

WHALEY BRIDGE ALLOTMENT & GARDENERS' SOCIETY

Newsletter – Mar/Apl 2009

Dear Member,

Our much loved and longstanding newsletter editor John Howes has been poorly for some time, but further deterioration in his health over the last few months has now forced him to resign from the committee. We shall all miss his inimitable good humoured and witty newsletters which were always a delight to read. John is one of the Society's founder members and has worked selflessly over many years generously giving much time and effort in building up the Society, and without his input we would certainly not have the flourishing Society we know today. In fact he has been the mainstay of the Society, and leaves the Committee with a hard act to follow. In addition to thanking John, our thoughts are with both him and Mary at this very trying time for them.

(Temporarily I am standing in as newsletter editor, but should any member feel he or she would like to become involved with production/editing of future newsletters, please let me know).

On the membership front, a warm welcome to new members Julie Batten of Disley, Sarah White of Tunstead Milton, John Bould and Janet Gowland of Buxton, Jean Clough, Emily Bates and Mr G Shirt from Chapel, who have all joined the Society recently. Sadly some members have still not renewed their subs for the current year, so this could be their **last newsletter** (we'll have to assume they no longer want to remain members). However, the rest of us will continue to enjoy the benefits of membership and you'll find attached a reminder of our Tool Hire Scheme, Gazebo hire, and various discounts available. Regrettably the new owners of Brookside Garden Centre have declined to continue the 10% discount previously offered to us.

Also attached is the 2009 price list for items at the **Elnor Lane Store** and while there have inevitably been some price increases, overall it's still good value. Our new Store Manager, David Osborn, and his helpers will be delighted to see you on Sunday mornings, 10 – 12 am, starting **5th April**. David is keen to ensure there's no fall in the standard of personal service set by his predecessor, John Howes, and you can phone him on 01663 733659 to arrange an alternative time for your order if Sunday morning is inconvenient. Incidentally David will be happy to hear from any member who would like to offer assistance on Sunday mornings at the store on a rota basis.

Doesn't time fly! We've already started on the programme of events for this year (you should have had a copy with the last newsletter) and some of you will have participated in the BBC Radio 4 'Gardeners Question Time' hosted by Chapel Gardening Club. I'm pleased to say there were quite a few of our members present, and amongst others, Roger Wood, Joy Brown, and Margaret Day had their gardening questions answered by the panellist who really did entertain as well as informing us. It's not often we have an opportunity to fire gardening questions directly at the experts, but only a week later we had our own guest speaker, David Hampsey, who gave us a talk on growing vegetables. Our expectations were high following the comments in John's last newsletter, and David didn't disappoint. Held at the Uniting Church there was an attendance of approx 35 and David answered a deluge of questions giving numerous tips derived from his in depth knowledge and expertise. It was a very relaxed informal event and even the novices amongst us were encouraged to get stuck in and have a go.

Roger, our talks organiser, has a number of other potential speakers and any further talks for this year will be notified via the newsletter.

The first of this year's **coach trips**, Renishaw Hall and gardens, is drawing near and Rosemary is still taking bookings upto **21st April**. Most visitors only see the gardens but on this occasion we have the opportunity of a guided tour of the hall as well, so **try not to miss this one**. Bookings for the other trips can also be made by simply phoning Rosemary on 01663 733393, preferably early to avoid disappointment.

Our annual **Plant Swap** will take place at our Elnor Lane Store from 10 to 12am on Sunday 10th May. Please bring along all your surplus seedlings/plants to either swap or sell, or just come along to join in the fun. There's always something tempting. Proceeds are traditionally donated to the Society. The store will of course be open for business as well. (I'm telling you this **now** as the next newsletter will probably be after the event).

After the hardest winter for many years some of our plants/shrubs have really suffered, our penstemons for instance took a real battering, and a rather tender euphorbia has snuffed it. But the prolonged frosts should also have set back many of the nasty pests that afflict our gardens later in the year so there 's cause for optimism, and hopefully we'll get a mild frost free spring. On the allotment front, the access path has been much less muddy since it was surfaced with road planings last autumn and hopefully the Town Council will become more proactive in maintaining it. There have been recent signs of activity on the plots and , given a fair share of good weather, we hope this summer will prove more productive than last year. Putting in the required effort doesn't necessarily guarantee results but each year we try to do better. Our thanks to Joyce Eyre for allowing us to take wood shreadings she occasionally acquires.

Second hand items for sale- petrol engine Flymo type lawnmower
petrol motor strimmer
electric Black & Decker hedge cutter 41cm blade

Refer to Bob Kellock on 01663 733393 if interested.

Are there any members willing to open their garden to the Society this summer? As most of you know, we've been organising these pleasant afternoons for many years. Where necessary, we can supply some seats, tables, a gazebo and even wine and raffle prizes. All you would need to provide are some light refreshments and an attractive garden. Proceeds are usually donated to a charity of your choice. Any offers should be referred to Rosemary on 01663 733393 who will be happy to discuss details.

Finally I hope we all manage to enjoy at least some of the events lined up this year, the coach trips and talks should all be popular. If you have any local news items relevant to the Society and members please let me have details for possible inclusion in future newsletters. The committee is always happy to discuss any suggestions from members relating to the Society.

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