

# WHALEY BRIDGE Allotment & Gardeners' Society

## January 2017

Spring is just around the corner and the first snowdrops and primroses are already braving the cold. As you can see from the attached programme of events, we have a varied and entertaining programme for 2017.



### Coming events.

*Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2 p.m. at Whaley Uniting Church.*

This social meeting includes Bob's slide show of last year's events. Come along to see if you were "caught on camera". Refreshments and a free raffle are included.

*Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Elnor Lane Store.*

Support our annual plant swap by bringing along any surplus plants, seedlings and seeds. Reinvigorate your perennials by lifting and dividing and pot up and label the surplus for swapping. Come for a chat if you have nothing to swap and bag a bargain for a small donation.

*Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2 p.m. at the Uniting Church.*

Jaqueline Iddon, who has a hardy plant nursery, will be giving a talk and practical demonstration on planting up containers. As usual there will be a free raffle and refreshments.

*Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May 9.30 a.m. Coffee morning at the Mechanics Institute.*

As usual we will have an outdoor plant stall, raffle etc. Donations of those unwanted Christmas gifts would be welcomed or the results of your baking skills.

*Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May. A coach visit to Don Witton's Euphorbia allotment leaving Whaley at 9 a.m.*

Following Don's talk last October, many members expressed a wish to visit his plot and see the full range of plants. He has advised us that this is the best time of year to visit to see euphorbia at their peak. We will follow this by calling at Sheffield Botanical Gardens.



### Store News.

Sunday openings will commence on 26<sup>th</sup> March from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Wednesday openings start on 29<sup>th</sup> March 6 – 7 p.m. Please support the store for all your composts, fertilisers etc. You can also donate unwanted tools which will be refurbished and sold on for WBAGS funds. The prices are keen and the staff are even keener.

### Allotment News.

A management committee has been set up with representatives of site users and the town council. A drainage trench was dug which has now become a moat so further works to solve the problems caused by water logging are being considered.

From its early years WBAGS has been affiliated to the National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) deriving useful benefits (discounted seed order scheme, specialised insurance, free guidance and legal advice on allotment matters etc.). The annual fee which is levied per member has increased steadily over the last few years and the committee is now considering the merits of switching to an alternative Nottingham based organisation set up in 1988 which offers similar benefits to NSALG at a much lower annual fee. No action is needed until July when

the NSALG membership is due for renewal.

### Membership news

Diane Beever has joined the committee with a view to taking over as secretary – many thanks.

We welcome new members Tim and Val Crispin from Reservoir Road and Rose Dickinson from Williamson Road and look forward to meeting them at our events.

I am not issuing the perennial subscription reminder as those who were members last year get this year free.

### Out and About.

*Chapel-en-le-Frith Gardening Club* have a varied programme of talks for 2017. Guests are welcome to attend (£2 per talk) and meetings are held at Chapel Town Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Steve Middleton will be talking about the spectacular starling murmurations at Cavendish Mill on 25.1.17. Keeping up the avian theme Andrew Wetters will discuss small scale poultry keeping on 22.2.17.

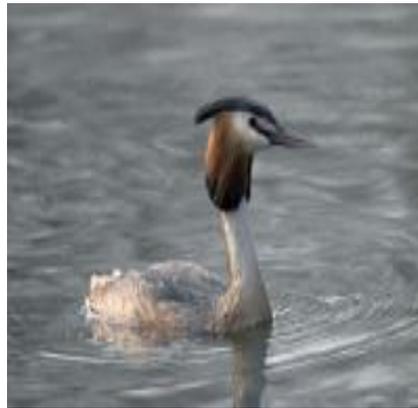
Dr Paul Challiner will be giving a talk on hydroponics on 29.3.17.

A *potato day* will be hosted by Marple Allotment Association at the Senior Citizens' Hall in the Marple Memorial Park on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. They will have over 90 varieties of seed potatoes, vegetable seeds, soft fruit and fruit seeds, summer flowering bulbs and a herb stall. For further details see [www.marpleallotments.org.uk](http://www.marpleallotments.org.uk).

*Plant Hunter Fairs* in our area are Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March at Carsington Water and Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>

April at Bramall Hall. There are many other dates and venues with full details on [www.planthunterfairs.co.uk](http://www.planthunterfairs.co.uk) or Facebook Planthunterfairs.

### *Podiceps Cristatus*



At last the grebe is back! He has clearly been preoccupied with the problems caused by invasive Japanese knotweed in his watery habitat and has sent us the following information.

### Knot in my Back yard.

Today Japanese knotweed is Britain's most destructive invasive plant costing around £166 million a year to clear and control. It undermines buildings, cracks through roads and overruns and eventually kills any plant it meets in its awesome – powerful - unstoppable progress.

*Fallopia Japonica* first arrived in Britain in a box of 40 Chinese and Japanese plants delivered to Kew in 1850. "Plant no. 34" was a simple shrub with reddish hollow canes and heart-shaped leaves. It became popular in the fashion for wild gardens and was soon available throughout the UK. Its destructive power for toppling walls and blocking drains was recorded in 1898 but nevertheless it was sold as a fashionable exotic until the 1930's.

The plant's promiscuous propensity for cross breeding worries professionals in that it may produce a plant with viable seeds. Currently the female is infertile and spreads by regenerating its rhizomes spreading deep underground. Slashing, mowing and digging tend to increase the infestation as the tiniest piece of rhizome will regenerate creating a new plant. The plant has colonised just about every corner of the UK – sandy salty beaches, heavy asphalt, swamps and marshes. It currently has no predators in the UK and can grow up to four inches a day in summer. Injecting the canes with weed killer is expensive and needs repeat applications. The hunt is on for a bio-control agent and the Animal and Plant Agency have spend over £1.5 million in the last four years on this search.



Sites where it is flourishing in Whaley Bridge include both banks of Todbrook between the footbridge and the sailing club starter hut, the banks of the River Goyt in the Memorial Park, the field in front of Carr House and the Fernilee side of the Errwood Dam.

Since this plant is classed as "Controlled waste" under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 you should take advice about its safe disposal if you find it on your property.