

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 27th January 7.30pm
Cookham Dean Village Hall

“How to be a 21st Century Gardener”
A talk by Timothy Walker

Director of Oxford Botanic Garden

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

As I write this letter, the snow is about 8” thick outside and still falling - everywhere looks incredibly beautiful and very silent. Unlike the first snowfall just before Christmas, when we lost our phone line for a week as BT couldn't get down the lane to repair it, and we were unable to leave the house for 3 days, we are hoping that this time communication will be maintained and we shall be able to get about a bit more easily. However, it does mean that one can do hardly anything in the garden until we have a proper thaw and then of course it will all be extremely wet.

Anyway, we have a very good year's programme planned, starting with a real send-off with Tim Walker of Oxford Botanic Garden. As most of you will know, he is an excellent speaker who always attracts a good audience, and his subject this time “Gardening in the 21st century” should give us plenty of food for thought. I thought we ended last year on an excellent note, the AGM was very well attended, we had some delicious wine and mince-pies and Jan Sambrook's talk on “Hollies” was a real eye-opener, to me anyway. The examples she brought with her were so attractive and I for one will certainly consider this plant when I have to replant or fill some of the space in my garden.

Chris Sibbald, who was responsible for putting together those lovely Christmas ‘hampers’ as raffle prizes at our November meeting, has asked me to tell you that, because you were all so generous, she was not able to use all she was given, so the surplus items will be used for future raffles in the coming months. A good monthly raffle is a valuable source of income for the society, so please keep them coming.

The Committee will be meeting again on Monday 18 January, so if you want us to discuss anything or have any suggestions for future activities, please let one of the committee or myself know before then. In the meantime, let's hope the snow finally departs and we can start thinking about the garden in 2010, at the moment, with more snow forecast and many of us unable to get out, it seems a distant prospect – I've still got some bulbs I haven't planted!

Happy New Year to everyone, and I look forward to seeing you at our January meeting.

Susie Tremlett



PLANT EXCHANGE

The NCPPG has sent the Society a list of plants offered and Wanted for their Plant Exchange scheme. The list (in A-Z format) is 34 pages long but if anyone is interested please let me know and I will either print it off or email it to you GT

HOLLIES

For those of you who were inspired by Jan Sambrook's talk on hollies and would like to plant more, below is a list of male and female varieties. Hollies are dioecious, male and female reproductive organs are separated onto different plants, meaning that fertilisation and production of fruit (berries) takes place on the female plant and will occur if male and female plants are found growing close together so that male pollen can reach the female plant.

MALE HOLLIES

Ilex x altaclarensis : Atkinsonii, Moorei, Hodginsii
Ilex aquifolium : Argentea longifolia, Ciliata, Crispa, Elegantissima, Ferox, Ferox Aurea, Golden Queen, Golden Milkboy, Silver Queen, Victoria.

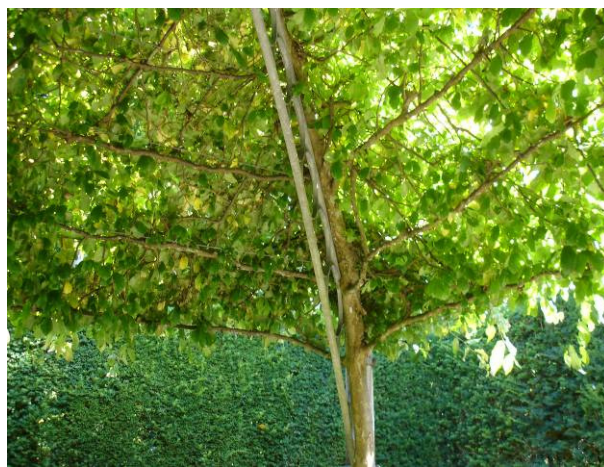
FEMALE HOLLIES

Ilex x altaclarensis : Golden King, Hendersonii, James G Esson, Purple Shaft,
Ilex aquifolium: Argentea marginata, Aurea marginata, Ciliata major, Silver Milkboy
Ilex : Indian Chief, Doctor Kassab
Ilex x meserveae : Goliath

To make it even more confusing, *Ilex aquifolium* 'Angustifolia' has male and female versions, as does *Ilex a.* 'Myrtifolia'
GT

NATIONAL TRUST GARDENS

In our search for new and unusual gardens it is easy to forget the wealth of horticultural expertise and innovation in the NT gardens around the country. There is a constant programme of renovation and new ambitious Head Gardeners are always making their mark on gardens. Last autumn we visited Castle Drogo which was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens for Julius Drewe, the founder of Home and Colonial Stores. The house was constructed in the 20th century but designed to look like a medieval castle. It stands high above the Teign gorge on the edge of Dartmoor in a magnificent setting, with formal gardens and a large estate of woodland and riverside walks. The formal garden, surrounded by clipped yew hedging, is the highest owned by the NT and has a sunken rose garden, herbaceous borders, a huge circular croquet lawn and a fragrant garden. I particularly liked the two large four cornered arbours created by trained *parrotia persica* trees (detail above) which were just starting to colour up in the early September. There is a brand new visitor centre so if you are heading West down the A30 do take time out to visit.....but choose a settled day as even the guides say the site can experience extreme weather conditions!!
GT



SEEDS OF RECOVERY

It is a shocking fact that more than 20,000 veterans of our armed forces are either on probation or in prison; more than the total number of personnel in Afghanistan at present. 'Gardening Leave' is the only charity in the country offering horticultural therapy to former servicemen and women with mental health problems. Veterans with post traumatic stress disorder and other psychological

damage often slip through the net of care agencies, resulting in long term symptoms which can be devastating for personnel and their families. Gardening Leave was set up by Anna Baker Cresswell at Holllybush House near Ayr. Gardening jobs have different effects; sowing or potting up for example helps with anxiety, as it is calming and methodical, which means you have control over the task. Planting bulbs can help peoples attention span, as you can break the activity into small, achievable tasks, such as finding the pots and getting the crocks for the bottom. During the long winter months when veterans can suffer from seasonal affected disorder, Anna aims to repair the dilapidated Victorian glasshouses to give welcome under cover areas to raise indoor plants in the future. For further information see www.gardeningleave.org.

Garden in Bloom Awards 2009

The Garden in Bloom Award Scheme was introduced in 1992 to acknowledge the important contribution that private gardens can make to the appearance of a town or village. Any individual private garden, groups of gardens or community garden which is visible to passers-by, that is from the road or footpath, is eligible for an award.

The scheme links to the Britain in Bloom Campaign. Our scheme operates throughout the Royal Borough and is run by Borough Councillors and some Parish Councils (as in the Cookhams.) Gardens are assessed, sometimes with help from local professional gardeners.

The criteria upon which the gardens are judged include overall impact, design, use of space and colour, general tidiness and any extra features which add to the display.

This year the scheme was sponsored by Windflowers, a trade nursery based in Burnham and Farnham Common Nurseries, an independent nursery which has been recommended previously by several members. One of our members, Stephanie Shortland, was overall runner-up for the Cookham Ward and several other members were among those commended for their efforts.

MD

SNOWDROP TIME

From the end of this month there should be plenty of opportunities for their snowdrop displays. Those closest to us include Waterperry Oxfordshire, Welford Park nr Newbury, Cerney House and Painswick Gloucestershire. Foxgrove Plants at Enborne near Newbury is hosting an on snowdrops on February 8th 2-4pm.(0845 612 1253 to book) .A full list www.greatbritishgardens/snowdrops . If you want to add to your own them 'in the green' after flowering in late spring. Snowdrops like a well on the alkaline side . Split clumps when they become congested. Well known snowdrop suppliers include Avon Bulbs, Broadleigh Bulbs, Foxgrove Plants and Harveys Garden Plants. (All have web sites using these names followed by .co.uk) For a catalogue from Dr Ronald Mackenzie, an award winning RHS exhibitor, please send an A5 sae to The Snowdrop Company, Barn Cottage, Shilton, Oxfordshire OX18 4AB



to visit gardens famed
Gardens in
Rococo Garden in
RHS talk and guided tour
of venues can be found on
collection, try to plant
drained deep, loamy soil

DISCOVERING WELSH GARDENS - 23 February 2010

International photographer, Charles Hawes, is coming to Cookham on 23 February from his home in Wales to give an illustrated talk "Discovering Welsh Gardens" which is taken from the recent book by Stephen Anderton for which Charles did the photography. The talk takes you through a tour of 20 Welsh gardens during which Charles gives some tips on garden photography and makes some candid remarks about the gardens themselves. This is a fantastic opportunity to hear a first rate speaker. The talk will take place on Tuesday 23 February at the Cookham Dean Village Hall at 2.30pm. For more information contact Liz Kwantes 01628 525130 or liz@cookham.com.

CHRISTOPHER LLOYD: A LIFE AT GREAT DIXTER

New exhibition opening 1 April 2010 At The Garden Museum (www.gardenmuseum.org.uk)

Celebrating the life and work of “Christo”, one of the great characters of British gardening, the exhibition promises to be ideal for groups with an enthusiasm for gardening and historic houses. Bringing together personal objects from Christopher’s home at Great Dixter, recollections and stories from his friends and colleagues, his writing and gardens the exhibition will be the first major retrospective on his life and work since his death in 2006. The Museum has also has an excellent café on site, The Garden Café, which serves home made vegetarian food and cakes – a perfect way to round off a visit to the Garden Museum (additional charges apply). **If Society members are interested in this exhibition it is possible to have a guided group tour. Please let one of the Committee know at the next meeting.**

Why not plan your visit to the Museum to coincide with one of the Plant Fairs?

Specialist nurseries display and sell their plants in the Museum throughout the year. Already confirmed for 2010 are the **Auricula Theatre** in late April when the Dowager Marchioness of Salisbury’s display of show auriculas takes centre stage and Pops Plants will be in residence; and on **Sunday 25 April** we will be hosting our annual **Spring Plants & Gardens Fair** with over 20 specialist nurseries bringing their wares to the Museum.

Please ask about other Plant Fairs and horticulture events when you make your booking

STOP PRESS ITEMS

SEEDS

The January deadline for the final Suttons seed orders is Wednesday 27th January. Please send cash or a cheque (payable to Cookham and Cookham Dean Hort Soc) with your order to Chris Sibbald, Half Timbers, Alleyns Lane, Cookham Dean, SL6 9AE

DREAM GARDEN

Only a fifth of members have responded to this request so please dig out your forms or just write down on a piece of paper the plants you would always grow again if you moved house in the area and bring to the meeting or just email me (GT) your list. Up to five each of small trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals, climbers and bulbs. No latin names needed and it can be completely anonymous! This is a chance to use these dark evenings to imagine your Dream Garden and your opportunity to give something back to the Society. Carolyn Foster and I hope to present the results next winter.

GARDENING COURSE

Carolyn Foster is tutoring a WEA evening course at Cookham Dean Village Hall starting in January.

The topic will be **Practical Tips for Successful Gardening** and will run on Thursdays for 5 sessions beginning on the 14th January from 7.45 to 9.45pm. The fee is £38 and there are a few places left. For more information or to secure your place on the course, please [contact Liz Crathorne on 01628 632208.](mailto:Liz.Crathorne@wea.org.uk)

JOHN CUSHNIE

Regular listeners to Gardeners’ Question Time will have heard of the sudden death of John Cushnie. John was a very witty contributor to the programme and once declared “ I have a passion for trees and shrubs, tolerate perennials, accept the need for annuals and put up with hanging baskets. I detest most ornamental grasses” I shall miss his humorous and knowledgeable contribution to the programme. GT

Deadline for February copy is 6th February to Gill Townend 01628 483092 or gilltownend@aol.com