



WHALEY BRIDGE Allotment & Gardeners' Society



SEPTEMBER 2010 NEWSLETTER

ENJOYING THE RESULTS OF OUR WORK!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We are delighted to welcome new members **Zoe Lingard, Liz Edwards, Tony and Susie Gloster.**

We are sorry to report the deaths of **Harry Priestnell** of Furness Vale and of **Joan Swindells** of Whaley Bridge. Our sympathies go to their families and friends. Joan has been described as "a diamond", who brightened many lives through her constant service to others. The Editor (phone number in "footer") would be pleased to hear from those who knew Harry.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday, 29th October in Trinity Church Hall at 7.30pm. Drinks and snacks will follow the meeting.

STORE NEWS

The Store has now closed. It has been a successful year. Full details will be given at the AGM. Stock levels are now almost zero.

SEED CATALOGUE ORDERS

Members will be aware that **Margaret Day, David Osborn and Roger Wood** have been undertaking a comparison of using Shelley's seeds with those of comparator companies. As an outcome of the trials, we have decided to use Kings for the coming year for our bulk order. (A report of the trials is given below.) Kings offers an excellent discount to WBAGS and offers seeds for flowers as well as vegetables. Those who ordered last year will automatically receive a catalogue. If you did not but would like to place an order, please contact **David Osborn** for a copy of the catalogue (phone number in "footer"). He must receive your completed order no later than **29th October.**

<http://www.wbags.co.uk>

The website is now up and running. If you receive your Newsletter by email, you can connect to it from the title above.

If you do not but you have access to a

COMMITTEE TELEPHONE NUMBERS Mike High 01663 732578 Roy Jennings 01663 734187 Bob and Rosemary Kellock 01663 733393
Tim Newton 01663 735197 David Osborn 01663 733659 John Pressman 01663 732045 Gill Williamson 01663 733035 Roger Wood 01663 735304

computer, you can type the address into the broad, shallow slot at the very top of the page visible when you have logged into the internet. The site is of course still undergoing development. Have a look and let **Tim Newton** or **Mike High** have any comments or ideas via the link. Many thanks to them both for their continuing work on it.

COMING EVENTS

*****BOOK NOW!*****

MALVERN AUTUMN SHOW "A Celebration of Nature's Harvest"

Sunday, 26th September . 8.45am from Whaley Bridge.

Enjoy the "Good Life" Pavilion featuring smallholdings, edible gardens and horticultural advice. See spectacular displays from top nurseries in the RHS Show. Visit the Harvest Pavilion, the Forgotten Skills Marquee ...and so much more. There will be a "sell off" at 4.45pm and the coach will leave shortly afterwards. Please contact **Rosemary Kellock** (phone number in "footer") to book and pay her no later than 21st September. *****

AUTUMN TALK

Tuesday, 2nd November. 7.30pm. Uniting Church



The Japanese Garden at Tatton Park
Simon Tetlow, Assistant Head Gardener at Tatton Park, will tell us the story of the restoration of its fabulous Japanese garden. This was inspired originally by the Japanese gardens at the great British Japan Exhibition held 100 years ago in

London. The garden at Tatton Park fell into disrepair after the death of Lord (Maurice) Egerton, who had originally commissioned it. Members £1. Visitors £2. Coffee and biscuits will be served. (See also Diary section of our website.)

PAST EVENTS

COFFEE MORNING AND PLANT SALE 19th June

Our Coffee Morning and Plant Sale raised around £325 net. Many thanks to all who donated plants, cakes and raffle prizes. Particular thanks to those who helped with the catering and gathered together the prizes. We are indebted to **Roger Wood** and **David Osborn**, who ran the plant sale in a highly professional manner in a stiff northerly breeze. Thanks also to all who supported the event.

VISIT TO MEYNELL LANGLEY TRIAL GARDENS AND KEDLESTON HALL 31st July

27 members enjoyed the hanging baskets in full bloom and the plants and vegetables in the beds and greenhouses at the Trial Gardens. The owner Robert Walker gave an informal talk, chatted with members, gave advice and answered questions. At Kedleston Hall vast areas of the garden and parkland have been cleared, sadly, to try and stop the disease "sudden oak death" from spreading. Happily, restoration work on the house, the Norman church and the museum about Lord Curzon's time in India provided plenty of interest. (See also Report section of our website.)

RESULTS OF SEED TRIALS

Margaret Day reports: "Seeds of Dwarf French Beans, Spinach, Carrots, Radish, Beetroot and two types of onions have been grown in the veg. patches of Roger Wood, David Osborn and me. Seeds from two suppliers (mainly Kings versus Shelley) were compared for each vegetable. Cost, germination and quality were considered.

For the carrots (St. Valery), Radish (French Breakfast), Spinach (Medania), there was little difference in any of the parameters to justify the cost difference (Shelley 2-3 times more than Kings). For the Broad Beans (Aqualdulse Claudia), Shelley performed slightly better in terms of germination and yield. Shelley beans, however, cost 35% more. The comparison of Beetroot and Onion "White Lisbon" was abandoned due to intervention by badgers! Onion "Red Baron" (Thompson and Morgan versus Shelley) showed some difference in germination time but the onions appear similar.

To conclude, although there are some differences, we ask whether these are of sufficient significance to warrant the additional cost? Sowing a few extra seeds can compensate for lower germination: most packets have more than you need. We three have some good news: rare in these difficult times. Cheap is OK where veg. seeds are concerned."

OPEN GARDENS

Four members of the Society opened their gardens during the summer. They were **Dennis and Mary Sharp** of Otterbrook, **Julie Batten** of Disley, **Derek and Anne Lear** of Green Oaks and **Alexis Budd** of 1, The Sidings, Whaley Bridge. We know that these were much enjoyed by all who were able to visit them and that funds were raised for diverse charities of the owners' choices.



Derek and Anne Lear's new wild garden

Since space precludes describing them all in detail, your Editor has decided to focus on **Alexis Budd's** garden, opened for the first time and specifically for members of the Society.

Alexis and her husband Brian moved into their newly built house seven years ago. They overcame the problem of very steep ground by means of gigantic terraces. Alexis applied her considerable artistic skills to designing the whole garden over three levels. The huge top terrace at the rear provides a generously sized level area, split between lawn and herbaceous borders with shrubs and trees, a summer house and a section with raised beds for

fruit and vegetables. The children have a play area at one end. On a lower level, Brian has an area for his model railway. Money was raised for the Anthony Nolan Trust and it will be used to provide treatment for a child known to the Budd family. Members of the Society were full of admiration for the garden, enjoyed warm hospitality and lovely refreshments. Those who did not make it missed an absolute treat. It was a shame more people could not attend.



The top terrace in Alexis and Brian's garden

SOCIAL EVENING 13th AUGUST

19 members attended our first social evening. Committee members felt that it had filled a need and been enjoyed. (See Reports section of the website.)

MARY HOWES....wishes to thank the many kind members who have given her produce from their gardens and allotments this summer.

WANTED AND SPARE

Bob and Rosemary Kellock are holding a large number of back issues of "Gardeners' World" 1991-2009. If anyone can use and house them, please contact Bob or Rosemary (see front page "footer" for phone number.). If they are unwanted, they will be recycled.

WHALEY BRIDGE SHOW AND GARDEN SOCIETY

The annual Show will be held on 11th September at the Bowling Club from 1pm onwards. Supplies of the booklet for competitors are scarce. The Editor has a reference copy.

MUSINGS FROM PODICEPS CRISTATUS

"Summer has set in with its usual severity!"

The unseasonal weather this summer in our part of the UK makes Coleridge's quote above seem rather sarcastic! Why has the weather of the last six months contradicted many of our old proverbs? *"February fill-dyke"*. 2010 was the driest Feb. for over 40 years and cereal farmers in East Anglia became seriously worried about the lack of rainfall.

March comes in like a lion and leaves like a lamb". The Arctic wind lions

remained caged for a slow start to misty March, roared gently for a couple of days – then went back to sleep. *"Wet March makes a sad Autumn"* – oh dear! *"April showers bring May flowers"*. April soon became beautiful, *The Ash and the Oak* – came together!! We didn't get *"a splash"* or *"a soak"* – and our hopes were raised for a better summer.

"Those who bathe in May will soon be under clay" .. quite so – it was really chilly and everything starting in the garden slowed down.

"June was blazing" from the first week and continued for the next fortnight. Then the winds came from the NW...by this time we had a hose-pipe ban! *"No tempest, good July"*. This old hay-making proverb from the 14th century did not hold true for us this year. A neighbour in Whaley recorded 29 days of rain or drizzle under leaden skies during July 2010 (reminds me of the Flanders and Swann ditty "in July the sun is hot:- is it shining? – no its not!").

August was called the weed month by the Anglo-Saxons: *"Weod monath"* because weeds grew as fast as the crops. They got that right and the month is spluttering along now.. – while all Hell lets loose in Western Russia and Pakistan.

All can be explained by the new "buzz word" for radio and TV reporters: "The Jet Stream". This narrow band of high altitude/high velocity winds whirls around the Northern Hemisphere from West to East at 10-12kms above us. Our weather changes if the jet stream moves or slows down. At this time of year, there are two branches – a strong (high pressure) one zooms over the Mediterranean sea towards Central Asia and a weaker "polar" one moves lower pressure across N. Europe (the source of our summer rain). This year, both streams have slowed down and the "polar" one has moved South East, resulting in a relatively static, low pressure zone over us and NW Europe – hence our inclement and variable weather pattern. Let's hope that high altitude wind velocity will increase and the Jet Stream patterns will return to regular SOON.- so that we can relate to the old proverb and so that

"September blow soft, 'till fruit be in loft."

