



WHALEY BRIDGE Allotment & Gardeners' Society



MARCH 2014 NEWSLETTER

DRYING OUT, WARMING UP, SHOOTING UP!



Podiceps Cristatus writes on a topical theme – see second page

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The Committee is pleased to welcome on your behalf the following new members: Ann High of Whaley Bridge and David and Christine Brooks, also of Whaley Bridge.

Subscriptions

Alas, several members have not paid their subscriptions for the current year and will not receive the next Newsletter or enjoy membership benefits until they have done so. Please pay without delay Bob Kellock, Treasurer (31 Meadow Close, Whaley Bridge, SK23 7BD) or any Committee member.

STORE OPENING 23rd MARCH

With Spring springing, it is time to get cracking. Your store team, led by David Osborn, has once again got a load of goodies to encourage you. Please see attached Store Price List. Sunday opening starts on 23rd March, 10am-12 noon. Wednesday opening starts on 9th April 6pm-7pm. (Remember: no subscription payment = no purchases.) A map showing the location of the store is also attached for the benefit of new members. If you would like to buy some products but are not very mobile or transport is a problem, please have a word with David Osborn, Store Manager. Something can frequently be arranged in such circumstances.

RECENT EVENTS

SOCIAL EVENING 13th February

Our Social Secretary Rosemary Kellock reports “We have abandoned our usual venue, Holy Trinity Church rooms, due to the stairs being a problem for some elderly members. This was our first meeting at WB Uniting Church using their ground floor room and kitchen, which was perfectly adequate for our purpose. However, the Uniting Church rules strictly forbid any alcohol on the premises, so we had to make do without wine, but the 26 members attending had no complaints. Otherwise the refreshments I organised were much the same as usual, tea/coffee, biscuits, cakes, etc. Another rule forbids the holding of a raffle (it is deemed a form of gambling) **unless** no money changes hands:- so raffle tickets were free and prizes were won by Janet Aldridge, Joan Macbeth and Dave Parker. The main item of the evening was a slide show given by Bob Kellock featuring last year’s coach trips (excluding the Highgrove visit). There was a slight delay at the start due to a minor traffic incident involving Bob and Pam Pierce on the ramp up to the car park but thankfully nobody was hurt and the car was restored to the road by some local strong-men volunteers. In his introduction, Roy welcomed two new members, David and Christine Brooks. Thanks to Joyce Eyre and Jean Philbin, who left the kitchen beautifully clean.

VISIT TO ASHWOOD NURSERIES 20th February



Generous sized blooms developed at the nursery

With the recent chaotic weather, it was a great relief to have a good day for the trip. There were 28 on the coach, boosted by another 6 who came direct. After initial refreshments, there was an hour’s guided tour explaining the propagation of hellebores, one of the speciality crops for which the nursery has received international acclaim. The guide was expert, despite her youth, holding the group’s attention throughout and giving a wealth of detail in a manner easily understood. She gave fascinating insights into the processes and demonstrated how tweezers and labels are essential tools in the cross-pollination process. After lunch at the busy restaurant, there was a guided tour of the owner’s private, 3 acre garden, tucked behind the nurseries on the banks of the Staffs and Worcester Canal. Again, the guide was excellent – a recently retired employee, who knew the garden intimately. Group members were amazed at the various features and the wide variety of planting from snowdrops, cyclamen and aconites forming carpets of colour, to witch hazels and sarcococca filling the air with scent. A wide range of hellebores also featured amongst a variety of other plants, including various conifers, birch, dogwoods, acers, willows and a stunning border of ornamental grasses. Overall, this was an excellent start to the year’s trips!

FUTURE EVENTS

SPRING TALK Thursday 1st May Downstairs room, Whaley Bridge Uniting Church 2pm “The Gardens of Derbyshire”.

The talk will be given by Eileen Dougan, Derbyshire county organiser for the National Garden Scheme. Members will almost certainly be familiar with the “yellow” book, which is full of ideas for visits to attractive private gardens in the county. Our speaker will be able to identify themes and highlights and talk about the operation of the National

Gardens Scheme. It should be fascinating and a helpful way of shortlisting gardens to visit from amongst the many offerings in the county. All are welcome. Members £1 and non-members £2. Refreshments will be served after the talk.

**WOLLATON OLD HALL
GARDEN VISIT Wednesday 14th
May Depart 9am from Whaley
Bridge**

The garden has been designed by Lesley and John Jenkins and developed since 1984. It is set around a 16th century Hall House and has developed into an important modern garden with echoes of Arts and Crafts. It covers 4 acres and is intensely cultivated. Lesley Jenkins quickly discovered that the age of the site demanded formality in the garden design and so she created three north-south and three east-west vistas. The resulting linearity of these gardens created a large number of separate gardens, each one having its own style and ethos.

www.wollertonhallgarden.com



The visit will include a light, pre-ordered lunch, included in the price. It should be noted that no picnics are permitted. Please phone Rosemary to book, if you have not already done so. Cost is £32.50 and must be paid by 7th May.

**PLANT SWAP 18th May 10am –
12noon at the Store**

This is an excellent opportunity to bring surplus plants for your fellow members and to take home something interesting in exchange. Great plants are often available as well as seedlings for those who aren't into propagation themselves. Surplus seeds can also be obtained. If you don't happen to have something to swap this year, come anyway. You can select some plants and simply make a donation to Society funds in lieu of making a swap. If by happy chance it is a sunny day as well, the Plant Swap is also a chance to catch up with gardening friends and to hear about their plans for the summer. All contributions need to be properly potted (seeds put in sealed envelopes) and labelled. If you have queries about what might be acceptable,

have a word with David Osborn or Roger Wood.



**CONFIRMATION OF AUTUMN
TALK**

It was not possible to include in Diary Notes 2014 details of the autumn talk. Roger Wood, our Talks Organiser, is pleased to confirm that **Anne Beswick** will give a talk about garden design on **Thursday, 2nd October, starting at 2pm.** The venue will be the downstairs room in Whaley Bridge Uniting Church. Anne is an award-winning designer and lectures for Wilmslow Guild, Macclesfield College and for the National Trust. She writes on gardening matters for a number of national publications. **Please write this addition into your copy of Diary Notes 2014.**

**INVITATION FROM
CHAPEL GARDENING CLUB**

WBAGS members are invited to attend as guests talks given as part of the Club's programme. Imminent talks are:

30th April. Paul Quigley. Norton Priory Walled Garden.

28th May. Ray Evans. Gardens for Wildlife.

These talks/slide shows are held at Chapel Town Hall commencing at 7.30pm. Entry fee for non-members is £3.00. For further details, contact Mike and Tricia Mckinna on 01663 750119.

PLANT HUNTERS FAIRS

Plant Hunters Fairs are held at stately homes and a range of notable locations. Plant nurseries attend them, present their offerings at stalls and encourage visitors to buy! In the foreseeable future, they are being held at various locations within day reach of Whaley Bridge. For more information, go to www.planthuntersfairs.co.uk or telephone Janet and Martin Blow on 01270 811443 or 0771 699 0695.

**MUSINGS FROM PODICEPS
CRISTATUS...**

*"Water, water, everywhere..
Nor any drop to drink"*

We all recall these lines from the start of Coleridge's poem "The Rime of the

Ancient Mariner"; how very appropriate, especially for the unfortunate victims of the floods in the South West during the last two months, and more recently in the Thames valley.

Though the current, prolonged wet weather may be unusual, excesses of wind and rain with accompanying tidal surges are nothing new – our island home is always at the mercy of the prevailing Westerly winter gales. The informed view, internationally, is that the extreme world weather patterns are becoming the norm.

The statistics are scary! Today's flooding in the Somerset levels is 11,500 hectares under 65 million cubic metres of water. Fernlee reservoir capacity is 4,940 million litres, so a fifth of the flood plain of Somerset is covered by thirteen "Fernleefuls" of water (plus other ingredients...)

The Environment Agency struggle balancing the cost of urban flood defences with the cost of preventing rural devastation. In fact over £950 million has been spent by the EA in the last six years to prevent damage, successfully, to 220,000 properties – these benefits are worth roughly eight times the cost. The cost benefits from dredging or reducing the spate of rivers by "holding water further back up in the hills" works out at *ten times less* than this.

The political, the environmental and the Treasury lobbies will continue to wrangle, but I've just noticed a chink of light through the fog!... A WOMAN, for the first time ever, has been appointed as Deputy President of the NFU !!! Her soon-to-be-announced "Flood Manifesto" will detail how farmers, landowners and immediate neighbours to rivers *must* accept the responsibility, with Government money, for the *management of the water courses*. Alleluia ! Go Mrs. Minette Batters !



PS from Editor - Podiceps Cristatus reports (1) that recently seven Hooper swans were seen on the Toddbrook Reservoir, taking a rest from their travels and (2) that there are 1000 litres of liquid in a cubic metre!