



NEWSLETTER

Issue 73

Summer 2011



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EDITORIAL

As I write, the sun is shining brilliantly, and the garden, resplendent with spring flowers, is being battered by chilly, gusty winds from the east. This departure from the warm, wet westerlies – we have had no significant rain here for a month now – must be worrying the water companies, and photos of parched reservoirs are beginning to appear in the papers. However, not a peep from Thames Water about the state of their aquifers, looming hosepipe bans, standpipe threats and so on. Perhaps they have noticed that the ash has come out before the oak, and are confident that June, July and August will be a washout. We can look forward to more mouldering onions and dismal summer garden parties (if wet, in Village Hall). Well done, anyone who has already taken their summer holidays!

However, we are all buoyed up by the delights of That Wedding, and it behoves us to look on the bright side. The gardens and allotments need rain (sensible rain, please....) and the garden amphibians will like it too; but I must say it is a joy to see my tiny toads sunning themselves on a ledge, revealed by the sinking pond water levels. Cheering too is the increase in the number of members taking up the electronic option for their newsletters and other paperwork. This saves the Society money, and delays the inevitable subscription increase. Webmaster Peter Day is delighted by the success of this scheme, and even more members benefit from his monthly reminder calendar-newsletter. If any members would like to change from post to electronic – or *vice versa* – or just have the monthly calendar by email please contact Peter: webmaster@lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk I am pleased that this issue has attracted articles from several members – Antony Glaser, Sue Wallace, Margery Povall, Mavarine Du-Marie, and Brendan Byrne – and Fiona Law, from the South London Master Gardeners. It is always good to receive input from other members – please keep your articles coming in!

At this time we are not sure as to how the Lambeth Country Show will be organised, and there is no Show Schedule yet available. Keep an eye on the website – www.lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk - for news, and Peter will include any information in the monthly calendar. On pages 7-9 are the terms & conditions for the LHS Calendar 2012 photographic competition. The organisers were swamped with entries last year, and hope to be again this year. Closing date 31st July! The Hut is, of course, open as usual, except on Show days. Eveline has ensured that it is well-stocked for the coming seasons. Once again much is at pre-budget prices, so get your gardening requisites there – and encourage your friends and neighbours to join and enjoy the same advantages.

Happy gardening!

Val Hunn

SOCIETY NEWS

When you receive this issue, the **Bedding Plants Sale** at The Hut will be in full swing – don't miss the weekends of 14th/15th and 21st/22nd May. You may well find some last-minute annual bargains, as well as the pots and compost for planting them. As we have discovered already this year, the weather cannot be trusted to behave sensibly, so watch out for frosts, and keep that fleece handy.

The **LHS Open Gardens season** will start on May 22nd at Doreen Mackie's lovely and unexpectedly huge garden behind Streatham High Road. She will be delighted to give you a tour of the many plants, shrubs and trees – and she makes lovely cakes.

June 5th will see us at two new gardens, opposite each other in Alleyn Road, owned by Penny and William Fraser, and Amanda Parry. Both houses are late Victorian, but the gardens are very different – one preserving the original layout, using mostly perennials and shrubs; the other redesigned, with unusual planting and an owner who loves propagation.

We can see another surprising, new garden on June 12th just off Peckham Rye. Garden journalist Janine Wookey's little cottage on Piermont Green belies the size and extent of the garden behind it. Unexpected features abound, and the history of the garden is fascinating. The garden will be in peak condition, as it is open for the NGS the week before.

Our season will finish with a tribute to the late David Shaw, who was one of our most enthusiastic members. Ann and Peter will be celebrating David's famous soft fruit collection, at their garden in South Croxted Road, on 7th August – a fitting conclusion to another season of Sunday afternoons, relaxing and enjoying our members' gardens.

If you have mislaid your Open Gardens leaflet, spares can be had at The Hut, or from the Secretary (please send small S.A.E.) Details are also on the website, www.lambethhorticulturalsociety.org.uk **Only LHS members and their guests can visit these gardens** – please bring your membership card with you.

Brendan Byrne has again arranged a grand set of **LHS Garden Coach Outings**, all on Saturdays, and nearly all in the garden of England - Kent. On 7th May we will go to **Pashley Manor Gardens** (once owned by the Boleyn family) and **Hole Park**, both in Kent. June 18th will see us at **Hampton Court Palace**, where some of the gardens have been restored, and then for tea at **Wind in the Willows**, in Buckinghamshire. On 9th July, well-primed with information from our first Wednesday evening talk (27th April) by the head gardener, Cory Furness, we will spend the day at **Penshurst Place** in Kent. The final trip for 2011 calls at **Mount Ephraim Gardens** and **Marle Place**, both in Kent. It is never too late to get onto the waiting lists for these trips – Brendan's contact details are on the back page. Leaflets are available at The Hut or from the Secretary (S.A.E please....) and more details of the gardens are on the website.

The **Lambeth Horticultural Society Calendar** was such a success last year that Annie and Philip are running the photographic competition for the 2012 edition even now! The deadline for submissions is July 31st. Full details, terms & conditions can be found inside this issue on pp7-9. Get out those cameras!

SAD LOSSES

We are very sorry to hear that two of our members have died this spring.

Maud Richards, a member for many years, was well-known on the coach outings.

Gillian Davies, the S E London organiser for the NGS, was also a local familiar face.

Our condolences go to their families and friends. Both will be much missed by the Society's members.

LHS SPRING SHOW: Saturday 9th April 2011

The day dawned bright and sunny for this year's show, as it has all through April, and the combination of July weather and the Grand National may have caused the dip in entries this year. For those of us in the hall, however, the spring flower and foliage spectacle, and the heady scent of narcissi, were as good as ever, as were the teas and the raffle.

Dusty Lori had a very good Show, winning Best Horticultural Exhibit with her giant pot Axon Shield for the Best Floral Art Exhibit Arrangement".



both the Shield for the of hostas, and the Joan with her "Table



Eveline Cragg, our Trading Secretary, won the Cheviot Gardens Award for the Best Domestic Exhibit with her very impressive carrot cake.



The Lily Jeal Plate for Most Points in the Domestic Section was won by our Show Secretary, Bob Tydeman.



Vera Hazzard's stuffed lion won the Cup for the Best Handicrafts Exhibit.

Chocolate brownies baked by Miranda Garton Grimwood won the Cup for the Best Children's Exhibit.



The show was opened by the Mayor of Lambeth, and the prizes presented by Show Secretary Bob Tydeman – except his own prize, presented by Tony Pizzoferro.

Linda Jackson, the Society's expert on herbs and herb teas, had a stand downstairs where she dispensed herb teas and advice, and displayed her new book, "Herbal Teas and Recipe Book".

Our thanks go to the judges – Colin Jones, Iris Smith, Olive Turner, Audrey Head and Peter Schneiter; the catering team headed by Carol Pacifico; the Hut volunteers who manned the gardening stall; all the background helpers; and of course Bob Tydeman for organising the whole event.

Val Hunn

OTHER GARDEN TOURS/OUTINGS

Janine Wookey (LHS member) of **Gardens Etc** has some very interesting tours arranged to raise funds for the National Gardens Scheme (NGS), a charitable trust established in 1927, having HRH The Prince of Wales as Patron, Joe Swift as President and Penny Snell as Chairman. Penny is also Chairman of our London Region. Joe reports that in 2010 the NGS raised £2.6 million for charity, which includes Macmillan Cancer Support and Marie Curie Cancer Care, as well as the National Trust and many garden charities. Janine's tours also include a delicious lunch and a glass of wine or a soft drink or beer of your choice.

(Janine will be opening her garden for the NGS on Sunday 5th June, and for the LHS on Sunday 12th June).

Janet Wright is organising outings for **Plant Heritage**, and **Ina Pulleine** (LHS member, who has previously opened her garden for the LHS) is organising outings for the **Dulwich Society**.

The details are as follows:

Gardens Etc/NGS

Wednesday 25th May

Sailing upstream along the river Thames.

Riverboat cruise from Blackfriars Pier at 09.30 am to Kew, visiting the famous Middle Temple garden, Fulham Palace gardens; lunch at a riverside restaurant, followed by four gardens in Kew Green. Cost £95

Thursday 26th May

The gardens of Hampstead and Highgate. Cost £85

Tuesday 24th May & Saturday 9th July

The secret gardens of London's ancient places; a walking tour. Cost £50

Friday 27th May

Fine farms and manors in Bedfordshire.

The Manor House, Stevington; Flaxbourne Farm, and The Manor House in Barton le Clay where water plays a big part. Cost £85.

Wednesday 6th July

The trendy gardens of East London; a walking tour. Cost £65

Friday 8th July

From plot to plate – edible Surrey gardens. Cost £85

Contact Janine Wookey on 020 8693 1015, mobile 07711 279 636, or www.gardentoursetc.co.uk

Plant Heritage

Saturday 11th June

Oxford Botanic Gardens and Pettifers. Cost £29

Saturday 23rd July

West Dean Gardens . Cost £26

Contact Janet Wright on 020 8402 8995 janetwright@live.co.uk

Dulwich Society

Thursday 23rd June

Pashley Manor and Scotney Castle. Cost £28 - does not include the entry to Scotney Castle which is £7.70

Contact Ina Pulleine on 020 8670 5477

Brendan Byrne

SNOWDROPS AT WELFORD PARK, BERKSHIRE

There is nothing more impressive than seeing snowdrops *en masse*, to lift one's spirits in the latter part of winter before spring arrives. Brendan and I took a train to Newbury and then a taxi for six miles to Welford Park. The recommended viewing time was for the first two weeks in February, and we arrived on the 10th. The park is opened for eight weeks, and receives 17,000 visitors. Before embarking on the full tour we had lunch and found the dense tides of the *Galanthus nivalis* cultivar. Only the beech trees and meandering River Lambourne broke the monochrome continuum. There were 7 acres of woodland and it was estimated there were 300 bulbs per metre. This made a total of 10,000,000 plants.

The owners of the property are James and Deborah Puxley. The house has been with the family since 1618. The couple inherited the house and estate from James's parents in 1998. Welford Park was originally a monastic settlement, and for Christians snowdrops were associated with Candlemas on the 2nd February. This cultivar of snowdrops originated from southern Europe and it is possibly early Christians who introduced it in the 3rd century AD. The plants certainly have naturalised, and have been unfazed by the submergence of intermittent floods, as well as surviving the Great Storm of 1987, when countless bulbs were thrown upwards and suspended in the trees. The ground was harrowed and fresh beeches, along with the bulbs, were replanted. Nowadays we are benefiting from the uniformity and maturity of the beech trees and snowdrops in this beautiful landscape. We had the opportunity to buy the *Galanthus nivalis* specimens for £3.00 in their shop.

I understand that the yellow aconites are becoming invasive in the grounds, but when I saw them they acted as a perfect *aperitif* for the snowdrops. On returning from the woodlands I had not bothered to look up beyond the carpet, but the dogwood was like a beacon of colour and a great opportunity for more photographs. Just as we were about to leave a group of super-fit City types arrived. They only had an hour, never enough time, but they stressed they were fit and could get about quickly

Snowdrops are big business nowadays. An example of this, a single specimen of the *Galanthus plicatus* from the original collection of E A Bowles of Myddelton House was sold for £350.00 on eBay. The Chelsea Physic Garden's most expensive specimen was £47.00; altogether, a fascinating February hobby.

Antony Glaser



MEMBERS IN ACTION!

Dusty Lori won the Joan Axon Shield for the Best Floral Exhibit in the recent LHS Spring Show. Very excitingly, she has been selected to enter the Floral Art competition at the Chelsea Flower Show in May this year. The subject is, appropriately, "Panache"! Her entry will be on display from Thursday 26th May (when the judging takes place at 6am) until the end of the show – so if you are visiting, take a look and see how she has done.

Audrey Hammond, who has twice spoken at our Wednesday evening talks on flower painting, is taking part in the Dulwich Festival's *Artists' Open House 2011* event. Her studio at 56, Gipsy Hill, London SE19 will be open on both weekends – 7th-8th and 14th-15th May. She will be showing paintings in watercolour and acrylic, and etchings, linocuts and cards. See www.audreyhammond.wetpaint.com

Linda Jackson, the Society's herb expert, has published her book "Herbal Teas and Recipe Book". The book is published by AuthorHouse, ISBN 978-1-4389-3867-7. It can be bought via Amazon or direct from the publisher.

SOUTH LONDON MASTER GARDENERS

Volunteer network supporting people and communities to grow fruit and vegetables in their gardens and on local communal land

The Master Gardener project has been up and running in Lambeth since last June. Master Gardeners have two to many decades growing experience. They have the enthusiasm to share their skills, knowledge and passion for growing fruit and veg with novice or newer growers. Kate Daly, member of Lambeth Horticultural Society, has just done the two day Master Gardener training. "It was brilliant! I updated my knowledge of organic growing and got ideas about how to reach and engage new people into growing."

The programme is managed by [Garden Organic](#), the national charity for organic gardening. Garden Organic is the working name for the Henry Doubleday Research Association (HDRA), which has been promoting organic gardening for over 50 years. Master Gardeners support families, couples, individuals, community gardens, work-based growing spaces and more. Advice is about preparing ground, using raised beds and containers, and can be about growing on balconies and windowsills. People don't want to wait for an allotment that may never become available. "Our Master Gardeners have been key to developing our growing" says Nicola at the Cottington Community Garden in Kennington. "We've done seed-sowing, transplanting, had a compost workshop and decided to grow fruit bushes too, now."

For Master Gardeners it's a chance to develop understanding of organic guidelines, engage with different parts of the community, get free membership of Garden Organic, meet and volunteer with likeminded people from a range of backgrounds and ages. You may also develop new skills and confidence. Master Gardener Claire Benson recently gave a presentation at a Transition Town meeting on growing heritage varieties in pots. "Though I was so nervous, it has given me great confidence to stand up in front of people". Claire has given up her PA job and wants to become a teacher. She has started volunteering with a school growing project.



A volunteer masterclass

The Master Gardener Programme is a three-year pilot, now 18 months in. It has five projects around England: Warwickshire, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Islington and South London. The aim is to roll out the programme nationally, supported by local finance. LB Lambeth, through their Green Community Champion Officer, Sue Sheehan, contributes to South London Master Gardeners.

Interested in becoming a Master Gardener yourself? Find out more about the Master Gardener programme, <http://southlondon.mastergardeners.org.uk> and watch out for us at events in South London this summer. The next training is on 9th and 10th September 2011. "The training was really well resourced and I thoroughly enjoyed it", says Kate. "I am raring to go".

Fiona Law

You can contact Fiona Law, South London Master Gardener Coordinator on 07584 343847, [flaw@gardenorganic.org.uk](mailto:f.law@gardenorganic.org.uk)

Visit our website www.mastergardeners.org.uk

N (?) K – NOW WE ARE SHORT OF PHOSPHATE

Just as the concept of peak oil has been conveniently buried under other bad news by governments the world over, so the approach of peak phosphate, possibly by 2033, is being swept under the carpet. Reduced availability of phosphate, with the resultant increase in prices, will have a profound effect on farmers and growers, as well as gardeners.

Phosphate (calcium phosphate) is a compound formed from the element phosphorus (P), calcium (Ca) and oxygen (O). It is present in all living things, as a component of cell membranes and DNA, and is involved in energy release. Plants need it to grow healthy roots. While levels of P in soil are usually adequate, it may be in a form unavailable to plants. To compensate for this, we can add phosphate as fertiliser from a variety of organic sources – bone meal, animal manures (especially chicken manure), or composted green waste. In extreme cases, organic growers may add mined rock phosphate, but need permission from their certifying body (eg the Soil Association). Conventional (non-organic) growers use triple super phosphate - rock phosphate chemically treated so the P is better available.

Unfortunately, applying phosphate to the land, particularly in non-organic growing, is very wasteful – only 10% is taken up by plants. Most is washed away by heavy rain and ends up as a pollutant in rivers and ground waters. Organic practices can reduce this by improving the soil structure, and using P-scavenging plants as green manures, such as buckwheat.

In 2009, 158 million tonnes of phosphate rock was mined worldwide. Two thirds of this was mined in just three countries – China (35%), USA (17%) and Morocco (15%). China has now restricted, and the USA stopped, exports of its phosphates. In the UK we have no phosphate deposits, so we are dependent on imports. The price rose by 700% in the 15 months up to 2010. It is easy to see how this affects the prices of

all fertilised edibles – fruit, vegetables and grain-fed meat.

To combat this problem, we need to change three things – how we farm, what we eat and how we deal with human waste.

Organic farming systems are already using techniques which will need to be adopted by all farmers: managing nutrient loss; using farmyard manure, crop residues and green waste composts as fertilisers; increasing P availability to plants by encouraging micro-organisms and mycorrhizal fungi.

Reducing the amount of meat in our diets can also reduce phosphate demand. Vegetables convert P inputs into dietary P much more efficiently than livestock, especially those fed on grain grown using artificial fertilisers. We will need to eat a diet based on vegetables, with reduced meat, preferably that fed on grassland.

One source of P which is currently completely wasted is household sewage, as we use a “flush-and-forget” system of disposal. Only 10% of the 3 million tonnes of P excreted by the global human population each year is returned to agricultural soils. In the UK, the majority of treated biosolids from sewage sludge is returned to the land, but it is not allowed on organic farmland due to historical concerns about toxic heavy metals. Ecological sanitation systems use sewage as a resource, collecting it separately from wastewater, and treating it so it can be used in agriculture. The Soil Association is pressing the EU to permit properly-controlled sewage sludge to be used on organic-certified land.

A new partnership between Thames Water and Ostara Nutrient Recovery has invented a process to extract P while unblocking sewage pipes. This will be recycled as a slow-release fertiliser. Definitely a step in the right direction!

Val Hunn

Sources: The Organic Way 199, Spring 2010, pp 20-21; Living Earth 242, Spring 2011, pp18-21; The Organic Way 202, Spring 2011, p6.

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.

Please ensure you read the Terms and Conditions for entry, which can be found on the following two pages, the LHS website, or at The Hut.

The Terms and Conditions also explain how you can enter, and the minimum requirements for the image size.

Get snapping!

Annie James

Lambeth Horticultural Society Calendar 2012 photo competition

Terms and Conditions

1. The COMPETITION

1.1 The Lambeth Horticultural Society Calendar Photo Competition ("the competition") is open to all current members of the Lambeth Horticultural Society. The organiser of the Competition is the Lambeth Horticultural Society ("we"/"us").

1.2 Images that have won an award in another public photo competition or are being promoted through any online commercial library are not eligible.

1.3 All entries must be submitted to Annie James. They may be emailed to LHScalendar2012@Gmail.com or posted to 72 Thurlstone Road, London, SE27 0PD.

1.4 You can use any type of camera to create your images but the following are the minimum requirements for the image:

- Landscape in orientation (i.e., longer in width than height)
- If emailed, in JPG format and at a resolution of 1024 x 768 or more (with a minimum of 640 x 480).
- If posted, no smaller than 6 inches by 4 inches

However, it is recommended that you submit photographs at the largest size/highest resolution possible. The final calendar will be reproduced in A4 size and photographs may need to be excluded if they cannot be successfully enlarged to that size

1.5 Each entry should be accompanied by a title and, if possible, when the photo was taken, the name of the photographer, their contact details and their LHS membership number (receipt of photographs will only be acknowledged if an email address is supplied).

1.6 The closing date for entries is 31st July 2011. Entries will be invalid if they are received after this date.

1.7 You agree that, by submitting your image and entering the Competition, you will grant the permission referred to in point 9.

1.8 By entering into the Competition, you hereby warrant that all information submitted by you is true, current and complete. We reserve the right to verify the eligibility of all entrants.

2. ENTRY FEES

2.1 Entry to the competition is free.

3. ENTRY CATEGORY

3.1 The competition is for photographs on a horticultural theme.

4. CHOSEN ENTRIES

4.1 The images chosen for the calendar will be from those entries that have met the image quality criteria and been selected by the judging panel. All winners will be notified by email, telephone or post after final judging has taken place.

4.2 The decision of the judges is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Should any entries fall below the standard required by the competition then we reserve the right to not consider the entry and/or remove it from the competition. We may also decide, in our absolute discretion, to change the rules of the Competition while it is running if it appears to us that it would be equitable or desirable to do so.

5. CRITERIA FOR ENTRY

5.1 Please refer to point 1.5 for details about the minimum image size accepted.

5.2 Digital manipulation by software such as Photoshop is allowed. Such manipulation must be carried out by you, the entrant, and not by a third party.

6. JUDGING

6.1 A panel of judges will assess all the submitted images and chose the final 12 pictures. A list of the chosen images will be posted on the Lambeth Horticultural website (www.lambethhorticulturalsociety.co.uk).

7. COPIES

7.1 Please ensure that you keep copies of submitted images. We cannot be held responsible for the safe storage of any printed or electronic images submitted to the competition, including Acts of God which may cause the images to be destroyed or damaged in some way. If you want your photograph to be returned, please include a stamped addressed envelope.

8. PRIZES

8.1 There are no prizes in this competition other than having your photograph reproduced in the calendar.

9. COPYRIGHT AND PERMISSIONS

9.1 By submitting images to the competition, you confirm and warrant that:

9.1.1 You are the sole author of each entry and that it is your original work;

9.1.2 You are the sole owner of the copyright in each image;

9.1.3 You have the permission of those pictured in the image (or, where the image shows any persons under 18, the consent of their parent/guardian) for the usage rights required by the Lambeth Horticultural Society and will indemnify the Lambeth Horticultural Society against any claims made by any third parties in respect of such infringement;

9.1.4 You have not licensed or disposed of any rights in the image that would conflict with uses to be made by the Lambeth Horticultural Society;

9.1.5 You have received any necessary permission(s) from the owner(s) of property included in submitted images for the usage rights required by the Lambeth Horticultural Society;

9.1.6 You will be responsible for any claim by any third party in respect of your entry.

10. CHANGES TO THE RULES

10.1 We reserve the right to amend the Rules and if we do so, we will publish the amended version on the Lambeth Horticultural Society website. It is your responsibility to check regularly to make sure you are aware of any updated information. If you do not agree to any changes to these Rules, then your only remedy is to withdraw from the Competition.

11. GOVERNING LAW

11.1 These Rules and the relationship between you and us shall be governed by the law of England and Wales.

LATEST NEWS FROM THE BEE FRONT

"If honeybees become extinct, human society will follow in four years". (Attrib. Einstein)

Research continues on several fronts to try to establish why our honeybees seem to be weakening and, in many cases, dying off, threatening the survival of agriculture – and humans - world-wide.

Results from the University of Sussex show that bees travel further to collect nectar in July and August than they do at the beginning (March) and end (Autumn) of their season. Gardeners provide valuable help by growing flowers which bloom for longer than the bees' natural food sources, thus extending the nectar calendar. (The Garden, February 2011). This research has been funded by Waitrose, Burt's Bees and Nineveh Charitable Trust.

The University of Aberdeen has been looking into the varroa mite, a pest blamed for much of the honeybees' decline. In a recent breakthrough, scientists have been able to fool the varroa mite's immune system into attacking itself. The technique will target the mite in the hive, and will not affect the bees, or other pollinating insects. Gardeners are urged to grow flowers rich in pollen and nectar to feed the bees. The best are foxgloves, clover, knapweed, cornflowers, buddleia, delphinium, hollyhocks, comfrey, lavender, alliums, asters and sunflowers. Also good are flowering herbs such as mint varieties and rosemary. (Waitrose Weekend, 13 January 2011).

The sharp-eyed amongst you, if watching Carol Klein's TV series on her own garden a few months ago, may have noticed a man installing a strange-looking beehive in one corner of her garden. A glimpse of it was seen in *Gardener's World* last week, but its significance has not really been made clear. The man was Phil Chandler, an American known as "The barefoot beekeeper", which is the title of his 2007 book. He believes that we humans are responsible for the bees' downfall, because of our domestication of them, pointing out that they had managed perfectly well for 50 million years or so without us. "It's only when we came along and started sticking them into boxes with nice neat frames with foundation



Phil's top-bar hive

[wax sheets] on them that they started having problems", he says. (Daily Telegraph, April 16th 2011).

He thinks that we are keeping bees in conditions which they do not really like, and adding chemicals to control pests, which results in resistant pests.



Natural comb hanging from a top-bar

Phil's idea is "natural beekeeping", putting the bees first – allowing them to swarm, which is part of their natural life-cycle; not using smoke to "calm" them (which panics them into collecting up honey) , but spraying with water; minimal interference with the hive, ensuring heat and pheromones are not lost; not taking honey - the bees' natural food – unless there is a surplus. He has designed his hive as a "top-bar" type, where the bees can make their own combs, which hang from a series of wooden bars along the top of the hive, which explains its peculiar elongated shape.

The photos are from Phil Chandler's website www.biobees.com where you can find more information and free downloads of his books and leaflets.

Other websites about natural beekeeping are:

www.natural-beekeeping.co.uk which discusses the use of the Warre hive.

www.naturalbeekeepingtrust.org offers courses, talks and workshops, based at a Sussex biodynamic farm.

www.friendsofthebees.org is a charity founded to conserve and protect bees

Val Hunn

THATU UPDATE

Those of you who have supported Thatu will want to know that contributions really do help to bring about change. So here is a short progress report.



This year Thatu is helping support two projects. School grounds on the windswept Cape Flats are the centre of an expanding home gardening initiative. The four centre gardeners are gaining in confidence and skills, and are starting to make a small income. If funding can be found for workshops for them, by the end of 2011 they will have had sufficient training to be able to be employed part time as Field Assistants, thus taking the home gardening initiative even further.

We have been able to help 20 more home gardens to be started. People sign a contract and pay a small amount in order to get a year's support to establish their own organic home garden. They also attend workshops on health and nutrition, energy-saving by making and using a hot box, and cooking economical meals. Slowly a community is being transformed as people join in a bartering scheme, learn about making and selling preserves, and jewellery and crafts from recycled materials, and so start generating an income and improve their lives. But success breeds success, and the waiting list grows of people wanting to join.



Paul's Home Garden being prepared – flourishing only a few months later. See the Thatu website for the story (Projects – Soil for Life)

In Kwazulu Natal all four schools we supported last year are continuing to expand their gardening and environmental activities. This has been in spite of unseasonal weather, goats and chickens and a fire all destroying carefully created food gardens. But more and more teachers are getting involved enthusiastically, as are the surrounding communities as they are helped to start their own home gardens.

But Thatu, like all charities, is finding it difficult this year to raise sufficient funds to help these projects which we know to be innovative, reliable and of course, needy. So please can you help us to help these people's worthwhile efforts? How about approaching a local school or church to organise an event, or make a one-off donation? What about an office challenge to see who can collect the most small change? Could you introduce us to the person who organises a company's charitable giving? Thatu also needs practical help here in London and the South East. For example have you time to write a few applications to Trusts for Thatu, or even to fundraise for us?

Every little helps.



What joy from one onion and carrot!

Margery Povall

Tel: 07910 332 939, or 020 86744972

Website: www.thatu.org Email: info@thatu.org

NEW WINTER GARDEN IN BATTERSEA PARK

In the south-west corner of Battersea Park, a new Winter Garden was opened in March 2011. Dan Pearson has designed this 1.66 acre garden, incorporating the existing mature trees and a cluster of Persian ironwoods, *Parrotia persica*, now the centrepiece of a sunken area, with chippings, limestone rocks and curving, yin-yang segments of dark planting and open grass. The mood is Japanese, with white birches at the entrance and dogwoods on the fringes. Red chaenomeles, red witch-hazel, holly and many other shrubs give colour and contrast. The Friends of Battersea Park raised £150,000 over six years to finance the project.

(Daily Telegraph, Saturday 12th March 2011)

WHAT IS 'ST JAMES'.....?

As a new entrant in the Spring Show, representing St James's Church, Park Hill SW4 (between Brixton & Clapham Common) I entered six sections of the Flower Classes. I was asked to write this article about the church garden as I was instrumental in transforming the run-down, neglected church grounds. A newly-appointed priest was about to arrive, and we thought that the church did not look an inviting place for him in which to work.

Nearly two years ago, apart from the grass being cut regularly (until the mower broke!), nothing else was done. The little blue-flowering weed borage was rampant, invasive and up to waist high. I for one am allergic to it, as it brings up a nasty rash as if stung with stinging nettles, which were also in profusion. Bindweed, saplings and brambles choked what remained of the shrubs and roses. Thank God for Tumbleweed!

In the grounds were also a listed pair of pink double-flowering cherry trees (one already dead and the other past its best) and an old, large, named sycamore tree, besides many other prunus, holm oaks and elders and sapling sycamores. Many of these trees had been self-seeded saplings, not removed some fifteen years ago, and left to grow and therefore now requiring urgent attention!

As you can appreciate, much heavy work was required to chop back and start 'the dig', before ever the gentle tending of flowerbeds could begin. The concept was that our church garden should be for the community to enjoy. The dog walkers already were using it and not clearing up the mess; the area was a danger at night because of vagrants, drug addicts and overgrown shrubbery. I think you can get the picture of what the grounds were like!!

Because of the safety aspect (there is a public right of way through the grounds), the local community police, Neighbourhood Watch and local residents besides the church members, became involved in the transformation. The Probation Service with the Community Payback Scheme – where offenders who didn't go to prison did supervised hours in the community – started 'the dig' some eighteen months ago, which loosened the soil and removed some of the invasive weeds – however, it is a long, hard battle as all the root-systems were not removed and it is a slow job, but we are making considerable progress.

Once the main 'borage patch' (approx 30' x 20') had been cleared and re-cleared, it was suggested

that it should be a Wild Meadow Memorial Garden. It was seeded, by all who attended a major memorial service for a previous priest of the parish last year, with annual wild mix seeds (one for shady and one for full sun combined with grass). Regretfully, the dry and scorching sun did not let it reach its full potential, but as this is a learning curve, it was suggested as a better solution to sow a seed tray of 24 dividers to plant out when plants are more established, and it will be repeated twice to have follow-on flowering into the autumn.

Many of the original plants - geraniums, polyanthus, wallflowers and bulbs - put in the first 'East End' flowerbed by the Foundation Stone - have succeeded for the second year and three wallflowers won a prize in the Spring Show. A sack of early daffodils, besides 'offcasts' of previous years' bulbs given to the church, had been planted very late in the Memorial Garden and these also won prizes because they flowered so late this year, together with a large vase of flowering foliage which also gained a 'First'. I was sorry that there was no section for pansies in the show – perhaps another year?

It has been a year of hard work, but with its rewards. We extend our grateful thanks particularly to all our local community, and to Betty Cox from LHS for providing 'shade plants' for the north flower bed, and giving encouragement with the offer of asking for some 'full sun plants' when the south flowerbed has been fully dug. Without everyone's efforts, the garden would not be so organised and colourful. There is still lots of work to be done. The next exciting phase is about to commence – it has taken approximately eighteen months to gain the necessary church and council permissions - to pollard and in some cases cut down the trees which are dead, dying or past their best. The two 'protected' flowering cherry trees at the East End will be replaced and we will be planting another two trees in the grounds (species yet to be decided.)

As this garden is open to the public at all times, you can view it by walking up Park Hill from Parson's Corner, buses 35, 37 & 417. This garden has now become a great out-reach into the locality as we continue to make this a Community Garden for everyone to enjoy. Any contributions or suggestions are still welcome and gratefully received. My contact number is: Sue Wallace 020 7733 4846 or 07956 261736, or through The Hut.

Sue Wallace

NEW LEAF: THE WEST DULWICH PROJECT

“Path of Natural Knowledge”

In 2006, the plant historian and professional gardener, Vinnie O’Connell, who also worked at Kew Gardens, the Chelsea Physic Garden and Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses, set up the ‘New Leaf’ charity. The aim of the project is about working to encourage an understanding of nature, on the basis that if we understand nature, we will care for it more so in modern times.

And educationally, how this is achieved is by providing opportunities to learn about the plant and insect life in the surrounding area and giving a chance to young people to do volunteer work and at the same time as learning gardening skills.

Most excitingly, New Leaf is creating from scratch on the banks of either side of West Dulwich Train Station, a timeline of the history of plants, phylogeny, which is the story of the evolution of plants, as an educational resource for everyone to be aware that plants do and did more than just look pretty! As to walk the platform is going to be like a step back in time. Time travel at its best!!



The Phylogeny Garden at West Dulwich station



The phylogeny mural inside the New Leaf shop

gardening and environmental projects for them to learn gardening skills and hopefully develop new interests in conservation and nature.

However, much more help and funding is sought after, so any monetary donations are very much needed to keep the project afloat and to put it on a secure footing for the future. As well, new volunteers are required to lend a hand in the garden, fundraising or as a trustee.

So if you can spare a few hours a week or a month, or think you can help out in any other way, please get in touch with Vinnie O’Connell on: 0795 0509 7455 or write to him at: The New Leaf Shop, West Dulwich Station (entrance/exit to platform 2) c/o 134A Thurlow Park Road, London SE21 8HN.

www.new-leaf.org.uk

Email: info@new-leaf.org.uk

Mavarine Du-Marie

PLUS CA CHANGE.....GARDENING IN LONDON OVER THE LAST CENTURY.....

John Dalziel, Secretary of the London Gardens Society, wrote the following in the Society's bulletin of 15th April 2011.

‘INTRODUCTION: TODAY AND YESTERDAY

“A caretaker digs his dockland garden; a woman on Blackfriars Road grows cowslips, dahlias and chrysanthemums on a factory roof; a tram-driver plants his border among the chemical vapours of Canning Town; an unemployed man in Hackney helps children to escape their tarmac environment by teaching them to cultivate plots of flowers; the men from the Inland Revenue in Somerset House stock and tend their neighbourhood garden in the churchyard of St Mary-le Strand; a solitary old man watches over the tulips growing in his window-box”.

‘A slightly earlier reference in a book titled “London Pride” outlines the struggle that Londoners had to garden in a city whose smoke and smog killed plants by blocking essential sunlight and turning soil acid and sour. The article then states that the then newly-formed London Gardens Society (whilst this name may have been adopted at the time, the Society historically was active from its beginnings in the late 1800’s) made efforts to encourage citizens to grow flowers, especially in areas of London that were considered dull and ugly. It then states that under the patronage of Queen Mary, the Society held competitions and offered prizes for the best-kept garden and in 1938 an astonishing 65000 entered as competitors of which 1611 were judged in the final of the All London Championship. Wow!

‘I am indebted to Mike Fitt OBE, Vice Chairman of our Horticultural and Judges’ Committees and particularly his wife Barbara for finding these items in the book “London Pride” published by Anaya Publishers Ltd in association with the Museum of London. Although the first article is from the book it was originally first published on 10th June 1939 in the “Picture Post” magazine of that time.

‘Although the smoke and smog and their adverse effects may have disappeared, the observations on what was happening could have almost been a snapshot of gardening today and it is good to know that our Society is continuing to encourage citizens to brighten up London through their horticultural efforts.’



Urban wild flowers (RHS website)

.....and CITIES STILL NEED PLANTS!

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) is publishing in May 2011 a new report which highlights the importance of domestic gardens in urban areas. In cities and towns, gardens

account for about 25% of the land, and up to 47% of the urban green space. They also contain about a quarter of the UK’s non-woodland or forest trees. The report, on urban greening, gives an overview of urban green space and how we use it. The report reveals that plants can cool the air in summer, help to insulate homes in winter, reduce flood risk, and support high biodiversity. Even small gardens, with a range of flora and fauna, can become mini-nature reserves and part of wildlife corridors. The smaller the garden, the more important is the choice of plants, as a greater proportion will be non-plant, such as paving. Front gardens are especially important – the RHS has many alternatives to impermeable paving and hard-standing, which means that front gardens can still be a good resource.

See www.rhs.org.uk/urbangreening for more information. After 23rd May, you can take part in an online survey into how people garden in urban areas.

Val Hunn

Dates for 2011

- 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: A year in my garden** Tony Kane, *an enthusiastic amateur gardener and inspired photographer, will give us an illustrated tour of the events in his garden over one year.*
- 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** (Nettlefold Hall, 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** (Nettlefold Hall, 8pm)
- November 23rd **Talk: Introducing the New Leaf Project** Vinnie O'Connell, *plant historian and professional gardener, will tell us about his project at West Dulwich Station. He is developing a timeline of the history of plants, and giving young people the chance to work with him and learn gardening skills. (See "New Leaf", p13).*

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!

Calling all photographers!

Many of us have been tempted out with our cameras in the recent lovely weather. Why not send in some of your shots for the LHS Calendar 2012? (See pp7-9).

Perhaps you would also like to enter the popular photographic classes at the LHS Summer Show, on 3rd September 2011.

The classes will be: 2 coloured prints - "Useful things - Aesthetic things"

1 print - "Time"

1 print - "Shape, form and texture"

Best of luck!

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)

*Please remember to show
your membership card*

Sunday: 10.00am – 12.30pm (last customer 12.15)

Exceptions - The Hut will be closed on Show dates – July 16th/17th (Lambeth Country Show, but please check nearer the time) and Saturday 3rd September (LHS Summer Show)

SALE DATES

BEDDING PLANTS SALE: Last chance - 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.

LIBRARY

We have a comprehensive library of over 500 books, as well as magazines and videos, all free for you to borrow! The library is open during normal Hut hours, and is run by Mavarine Du-Marie.

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

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