

Over The Fence

The West Malvern Garden & Nature Club News Letter

Autumn 2019



A family outing on Derwent Water.

Hello everybody,

'Welcome, to the Autumn edition of Over the Fence!' We hope that you enjoyed your summer and are already planning next year's fruit, vegetables and flowers. (Ready for the Annual Show 2020) Autumn is the time to enjoy seed catalogues and look for interesting bulbs. The weather was different again this year seeds seemed to be slow to germinate.

The swifts have now gone after their wonderful display this year. We think that they may have been nesting at the Village Hall by their activities around the hall roof. Entertainment for those of us supposed to be taking part in exercise classes! We watched the swifts swooping and screeching along the West Malvern Road and alongside the hall. They provided a distraction from the jackdaws building a nest in a chimney pot opposite! A fascinating exercise in measuring sticks and dropping them down the pot. Followed weeks later with several small jackdaws sitting on the stacks.

There seems to have been a reduction in numbers of swifts again this year. Are there fewer insects to feed them or fewer swifts visiting the area? Last year there was an exhausted one in our garden which we eventually launched from our balcony.

Wonderful creatures!



A bird in the Hand - an exhausted swift.

After our A.G.M. in March (thanks to everyone for an outstanding buffet) Julie Ritchie, from Hill House Nursery, talked us through 'Small and Beautiful Easy Alpines and Low Growing Perennials'. After an introduction about alpines she introduced a range of plants, gave us a list of the plants she was speaking about and illustrated them with some very clear photographs. Having bought snowdrops and irises from her nursery I can recommend a visit. She showed us a good use for a strawberry pot, it was planted up with sempervivums and was an unusual and attractive addition if you don't have a rockery.



An early flowering Snowdrop.



A beautiful blue Iris in its full glory.

In April we were looking at 'Nature in Focus' and welcomed Rosemary Winnall back to speak to us. The theme of her talk was looking, recording and how to collect information. Rosemary is actively involved in the 'Wyre Forest Study Group', their aim is not to kill anything while taking micro shots of legs, wings etc. Her photographs were amazing, capturing the horse fly's coloured eyes, the colours on a starling's wings and a variety of plants and creatures, close-up. Rosemary wants to encourage the young to be observant and to investigate the natural world. She uses a tilting screen on her camera for difficult close-ups and she also uses an Olympus TG5 underwater camera for investigating ponds and streams. Her use of a motion triggered outdoor wildlife camera to record animals when she is not there is something some of us could relate to, recording or photographing visits to our gardens by foxes, badgers and deer. That would make an interesting article for this newsletter. I look forward to receiving some articles plus photos for the next Over the Fence.



A horse-fly.



A wasp.

In May we were looking at Weeds with Roger Umpleby. This was an alternative look at weeds, encouraging plants rather than trying to rid the garden of them. There has been some discussion in the village about killing verges with weed killer or unnecessary strimming. People are much more aware about protecting pollinators. Perhaps the days of pristine gardens with everything in order, or rows or being encouraged to stand up straight and be tidy are going to become a thing of the past? (Hopefully! Thinks this slap dash gardener!) Have you thought about setting aside an area in your garden where weeds might flourish and provide habitat for some of our struggling insects? Ralph Waldo Emerson said, a weed is - 'A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.' We had recommended eating your ground elder in our last Over the Fence (cooked in butter) and Roger pointed out that many of our wild plants were used in medicine and for food in the past. Have you got any interesting garden weed recipes to share with us?

The Annual Dinner took place at The Malvern Hills Hotel. We were unable to use The Brewers and fancied a change from Elim. Chris Hall bravely sampled several offerings from various venues and negotiated us a good deal at The Malvern Hills. There was a good turn out and although the meal was a bit hit and miss it was an enjoyable evening. The club will be looking for venues for next year's meal and welcome any suggestions that you might have.



Happy diners socialising at our Annual Dinner.

We asked for contributions to the newsletter and Cara Roslington kindly sent an article that she had written for the Civic Society about a West Malvern personality. Cara wrote about the Reverend George Hutchinson. He was a curate at the Chapel of Ease, rebuilt as St James Church. You can read the full article on the society's webpage and on our website at www.WMGNC.uk. I apologise for not including this very interesting article as we are short of space. The full article is well worth reading. Thank you Cara!

This year's Treasure Trail was set by Chris Hall. It was a very enjoyable visit to some new and some familiar places and Chris set us some very interesting questions. We ended up at Pershore Abbey and to be truthful some of us were starting to feel exhausted and may not have given our full attention to the last few questions. Chris informed us that this was only half of what he had originally planned! So, we have next year's Treasure Trail already set. We enjoyed a picnic and there was no argument about the answers which was probably a first! Congratulations to Chris and Jenny on 45 years of wedded bliss and thank you for celebrating the anniversary with us.





St. Peter's Church at Pirton. The 12thC Church is built of coursed rubble (the wall is made with irregular stones or flints levelled up in courses). It has a 12thC nave and a 14thC medieval chancel and tower. It is notable in that its clock only has one hand.

The Annual Show was held at the end of August. There had been some discussion about the weather this year, different to last year, with many seeds and plants slow to take off. But there were a good number of entries in the fruit, vegetables and ornamental sections with a new members' cup for ornamental which was donated by Cara and John Roslington. As last year, the making section of cookery was well supported and the range of photographs showed how people have different interpretations on a subject. The Children's Competition, 'To Grow Cress in a Beastly Container', drew two entries (two more than last year!), which was encouraging. The joint winners were Noah and Arlo who shared the gift token. There was another cup donated by the Roslingtons for the Juniors and William won this for his excellent baking and an interesting well-made model. The results are at the end of the newsletter. A big thank you to the committee and members who volunteered and helped the day to run smoothly. A lot of work goes into planning, setting up and clearing away afterwards. Thanks also to the judges who support local efforts. If you didn't enter this year don't be shy! The more entries the better! Some of us are amazed to win when we thought our entry couldn't possibly compete. We need your support for all the club activities it would be a shame to lose the club because people do not value the importance of their contribution, the Committee really do appreciate it when you make an effort and give up your time.



Some of the beautiful floral entries being judging.



William won the Junior Cup for his excellent baking and an interesting, well-made model..



Proud Chan with grandsons Noah & Arlo who shared the gift token for winning the 'Grow Cress in a Beastly Container' competition.



It is always impressive to see the wonderful Vegetable Baskets that are entered each year.

The Trophy Winners were:

Anniversary Trophy
 John Deem Cup
 John Deem Prize
 Members Plate
 Members Shield
 Members Tankard
 Members' Spoon
 Roslington Shield
 Junior Cup
 Children's Challenge

Best Overall entry
 Best Overall Veg Grower
 Best Fruit entry
 Best Craft entry
 Best Home-Grown entry
 Best Photographic entry
 Best Home Cookery entry
 Best Ornamental entry
 Best Junior entry
 Cress in a Beastly Container

Chan Crawford
 Lynn Clearwater
 Deirdre Drake
 Christine Harris
 Lynn Clearwater
 Sue Kershaw
 Jenny Nesbit
 Deirdre Drake
 William Edwards
 Noah and Arlo
 Ahmed Crawford

St James Church featured in another Garden Club activity in September. Chan and I, representing the club, supported the Flower Festival which was a three-day event, organised by Richard Hammond, to celebrate the life of Peter M Roget. Many of you will know that Roget (famed for his Thesaurus) was buried in the churchyard in 1869. As we are not flower arrangers Chan and I adopted the 'Well Dressing' approach and tried to create a wild garden overlooked by a more formal arrangement on the window-sill. We also served teas on the Sunday afternoon, on behalf of the club, with the help of our friend Jen Burford and a cake from Jen Nisbet. Did you come and see the displays? The talk about Roget by Colin Jackson was excellent and Sunday's poetry and music was very entertaining thanks to David Matthews and Gwynn Klee. We felt it was important to support a community event and to help publicise the club. Please try and offer your help with future events as we know that there are a lot of creative people at the club.



The garden arrangement with lots of interesting creatures lurking.



Above: Chan doing her bit!



Right: Our formal arrangement back-lit by the beautiful stained glass window.

Our first meeting of the club year was Canals in the Environment, a talk by Tony Conder. He explained how the geology and geography of a place influenced the construction of the canal and its place in the surrounding environment. Canals changed the landscape from agriculture to industry in the 18th century and now in many places the canals have become green areas once again. Engineers began to discover more about the geology of the country as they dug mines and canals as a result two hundred years ago, a geologist called William Smith became the first person to map the geology of Britain, which helped to develop the scientific and economic development of Britain. Did you know that many of our invasive species such as Himalayan balsam follow the canal? Animals such as water voles were once considered a nuisance for destroying canal banks but are now flourishing in nature reserves as part of the canal environment. Tow paths are used more than the waterways it seems. An interesting and informative first meeting.

Next month we travel to East Anglia and Essex with Brian Skeys to look at gardens he finds inspirational.

There were no other summer events this year, but we hope that we might include an Open Garden into next year's programme. (Any Volunteers?) We NEED some extra Committee Members and someone who is interested in setting up the Club Programme for 2020/2021. Please contact Vic if you would like to help keep the club running. We only have a few meetings a year and there's always plenty of cake!

Finally, Jim has set up a new club web page at www.wmgnc.uk which we are still developing. This will be used to keep members up to date with club activities and hopefully provide general interest, hints and tips. We are still working on the content and hope to have it finished soon.

Carole Houghton

October 2019

Compiled by Vic Frampton

Results for the 2019 Annual Show

This year we had really good support, both from members and local people alike, that helped swell the numbers. In all there were 178 entries and our concerns that it would be a poor year for fruit and veg, because of the long, hot, dry summer, proved to be unfounded. We are grateful to our Judges – Karen Seymour (Flowers), John Deem (Fruit & Veg.), Lee Smith (Cookery), Yvette Crawford (Craft) and Colleen Donaldson (Photographic) who donate their time for free.

CLASS	FIRST	SECOND	HIGHLY COMMENDED
<u>FLOWER SECTION</u>			
BEST FLOWER	Kathy Frampton	Jane Edwards	Chan Crawford
DAHLIAS	Deirdre Drake	Jane Edwards	Richard Hammond
PANSIES/VIOLAS	Chan Crawford	Deirdre Drake	
POT PLANT	Vic Frampton		
SINGLE ROSE	Deirdre Drake	Vic Frampton	
SWEET PEAS	Carole Houghton	Chan Crawford	
VASE OF FLOWERS	Chan Crawford	Cara Roslington	
AUTUMN ARRANGEMENT	Carole Houghton	Cara Roslington	
TABLE CENTRE	Chan Crawford	Colin Jackson	
<u>FRUIT SECTION</u>			
BERRIES	Lynn Clearwater	Kathy Frampton	Deirdre Drake
STONE FRUIT	Colin Jackson	Deirdre Drake	
TOMATOES (LARGE)	James Bullett	Chan Crawford	Catherine Campbell
TOMATOES (SMALL)	Chan Crawford	Chris Hall	Lynn Clearwater
APPLES – COOKING.	Deirdre Drake	Vic Frampton	David Matthews
APPLES – DESSERT	Cara Roslington	Vic Frampton	Deirdre Drake
ANY OTHER FRUIT	Deirdre Drake		
BASKET OF FRUIT	Deirdre Drake	Cara Roslington	Chan Crawford

VEGETABLE SECTION

ONIONS	John Tuckey	Colin Jackson	Chan Crawford
RUNNER BEANS	James Bullett	John Tuckey	Chan Crawford
FRENCH BEANS	Chan Crawford	John Tuckey	Colin Jackson
COURGETTES	David Matthews	Cara Roslington	James Bullett
POTATOES	Chan Crawford	Jenny Hall	Carole Houghton
CARROTS	Daniel Nisbet	Chan Crawford	Lynn Clearwater
RHUBARB	Kathy Frampton	Helen Tudge	Chan Crawford
HERB COLLECTION	Cara Roslington	Chan Crawford	Kathy Frampton
ANY OTHER VEGETABLE	Chan Crawford	Lynn Clearwater	
BASKET OF VEGETABLES	Lynn Clearwater	Jenny Hall	Cara Roslington
PLATE OF SALAD	David Matthews		

COOKERY SECTION

VICTORIA CAKE	Jenny Nisbet	Kathy Frampton	Carole Houghton Chan Crawford
SAVOURY LOAF	Chan Crawford	John Tuckey	Carole Houghton
CHEESE SCONES	Jenny Nisbet	Carole Houghton	Chan Crawford
BISCUITS	Kathy Frampton	John Tuckey	Chan Crawford
MARMALADE	Colin Jackson	Kathy Frampton	Chan Crawford
JAM	Chan Crawford	K Beach	Carole Houghton

CRAFT SECTION

ART	Deirdre Drake		
EMBROIDERY/ SEWING	Carole Houghton	Catherine Campbell	Jenny Hall
KNITTING	Christine Harris	Carole Houghton	
OTHER CRAFT	Deirdre Drake	Vic Frampton	Daniel Nisbet

PHOTOGRAPHIC SECTION

THE GATE	Michael Houghton	John Tuckey	Carole Houghton Rosemary Bellord
A COUNTRY LANE	Michael Houghton	Carole Houghton	Vic Frampton
MALVERN IN THE SNOW	Sue Kershaw	Vic Frampton	Chris Hall
COLOUR BLUE	Sue Kershaw	Vic Frampton	Chan Crawford Chris Hall

The WMGNC 2019-20 Events List.

15 th Oct 2019	Brian Skeys	'Inspirational Gardens of East Anglia and Essex'. Brian talks about how these ideas apply to smaller gardens.
19 th Nov 2019	Mike Wilkes	'Action in Nature'. Mike is a fantastic photographer and I am expecting some great action shots.
Tuesday 10 th Dec 2019	Christmas Party	Village Hall, an event not to be missed.
21 st Jan 2020	Chris Hall	'Desert and Delta'. Chris's trip through Botswana, a landscape defined by the Kalahari Desert and the Okavango Delta, which becomes a lush animal habitat during the seasonal floods.
18 th Feb 2020	Duncan Coombes	'Ponds, Marginals and Bog Gardens'. Duncan will give advice on pond design & maintenance, suitable plants etc
17 th Mar 2020	AGM Peter Garner	7:00 pm start. Talk details to be arranged. Don't forget nibbles for the Finger Buffet.
21 st Apr 2020	Andrew Gagg	'Slowly down the Ganges'. The story of a fascinating voyage of discovery on board the riverboat ABN Sukapa on a journey down the historic and holy River Ganges.
19 th May 2020	Paul Green	Paul will talk about 'Plants of the Season'. He will bring lots and lots of plants for sale, and talk about their culture.