



January 2022

Newsletter

PRESIDENT: Jackie Tomnie
CHAIR: Wendy Jenkinson
SECRETARY: Angela Shaw 01676 534562
TREASURER: Helen Jones 01564 772645
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Marion Keeley 07973911313 Web site: www.bdhs.club

Dear Members,

Welcome to another gardening year with Balsall & District Horticultural Society. Obviously, the country is gripped by another Covid variant, but a decision has not yet been taken as to whether our speaker meetings will be held in the Village Hall as planned, or back on Zoom.

The Society's programme for 2022 is outlined below:

27.01.22 The Role of a District Park Manager – Mike Hinton, Birmingham Parks Dept.
24.02.22 Plants of The Pyrenees – David Charlton, The Alpine Society
31.03.22 The Diary of a Modern Country Gardener – Tamsin Westhorpe, Stockton Bury Gardens
28.04.22 Rose Growing Made Easy – Simon White, Peter Beales Roses
26.05.22 Plants Amongst the Ruins; Natives & Invaders – Michael Brown, The Historic Gardener
30.06.22 The Work of a Master Thatcher – Michael Brown, Master Thatcher
23.07.22 Members' Annual Show, St Peters Church Hall, Holly Lane
28.07.22 Members' Social Evening- venue to be confirmed
29.09.22 Plants & Gardens of Transylvania – Razvan Chisu
27.10.22 The Late Summer Garden – Jack Willgoss, Wildegoose Nursery & Gardens
24.11.22 AGM & Buffet Supper

Some of you may remember both Tamsin Westhorpe and Jack Willgoss speaking to us a few years ago on other topics, with subsequent coach trips to their lovely gardens in Herefordshire & Shropshire respectively.

Renewal of membership subscription is now due, and our Treasurer, Helen Jones, is sending out the appropriate forms with this newsletter. Those of you who were at November's AGM & Supper will recall that members voted in favour of a new annual subscription of £15; a rise of £1 because the rental of the Village Hall has increased due to the 'hike' in utility bills.

I'm not sure how many of you visited St Mary's Church, Haseley, to see their Christmas Flowers. I went and was hugely impressed by their floral design and artwork. The porch illustrated 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', though I'm not sure if all the goose eggs would have remained throughout Christmas given that creatures such as foxes, rodents and carrion crows could gain access to them!

Inside the church, various carols were depicted in windows, box pews, around the organ and the altar. In one large window there were flowers and paper houses for 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'. Under the Altar table was a beautifully decorated crib scene for 'Away in a Manger'. Amongst the flowers were shepherds and sheep, kings and gifts, which all appear in a number of carols. A huge guiding star had been hoisted up into the bell tower. 'Good King Wenceslas' was depicted over the top of a box pew with a very white display including flowers, a moon, snow & ice and the words "Brightly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cruel". Holly and ivy abounded, reminding us of 'The Holly and the Ivy' and 'Deck the Halls'.

Happy New Year to you all,

Marion

AGM

Report from our AGM held 25th November 2021, Balsall Common Village Hall

More than 60 members attended this event followed by Sue Edwards final buffet supper. After last year's AGM via Zoom, the event proved popular and following the formal part of the evening, members settled down to delicious food and plenty of conversation.

As far as the AGM went, there were no matters arising from last year's minutes, nor the Treasurer's report. Members agreed an increase in the annual subscription through a show of hands. This was the last AGM for our Chair, and Ivor used his report to thank many people, including the membership, for keeping this Society going despite the ever - changing restrictions due to Covid. Of special note, meetings could not have continued without the skills of David Ashcroft organising meetings on Zoom. Various members became "Zoomers" for the first time, thanks to his guidance. By September, David had also orchestrated another successful Annual Show, so it was an easy decision for the Committee to name him as the recipient of the Banksian Medal for 2021.

With the stepping down of Ivor, Wendy Jenkinson was elected as the new Chair, and everyone wishes her well during her term of office. Angela Shaw was re-elected as Secretary, with Helen Jones as Treasurer, and Mary Cotterrell as Internal Auditor. The rest of the Committee were re-elected, apart from Barbara Money who has also stepped down. Therefore:

David Ashcroft (Show Secretary)

Alison Watson (Speaker Programme)

Marion Keeley (Newsletter Editor)

Pet Hawley (Refreshments)

Sue Edwards

David Cotterrell

Edward Cotterrell

Doug Timmis

Certificates were presented to the ten trophy winners from our 2021 Annual Show. This provides them with a keepsake of their achievement because trophies are ultimately handed back by the date of the next show. The winners were Helen Jones, Wendy Jenkinson, Chris Hornsby, Laura Eden, Jean Wood (x2 trophies) and Edward Cotterrell (x4 trophies).

Our President, Jackie Tommie, drew the AGM to a close by presenting our retiring Chairman with a gift, and adding her thanks to what our membership had achieved during a most trying year.

Next year's AGM is to be held on 24.11.22

Postscript

- The Committee thanks the significant number of members who stayed behind to help clear up and tidy the hall afterwards.
- On 26th November, Ivor Stansfield emailed his thanks to the Society for the gift given to him upon his retirement. He promises that he will use it at the allotment!
- On 1st December, Sue Edwards emailed her thanks for the surprise flower arrangement delivered to her that morning, in recognition of the many BDHS suppers she has catered for over the years. A photograph of delighted Sue and said flowers can be found on our website! www.bdhs.club

NOTICEBOARD

RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch 2022

Between Friday 28th & Sunday 30th January, spend an hour in your garden recording the birds. Every single birdwatch helps the RSPB monitor how British birds are faring. To register, go to www.rspb.org.uk/rspb/birdwatch22 or telephone RSPB HQ on 01767 680551.

I have only received 6 entries for the Christmas Quiz featured in the Nov/Dec Newsletter, and I am not setting another puzzle this month. Entries for the quiz can still be sent to me via the post at The Cottage, Fen End Farm, Oldwich Lane East, Fen End, Near Kenilworth, CV8 1NR or by email marion.keeley@btinternet.com. Closing date is January 27th, our next meeting.

NOTICEBOARD CONTINUED

A new Heritage Orchard at Temple Balsall (T.B.)

Locally, we have witnessed the destruction of many trees and hedges with HS2. Nationally, tree planting campaigns have been launched such as BBC Countryfile's 'Plant Britain', and HM the Queen's "Treebilee" as part of her Platinum Anniversary celebrations. Temple Balsall has maintained an active conservation tradition for some years. A site has been identified just off the large main carpark, and close to an old hedge consisting mainly of wild pears, to establish a fruit orchard using old varieties that would have been grown in the Midlands. A similar orchard was planted at Stoneleigh beside the church and near the river. At Temple Balsall 24 bare root apple and pears are currently being planted.

The Apple varieties are Annie Elizabeth (1857, culinary), Golden Russet (1676, dessert), Leathercoat (Elizabethan, dessert, noted in Shakespeare's Henry 1V, Part 1, **and my choice!**), Genet Moyle (1600, culinary/cider), Lord Derby (1862, culinary), Hanwell Souring (c1820, culinary), Non Pareil (late 16th C., dessert), Autumn Pearmain (18th - 19th C., dessert), Peasgood (1853, culinary/ baking), Bess Pool c.1700, dessert), Wyken Pippin (c.1700, Coventry, dessert), Wormsley Pippin (1811, dessert), Domino (1883, culinary), Hunt's Early (1884, dessert).

Pear varieties are Cannock Pear (Forest of Dean, dessert & culinary), Catillac Pear (1665, culinary) and Thorn Pear (1670, dessert).

The trees are being planted by T.B. gardener Adrian Smith, whom some of you will know from Meriden Allotments, and T.B. Walled Garden volunteers. Sponsorship has been invited to help pay for the purchase & maintenance of these rare trees, with a suggested donation of £25. Please contact Peter Larkin for further details, telephone 01926 859278, or by email on peterlarkin7@btinternet.com. Cheques should be made payable to "St Mary the Virgin Temple Balsall PCC", or payment by BACS can also be arranged.

I know that my Leathercoat apple was planted just before Christmas to remind me of my old Dad who disliked leatherjackets in his garden!

TOPICAL TIPS

JANUARY

- Plan flower and vegetable borders for the forthcoming growing season.
- Seed catalogues are now available so that seeds can be ordered.
- Keep an eye on the greenhouse for blocked guttering, cracked glass, problems with any heating systems, and rodents.
- Get your mower and other mechanical garden equipment serviced. Continue to clean / oil other garden tools.
- Check stored fruit, vegetables and summer bulbs for rot.
- Spring flowering bulbs in pots can be encouraged into flowering by moving them into a cold frame, cold greenhouse or unheated conservatory or porch.
- Force rhubarb for young stalks in 6-8 weeks' time, or plant new rhubarb crowns / divide old ones in open ground.
- Winter prune apple and pear trees, currant and gooseberry bushes, but leave plums and cherries to avoid silver leaf fungal infections.
- Plant bare root deciduous hedging plants and trees whilst the soil is damp, but not waterlogged or frozen.
- Dig over heavy soils and leave in clods for the frost to break down. Other finer soils can be mulched with compost to lock in moisture.
- Sow sweet pea seeds under heat. Those sown in the autumn may be pricked out into separate pots.
- Summer bedding seeds such as antirrhinums, petunias, violas may be sown under glass.
- Keep an eye on the welfare of garden birds and other wildlife in your garden.

THANK YOU CARD FROM SPRINGFIELD HOUSE SCHOOL

For the Sainsbury's Heroes cards we collected for Doug to deliver to the school.

To Doug and friends,

Thank you for all your support,
have a Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year.

From

Springfield House School

