



WHALEY BRIDGE Allotment & Gardeners' Society



NOVEMBER 2010 NEWSLETTER

A GREAT GROWING YEAR!

POSTPONEMENT OF TALK!

The talk on 2nd November about the Japanese Garden at Tatton Park has been postponed due to non-availability of the planned venue.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM took place on 29th October. Full information about the meeting will be included in the January 2011 Newsletter.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

The renewal of your annual subscription is due this month. Please help Bob Kellock, your Treasurer, by renewing promptly. A form to complete and give to Bob with your payment is attached to this Newsletter.



Treasurer Bob

THE STORE

David Osborn would like to thank Gordon Belfield, Dave Parker and Roger Wood for their invaluable support in running the store this summer. The Editor wishes to thank David on behalf of all readers for his unstinting efforts in making the store a great success this year.

Quite apart from doing the "day job", the team also offered succour to an injured racing pigeon, which

turned up many Sundays running for a bit of TLC!

"HOW DID YOUR GARDEN GROW?" or "WAS YOUR PLOT PRODUCTIVE?"

The Editor asked some members how the growing season had gone for them. Here are two responses...

Geoff and Di Howes, Elnor Lane

Our soil is on deep clay so it cracks in dry times and runs with water in wet weather.

The early dry spring helped with seed sowing but presented a problem in keeping young plants watered and growing. In vegetables. Peas produced less than average and runner beans were very poor. Swedes sown early were very good but onions from sets started growing mouldy at the roots by mid August. Greens grew larger than normal but after it rained the snails climbed up the sprout heads and competed with the caterpillars! Beetroot were average but carrots were pestered by carrot fly.

Plums and apples cropped well but raspberries produced fruit like wild ones until watered more.

The severe winter did less damage than expected. Nasturtium seeds unexpectedly came up after overwintering in the ground. We did not think they were that hardy.

We successfully grew sweet peas from seeds saved from the previous year and will try that again to see if vigour and type remain.

The one wild orchid that appeared in our 'meadow' by the pond last year reappeared with four or five more

plants this year which was very pleasing.

The rest of the flower garden has suffered this year with the arrival of a new puppy but hopefully things will be back to some semblance of order next year.

Gardeners always live in hope.

Judy Longden, Allotment holder

Judy reports that she had a very good year generally. Her corn crop was slightly poorer than expected but her five chickens (Silkies) are flourishing on the cobs. Her sweet peas were early and prolific and three weeks ago, she started off next year's plants, which are already sprouting. Water shortage was a problem in May and she feared she would suffer badger damage, having seen tracks. Happily for her, they went elsewhere!



Judy with scarecrow Valerie

RECENT EVENTS

COFFEE MORNING 11TH SEPTEMBER

Our Coffee Morning went as well as can be expected, given a clash with the Whaley Bridge Flower Show, unseasonable weather and the non-availability of some of our regular helpers. Particular thanks go to June Christon who brought numerous

home-made cakes, worked hard with the catering team and – together with Barbara Driver - sold raffle tickets round the village. Thanks too, to Alison Bury and Rona Coley, who brought cakes, meringues and trifles, all of which were a big attraction.

VISIT TO THE MALVERN SHOW 26TH SEPTEMBER

Rosemary Kellock reports:
“28 members left early to travel to the Malvern Three Counties Show, arriving around 12.00 noon.

One of the first things to go past was the dogs agility trials with some very excitable dogs which all seemed to be thoroughly enjoying themselves. Amongst the other animals included in the show were horses and goats pulling carts as well as some alpacas and pigs for children/adults to pat and admire. There was a large craft element at the Show both as stalls selling their wares and a large exhibition hall, where entrants were awarded merits for their work. There was a considerable number of small nurseries selling very good plants for keen prices and these were loosely scattered around the exhibition tent for flower and vegetable grower’s displays, which had been judged on merit. I think what we consider large vegetables would have been dwarfed by some of the specimens there. Joe Swift was also in the Pavilion holding a question and answer session and some of our members took the opportunity to go to that.



Great size – but what about the flavour?
The coach left at 5.00ish with its undercarriage nicely packed with bargain plants and after a stop at an

M & S Services for a snack and coffee, we arrived back just after 8.00pm.”

BEE AWARE!

Following the musings of Podiceps Cristatus in June, several members have sought information about bee-keeping. Bob Kellock has gathered information eg from the town council and the local beekeepers’ association. Contact Bob if you are interested (phone number in “footer” on first page).

www.wbags.co.uk

Don’t forget to look at what is new on your website. It can be updated and give you Society news much more frequently than is possible with a Newsletter.

SPARE AND WANTED

Roger Wood has pots of bamboo available. User collects. See Roger’s phone number on page 1.

“MUSINGS” FROM PODICEPS CRISTATUS

“Come fly with me?”

This is surely the “season of mists and mellow fruitfulness” – the early morning mist lingers on the tops over Taxal and Chinley, it’s getting much colder at night, still some of Norman’s cattle out on the moor over Whaley towards Stoneheads – they’ll be back in shed soon !. As for fruitfulness: what a bumper year we’ve had for plums and damsons!

We’ve said goodbye to the last of the summer swallows and swifts, they were feeding up on clouds of insects over the mud flats of the emptying reservoir, before setting off on their long flight to warmer climes. Most will head to Southern Africa, where they will colonise the vast reed beds of the great river deltas – 6000 miles away!

It is estimated that more than 200 species, as many as five billion birds undertake the twice yearly journey between Europe and Africa. But why

do birds migrate? –and if they survive the perilous journey and reach their winter home, what impels them to come back the following Spring?

At the start of Autumn, the temperature drops and the insects which so many species rely on begin to disappear – the days are getting shorter, so there is less daylight to find food. For many insect eaters like swallows, warblers, flycatchers, martins –there’s only one choice: starve or head South for Winter.

Don’t forget South is the U.K. for our feathered friends from Arctic Canada (Bewick Swans) from Iceland and North Siberia (Brent Geese) –they’re already arriving at Slimbridge, Martin Mere, the North East coasts and East Anglia.

After a few weeks of warm South and happy bird song, the weather starts to get hotter, there are more hungry predators about – so it’s time to head North again, it’s Spring over there, cooler, more insects emerging, and a young man swallow’s fancy turns to....starting another family!

I was “ dive bombed “ by two terns on Coombs last week, “squeek! Squeek! Squeek!” – now those fellas really do travel ! – they follow the sun from the Arctic to the Antarctic and back ... clocking up over 40,000 miles a round trip!

We grebes do a lot of “theatre” courting and nest-building earlier in the year so we don’t do migration, come winter we’ll look for warmer roosting, or we may pop down to the sea-side for a month or two now the holiday crowds have gone...

