

Chichester Organic Gardening Society

Newsletter 85 January 2022

Notes from the Committee

A Happy New Year to all our members. In spite of last minute alarms and rumours of more lockdowns, we hope you were able to spend a more normal Christmas with your families than in 2020. At least at the moment we can look forward with some cautious optimism to our regular programme of monthly meetings. Details are outlined below.

Our gardens and allotments, of course, go through their seasons untouched by human concerns, although not by the weather. Up to the first week in January it has been so mild that summer plants have gone on flowering right up to Christmas. While it is lovely to see cosmos in December, it surely cannot be healthy for plant life or the environment. Let's hope we have at least a short burst of seasonably cold weather before long to kill off the bugs and give our plants a rest, as we look forward to the longer days and a new growing season.

Meetings Autumn 2021

27th September - A LIVE PRESENTATION (the first since February 2020) **by Paul Gallivan, head gardener at Woolbeding Gardens.** Always an entertaining speaker, Paul brought us up to date with what has been happening in the gardens over the past few years, including the 10-sided kinetic glasshouse currently under construction. This structure and the new garden area around it will be used to enable the public to learn about the plants brought to Europe along the historic Silk Route from China, many of which have become staples of the British garden. Although the gardens are owned by the National Trust, they are also home to Stewart Grimshaw, who has leased the property with his partners, the late Simon Sainsbury, since 1972. He is still very active in overseeing the garden design, and Paul's account of their working relations formed a fascinating background to the story. A COGS visit there one summer soon is a 'must'.

25th October – AGM and Bring and Share Supper. This went ahead as usual. Attendance was small but everyone enjoyed themselves immensely dining on each other's offerings once again. Ben Harding organised a challenging quiz.

The accounts for 2020-2021 were presented and approved. In spite of decreased income from activities, expenditure was also decreased so the society almost broke even and is able to begin 2021-2022 with sound finances. Paid memberships were down as members could not attend meetings but are already up to 2019 levels this year. Vee Cowan stepped down from the committee and Gina Carrington was elected in her place. We thank Vee for all her contributions over the years and hope to see her at meetings soon. The officers were all re-elected.

29th November – our old friend, **Steve Millam** from Brinsbury, gave a talk on '**Balancing Your Garden**', which drew a good audience of 23. Growing numbers of people are now trying to garden with biodiversity in mind but getting the balance right and doing the best for wildlife is difficult. So many of the plants we think of as traditional British garden plants are not in fact native. Most of them have adapted well and there is no reason why we cannot continue to enjoy them. But we went away with an increased determination to devote some areas to the truly native plants that are so beneficial to our wildlife.

The first raffle for nearly 2 years was held, proved popular and raised £15. It will be held again at every future meeting.

Future Meetings

31st January 2022 – Members Evening. Bring along your stories of triumph and disaster and any queries you may want to share with members. If you have preserves to share from the 2021 harvest, we will provide one-use wooden tasters, so that we can all sample in safety.

28th February – a talk by **Transition Chichester's Ed Bowring** on the development of the Bishops Palace Gardens and the concept of therapeutic gardening.

28th March – **Nik Knight**, Chairman and County Bat Recorder for Hampshire with a talk entitled '**Bats; Superheroes of the Night**'. After the past 2 years, bats probably need all the good publicity they can get!

25th April - a talk by **Melanie Oxley** on '**Gardening in a Climate Crisis**'. Melanie is an ecologist now based in Petersfield and a founder member of Plantlife and the Wilder Gardens Champion of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

6th June - Spring Fling. A chance for a shared meal and a plants and seed swop.

26th September – a talk by **David Standing, former head gardener at Gilbert White's Garden in Selbourne.** After his retirement, David continues to research the history of the garden and 18th Century plants.

31st October – AGM and Harvest Supper

28th November – to be arranged.

Summer Visits – we hope to arrange some to members' gardens. Please contact a member of the Committee if you wish to volunteer yours or have a suggestion.

Tree in Memory of David Scott

It was agreed at the AGM that the donation in memory of our late treasurer, David Scott, should be used to plant a tree. Alexander Damper, who was present as a guest, generously offered to make a plaque to go with it. Rob Campling offered to contact New Park Community Centre to see if they had space in their wild area, as a space secluded but accessible to the public. However, in spite of several emails he has not had a reply from the Centre so we may need to find an alternative location. Suggestions from members would be welcome.

Last Words

Gardens and allotments can be risky places, from trip hazards to plants that sting and insects that bite. But the editor encountered something quite different on her allotment this autumn. She put her case with her reading glasses (needed to distinguish black berries from red) in it on the ground only to see it being carried off by a fox! Hearing her shout, the fox soon dropped the case, leaving her with a case with 2 large teeth marks and the amusing image of an intellectual fox wiling away the winter hours in the lair reading with spectacles perched on the tip of their nose!

*Unless otherwise stated, Monday meetings take place at the Bassil
Shippam Centre, Tozer Way, St Pancras, Chichester, PO19 7LG.
Meetings start at 7.30pm; doors open at 7.15pm*

Your Cogs Organisers are:

Treasurer – Liz Campling (01243 532910; lizcamplinguk@hotmail.com)

Secretary – Penelope Johnstone (01243 771881; penelopejohnstone@yahoo.co.uk)

Membership Secretary – Stephanie Carn (01243 533393; stephcarn@gmail.com)

Website – Tom Broughton (01243 790026; tom@chicogs.org.uk)

Committee Members – Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Secretary, plus:

Pat Alderton (01243 822615)

Gina Scott (01243 778689)

Diana Morgan (01243 786386)

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