



April 2022

# Newsletter

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Dear Members,

It is with tremendous sadness that I report the death on April 13<sup>th</sup> of our superb Show Secretary, David Ashcroft. He was a larger-than-life character with a wicked sense of humour. His organisation of our Annual Shows was second to none, and he got even the most reluctant of us 'zooming' for our monthly meetings in both 2020 and 2021. David will be sorely missed, and our heartfelt condolences go to wife Jan and his family.

We were also sorry to learn of the death of Sylvia Stratton, a member for many years, and our condolences are extended to her family too.

In March our Society met twice. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, 62 of us sat down to a delicious dinner catered for by Sue and Brian Dalby and their young team of waiters / waitresses. We are very fortunate that they continue to do our Annual Dinner as they have 'semi - retired' from catering, and we hope that they will return next year. Your committee worked hard to set everything up then clear away on the night, but special mention should go to the following. Sue Edwards worked with the Dalby's to arrange the catering and stayed after the hall was set up to let them in early to the kitchen. Helen Jones managed the ticket sales and supplied the glasses. Alison Watson organised both the drinks and the raffle prizes (thanks also to those who sold tickets and folded stubs). Who remembers the delightful, crocheted plant potholders on the tables? Pet Hawley made all of these and bought the plants, as well as organising the 'ticket under the chairs to win one to take home'. The daffodil competition was won by Alison Watson and Edward Cotterrell amassed the most points for last year's gardening photographs on our website during lockdown. Both winners were presented with £10 gift vouchers.

Our March meeting report is below. Next month's meeting is on April 28<sup>th</sup> at 8pm in the Village Hall when Simon White from Peter Beales Roses in Norwich will talk about 'Rose Growing Made Easy'. The committee understands that if there is a specific Peter Beales rose you wish to purchase, you may contact Simon direct at the firm to ensure that he brings it with him on the van.

We will be holding a plant sale on the small carpark in front of the Village Hall on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May between 10am and 11.30pm. Please consider what plants you could propagate to donate for sale for BDHS funds, LABELLED OF COURSE!

There are several other items in the Noticeboard section relating to the Annual Show and other outings this year – please read.

The joy of that extra hour in the garden and the fine weather has been wonderful and I've made the most of it, although my back isn't so impressed!

Take care in the garden,

Marion

## SPEAKER REPORTS

### 'From Border to Book – The Diary of a Modern Country Gardener'

by Tamsin Westhorpe from Stockton Bury Gardens, Leominster

It was exactly 6 years to the day on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 that Tamsin previously visited us to talk about 'Spring at Stockton Bury', followed by a coach trip to her garden on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016. It is no surprise that 66 members attended to hear her speak this year. As well as giving talks, she writes for magazines & newspapers, presents podcasts, and is an RHS Chelsea gardens team judge, not to mention being a wife and mother!

Stockton Bury (SB) is a 4-acre garden created in the early 1980s by her great uncle John Treasure, RHS V.M.H. & multiple Chelsea Gold Medalist. It sits in the heart of a working farm which has been in Tamsin's family since 1886. A former monastery, the garden boasts a dovecote and cider press, although today's apples are sent to nearby Bulmers. It also has a museum containing tools from yesteryear. SB regularly features in the best UK gardens to visit. Tamsin is **THE** full-time gardener, and her sister runs the cafe using produce from the kitchen garden.

Tamsin's book launched in Feb 2021, (ISBN 978-1-90336-042-2), chronicles her gardening year and rural life in an easy-going and light-hearted manner. Each chapter lists jobs to do (plus toolkit), must-have plants & flowers, a country project, as well as Tamsin's activities, life in the natural world and on the farm around her.

**FEBRUARY** Her gardening year begins in layers of warm clothing, and a full biscuit tin plus plenty of tea in the tool shed! Tamsin weeds, tidies borders and mulches rather than turns the soil, to reduce weed seedlings. She dares not leave this job totally to the spring as it would never be completed before the garden opens on 1<sup>st</sup> April. Using organic slug pellets from 14<sup>th</sup> February and a couple of ducks, she attacks the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of slugs & snails, and rabbit proofs the garden with chicken wire. Floral interest comes from snowdrops, crocus, iris, early narcissus, cyclamen coum, ranunculus, hellebores, mahonia, viburnum & witch hazel.

**MARCH** is very busy keeping on top of emergent weeds and garden pests, as well as finishing off tasks for opening, which includes making the visitors' toilets sparkle! Perennials are lifted and divided. The bulk of seed sowing begins now, plus early lawn care from the end of the month. There is emergent life everywhere from lambs to early insects, to nesting birds and frogspawn, and further narcissi & crocus, muscari, anemone, fritillaries, hepatica, epimediums, corydalis, ribes, magnolia and chaenomeles.

**APRIL** Tamsin retrieves her over-wintered standard fuchsias and dahlias from a constantly cool, dry cellar, re-potting them in good compost with slow-release fertiliser. Well-rotted horse manure and homemade leaf mould is spread round the roses and on the veg garden, and hostas are divided. This is the month for bluebells, cowslips, erythroniums, brunnera, trilliums and early clematis.

**MAY** and off to Chelsea for some glamour, but also long intense hours judging from Sat AM to Sun PM! May is tulip month, but there are also irises, peonies, alliums, astrantia, hardy geraniums, wisteria and lots of blossom to enjoy.

**JUNE** and a garden busy with visitors, apart from Wimbledon fortnight! Tamsin puts in many of her plant supports now so that earlier visitors aren't looking at a garden full of metal and hazel structures, but this can mean some remedial work and repair. Another dilemma: to deadhead or to leave to self-seed? Tamsin enjoys creating colourful container displays. She remains vigilant for weeds and monitors the temperature in the greenhouse. Roses, alstroemeria, gladioli, lilies, hemerocallis are just some of the treats in bloom.

**JULY** and the sweet peas are heavenly! Regular deadheading and weeding continue. To water or not to water? SB has no mains water supply apart from the café, so the garden relies on drought tolerant plants, collecting rainwater, and only watering the containers. Lupins, hollyhocks, delphiniums, campanula, echinops, eryngiums, honeysuckle and later clematis abound.

**AUGUST** finds Tamsin drying onions on a chicken wire frame over an old wheelbarrow, scything the wildflower meadow, and refreshing houseplants outside in the rain. Being the main holiday month visitor numbers often lessen, so Tamsin has been known to camp out in the garden amongst Japanese anemones, echinacea, eupatorium, eucomis, and sanguisorba.

**SEPTEMBER** is SB's last month of opening. Keeping the garden looking good during this month and last can be a headache. Faded perennials are cut back, spent containers are emptied, and seed saved & stored. Fruit and vegetables are harvested for the freezer, pickling jars and jam pan. Dahlias, heleniums, rudbeckia, kniphofia, and changing leaves provide striking colour.

**OCTOBER** is Tamsin's main tree and bulb planting month (apart from tulips). She also starts to cut back & tidy borders to prevent an impossibly huge job in spring. However, she does leave piles of prunings in the borders for invertebrates. By the month's end, tender plants are heading to overwinter in the cellar. Acers, euonymus and grasses prolong autumn interest.

**NOVEMBER** Whilst the garden is closed, Tamsin heads for a break in Madeira. On return, she dons her thermals and it's back to gardening in shorter daylight hours. There is much pruning, collecting fallen leaves to make leaf mould, tulip planting, and the last of the frost - blackened dahlias come in. Sedums, chrysanthemums, hesperantha, skimmia, and rosehips provide colour.

**DECEMBER** Tamsin looks forward to a homemade Christmas: cutting a tree from the garden, wreath-making, collecting pinecones, and heading to the mistletoe sales. She still finds time to dig over the vegetable garden, remove any annual & perennial weeds lurking in tidied borders, and take hardwood cuttings. There is still some interest from evergreens, wintersweet, dogwood, daphne, & witch hazels.

**JANUARY** is a quieter month when Tamsin does much of her writing. She also sows sweet peas, re-paints wooden garden furniture, prunes gooseberries, sorts out the garden's polytunnels & nursery, looks after the birds, and keeps a beady eye open for the first of the new year's flowers!

## TOPICAL TIPS

- Deadhead daffodil and tulip flowers but leave the foliage.
- Apply a balanced fertiliser to trees and shrubs and a general-purpose fertiliser to beds and borders.
- Feed and mulch roses.
- Finish dividing and replanting herbaceous perennials.
- Remove weeds before they flower to avoid seeding.
- Sow hardy annuals outdoors. Harden off half-hardy annuals sown previously.
- Sweet peas can be sown or planted outdoors.
- Plant summer flowering bulbs, corms and tuberous plants such as *Dahlia* and *Gladiolus*.
- Evergreen shrubs may be planted at end of the month or in May.
- Tie in climbing and rambling roses and other climbers such as clematis and honeysuckle.
- Prune back *Salix* and *Cornus* grown for winter colour, and evergreen shrubs such as *Choisya*, *Ceanothus* and laurel.
- Prune early flowering shrubs, such as *Chaenomeles* and *Forsythia*, after flowering.
- Re-pot houseplants if pot-bound. Houseplants will benefit from standing outside during warm rain.
- Plant out early potatoes in the first half of the month and main crop potatoes in the second half.
- Sow vegetables such as beet-root, carrots, lettuce, radish, turnip, peas, spinach and parsnip.
- Spring clean the pond.
- Reseed bare patches of grass in the lawn.
- Start mowing lawn regularly, choose a dry day.

## NOTICEBOARD

A small white vase containing a pink camelia was left behind on the flower spike table at the end of the March meeting. Please contact me on 07973 911313 if the vase is yours.

Don't forget that the **final** diameter of the pot for your begonia corm and pelargonium plug at the Annual Show is 6 inches.

The photographic judge at our Annual Show has announced that the **topic for one of the three photographic classes is 'a meeting place'**. This can be interpreted to suit yourselves! The other two classes will remain as a single flower or stem, and secondly a garden scene.

Kenilworth Gardening Club has a **coach trip on Sunday 8th May to the RHS Malvern Spring Show**. Cost is £41 for coach and show entry (£2 reduction for RHS members). Telephone Diane Carter on 07817 585319 for further information

Tickets are on sale (price £35) for **our coach trip on Wednesday 25th May**, departing at 8.30am from Balsall Common's Co-Op carpark to Hergest Croft Gardens (AM) and Brobury House Gardens (PM), both in Herefordshire. Cars should NOT be left in this carpark which has a maximum 2 hour stay. The ticket price includes entrance to both gardens, a guided tour of Hergest Croft, tea & cakes at Brobury, and the coach hire + driver's tip. If you wish to have lunch in the café at Hergest Croft, this must be booked in advance. Please contact Helen Jones (01564 772645 or helen@manorfarmknowle.co.uk) for tickets and further information. Non – members welcome.

An evening visit has been arranged to the garden of Sarah Heath, daughter of BDHS members Celia and Cyril Davis. **It will take place at 1 Marton House, Birdingbury Road, Marton, CV23 9RY, (between Coventry and Rugby), on Thursday 23rd June at 6.30pm.** You will need to make your own way there. Car sharing is advised due to limited parking in this village.

We are finalising details for a **coach trip on Sunday 25th September to the new RHS Garden Bridgewater**

## QUIZ – FRUIT & VEGETABLE VARIETIES

Many of you grow these as well as flowers, so here is a quiz to cater for you as I'm conscious that it's often flowers at the core of competitions. You do not need to be an ardent fruit & veg grower to answer the clues, as some general knowledge will help with the answers!

1. This tomato variety could be a Spanish holiday destination for some of you! (8 letters)
2. A research centre in Kent lends part of its name to several raspberry and strawberry varieties. (7 letters)
3. This thornless variety of blackberry may be hiding a monster! (4 + 4 letters).
4. An East Midlands cathedral city lying to the north - east of Nottingham and a variety of pea. (7 letters)
5. Think of a Scottish mountain and you have a common forename for varieties of blackcurrant. (3 letters)
6. Varieties of fennel and strawberry share the name of this Italian city. (8 letters)
7. An apple variety with the same name as a well – known traditional folksong, whose words Henry VIII is often quoted as writing when courting Anne Boleyn. (12 letters)
8. A supersonic aeroplane now consigned to history is also a variety of pear. (8 letters)
9. A carrot variety or a city in Western France close to the River Loire. (6 letters)
10. Before the Russian Revolution, the country's head of state had a title like the name of this plum. (4 letters)
11. Did the ship 'The Titanic' hit this crunchy variety of lettuce? (7 letters)
12. This AGM cauliflower has the same forename as a certain prime minister! (5 letters)

Answers to me by the April meeting in person, by email ([marion.keeley@btinternet.com](mailto:marion.keeley@btinternet.com)), or in the post (The Cottage, Fen End Farm, Oldwich Lane East, Fen End, Near Kenilworth, CV8 1NR) please.

## MARCH CROSSWORD ANSWERS

**ACROSS:** 1.Galanthus 7.Acid 8.Anemone 9.Living 10.Tassel 13.Olearia 15.Apogon 17.Galls 20.Tropical 21.India 22.Collards 23.Husk

**DOWN:** 1.Giant 2.Leeks 3.Niobe 4.Heel 5.Salvia 6.Biennial 11.Sago Palm 12.Lonicera 14.English 16.Parrot 18.Lady's 19.Seal

After Helen Jones put some extra copies of the crossword on the annual dinner tables, I received 10 entries. I know this crossword made you scratch your heads!!!

Thank you to Wendy Boulton, Barry Clarke, Mary & Edward Cotterrell, Val & Edward Cotterrell, Sylvia Farley, David Felthouse, Amanda Ghent, Pet Hawley, Sandra Heard, & Gill Whitehead.  
The winning entry pulled from the hat was Pet Hawley who will receive a copy of the RHS magazine 'The Garden' at the April meeting.

## MONTHLY FLOWER STEM & POT PLANT COMPETITION

**Flower Stem**

1. Alison Watson (Prunus 'Accolade' blossom)
2. Mary Cotterrell (Narcissus)
3. Pet Hawley (Camelia)

**Pot Plant**

1. Edward Cotterrell (Narcissus bulbocodium 'Conspicuous' or Yellow Hooped Petticoat)
2. Alison Watson (Narcissus 'Sailboat')
3. Felicity Hill (Aeonium)