I have had precisely one red tomato, and think that soon I shall be frantically searching for a recipe for green tomato chutney. The beans produced a white flower, and I was somewhat worried that these would not attract pollination. However, the beans have turned up trumps, and I have had several delicious pickings from them. Basil has flourished, but the coriander had to be replaced. The gourds produced a mass of yellow flowers, but that was about all. I read somewhere that they need to be hand-pollinated, but I had great difficulty in finding any male flowers. Two tiny gourds developed, but promptly fell off.

My sweet peas were a huge disappointment – only a handful of blooms. I have a photo of sweet peas grown in previous years, and they are a riot of colour. I was even able to give my neighbour a bunch. I just don't know where I am going wrong.

Next year I am going to increase the number of beans and tomatoes that I grow, and I'll keep persevering with the herbs and peppers.

Margaret Jackman, Autumn 2010

WHITEFLY TIP - FROM OUR HAMPSHIRE CORRESPONDENT

Now - a gardening tip for the newsletter, about which I am very excited. I am not sure where I heard it, but it was suggested that if you get whitefly in your greenhouse, an organic method of dealing with it is to put a carnivorous plant in there.

I have a pitcher plant, which normally lives on the pond margin (they look exotic, but in fact are as hardy as old boots!) and when my tomatoes started erupting with whitefly, I put the plant in the greenhouse. Within three days all the whitefly had gone. I left the plant in there for a couple of weeks, to deal with hatching eggs, but it is not madly happy indoors, and now it is back on the pond edge again - burping gently because it is so full of whitefly! If the problem returns, so will the pitcher plant nemesis!!

Incidentally, I had always thought that the pitchers on the plant were the flowers, but now that I have had a couple of them for several years, I know that the pitchers are adapted leaves. The flowers are absolutely fantastic - blood red, and of an extraordinary shape. Why don't more of us grow these lovely things - although of course, they are not choosy about which insects to eat, and devour friends as well as enemies!

Robin Robbins, August 2010

VISITING HIGHGROVE

Visiting Highgrove is always a privilege. Brendan and I were fortunate to be among a coach party of 50 out of 300 who had applied through Coolings Nursery. On arrival, we were greeted warmly by volunteer staff at Highgrove, where a video screening introduced us to the layout of this famous 15 acre garden.

With 8 distinctly different gardens, any review will necessarily portray one's personal focus. Of late I have become interested in garden statues and this visit did not disappoint. HRH The Prince of Wales's collection was breathtaking. At the beginning of the Thyme Walk stands the commanding bronze copy of the Houghton Hall *Borghese Gladiator*.

Standing amongst acers in the Arboretum, the final work of Frederick Hart (of the Korean War Memorial fame), the bronze sculpture *The Daughters of Odessa*, highlights the tragic history of 20th century Ukraine as a metaphor for world injustice.

The Wall of Gifts was composed of sculptural and carving gifts from Shoreditch art students.

They were positioned alongside a revisited Victorian stumpery (designed by the Bannermans – his favourite garden designers), whereby ferns and hostas grow from the stumps, providing a habitat for insects and bugs alike. This awareness of nature is evidenced by the sculpture *The Goddess of the Woods*, whose stillness stood witness to HRH's celebrated organic approach, whereby orchids had appeared miraculously in the 4-acre wild meadow either by having been carried by birds, or lying dormant for years until the soil was at its best for them to appear. Up to 30 native wild plants have been recorded, including ox-eye daisies, yellow rattle and meadow cranesbill. The use of sheep for four months in the year further exemplified the careful grazing maintenance of the meadows.

The Walled Garden, an acre of self-sufficiency in fruit, herbs and vegetables, serves the estate, cascading with apples, pears and plums, alongside the organically-produced leeks, beetroot and amaranthus (a favourite Indian dish). Nicholas Dimbleby's proud sculpture *The Green Man* overlooked the masterful relationship with nature. A moss-festooned fountain, brought from Italy by the Prince, is visited by birds and insects alike. The occurrence of box blight in the

estate had led to replanting with dwarf germander hedges (*Teucrium x lucidly*). They were certainly attractive to bees and other insects.

I for one always look forward to seeing imaginative Chelsea Garden show designs relocated somewhere fitting. The 2001 winning Islamic-influenced Carpet Garden did not disappoint, whose perfect autumnal lighting delighted the crowds with the prominent chocolate cosmos and *Verbena bonariensis*. Plants mentioned in the Koran grew merrily - figs, pomegranates and olive trees.

Trees are another passion of HRH - he has planted 10,000 across his 37-acre estate. The autumnal season made the Japanese maples a delight, as were his national collection of beech trees. Regretfully a Manchurian ash planted by the Dalai Lama in 1998 was doing less well.

At the back of the house are the captivating yew topiary hedges. The balls were 6 feet high, round and plump. They pre-date the purchase of the estate in 1980 and have been lovingly kept and designed by his gardeners, who I understand are given free rein to shape. Beneath them, a mixed aggregate path is inter-planted with over twenty different varieties of thyme. There are Italian gardens and another garden centred round a sundial.

The Terrace Garden was breathtaking, with Spanish olive trees. A dying cedar tree was turned into a roof tree, designed by Mark Hoare, two years ago. Magnolias grew and there was enough shade for the hostas. Immediately facing the front of the house, in front of the door, was a captivating 3-foot Trelissick red dahlia. Everyone was amazed at its tall slender stems. Of course no garden is immune from the ravages of Mother Nature and the cold winter has affected the tree ferns, mostly the recently-planted ones. Around 15% have been lost. I hope this is the limit. I was most impressed with the donation of 76 tree ferns from the New Zealand Prime Minister. They swayed in the surreal dappled light by a new clearing outside the Walled Garden area, called the Southern Hemisphere Garden, as it offers protection from the winter chill. Its success encouraged palms and eucalyptus to be planted recently.

The most striking thing about HRH is that he is not just a privileged member of the aristocracy, but also a gardener like one of us. I really appreciated the vision of the garden, the way it worked with nature. His head gardener Debs Goodenough and 11 garden staff have done wonders

Antony Glaser

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

The Summer Newsletter will be sent out as usual in early May. It is always good to have contributions from the members, so if any of you would like to write a short piece, it would be very welcome!

Please send any articles to me by **Sunday 17th April 2011**. Many thanks!

Val Hunn (See p15 for contact details)

Talk: BEES by Bob Jackman, 25th August 2010

Bob, an LHS member who keeps bees in Dulwich, was assisted by Claire Joseph from Bromley Beekeepers (winner at the National Honey Show) and Peter Springall, a well-known local beekeeper who has maintained an observation hive at the Horniman Museum for the last 30 years.

Bob started by showing us how a typical “National” beehive is constructed, with 11 vertical frames in the lowest “brood” box. The frames contain a flat sheet of beeswax, imprinted with a hexagon pattern that corresponds to the bees’ measurements. Smaller boxes or “supers” stack on top. The queen lives only in the bottom box, and is prevented from leaving by a lattice “queen excluder”. On top of the pile of boxes is the crown board, and then a waterproof galvanised top. This arrangement is to make life happy for the bees, and the honey extraction simple and safe for them.

In days of yore, a woven “bee skep” was used, and the bees made their own arrangements inside it. At the end of the season, the bees were often killed so that the honey could be extracted.

In June, at the summer’s peak, a honeybee colony will have one queen, 2,000 male drones and 60,000 female workers. The life-span in summer is about 6 weeks. In winter, there will be 1 queen, 5-10,000 workers and no drones, with a life-span of about 6 months. Honeybees store honey to live on over the winter.

At night the workers regurgitate nectar, collected from flowers, and allow it to evaporate to form honey, which they use as a carbohydrate store. They also collect pollen (thus accidentally pollinating plants) and use it as a protein store. These food stores are laid down in the hexagonal wax cell in the brood box (for raising the infants) and the supers.

Drones fertilise eggs laid by the queen, and have no other job. The eggs are laid into honey-filled hexagonal cells made of wax, on the frame pattern, by the workers. After three days, eggs hatch into larvae, and five days later the cells are capped over with wax to keep air from the honey.

To extract the honey, a frame is removed from a super (none of these cells will contain eggs, as the queen cannot leave the brood box), the wax capping the cells is cut off, and the frames placed in a centrifuge so the honey can be spun off. Claire did this very efficiently!

After a tea interval in which large amounts of bread and delicious honey were consumed, Bob gave us some general information about bees. They forage in fields and gardens, getting nectar wherever they can. Different plants impart different flavours to the honey. Oilseed rape is good for the bees, but the honey will crystallise quickly. Phacelia is good for bees. Bees perceive colour differently from us – purple crocuses are seen as very bright yellow, with a dark area around the nectaries, guiding the bees in. London is a good place for bees, as there is a very diverse range of flowers.

Bees are currently having problems with the varroa mite, which is now immune to the usual insecticide. Now several different methods are used to cope with the mite, which injects viruses into the bees while sucking their blood. DEFRA sends bee inspectors to check for bee diseases – this is a free service. Other pests are magpies – surround the hives with wire netting; and mice – use a perforated cover for the bee hole.

After this recent very cold spell of weather, I asked Bob how the bees survive. Apparently they have heating mechanisms – as long as they have sufficient honey for fuel, and a large enough cluster, they will get through. Damp is a problem, so he has been pushing snow off the roofs, because as it melts it can be absorbed by the wooden walls.

Val Hunn

BUMBLEBEES IN TROUBLE – AND SOME DOING BETTER!

Some rare species of bumblebee, which live in small, isolated populations, are risking extinction because of inbreeding. This weakens them and makes them vulnerable to a gut parasite. The Bumblebee Conservation Trust points out that loss of habitat is stopping the bees from moving around.

However, the Shril Carder bumblebee is making a comeback in Kent and East Sussex, thanks to environmental work carried out by farmers and land managers to improve habitat.

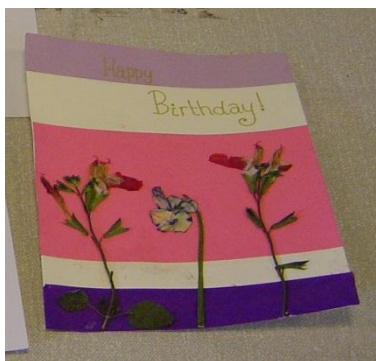
Bumblebees play a vital role in the food chain by pollinating crops to the tune of c.£130m per year.

See www.bumblebeeconservation.org where you can submit digital photos of the bumblebees in your garden.

See www.bto.org/gbw for a new bumblebee survey you can take part in.

LHS SUMMER SHOW: Saturday 4th September 2010

How do they do it? The winners and their super exhibits that is. I thought I'd ask them and this is what they said.



Greetings card (Children's section, Alice Guillaume) This was made with pressed flowers from the garden and is now kept on the fridge.

Chrysanthemums (John Reed) Take cuttings from last year's plants in January, February and March. Start off using 3" pots with John Innes (JI) No1 compost (in an unheated greenhouse) and pot on, changing the compost through JI No 2 to JI No 3. Plant out in the open, in May, for earlies. When the plants are



about 15" tall they should be stopped (pinch the top out) to encourage side shoots. Keep up to six shoots but then thin to the best 3 buds. The sneaky bit: to keep their colour, reflexes are grown in the shade of sunflowers, to provide half shade, and incurves are bagged.

Dahlias (John Reed) In a similar fashion to chrysanthemums, cuttings are taken from last year's stools (the saved root mass). Dahlias are planted out later when the chance of cold or frost is less. Choose a position in full sun. The plants are thinned to 4 stems and disbudded to the sizes wanted.



Handicraft (Vera Hazzard) The cushion of was made over a two year period using cross stitch. The design on a blue background was decorated with four pink geese and bordered by red flowers.

Floral Art (Gladys Halley) "Our tale is told by Candle light". The class title stipulated the inclusion of a candle. Ivy was used together with the candle to produce a triangular form. The candle was matched in with the base of dark blue.



Tomatoes (Don Willmore) Six plants were grown in the greenhouse border. 3 plants of the Italian Marzano and 3 plants of a Lebanese variety were grown. Feeding the plants was with Tomorite and Comfrey.



Pelargonium (Brenda Wheeler) The zonal pelargonium was bought as a plug plant in May in full flower and potted on twice. Feeding was with diluted Tomato Maxicrop (from The Hut) at a cap-full to a watering can and was given to all plants

Photographic (Val Hunn) The "Still and Lively" pictures were taken when experimenting with a new digital SLR camera, testing out depth of field, on Brighton beach.

There you have it, artistry, forethought, patience, creativity, skill and knowledge.
Bob Tydeman

PRIZE GIVING and SOCIAL: Wednesday 27th October 2010

In spite of the unusual weather during the spring and summer of 2010, the Summer Show had a fine display of entries. Only a few sections in the flower and vegetable sections were devoid of produce, so the full complement of cups and prizes were awarded at the Prize-giving and Social event.



Bob and Carol

As usual we had invited the Mayor of Lambeth to present the prizes, but at the last moment we heard that he was unwell, so the presentations were performed by our Show Secretary, Bob Tydeman. Many thanks are owed to Bob for the smooth running of our Show events.

Those old stagers Mary Upstone and John Reed swept the board in the vegetable and flower sections, which must mean that they have the knowledge and experience to cope with whatever the weather might throw at them! We should listen and learn from them. I suspect that compost is at the root of it.

After the presentations, we had an extended tea interval with a variety of goodies brought in by members and organised beautifully, as usual, by Mrs Margaret Marchant and Dot Cutbush, with their volunteer helpers in the kitchen. Like any army, all our events march on their stomachs, so the catering organisers deserve our thanks – and of course this includes our Show team, Maggie Walters, Carol Pacifico and Dot Yates.

Herne Hill honey, produced by the bees of Bob Jackman and Mary Slater, was on sale, presided over by Dot Cutbush, and proved very popular.

Back in the hall we competed in a horticultural quiz, compered by the stentorian Philip Spedding. As usual there was a good deal of controversy, especially when some questions were discovered, too late, to have more than one answer! After a good deal of shouting, one table won the prize with a very good score, but all had a very enjoyable session.



Gladys and Thelma

The evening finished with a raffle, tickets for which were sold, as usual, by the dynamic duo Thelma and Gladys – many thanks to them and their unfailing good humour – and numbers called out by Tony in his own inimitable style, which rounded off a very pleasant and sociable evening.

Val Hunn



*Prize winners, from left: Gladys, Joyce (for Alice), Geoff, Robert, John, Val and (below) Mary
(A full list of prize winners can be found on the website:
lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk)*

Talk: THATU and ORGANIC VEGETABLE GROWING in SOUTH AFRICA
by Margery Povall, 22nd September 2010

LHS member Margery is the Chair of Thatu, a UK-based charity supporting self-help initiatives in poorly-resourced communities in southern Africa.

We had already read the introductory article about Thatu, which was published in the Autumn 2010 Newsletter, so we felt familiar with the aims and objectives of this organisation.

With the help of slides, Margery showed us how the input from Thatu of financial support and expertise has enabled so many people to grow their own food organically, in areas where food has never been grown, and often in places where we would never consider growing. True to the principles of permaculture, everything possible is recycled, and cardboard boxes, plastic bottles, bits of corrugated iron, rusty cans – all are pressed into service. Composting is of tremendous importance, and no organic material is wasted. The food produced is mostly of excellent quality, and as well as having better nutrition, the people are enabled to take control of their own situations, and their quality of life is immensely improved.

Contact Margery on 07910 332 939 or 020 8674 4972

Website: www.thatu.org

Email: info@thatu.org

Talk: AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 GARDENS by Colin Jones, 26th July 2010

Colin is a judge and lecturer in horticulture, and is well-known to us in both capacities. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of plants, and this talk showed that he is no fair-weather garden visitor!

He has travelled the world lecturing on cruise ships, and in the spirit of Jules Verne began this journey at the Reform Club by St James's Park, the swampy site of a 13th century leper colony. Charles II employed Andre le Notre to lay out the park, to a design based on Versailles.

Then we were in Iceland, with eider ducks and geysers, where the volcanic heat is used to warm greenhouses, so the population is self-sufficient in salads and they can grow bananas.

On we flew to Paris, and the Tuileries Gardens (very ordered and methodical), Versailles (le Notre, in 1661, imported mature trees), and Monet's garden at Giverny with its strong Japanese influence.

Suddenly we were in Holland, where 9 billion tulips are grown each year. Along with hyacinths, they are grown on reclaimed land which is just sand. The Keukenhof Gardens south of Amsterdam are lovely in April, with water, tulips and grape hyacinths – and a glass of gin to walk round with!

Off we went via the Alps (not many gardens, but famed for trailing geraniums in window boxes) to Spain, and the shady, palmy Mediterranean gardens of Granada. The Alhambra Palace and Generalife Gardens were built by the Moors in the 13th century, when rivulets and pools of water throughout demonstrated wealth. In Barcelona, the architect Gaudi was fond of covering everything in mosaics, so there is a memorial park with winding mosaic paths and structures, and no straight lines.

In Ventimiglia in Italy are the Hanbury Botanic Gardens. The Quaker Thomas Hanbury was born in Clapham, and at the age of 20 went to China to trade. When the American Civil War stopped the supply of cotton to England, he sent Chinese cotton in its place. In later life, due to poor health, he came to Italy and cultivated a huge garden, where he continued his interest in medicinal plants and herbs. Eventually he returned to England and settled in Surrey at Wisley – and left his property to the Royal Horticultural Society. Table Mountain overlooking Cape Town has over 1500 varieties of wild flowers. Ericas, orchids and hottentot figs are used to prevent erosion. In the Kirstenbosch Gardens all the plants, such as proteas, strelitzias and osteospermums, are native to South Africa. Originally belonging to Cecil Rhodes, the estate was bequeathed to the nation in 1913.

Our journey continued at breakneck speed through Singapore, Bangladesh, India, Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, California, Canada, Florida, the Azores, Madeira, Denmark – where mention of poinsettias at Christmas brought us to the Caribbean and home to Wisley.

Truly a *tour de force!*

Val Hunn

COACH OUTING: WEALD and DOWNLAND OPEN AIR MUSEUM, SINGLETON
Saturday 11th September 2010

The weather forecast was not good for this final outing of the 2010 season, but trusting to Brendan's usual good luck, we set off on the long journey in high spirits. We were not disappointed, as the rain held off for most of the day.

As we emerged from the entrance building, itself a rescued farmhouse from Newington, Kent, the two main clusters of buildings were spread out before us beyond a huge expanse of grass. To the right, sloping down to the lake and mill pond, are the working buildings – sawpit, smithy, barn, and the working water mill (flour on sale in the shop); straight ahead is a cluster of imposing buildings, including a market hall from Titchfield, Hampshire; a mediaeval house from North Cray, Kent; a mediaeval shop from Horsham, Sussex; and other large buildings, some of which act as meeting and education rooms.



Pendean Farmhouse, Midhurst



Mediaeval cottage, Hangleton

The Museum, a registered charity, rescues examples of threatened vernacular buildings from south-east England, the region which includes the Sussex and Kent Wealds and the North and South Downs. Launched in 1967, it has acquired good examples of buildings gradually and now they number forty-four.

The site is huge. Moving off to the left of the big complex, there are cottages, stables, barns, and granaries. Some of the cottages have gardens attached, in their original style. Bayleaf Farmstead, a Wealden House from Chiddingstone, Kent, is a wonderful house to explore. Dating from the early 15th century, it is heated by an open fire in the centre of the hall, the smoke leaving by a hole in the roof. There is a buttery and pantry, and two rooms upstairs, at either end of the house. One of these is the solar, the family's private bed-sitting room, and possesses the

heights of luxury – a privy, venting to a cesspit outside the house, and sliding window-shutters. This farmstead also has a barn, an orchard, a garden, and shaws, or small woodlands. The garden is being developed to represent one contemporary with the house, growing mostly vegetables, fruit and herbs.

The long walk up into the woods reveals further houses, cottages, a wood yard and a charcoal-burner's camp. Returning past the treadwheel, one arrives at the Downland Gridshell, a new building completed in 2002. A lightweight structure made of oak laths, it has two levels. The basement houses the Museum's collection of tools and artefacts, and the upper deck is a workshop with space for exhibitions, conservation and training.

Several LHS members were fortunate to be trapped here during the hour of rain we



Gridshell, exterior (Antony Glaser)



Gridshell, interior (Antony Glaser)

had mid-afternoon. Others were happy to have been caught in the tea-room; I was up at the wood yard, and swiftly hopped over a rope to shelter in the cattle shed, to watch the dripping trees.

There is so much to see that even a day is insufficient. This was my third visit, and still I have not seen it all. What a great place to round off the LHS's outings year!

Val Hunn

Talk: IS IT TOO LATE TO PLANT BULBS NOW?

by Tony Pizzoferro, 24th November 2010

Due to an unfortunate misunderstanding over dates, the expected speaker, Dr Peter Brandham, did not arrive to give his talk. Luckily, Tony was available, and as Eveline Cragg, our Trading Secretary, had brought a profusion of stock from The Hut, he had plenty of raw material on hand for his spur-of-the-moment demonstration.

His answer to the question above was – it depends, on the bulb, and on the weather.

Snowdrops are the first to flower, so get them in NOW. They are difficult to grow from dry bulbs, so it is better to plan ahead and divide and plant ‘in the green’, just after flowering.

Crocuses are already sprouting. Grow indoors in water only, or in the garden. Start in a pot and plant out once growing, and cover with chicken wire or upended hanging baskets to foil the squirrels.

Other small, early bulbs are *Chionodoxa luciliae*, *Scilla siberica*, and muscari of various types. These will spread and can naturalise in lawns.

The dwarf types of **narcissi**, such as ‘Jack Snipe’, ‘Tete-a-tete’ and ‘Topolino’ are very popular in small gardens. The larger narcissi need to be planted immediately, or a fly will infest and soften the bulbs. After flowering, dead-head them to prevent energy-wasting seed production, and sprinkle with Superphosphate (available at The Hut) to help nutrition back into the bulbs. Do not cut off or tie up the leaves.

Alliums are very decorative and useful space-fillers, but they grow tall and the leaves collapse. Underplant them with forget-me-nots or wallflowers to cover the leaves as they decay. *Allium cristophii* and *A.schubertii* have huge round globes of tiny flowers. The seed-heads look architectural, whether left in the garden or dried and put indoors in the fireplace.

‘Prepared’ **hyacinths** have been treated so they will flower by Christmas – but only if they are planted by September 15th!

Amaryllis will flower in 10 weeks. Plant the bulb in a tight pot, with stones in the bottom for weight and drainage, and the bulb half out of the compost. Popular varieties are ‘Red velvet’ and ‘Christmas star’, but there are speciality amaryllis which come ready-potted – smaller flowers, but different. After flowering, cut off the flower stem, and let the leaves grow. Feed with Superphosphate, and put in a shady, cool part of the garden. In September, lay the pot on its side – the leaves dry and fall off. Then repeat the potting process.

Bulb fibre should be used when growing in a container without drainage holes, as the additives – grit, mother-of-pearl and charcoal – keep the water sweet. Do not overwater. In a container with holes, use normal compost.



Bob and his Herne Hill honey

Asparagus is time-consuming, and needs a rich bed – dig a trench and fill with good compost/manure. Make a mound along the trench, tease out the roots of the asparagus crown, put the crown over the mound, and cover with soil. Do not cut the spears for the first three years! In the fourth year, you can eat it – but beware of asparagus beetle!

Poinsettias are native to Mexico. From the euphorbia family, with irritant sap, they have red bracts, not flowers. The flowers are small, yellow and insignificant. They can be kept going year after year, but are sensitive to changes in temperature.

We thoroughly enjoyed Tony’s demonstration, and can only marvel at the depth of his knowledge, and the entertaining way in which he imparts it to us mere mortals. Many thanks, Tony!

With the bulbs and other Hut stock on sale, a good run on the Herne Hill honey, and mince pies in the interval, this turned out to be a really Christmassy event.

Val Hunn/Betty Cox

We are delighted to announce that Dr Peter Brandham will be giving his missing talk “The Lost World” on Wednesday 24th August 2011. This is the last time we will hear Dr Brandham, formerly of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, as he is retiring from the lecture circuit. We will accompany him in the footsteps of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle through the rainforest of Guyana. On a hundred-mile walk through dense jungle to the flat-topped, vertical-sided Mount Roraima, we seek orchids, carnivorous plants, ferns, bromeliads and other exotic species for research and display at the Royal Botanic gardens, Kew.

Dates for 2011

- February 12th **The Hut reopens** (Saturday and Sunday – see p16 for opening hours)
- March 23rd **Annual General Meeting** *If you have any questions for discussion, please send them to the secretary beforehand, for inclusion in the agenda.*
- April 9th **LHS Spring Show** (Saturday – open to public 2-5pm)
- April 27th **Talk: The Gardens of Penshurst Place** Cory Furness, the Head Gardener, *will give an illustrated talk about the gardens. (LHS coach outing on 9th July is to Penshurst Place).*
- May 25th **Talk: 'Behind the Scenes'** Chris Smith (award-winning nurseryman, of Pennard Plants) *will give an inside peek at what makes the most famous (and not so famous) flower shows tick.*
- June 22nd **Talk:** To be confirmed
- July 16/17th **Lambeth Country Show** (Weekend) , Brockwell Park
- July 27th **Talk: Roots and Shoots** Linda Phillips, the Director, *brings us up to date with the work that this charity for disadvantaged young people does through gardening.*
- August 24th **Talk: The Lost World (Postponed from November 2010)** Dr Peter Brandham (ex-Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew) takes us on a 100-mile walk in the tropical rainforest of Guyana to seek exotic and curious plants.
- September 3rd **LHS Summer Show** (Saturday – open to public 2-5pm)
- September 28th **Talk: Auriculas** Bill Lockyer, assisted by Colin Jones. Bill grows a vast number and variety of auriculas, and has been the only amateur exhibitor at Chelsea for many years.
- October 26th **LHS Prize-giving and Social**
- November 23rd **A Christmas theme** – to be confirmed

Talks take place on the fourth Wednesday of every month from April to November inclusive.

***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!

LAMBETH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OFFICERS	
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TRADING HUT

Cedar Tree Close, Cedar Tree Grove (off Lakeview Road, Knight's Hill, London SE27)

**Opening times: Saturday: 2.00pm – 4.30pm (last customer 4.15)
Sunday: 10.00am – 12.30pm (last customer 12.15)**

The TRADING HUT reopens on Saturday 12th February 2011, when you will find it well-stocked with all your spring gardening needs.

On sale will be a wide variety of bulbs, some potted, ready for flowering, at keen prices and capable of being planted out later. These are sure to cheer us up after this extreme winter!

Also on sale are many varieties of **SEED POTATO**. Buy now while stocks last!

First early – Accord (new this year), Foremost, Maris Bard, Rocket.

Second early – Aphrodite, Nadine

Maincrop – Desiree, Kerr's Pink, Pentland Crown

Salad – Belle de Fontenay, Pink Fir Apple

SALE DATES

BRING & BUY SALE: 16/17th, 23/24th April 2011

Bring all those potted-up cuttings that you haven't got room for – and buy something that suits your space! Vegetable plants will be especially welcome.

BEDDING PLANTS SALE: 7/8th, 14/15th, 21/22nd May 2011

Patio plants, vegetables, roses, tender perennials, annuals, hanging basket materials - everything you need to get the gardening year off to a flying start.

Would you like to VOLUNTEER at The Hut?

The Hut is the Society's chief source of income, and is used by many members who take advantage of the competitive prices and wide range of stock. However, it only runs on the goodwill of its volunteer helpers – and we always need more!

If you would like to join the happy band of helpers at The Hut, for one day a month, one weekend a month, or any other permutation, please call in at the Hut, or contact our Trading Secretary, Eveline Cragg, on 020 8771 9212, or enquiries@lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk

Our Spring Show is on Saturday 9th April - see the enclosed Schedule - why not enter this time? You may find, in your house or garden, daffodils, narcissi, hyacinths, foliage plants and succulents, or you could plant up a trough - there are classes for all of these. Maybe you could make jam, or bake a cake? New for the Spring Show - photographic classes! You could win a prize! And it's all good fun.