



## WHALEY BRIDGE Allotment & Gardeners' Society



### **June 2013 Newsletter**

As many members are aware, Gill Williamson's husband David died very recently. We offer her our deep sympathy and look forward to her resuming her role as Newsletter Editor when she feels sufficiently recovered from her bereavement. Meantime, this edition is regrettably not in the usual columnar format as I do not have the necessary computer programme or expertise to match Gill's results. My apologies.

Bob Kellock (secretary & treasurer)

#### **MEMBERSHIP NEWS-**

Since March we have welcomed the following new members- Carole Hill from Buxworth, Colin Fidler and Les Jones both from Whaley Bridge.

#### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS-**

**Coffee morning and plant sale- Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June 9.30am to noon** at WB Mechanics Institute. Do come along and support this event. It helps raise the Society's profile. Rosemary is in charge so please contact her if you can offer help in any form, either by providing cakes, bric-a-brac etc. or by joining the catering team. Any plants for sale should be suitably labelled in pots and passed to either Roger Wood or David Osborn by 10am. Don't miss this opportunity to buy plants for hanging baskets etc. at bargain prices. Summer is nearly here.

**COACH TRIPS** (see your WBAGS Diary Notes for full details and *booking deadlines*)

**Burton Agnes Hall & Gardens, Driffield on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July.** It should be an excellent day out with plenty of interest in the award winning gardens.

**Coton Manor Gardens, Guilsborough, Northants on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August.** Expected to be a very rewarding experience as the garden is reputed to be a favourite with visitors, and summer flowering plants will be at their best.

#### **30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY GARDEN PARTY - Saturday 27th July, 2pm to 4.30pm**

at Derek & Anne Lear's marvellous bungalow garden, Greenoak, Taxal. There will be a full buffet and celebration cake, plus a drop of wine to get us into a convivial mood, a raffle and maybe a short speech. Entrance is by ticket cost £12.50 (members) or £15.00 (guests). We are anticipating a good attendance but obviously need a reasonable idea of numbers for catering purposes, so Rosemary will appreciate names and payment if possible by **19<sup>th</sup> July** please.

Full details are given on WBAGS Diary Notes. All queries should be addressed to Rosemary, our Social Secretary (tel 01663 733393). Be prepared to give a little to help Derek's Kenyan charity via his plant sale.



This promises to be a very enjoyable event and **highlight of the year!**

**Social Evening at Trinity Church WB on Friday 13th September 7.30pm.** Another get together and a 'raspberry tasting' session organised by Margaret Day. Bring along samples of your own home grown fruit! As usual it should all be great fun. More information will be included in the next newsletter.

#### **RECENT EVENTS**

Regrettably the **Talk on NGS Derbyshire open gardens**, scheduled for Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March had to be cancelled due to atrocious winter weather. Our talks organiser, Roger Wood, is attempting to re-arrange it with the speaker, Irene Dougan.

#### ***Coach trips***

**Dunham Massey 15<sup>th</sup> April**

There were 22 on the trip to Dunham Massey (NT) and the weather was delightfully sunny and warm despite a cooling breeze. Some attended an initial short talk giving historical details of the Georgian house and garden and then we strolled around the gardens including the large 'winter' garden which was a little disappointing, mainly due to the long harsh winter and late spring. The fragrance from shrubs of *Lonicera* (honeysuckle) was wonderful and there were plenty of daffodils/narcissus on view with the ubiquitous hellebores and other spring flowers, but the snowdrops were over. After refreshments many of us went to look around the hall which is very extensive and reveals the wealth of its past aristocratic owners. Two attractive horaries c 1800 were displayed in the small but prized library and there was an impressive collection of silverware. Close by, there was a 400 year old saw mill in working order, adding extra interest. Overall it was a refreshing day out following the rigours of winter.

### **Muncaster Castle 9<sup>th</sup> May**

Despite a bad weather forecast 19 of us went on this trip. After a 3 ½ hour drive we arrived just as light rain set in. It didn't prevent us enjoying the huge rhododendron collection and extensive gardens. The lovely grass terrace with its clipped yew and box edging (approx. ½ mile long) was very impressive giving fine views up the estuary towards the Lakeland fells. We were given a short talk on the World Owl Centre by the head keeper and had close up views of a tawny owl and a very attractive barn owl, both of which were getting quite wet with the worsening weather. The other owls were viewable in their enclosures. Shelter from the weather wasn't a problem as there was an excellent café in the stable yard and of course the castle to view. Owned by the Pennington family since 1208 it's an impressive structure featuring the Great Hall and the elegant octagonal library and drawing room with barrel ceiling. Its present owner, the rather eccentric but feisty octogenarian, Mr Gordon-Duff-Pennington, personally thanked us just before the coach left for our return journey. What a character ! He spent a good 5 minutes entertaining us with some of his humorous yarns

### **Plant Swap/Sale 19<sup>th</sup> May**

Happily the weather was fair but only a modest number of members attended, perhaps due to the extra long winter which may have discouraged members from any active gardening. There was a reasonable selection of plants. Tomatoes in particular looked good with a choice of varieties. David Osborn and his team had rigged up a couple of union flags and some bunting to give the occasion a sort of festive feel . As usual an air of levity prevailed courtesy of Dave Parker aided and abetted by the rest of the store team. Overall results were satisfactory with donations of £35 and a decent number of store sales.

### **ALLOTMENT NEWS**

Significant progress has been made on extending the allotment site due to the effort of working parties over the last 6 months, comprising volunteers from some of the existing ploholders and others including Town Councillors, John Swift, Martin Thomas, Rodney Gilmore, and tea lady, Anne Winter . Organised by John, the team has cleared a massive amount of brush and timber to reclaim land eventually to be turned into more plots or raised beds. Chain saws and heavy machinery were used to fell trees and lift roots which are to be burned or removed. When completely clear, the area has to be properly levelled and drained to make the land usable. John estimates the project will be completed sometime next year. The Town Council is responsible for the allotment site (not WBAGS) but the Society is supportive of any action taken to improve matters both for existing and future ploholders.

### **MUSINGS from PODICEPS CRISTATUS**

#### **"A soak or a splash ?":**

At this time of year predicting the weather for the coming Summer months is a preoccupation for farmers and gardeners. We hesitate to plant out the bedding, we sow veg. seeds into trays and cover these in frames or cloches rather than sow directly into the prepared ground, worried about the unseasonal cold nights.

The old country-lore saying : *"oak before ash, we're in for a splash ; ash before oak, we're in for a soak !"* was more relevant fifty years ago before our Springtime average temperatures started to rise. Oak trees react to warmth and come into leaf, the ash react first to light – so in the last twenty years or so the oak has beaten the ash into early leafing.

These two wonderful broadleaf forest trees are part of our ancient history, we identify them in our place names : Ashford, Long Ashton, Knotty Ash, Moynash, Askrigg, - how many placenames can you recall including Oak or Oke ?

The ash, which represents 13% of the UK broadleaf woodland is now threatened by a deadly fungus *chalara fraxinea* or "ash die back". This was first discovered in saplings imported from Denmark last year, and since then is found in dozens of locations in England and Scotland – about a third of our forests !

The value of imported plants is now more than £400 million per year, so fully grown trees are increasingly being imported, always with root balls enclosed in soil containing a range of organisms from the country of origin.

85% of everything we import comes in wood-based packaging : pallets, cardboard, paper i.e. "dead trees" – perfect habitat for fungi !

There exist about 80 million ash trees in UK, if the disease follows the progress observed in Denmark where approx.10% remain symptom free, 72 million ash trees could be infected ! – this "battle for the ashes" will last longer than the cricket season - and could change our countryside for ever.

Useful phone numbers- Committee-

Roy Jennings (01663 734187) Bob & Rosemary Kellock (01663 733393)

David Osborn (01663 733659) Dave Parker (01663 750172) Gill Williamson (01663 733035)

Roger Wood (01663 732112) and webmaster- Mike High (01663 732578)

