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**Enjoying Gardens
Spring 2020**

Editor's Musings



It has been a very challenging start to the year for all us gardening folk. Gales followed by rain then storms and in many places floods of a severity not seen before. This is probably not the place for a political discussion but if planning is granted to build on flood plains and every non gardening householder puts down hard standing for their car which "They" have determined should be discouraged by not providing enough space the outcome seems obvious. I can only send sympathy to all those people who have suffered and will continue to suffer for a long time to come. We gardeners can feel that we are doing our small part by continuing to garden in the old fashioned way.

I hope you have all appreciated the slight change of style for the magazine with a full colour photo of a topical horticultural theme and the title "Enjoying Gardens". I felt it gave it a bit more impact and maybe if folk see it about it might persuade them to come along and give us a try.

I suppose one thing we can count on is that at some time in the future we will look back on this period and hardly remember how bad it seemed at the time. Signs of Spring are all around and Summer will soon be here. Nature's cycle may be different from year to year but things usually catch up on themselves in the end, so those, like me, who have made the excuse that the ground's just too boggy to work know we are storing up work for ourselves. So get those tools ready to go as soon as an opportunity presents itself.

Meetings



Our first meeting in **January** survived only because of the diligence of our secretary, Sarah, who, whilst checking on our intended speaker, found that sadly and suddenly he had passed away in November. Despite this a replacement was found, Jackie Petherbridge, who gave members a very informative and interesting talk on daffodils. I had no idea that there were quite so many different classes of bloom all with their own peculiar beauty and charm. I was very interested to learn that to be classified as a daffodil the flower has to have six petals. For ages after I looked out for blooms without the requisite six and I think I found one in a vase at home. I was also interested in hearing about the golden triangle based around Kempsey in Gloucestershire. I fully intended to visit and explore but I was thwarted on every occasion first by the floods



in that part of the world and then by lockdown which has made the world feel such a different place. The smiling faces of the daffodils in my own garden will have to be a lovely substitute for a trip out this year. They are a particularly cheerful harbinger of the spring and summer to come and its great to have our spirits lifted a bit by their optimistic golden display. I won't go on I'm no Wordsworth. Given that the speaker stood in at very short notice I felt that we were treated to an excellent talk by an expert in the field who managed to convey her knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. I would like to extend the thanks of the Society to Jackie for helping us out.



February

The February meeting was treated to an excellent talk by Tony Gray on that perennial thorny topic - pruning. I think we all have that little bit of fear when we are confronted by a much prized plant which performed so well last year and which now needs some treatment. If I go in too hard will I kill it, or if I go too timidly will all the blooms be above my head on a bare stalk? Who knows what to do for the best? Well Tony



does and he shared a whole heap of knowledge with us. There seem to be some basic principles. Cut out crossing branches and weedy growth. Try to get an open structure (like a wine glass for those of us who think in those terms) to encourage the circulation of air and prevent disease. Cut above a bud and don't be too fearful you might lose a season's blossom but you are unlikely to kill it. It is good to know whether what you are pruning flowers/fruits on this year's growth or last year's. Get it wrong and you will cut out the fruit/ blossom bearing branches. Tony is a very approachable chap and I would suggest that you could always ask him at his place of work which is the Blue Diamond Garden Centre (Sanders) however I have just been emailed that it is closed at the moment. Never mind it won't always be so.

March

Our March meeting was once again a departure from that advertised. Our speaker fell ill and given the current circumstances felt she should keep away from a crowded gathering. This was a shame as we had quite a bit of interest in her topic 'No Dig Techniques'. We hope to reschedule in the New Year. In her place we were grateful to have Laura Batt, who was able to talk to us about the work of the Hedgehog Rescue Organisation - Prickles. She enlightened us about the dangers these little animals face and how we can protect them in our gardens. She also talked about the work of the Society. I was quite amazed at the numbers they care for at any one time. I hope members found her talk



interesting and informative even though it was not what was advertised Thank you Laura for stepping into the breach so admirably.

The evening also saw the first of our seed swaps which it is hoped will be a feature of all future meetings. It seemed to be very popular and many members both brought their excess purchases and went away with some goodies for sowing when the weather turns.



Points from The Committee

In recent months one topic which has been considered was the quality of the Audio Visual equipment we have for our speakers. We own a pretty decent amplifier and if we could couple it to some hands free microphones, a better projector and more reflective screen we would be able to change the room layout and be able to see and hear presentations without the need to dim the lights. Rod Thomas volunteered to research a suitable package and at the March meeting we were given a demonstration of what we have purchased. I hope members will be able to judge for themselves in the near future.

Coronavirus

Like every other organisation in the country we are having to examine what we can do in the face of the virus and the consequent regulations which even as I write this are being tightened on a daily basis.

What we do know is that the visit to RHS Cardiff is cancelled. Sue Thomas has contacted all those who had paid for this trip with details for refunds.

The Plant Sale is also cancelled. Not only does it fall foul of the ban on gatherings but we would have had to commit to buying in plants from our usual nursery. We cannot put the Society's cash at risk recklessly in that way. So sorry to all those who like me were banking on buying some plants for our gardens and greenhouses. Keep your eyes open for offers from our local garden centres instead. Many are offering delivery of essential items such as compost.

The May meeting is also cancelled. There is no possibility of the restrictions being lifted by then and this is intended to give you as much notice as possible. So many apologies but this is out of control.

In my opinion more events are also under threat and it would be really helpful for me to be able to contact as many members as possible by email. I am one of the old codgers who have to socially isolate. I appreciate many members like to have a copy of this lovely magazine and we will always provide that when possible but if you have an email and have kept it a secret please email the address at the bottom of this page and let me know. You could also let me know if you still want a paper copy of the magazine so that I can add you to the correct list. However at the moment the printers have shut so this is the only way I can distribute it.

Schools have now been closed so the Wheelbarrow Competition will not go ahead. However to end on a positive note we have decided to go ahead with planning for the garden and allotment competitions and you should find a form enclosed. It is also downloadable from the website. Events may well overtake us but that it is the intention.

Thanks everyone and above all take care and stay safe so that we can meet again when this is all behind us.

Contact points for your Committee

President:	Cynthia Filer	Tel 514057
Chairman	John Chapman	Tel 418904
Treasurer	Mr and Ms Wilson	please use email below
Secretary	Sarah Ireland	Tel 07771993784
Membership Secretary	Keith Jackson	Tel 412792
Flower Show	John Chapman	see above
Coach Trips	Sue Thomas, Georgina Heathcote	
Newsletter	Keith Jackson	Tel 412792

Communicating with the Society:

All emails can be sent to
westonhortsoc@gmail.com which Keith monitors