



WHALEY BRIDGE Allotment & Gardeners' Society



AUTUMN 2012 NEWSLETTER RAIN, MUD, SUN, RAIN AND MORE MUD!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

**ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING!**
Friday, 9th November
Trinity Church Hall
7.30pm
HAVE YOUR SAY!
SHARE YOUR IDEAS!
**ENJOY THE COMPANY OF YOUR
GARDENING FRIENDS!**



Please come and share your ideas about how the Society is run. Members may propose candidates (with their agreement) for election as new Committee members. Please give details to Chairman, Roy Jennings, prior to the meeting.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A Subscription Renewal form is attached. Annual subscriptions (£5 per member) are due on 1st November. Please give or send the completed form and a cheque made out to WBAGS to Bob Kellock, Treasurer (31 Meadow Close, Whaley Bridge, SK23 7BD.)

SEED ORDERS

Please let Roger Wood or Bob Kellock have your completed seed order no later than the AGM. If you have not got a Kings Seeds Catalogue and would like to benefit from the WBAGS discount, please contact Bob as soon as possible.

RECENT EVENTS

VISITS TO HIGHGROVE

Unusually this summer, the 11th July trip participants enjoyed dry weather. The gardens looked good and there had been some recent plantings in parts of the woodland area since last year. The

meadows were in bloom with many wild flowers, some of which are not seen in Derbyshire, so the tour visited these, followed by the front of the house which overlooks a beautiful rural view. The group returned through the flower gardens and back to the Visitor centre, tearoom and shop. There were a few plant purchases to accommodate before the party drove home.

The 7th August trip made very good time until it was discovered that the Tetbury road had been closed with diversions. Highgrove was helpful, the driver worked out an alternative route and the party was slotted into a later time for the visit. Formalities were speeded up and a very capable guide got the tour underway rapidly. She was exceptionally knowledgeable about plant names and the history of the garden. She answered most questions without reference to her notes and it turned out she has worked for Highgrove for 13 years and was Head Gardener for 9 of those – no wonder she was good! The main elements of the garden were enjoyed and as the meadows had not been totally cut, they were visited as well. After a snack, chat and purchases, the group set off home, thankful for having had good weather again!

VISIT TO PARCEVALL GARDENS 23rd August

Bob Kellock reports "This was the last WBAGS visit of the year and thankfully the weather did not spoil it. The walk through the natural rock garden and rose garden led uphill through woodland to a lovely viewpoint overlooking Troller's Gill. The path down led on to the Hall complex, built from a derelict 17th century farmhouse by Sir William Milner, who also laid out the gardens and grounds, enhancing the already attractive Wharfedale scenery. In

particular, the terraces laid down the hill from the Hall are beautifully engineered with stone buttresses supporting the retaining walls. There is a good variety of trees and rhodos. In the wooded area. The most spectacular floral display were specimens of *Eucryphia glutinosa* cascading in a huge arch. Other striking plants in flower included two beautiful clematis draping the stone walling and a long border of agapanthus.. The south-facing view from the top terrace was just perfect. It was so peaceful, being in a very quiet part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. We came away feeling very contented."



The garden with Wharfedale beyond

SOCIAL EVENING 14th September

This was another, enjoyable chance for a get-together. Wine, coffee and tea were served with light refreshments and there was plenty of opportunity to share news about gardening successes and failures. The disasters were not so bad when you knew you were not alone!

A highlight of the Social Evening was a blind-tasting of Gardeners' Delight tomatoes grown by some 9 members. Those present had to identify whose tomatoes had the best flavour. Because of the poor summer, only those indoors had ripened by the date of the

competition. The winner was Margaret Day, who had a convincing victory.

This is how Margaret grew her tomatoes:

- Sowed the seeds in a propagator in February.
- Transferred them to 3inch pots when they were about three inches high. Placed in greenhouse.
- Transferred them to their final pots when they were about nine inches high. The pots contained a blend of John Innes No 3 (45%), multipurpose (45%) and vermiculite (10%) the remainder. The vermiculite opened up the soil and improved drainage.
- She watered them every day and used an irrigation system when away.
- When 5 trusses had formed (or the plant had reached the top of the greenhouse), she nipped off the top shoot. She took out side shoots as they appeared.
- Once the fruit had formed, she gave them water (from the base of the pot) and fed them a seaweed feed (via the top of the pot), alternating between the two.

She takes enormous care to ensure plant pots and the greenhouse itself are scrupulously clean.

Dave Parker sent the Editor information about when tomatoes from his two vines had been ready for picking. They were also Gardeners' Delight and grown indoors. The vines produced 56 ripe tomatoes between 29th July and 14th September. There were picking peaks in mid-August and mid-September. There were 37 still ripening at the end of the recorded period. Dave reports that whilst "not outstandingly flavourful, they were pleasant with salads and the like".

Many members brought other types of tomatoes they had grown, so those present could try out some new types for flavour and appearance.

"VEGETABLES FOR EVERY TASTE"

Talk by Margaret Robinson of Robinson's Seeds 19th October

24 members and four guests enjoyed this excellent, informative talk. Margaret brought examples of many of the vegetables she identified and told us how to have

vegetables for the table all round the year. She explained which could be grown in small plots, hanging baskets or containers, as well as how to get diversity from a larger plot. Questions, coffee and chat were enjoyed after the talk.



Margaret and her display. Talk organiser Roger Wood in the foreground.

FUTURE EVENTS

**DAFFODIL BULB COFFEE MORNING
Friday 16th November Mechanics
Institute 9.00 -12 noon**

Once again, the Society will be playing host to Whaley Bridge residents and members, who are invited to drop in and enjoy chat and refreshments for a modest sum. There will be a home-made cakes stall and also a bulb stall, in place of our usual "bric-a-brac" offering. Bags of mixed bulbs (mostly daffodils) will be on sale at very competitive prices. Rosemary Kellock would appreciate offerings of home-made cakes from members, as well as helpers to serve our guests and help with the clearing up.

CONGRATULATIONS....to WBAGS member John Savage for winning the Chapel Parish Council allotments award this year.

MUSINGS FROM PODICEPS

CRISTATUS.... "Sing a song of sixpence, a pocketful of rye...."

Humming the nursery rhyme and then paraphrasing Mrs. Beeton's advice: "first catch twenty four black birds ..?", I reckon that the serious blackbird pie-maker would be more successful hunting for rooks !!

Our easily recognised neighbour *corvus frugilegus* is the most numerous member of the crow family, intensely gregarious throughout the year, nesting communally in trees, like the big "rookeries" on the South banks of the reservoir. My attention is always drawn to their restless activity, the raucous "caw" and "caah" of their calling. Now that the young green shoots of spring and summer vegetation are harder to find, this year's youngsters are becoming hungry, and venture further afield to feed. The young birds are easy prey to our other neighbour: the buzzards, which are so numerous this year up on Taxal Moor!

As I watched, a buzzard came into view, soaring in huge lazy circles high over the rookery: his wings fully extended to maximize the wing area, gaining height from the rising air thermals. A quick change of wing angle and narrowing the wing shape would immediately accelerate the dive towards his lunch! ... but no...the alert has been sounded at treetop level, and a flight of ten rooks is "scrambled", and together appear to mob the buzzard with loud cries and aggressive tumbling flight patterns – eventually driving the raptor away.

While farmers and game keepers bear a grudge against these black crop raiders, and cunning egg thieves, perhaps the spring time gardener thanks them for ridding us of the leatherjackets and weevils in our newly dug allotments!

Hello, here comes the wind again, or as Mr. Tennyson would say: "**the last red leaf is whirl'd away, The rooks are blown about the skies...**"

