



MARCH 2015 NEWSLETTER

SPRING INTO ACTION

STORE OPENING IMMINENT.

Unlike Aldi, we can't promise a golden envelope to our first hundred visitors but the store team have stocked up on all your gardening essentials so don't forget to pay them a visit. The first day of opening is on Sunday 22nd March from 10 till 12 and Wednesday evening opening commences on 1st April from 6 till 7 p.m. The current price list is attached showing no increases from last year's prices. We are pleased to hear that Dave Parker is recovering from his recent illness and will be on hand to provide the usual banter.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New members.

A warm welcome to three new Whaley Bridge members who have recently joined the society – Rodney Gilmore, Roger Dane and Elizabeth Fox. We look forward to meeting you at events throughout the year.

Subscription renewal.

As ever, we have some members who have not yet renewed their subscriptions. Hopefully this is just an oversight; those who wish to renew their membership can pay at the store or send a cheque for £5 to our treasurer Bob Kellock at 31, Meadow Close, Whaley Bridge. SK23 7BD.

RECENT EVENTS

Social meeting

Despite the cold, wet weather there was a reasonable attendance of members who, in the warmth and comfort of the Uniting Church, enjoyed a slide show given by Bob Kellock featuring all of last year's trips. For those who went on all four trips it was an enjoyable reminder of excellent days out as Rosemary had

arranged for the usual fine weather. For those who missed any trips it was an opportunity to see what you missed. The slides shown are also featured on the web site and can be viewed by clicking on "photographs" at the end of the relevant report for each trip. Rosemary apologised for the fact that trips in 2015 are on Thursday's which may not be convenient for some members – the retired ones seem particularly busy! This was unavoidable due to booking priorities but she will make every effort to rotate future trips. Raffle prizes were won by Pauline Price, Christine Goddard and Jean Clough.



Visit to Hodsock Priory.

We had a full coach load of 28 which included members of garden groups from Chapel and Buxton. Due to pickups in Buxton, Wendy took us via the scenic route through Ashford in the Water and Chesterfield. This cunning plan allowed time for the heavy rain to stop and the clouds to lift so that it was fine on arrival at Hodsock. Those who remember our last visit were impressed by the improvements including a well stocked cafe in a marquee. The "Italian Garden" was showing a lot of winter colour and structure with pops of colour from iris, daffodils, cyclamen etc.



The tree canopy in the woodland walk had been reduced to allow more light to penetrate allowing the sixty varieties of snowdrop to flourish.



Many members gathered at a bonfire in the woods for a short talk on the history of Hodsock given by George Buchan, the son of the present owner, who manages the estate for his father Sir Andrew Buchan and is the eighth generation of the family to live at Hodsock.



He told us how his ancestor, Colonel Henry Francis Mellish, gambled away the equivalent of tens of millions of pounds and had to sell his inheritance to pay his debts apart from Hodsock which was entailed to his sister. George now lives in the former servants' quarters with his wife and four children and the house has been developed as a civil wedding venue. Willow for England cricket bats is also grown on the estate. Apart from unusual (and expensive) snowdrops the plant sale area had a good selection of shrubs, plants and bulbs for early spring colour and many members helped to fill the coach boot. Raffle prizes were won by that well known trio – Kay, Chris and Cath!

COMING EVENTS

Talk on Norton Priory walled garden. Friday 8th May 2 p.m. Uniting Church.

Being about Norton Priory walled garden, this talk should whet our appetite for the trip there on 1st October.

Plant swap. Sunday 17th May 10.00 to 12.00. Elnor Lane Store.

Our plant swap is on Sunday 17th May from 10.00 to 12.00 at the Elnor Lane Store. Please label your plants – pictures and cultivation notes would be good. Any surplus seeds and seedlings would also be welcome. Swappers and non swappers are welcome as you can obtain plants for a donation to the society if you have nothing to swap.

Coffee morning and plant sale. Saturday 30th May 9.30 -12.00 Mechanics institute.

The plant stall outside the Mechanics allows us to market WBAGS to interested visitors. It also raises funds through the sale of refreshments, home-made cakes, preserves etc. Please support us by bringing any surplus plants, potted and labelled and items for tombola, raffle or bric a brac stall. Volunteer helpers are doubly welcome or, if you're busy, just pop in for a coffee.

Coach trip to Cobble Hey Farm. Thursday 4th June.

Leaving Whaley Bridge 8.30 a.m. Booking and payment of £25.20 to Rosemary (01663 750172) by 21st May. This promises to be a full day with a working rare breeds farm, lapwing conservation area, tearoom and plant nursery as well as the extensive gardens which hold the national collection of geraniums – and that's just the morning! In the afternoon we are visiting Clearbeck House with its two acre lake, bog garden etc. Please let Rosemary know if you would like to use the electric disability chair available there.

My apologies to those whose events list did not include the second talk on Thursday 29th October by Anthony Norman from Conquest Plants nursery. Please add the date to your diary/ events list. More details to follow.

Compost trial

There is still the opportunity for a few more members to join in the peat free compost trial organised by Margaret Day. Sufficient compost for the trial will be provided from the store or contact David Osborn or Roger Wood. Full instructions will be given.

Highgrove.

There were insufficient numbers to confirm a trip for this year but Rosemary will provisionally book a specific date in June/ July next year which will go ahead if the required number book and pay.

AN INVITATION FROM CHAPEL GARDEN CLUB.

Members are welcome to attend the talks organised by Chapel gardening club as guests for £3 per talk at Chapel Town Hall at 7.30 p.m.
25.3.15 Around the year with clematis.
29.4.15 Hostas
27.5.15 Gardening for bees. (By Paul Quigley of Norton Priory.)
There is also a coffee morning and plant sale on 16.5.15 at Town End Methodist Church.

ALLOTMENT NEWS.

There will be further work parties at the allotment site when the weather improves to prepare for the grand opening of the extended site at a date to be arranged. The allotment society have purchased 2 gazebos (one octagonal) which can also be loaned by garden society members. This is in addition to the ones owned by the garden society.

OUT AND ABOUT

Planthunter fairs in our area are Saturday 4th April at Carsington Water (DE6 1ST) with free entry and Sunday 10th May at Adlington Hall (SK10 4LF) £3 entry to fair, park and garden which is half the normal admission.

Garden plant and craft shows will be held at the Pavilion Gardens in Buxton on April 26th and May 4th.

FEELING BADGERED?

A number of members on the edges of the village have reported regular visits from badgers. The badger trust

(www.badgertrust.org.uk 08458 287878) produces an advice leaflet about minimising damage and will put you in touch with a local conservation group. Badgers and their setts are protected by law but lawful actions can be taken to minimise damage. Food placed for other animals and birds, particularly peanuts, will attract badgers. To avoid this, food should only be placed in the garden during daylight and not left out overnight. Badgers are omnivorous and will eat many things, they will dig for earthworms and insect larvae and also eat flower bulbs, fruit and vegetables.



My badger triggers the security light on his nightly rambles and is happy to pose for pictures.

GET INVOLVED

Bob forwarded details of a national plant monitoring scheme which is looking for volunteers to monitor a kilometre square near to them and record plants twice a year. I have checked the website and the only available square in our area is up on the moors on the Bleaklow Plateau! If anyone fitter than me is interested they can find all the details and register on the NPMS website and they will be sent survey guidance, species list and a species guidebook.



SPECIAL OFFER

The free green house mention in the last newsletter is still available. Further information from Roger Wood (01663 732112)