

NEWSLETTER

May

2009

NEXT MEETING: **Wednesday 27th May at 7.30pm**

COOKHAM DEAN VILLAGE HALL

Paradise on Earth, the beautiful flowers of
Kashmir

Chairman's Letter

April and May are lovely months in the garden, with many shrubs covered in blossom and plants (and weeds!) growing strongly. It never ceases to amaze me that my 'shrubaceous' border, which looks pretty bare and depressing at the beginning of the year, suddenly spurts into growth and I remember things I planted last year which start showing some green shoots. I have a lovely *Exochorda x macrantha* 'The Bride' which has been covered in white blossom and although it does nothing else for the rest of the year, really shows itself off and justifies its existence in the spring. Unfortunately, we've had some pretty cold evenings and nights recently and certain plants have shown evidence of this – Brian Thompson came last week and inspected his sweet peas and



told me that they were showing signs of cold damage, but they will recover. His own new garden is in a frost pocket so he has to contend with this as well.

Carolyn Foster gave us a really excellent talk last month about 'extending the season in the border'. There were so many beautiful pictures to illustrate her theme and some of her ideas were very creative and stimulating. I was particularly interested in her use of plants that accentuate light and movement in the garden. Given that there was a big Cookham Festival event taking place at the same time in the

Village Hall next door we had an excellent attendance, partly I think because Carolyn's reputation goes before her. We are so lucky to have both her and Gill Townend in our

P.auricula ,RHS Spring

We're hoping to have fuchsia plugs available at our May meeting so that members can buy them and bring them on for entry into our competition for the best plant in September. I'm sure we shall have an interesting talk on the plants and flowers of

Kashmir and there will be more information about the outings planned for June and July. I hope to see you there.

Susie Tremlett

Tip from a member "Recently heard on the radio that ground coffee round plants keeps them free of slugs. They don't like the grittiness"

And a river runs through it.

Wind in the Willows, Moorhouse Farm Lane, off Lower Road, Higher Denham, Bucks. open for the National Gardens Scheme www.ngs.org.uk with two other Higher Denham gardens on Sun. 31st May, (1 – 5pm)

I was lucky enough to visit this garden last week, in perfect weather. It is "a 3 acre wildlife-friendly garden comprising informal, woodland and wild gardens separated by streams lined by iris and primulas." We were a little early for the irises, but the stream edges are also planted with marginal and bog-loving species, including over 80 hostas. Bright gold marsh marigolds were lit by the sunshine, but there were plenty of shady areas for newly unrolling ferns to enjoy. The soil is mixed but more acid-loving plants seem to do well. New banks have been created to improve the flow of the stream, thus helping to avoid flooding, using coconut matting and silt, planted up with *Iris sibirica*.



The stream is crossed by a red painted bridge, whose colour complements the bronze foliage of astilbes. Crossing the bridge brings the visitor to an area of mature trees, backed by farmland. Here we find many unusual ground cover plants such as *Smilacina stellata*, red and white trilliums and podophyllum (Spotty Dotty!) While snowdrops and daffodils were over, hellebores and comfrey were in abundance. Rhododendrons (including a

wonderful "Pink Pearl") and shrubs pieris and fothergilla (both acid lovers) were beginning to be in flower. They also promised plenty of Autumn colour. There was a delightful tulip, *Clusiana "Cynthia"*, with pointed cream and pink petals.

The wooded area thins out a little at the wilder edge of the property and here grew a rare Black Poplar, only 400 of which are left in the UK. The wood was used in the past to make farm implements such as wheels. This specimen was sadly cut down when it became unsafe, but cuttings taken by British Flora are flourishing and are helping a preservation project. The owner Ron James explained that the wild area especially needs careful management as plants can quickly become rampant.

Back towards the house we were intrigued by *Darmera peltata*, the umbrella plant, whose pink flowers rose triffid-like on white-haired stems close to the stream edge. Large rounded leaves appear later. This really is a garden for all seasons, full of surprises and well worth the drive as you will see if you manage a visit on May 31st. You won't be disappointed.

Mary Downes

A Good Day out

After break of many years my family and I visited Waddesdon Manor at Easter. Probably not the most peaceful time to go but Granny was with us and it seemed like a good idea at the time. Waddesdon Manor was built (1874-89) by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild to display his outstanding collection of art treasures and to entertain the fashionable world. It was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1957 and visitors to the house require a timed entry ticket. There are 45 rooms which house high quality French furniture, decorative arts and paintings. The house interior is rather dark to protect the paintings and furniture so an audio guide is a better option than the guide book which we couldn't read in the gloom!



The gardens are mainly formal and the famous parterre in front of the house was a riot of colour with the area in front of the aviary being restored to its former design as formal bedding, this year in white hyacinths. The carpet bedding birds were rather fun, see left, and I also enjoyed the winter interest garden which had beds featuring different colour themes using deciduous stems, evergreens and grasses.

There is plenty of activity for children at Waddesdon but try to take your own picnic as the catering was a disaster the day we went. There is also a plant centre, toy shop, wine cellar and the famous aviary.

Waddesdon Manor, nr Aylesbury HP18 OJH . No dogs allowed. See NT book for details of opening. (It took us about 45 minutes to get there, via Marlow,Stokenchurch, Thame and Long Crendon....a quiet and scenic route.) *Gill Townend*



THAMES HOSPICECARE EVENTS

PLANT SALE at WEMBURY, ALTWOOD CLOSE FRIDAY, 15TH MAY
from 10am onwards

Hanging baskets to order, patio pots, patio and basket plants, bedding plants, herbaceous perennials, tomato plants. Coffee, tea, homemade cakes and Ploughman's lunches. Raffle.

COOKHAM DEAN OPEN GARDENS DAY Sunday 14th June 2009 2-6pm. Please support this event with offers of help (plants,cakes,etc) to Barbara Dent 476512

Programme from May to December 2009.

Wednesdays at 7:30pm, at Cookham Dean Village Hall, unless otherwise indicated.

May 27th Christopher Chadwell "Paradise on Earth – The Beautiful Flowers of Kashmir."

Chris is a modern-day plant hunter specialising in the Himalayas.

June 24th Visit to The Plant Specialist Nursery and Garden, Whitefield Lane, Great Missenden, Bucks. at 6pm. Sean Walter, who runs the Nursery, will show us round and answer questions about their splendid collection of herbaceous perennials, grasses and bulbs. Parking is available close by but please share cars where possible. There will be a charge of £2 per person, to include tea and coffee. www.theplantspecialist.co.uk

Whitefield Lane is at the end of Great Missenden High Street, opposite the main entrance to Missenden Abbey. Maps will be available at the May meeting but if you have any questions in the meantime, please tel. Mary Downes, 01628 524881.

July 29th Visit to Thrive, the Horticultural Charity, The Geoffrey Udall Centre, Beech Hill, nr. Reading, at 5:30pm. Further details will be available soon.

August No meeting.

September 30th Cindy Barnes " Growing our own Future", a local project.

An opportunity to hear about local initiatives involving organic and sustainable gardening and agriculture, including an introduction to "Transition Town Maidehead". Vinnie McCann who runs Waltham Place and is an organic farmer, will also be speaking.

October 28th Elizabeth Farrar "Pansies, Violas and Sweet Violets"

The history and cultivation of these much loved but often misunderstood plants.

November 25th AGM and pre-Christmas meeting.

Jan Sambrook will be with us to talk about and show us specimens of several different kinds of **Holly**.

December No meeting.

STOP PRESS

I have a spare ticket available for Chelsea on Wednesday 20th May for the afternoon (3.30pm-8pm) £21. Contact me below;

Contributions for the June newsletter to Gill Townend on gilltownend@aol.com or phone 01628 483092, or post to The Farm, Bigfrith, Church Road, Cookham Dean SL6 9PR. I live in hope!!