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Editor's Musings



Hello to everyone, I hope everyone had a safe and cosy Christmas and is looking towards some improved circumstances in the New Year. We sometimes say that things couldn't get much worse, but that is not always true and here I speak from personal experience. After an Autumn when we were able to get out and about a bit and enjoy the gardens and wild spaces under the rules, my wife,

Trish, finally lost her battle with breast cancer and passed away in Weston Hospice (about whom I cannot speak too highly, and Macmillan ditto) at the beginning of November. I have been grateful for the support of my colleagues on the committee and it is my intention not to put myself under pressure by doing both the membership secretary and magazine editor roles together. Heather Taylor will take over the membership role as soon as we can meet for a sensible conversation to explain how I have been doing the job. I am sure she will do it in her own way and fresh eyes always bring improvements. The consequence of this is that I will not be sitting at the threshold badgering you for subs or membership cards but I will be about taking pictures and looking for stories. I have just been looking back and rereading what I wrote in spring last year and it all looks so optimistic now. Hoping to meet with Terry Walton our speaker in the Autumn meeting and expecting things to be better by the end of summer. In a way I suppose I could use the same prose now. The Oxford vaccine has arrived today. No doubt many of us will get one before long and maybe we will be able to get back to doing the things we so enjoy in the not too distant future.

I always like to use a photograph for the front cover which I have taken and is appropriate for the season. It avoids copyright issues and I quite like going out taking pictures specifically for the magazine. This time I have been forced to go back through my files to find an appropriate image. Delving through the albums has been a bittersweet experience and the one I have selected is a sight we have not seen for many years but it has that Christmassy feel.

AGM and Memberships

It is obvious that we are unable to hold our AGM in the foreseeable future. We think all we, as a committee, can do is hold the reins until it will be possible and keep you informed as to exactly what is happening. There are precious few decisions which we can take as we can only meet on Zoom and some members do not have the necessary equipment. Also Margaret and Wendy with the lovely hearing dog, who have acted as a focal point for garden entries in the flower show, have been unable to take part and so have tendered their resignations. We are grateful for all their hard work and hope they will continue to support the Society in the future.

We have also taken the decision to roll all memberships forward till the end of the year. So if you have a membership card it will be valid till the end of 2021 without any further payment. Obviously any new members will need to contact Heather whose details are on the back of this newsletter. Let us hope we are able to offer you something related to our wonderful hobby which will justify us asking for a membership fee for 2022.

Winter Gardening

Even though Winter is upon us and the days are short, there are still enough hours in the day for tidying and preparation for springtime, so long as we can keep off the soil.

I have been fairly busy in the vegetable plot over the last couple of months. The vegetable plot has three separate beds and one has been designated to be a no-dig bed. I cleared the bed of weeds, raked it level and spread a three inch layer of compost. For the two remaining beds I dug them over to one spit deep, and spread a similar three inch layer of compost to each of the two beds.

I intend planting small areas of similar vegetables in each bed, i.e. beetroot, onions, runner beans, lettuce and radish, and then compare the produce over the Summer. I am



concerned that the runner beans may not be as productive in the no-dig bed, as there will be no trench prepared for them.

I prefer preparing the vegetable plot in Autumn rather than in February/March as the ground is drier and can be worked without fear of compaction, and it also gives plenty of time for the worms, etc. to draw the compost down into the ground where it is needed. I was given this tip by Ted Gill, a long serving member of our society.

One of the positives for this December is a basket in my garden that is still in full bloom. The white and lilac bacopa are magnificent. When we have heavy frosts I will cut the bacopa back, but it should survive the Winter and regrow in the Spring.

Flower Show 2021

Looking forward to Summer 2021, the Horticultural Society has booked the Winter Gardens for the Flower Show on the 14th of August. This will be subject to any future restrictions imposed by the government with the Covid-19 virus, but looking on the positive side we will commence planning for the event at the start of February. Any member who would like to be involved in planning/ suggestions for the Flower Show, please contact me or any committee member.

John Chapman

Retiring Committee Members

Margaret Tovey and Wendy O'Sullivan have decided they are no longer able to make a contribution and have tendered their resignations. We thank them for their work during the preceding seasons but as a consequence we are beginning to look rather thin on the ground and would appreciate volunteers who would be prepared to serve either as a committee member or in a specific role.

Getting Ready for the New Year

Those of you who have heard me going on about whether to dig up my dahlias, as I have always done, and which most books recommend even in these days of warmer winters, may be interested to know that I have finally decided to cut the haulms down and leave them in the ground. Then chuck some compost over the top and plant wallflowers in between . They are looking quite good and seem to have survived the transport from the allotment to my garden. I have disturbed a few bulbs in the process but I think they will recover.

Another joy at this time of the year is that, despite the internet, seed companies are sending out magnificent catalogues. It can bring a real bit of colour and optimism to a cold winter evening to sit and imagine how your garden might look if you were to buy a few of these smashing seeds and plants. In years gone by the fantasy reading at this time of year was the travel brochure but we know what happened to that! Just cast your mind back to the early spring. During the first lockdown seeds were in short supply and compost deliveries were erratic. So lets all be prepared this time round.

However, just a few words of warning. If you have one, look in your seed tin and see how many packets are still there from previous seasons. If you didn't use a whole packet there may be enough there to see you through the season as long as there is enough to cope with a poorer germination rate. However if you have saved a couple of seeds from a packet of five do you really want to rely on the germination of two seeds? By the time its obvious nothing is coming up it's a bit late to try to get a fresh packet. Who knows what is likely to happen?

So keep warm, have fun planning and hoping for a little bit of light at the end of the tunnel. Let's just hope it's not something coming the other way!

Heather has been doing a horticulture course and has offered to produce some designs for any member who is going to revamp their garden. I am in that position and will hopefully be taking advantage of her offer when I move house. I already have some ideas and I have been buying some plants ready and here I like to use a local family owned firm rather than these huge national chains so I unhesitatingly endorse Elmsley Nurseries for plants and compost and excellent service. They don't sell cards, coffee, china, clothes or houseplants . Wonderful Good gardening All. (And I'm not being paid)

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	Heather Taylor	Tel 412792
Flower Show	John Chapman	see above
Coach Trips	Heather Tayler, Georgina Heathcote	
Newsletter	Keith Jackson	Tel 412792

Communicating with the Society:

All emails can be sent to

westonhortsoc@gmail.com which Keith monitors