

Cookham and Cookham Dean Horticultural Society

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 25th November 7.30pm
Cookham Dean Village Hall

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Followed by 'Know your Hollies'

by Jan Sambrook

*plus Wine and Mince Pies, Bumper raffle and a
Table Decoration competition!*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I'm sure everyone present enjoyed Elizabeth Farrar's talk on Pansies, Violas and Violets last month, what a delightful lady and her method of interspersing pictures of people who had been involved in some aspect of cultivating these lovely flowers made her presentation so much more interesting. A return visit from her at some time in the future would I'm sure be very popular.

I've been told that some of the daffodil bulbs that were sold at last month's meeting for the spring competition were soft, so if you would like replacements please collect them at the November meeting. We still have quite a few left, so if you wish to buy some more they will be available at 60p for five.

Despite her best efforts, Chris Sibbald has still not been able to track down any donors or families of donors who gave cups to the Society in the past, so we will hold on to them for the time being. The Committee has agreed that anyone who wins a cup in future should have it engraved themselves with their name if they wish.

Last year we asked members to bring Christmassy items to the November meeting so that we could make up small hampers for raffle prizes, and it was very successful. The money raised was donated to Thrive, the charity which encourages disabled and mentally ill people to learn how to garden. The Committee agreed that we should do the same this year, so please bring your donation along to the meeting.

As usual, we shall be holding our AGM at the next meeting, but there will also be our usual Christmas competition – details at the end of this letter. After the AGM there will be wine and mince-pies, or tea/coffee or soft drinks, and our speaker, Jan Sambrook, will judge the competition. We hope there will be a really good entry for her to choose from. When we are all suitably refreshed, Jan will give a talk on "Hollies" which is a very seasonal subject and may well inspire some ideas. At the end of the evening we shall announce the winners of the competition and the raffle. **N.B.** In order to save paper, the minutes of last year's AGM are included at the end of this newsletter, so please read it and bring it with you to the meeting, particularly if you wish to raise something.

One more thing – a reminder to fill in the form on your 'Dream Garden' which Gill Townend included in last month's newsletter. Give names of plants that you would buy again and that suit this soil, and Gill and Carolyn Foster will then collate all the information early next year. I'm sure the results will be of great interest to all of us.

CHRISTMAS COMPETITION
**A TABLE-CENTRE DECORATION, WITH CANDLE,
USING NATURAL MATERIALS.**

SUTTONS SEEDS

Suttons catalogues will be available at the November meeting. There is 10% Society discount on everything in the catalogue. This will be the last year that the seed ordering scheme operates unless someone steps forward to take over. Cheques (Cookham and Cookham Dean Horticultural Society) with orders please to Chris Sibbald (01628 522304)

Mabel Vevers

As most of you know Mabel died in Queens Court, Windsor on 13th October.

She had certainly been a member of the Horticultural Society for longer than any one else and it is a tribute to her that over the years she never lost her enthusiasm or interest in the Society and all things horticultural.

Where other members had not liked the changes that inevitably happen as different committees come and go Mabel had taken them all in her stride and continued to attend every meeting and every committee meeting. Her support could always be counted on as could her mince pies for our Christmas meeting (which were delicious) and I am sure no-one will forget her raffles!

She had an amazing memory for names, of people and plants and places she had visited and loved to regale people with tales of happenings in the past. She had seen many changes in Cookham Dean but was never critical of any of them.

When it became obvious that she could no longer live on her own she accepted the fact with equanimity and her positive outlook on life made the transition from her cottage and acre of garden to a residential home seem a very reasonable move. While there she knew all the staff, their backgrounds, nationalities and personalities and became a great friend to the man in the next room who was a mere 104!

I will remember Mabel for her friendship, her generosity, her cheerfulness and the wonderful stories she could tell of the folk of Cookham Dean. My garden and many others have plants she loved to share, the Autumn crocus she gave me have bloomed this year as never before and I am sure will continue to do so for years to come. A true gardener's legacy!

DB

GOING GREEN

The only sort of green I have ever been is green with envy when I see the fabulous flowers, voracious vegetables and thriving trees in other people's gardens. Sadly my enthusiasm for gardening had such a poor effect that I was known as the Mrs Tweedy of plants – killing everything in sight! Soon after we moved to the village a friendly neighbour suggested that I might learn something from the Cookham and Cookham Dean Horticultural Society. And learn I did.

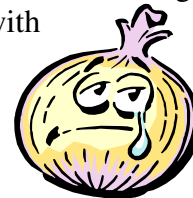
The Society meets every month in the Cookham Dean Village Hall and has talks from a wide variety of gardening experts. I may not know my agapanthus from my alliums yet but that doesn't matter at all. It is still fun to hear about how to go about everything from designing a garden for Chelsea to designing an enclosure for London Zoo.

Putting my newfound knowledge to the test in last year's Village Fete Flower and Produce show, I entered one of my runner beans to see if it was the longest, two marrows to see if they were the best matching pair and a giant pumpkin. And much to my astonishment the pumpkin won! I had done nothing except buy a small pumpkin plant at Bourne End Garden Centre, plonk it in the ground and watch it grow and grow! But it is very addictive and once you have one of those First Prize certificates on you kitchen pin board you want more ...

So this year I started early, with compost from the Queen's stables at Windsor to support the ambitious plans for my vegetables. Dreaming of more certificates and the tantalizing possibility of a silver cup or two I began planting. First the garlic and onions went in, then the beetroot, the runner beans, the marrows and the pumpkins. Things were looking promising until the gusty winds of early summer buffeted my runner beans almost to destruction, the marrows and pumpkins protested against the lack of rain by remaining steadfastly small and insignificant and most heartbreaking of all, the potatoes caught potato blight. Undaunted, I forged ahead with my plans for the Village Show hoping the judges would be so dazzled by the size and symmetry of my five potatoes that they wouldn't notice a few small spots. Despite apple trees groaning with fruit finding five of a similar shape and size turned out to be a challenge too far. In the end I opted for polishing up some beautiful red and green Bramleys, this time optimistic that looks would win through.

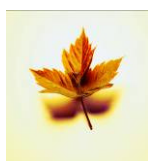
Last year I learnt a thing or two about how to make your runner bean the longest and straightest, watching the experts arriving with theirs emerging wrapped in kitchen towel and pressed into the spine of a heavy book. But to no avail. So all my hopes were pinned on my onions. I did some internet research to see how to present them properly, learning how to tie a special raffia knot. I had three of exactly the same, impressively large size. Just one snag. No one told me I needed to lift them out of the ground at least a week before the show, peel the skins down to the first smooth layer and leave them to gain a golden glow.

So there were my onions on show for all to see, bright, white, impressive but obviously and embarrassingly wrong. Leaving my lovingly tended fruit and vegetables to the mercy of the judges I left with one small glimmer of hope on the horizon - my jar of 'No Bits Bigfrith Plum Jam'. But when I arrived back in the hall later that day all my efforts were for nothing.

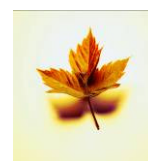


Is my enthusiasm dampened? A little. Will I be back next year? Most certainly.

Anon (but thank you Claire!)



AUTUMN LEAVES



Gardening Which? has experimented with fallen leaves to discover the best form of composting. Many of you will be busy collecting leaves this month so I thought you would find this information useful.

METHOD 1

Leaves put into black bin bags with no additional treatment other than moistening with water

VERDICT

Minimal effort required but slow progress. Two years to break down leaves fully

METHOD 2

Either running a mower over the leaves on the lawn or using a blower with a mulch attachment

VERDICT

The most efficient method for good quality leaf mulch or soil conditioner. Wait 12 months to use as a potting compost.

METHOD 3

Adding grass clippings to leaves to add nitrogen in two trial proportions, 10% and 50%

VERDICT

Adding grass clippings didn't produce leaf mould any faster compared with the leaf only bags Only after 18months did the 10% mix produce usable compost. (but not the 50% mix)

METHOD 4

Using a compost treatment product, ComposTreat for leaves and Biotal compost maker

VERDICT

ComposTreat was pricey and did not speed up the composting process. Biotal worked well with shredded leaves but the formulation has since changed.

REMEMBER

Don't shred wet leaves as they will clog the mower.

Don't add diseased leaves (rose black spot or apple leaf scab)

Don't let leaves in black bags dry out...keep moist but not wet

Don't mix evergreen leaves with deciduous leaves.

Programme News, December to March.

We hope you will be able to join us at the AGM, when **Jan Sambrook** will be talking to us about a soon to be seasonal subject, **Holly**. On a recent visit to the Walled Garden Centre at Dorney, I was pleased to see quite a wide selection of different specimens; spiny, spineless, variegated, gold, silver, berried and that most interesting holly, *Ilex aquifolium* "Ferox", which has the very apt common name of "Hedgehog", as even the centre of its leaves are covered in prickles.



On January 27th there is a New Year treat in store. We are looking forward to welcoming **Timothy Walker**, Director of the University of Oxford Botanic Garden, who is returning to Cookham with a new talk, **How to be a 21st Century Gardener**, in which he looks at the many ways that gardeners can reduce their impact on the World's natural resources and at the same time help those plants whose habitat is evolving faster than they can. (Not only about global warming and use of peat though!

On February 24th, **Gill Townend** will be transporting us back to the Victorian era of gardening with a talk on **Trevarno, a Cornish Estate**. This superb garden, dating back to 1246 has more recently been the subject of sympathetic restoration and includes a lake, boathouse, sunken Italian Garden, Serpentine Yew Tunnel and the National Museum of Gardening, not to mention very varied and interesting planting.

On March 31st it will be the Members' turn to show off their expertise and creativity at our **Spring Show**. **Les Waldren** has promised to return to keep us up to scratch as our experienced judge and occasional chastiser (in the nicest possible way!) That will complete our winter season. MD

(Please bring this agenda and minutes with you to the meeting)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 25TH NOVEMBER 2009

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Chairman's report
2. Apologies
3. Minutes
4. Matters Arising
5. Treasurers report
6. Election of officers
7. Election of new committee
8. A.O.B.

Date of AGM 2010 : Wednesday 24th November 2010

Nominations for new committee members to Di Benson (472163) or any present committee member in advance or at the meeting.

COOKHAM AND COOKHAM DEAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

MINUTES OF AGM, 26TH NOVEMBER 2008

1. WELCOME

Chairman Brian Thompson welcomed over 50 members, 2 guests and the committee and explained the programme for the evening.

2. APOLOGIES. Marie Therese and Philip Ind, Marion and Charles Elly

3. MINUTES. Minutes were circulated, agreed unanimously and signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING. None.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT.

Balance sheets were circulated and the following report was given.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that we have arrived at the end of another year with a small profit and that we have at this moment 111 members

One of the reasons for our profit is that we received an unexpected windfall of , 485.60 when the Berkshire branch of the RHS was wound up because the branch was unable to find any one to take the roll of treasurer. We also made more money than usual on the hire of our equipment. That is, hire of vases and hire of trestles. Our raffles held during the monthly meetings have also made more money this year.

We have been able to cut down on our expenditure on insurance because we now have fewer cups than before although we still have to pay public liability insurance, The cost of the speakers has been less than last year but I may say this has not been the design as your committee is committed to providing the best possible speakers. Unfortunately the cost of the speakers does not seem to relate to the quality of their presentations.

You will notice a dramatic increase in general expenses. This is because your committee found it necessary to purchase a lap top computer with power point and projector as speakers are now asking for this to be provided.

The rest of our income and expenditure remains much as before.

I do expect the cost of speakers to rise next year even if it is only in the matter of travelling expenses.

I have also received notice that the hire of the hall will be increased next year. With this in mind the committee is recommending a rise of subscription to , 7 for the coming year.

The Chairman then proposed we increase the subscription for 2008-2009 to , 7
Proposal passed unanimously.

The secretary asked for a proposal that we accept these accounts.

Proposed - Barbara Dent.

Seconded - Mary Fallon.

6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

We have had an interesting programme thanks to Susie Tremlett including our two outings. The outing to Copas= PYO farm had been interesting and we had all learnt about the problems of growing fruit and vegetable on a commercial scale. Our guides, Richard Copas and Peter Shaw both gave excellent presentations. The outing to Mill House at Medmenham was on a very wet evening once again but that did not change the fact that it is a fantastic garden.

The Spring Show was excellent once again with a good number of entries judged by Les Waldren. Becky Pinniger and Mary Downes had introduced a seed swap on the same evening and that had been a great success - thanks to them for introducing a new idea to the society. Les Waldren has been booked for our next Spring Show in 2009.

Chris Sibbald has agreed to do the seed ordering for another year but has great problems with the firms she ordered from and has sent many letters and made many phone calls trying to sort out mistakes. Many thanks to her for her patience and perseverance.

Gill Townend continues to edit an excellent newsletter which keeps us all in touch with events in the society and the latest garden news. We now have the printing carried out by the church printers and the system is working well. We appreciate members having their newsletters delivered by e-mail wherever possible as this saves on printing and postage costs.

Sadly, Mary Fallon is moving from the area but she has made an excellent contribution to the committee, organising the tea rota and keeping the register up to date. We wish her well in her new home.

Thank you to Janet Shanks who keeps our accounts in order and does an excellent job.

Also thanks to Di Benson the secretary and thank you to all the members who support us so well.

The Chairman then resigned from his position.

Officers were then appointed as follows.

Chairman - Susie Tremlett, proposed by Brian Thompson, seconded by Joan Burgin.

Treasurer - Janet Shanks, proposed by Kitty Hitchiner, seconded by Carolyn Foster.

Secretary - Diana Benson, proposed by Chris Sibbald, seconded by Mary Fallon.

Chris Sibbald, Becky Pinniger, Mary Downes, Arthur Burgin all agreed to stand again.

Pam Campin, Penny Meredith, Claire Phillpot and Carolyn Foster were all nominated and accepted unanimously.

A.O.B. None.

Meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.

Susie Tremlett thanked Brian Thompson and Mary Fallon and presented them with cards and gift vouchers.



MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS 2010

Membership subscriptions for the year 2010 become due at the AG.M. on Wednesday November 25th 2009. Your committee will recommend that the subscription shall remain at £7 for this year. It helps me if you fill in your details on the form below and bring it with you to the A.G.M. together with your £7 subscription. If you are unable to attend the November meeting the January meeting is fine or send your completed form and subscription to me at the address below together with a stamped addressed envelope and I will send your membership card to you as soon as I am able.

The committee is asking everyone who has an Email address to receive the newsletter by Email as it saves on the cost of postage for the society.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

The address to send your subscription is:

**Mrs Janet Shanks, 144, Whyteladyes Lane, Cookham Rise, Maidenhead,
Berks SL6 9LA**

Thank you