

Over The Fence

The West Malvern Garden & Nature Club News Letter

Spring 2019



Spring is in the air!
Just one of the excellent photos from Chris Hall's talk
on "Antarctica".

Dymock Daffodils

'And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;
And each flower and herb on Earth's
dark breast,
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.'

Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'The Sensitive Plant'



I don't know about your wintry rest, but I am really pleased to see Spring! I hope that your sensitive plants have survived the winter and you are able to take part in this year's Annual Show. This year it will be on Saturday 31st August, when we hope to see your vegetables, fruits, flowers, photographs and craft items. Look out for a new trophy and changes to some of the items on the schedule. These are the changes so far - this year's marmalade challenge is Seville Orange, the jam challenge is a two fruits jelly. Photographs are Malvern in the Snow, A Country Lane, The Gate, the colour Blue. Baking items will be announced before we finish meetings in May.

Many of you are walking around sporting very attractive knitted hats made by Kathy Frampton. Kathy has written to thank you.

Very many thanks to everyone who bought my knitted hats in aid of St Richard's Hospice. I have now reached my target of £200.

I shall continue to knit hats which, hopefully, can be sold in one of St Richard's Hospice shops. Kathy



Hats on sale at the MacMillan Coffee Morning

I am hoping that we can sell more hats again at our October Macmillan Coffee Morning this year, the date for your diary is Thursday 3rd October in the village hall, winter will be on its way by then. Perish the thought!

Last year's Macmillan was held in St James' church and was organised by Richard Hammond, the Village Hall Committee and the Garden and Nature Club Committee. Many thanks to those who came and helped

and to those who spent their money. Richard wanted to commemorate his mother and £2000 was raised in her memory.

Our first meeting of the year was a replacement item as Chris Hall was unable to speak to us. At short notice Brian Skeys, of the Black Pear Gardening Club, took us to Madeira with holiday photographs of the Flower Festival and a variety of gardens. One of especial interest was an orchid garden with over 250 specimens.

We were introduced to the history and the composition of the Cottage Garden by Rachel Salisbury in October. And in November, the photographer Will Watson made our minds boggle at the variety of bees and wasps in our gardens. Wasps are the early pollinators in our gardens and should be encouraged.



FACT

Hellebore flowers are a rich source of nectar for many types of insect, including newly emerged bumblebees.

I missed January's meeting unfortunately, as Duncan Coombs is a favourite speaker of mine. Vic has written a report about the talk.

A drab January evening was enlivened by the photos and sheer enthusiasm of Duncan Coombs who spoke about introducing "Winter Colour and Interest" into our gardens. Duncan kept the audience on their toes by asking them as many questions as they asked him - and that was a lot. Our old favourite Cornus in the form of alba Baton Rouge was there and he extolled the virtues of Mahonia in the winter garden. But they are so prickly and grow so big we all cried. Then from out of his hat (OK it was from off the table) he introduced us to a non-prickly Mahonia Soft Caress that grows no more than 3 feet tall. The sample he brought with him was quickly snapped up by a keen member of the audience. A useful tip was to avoid the early morning sun when siting winter flowering plants. A great evening thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.



Cornus alba baton rouge



Mahonia soft caress

Vic has also circulated a list of plants which will be useful. We are trying to persuade our speakers to do this so that I don't have to write plant names down phonetically at the meetings, to include in this newsletter, and hope that I have got the right ones!

December was the Christmas Party, this year we avoided the snow and ice which cancelled the 2017 party. There was a super spread, such a variety of treats, and Chan had made mulled wine. Thanks to the people who organised the party, made the food, the mulled wine, the puzzles and quiz and thanks to Chris Streatfield our master of ceremonies and to Sue and David Matthews for the games. Poor David was shocked at the cheating going on in the games, not that we noticed any cheating David!



As usual we all tucked in to the glorious buffet supper provided by members.



The Secretary insists that her answer is right whilst doing the quiz.



Bev adopts the stance of an experienced hockey player during one of the games.



I think we should do it this way - well maybe not.

Tiggy would like volunteers to make and serve the refreshments at the end of the meetings. No experience needed, training will be given! This is an equal opportunities activity for both women and men.

Chris Hall came to the rescue for the February meeting and replaced the advertised speaker. He was at last able to give us his talk about a holiday which he and Jenny took to Antarctica. It was an excellent talk his enthusiasm and knowledge shone through and we could also enjoy his photographs and videos, which really captured the atmosphere. We are trying to encourage him to speak again as there was so much to hear about and, unfortunately, he had to rush at the end to try and include every place they visited. We're sorry if you missed it, which is why another session would be great.

Hopefully an account will be on our website and include more of his photographs, some have won prizes. wmgnc.uk.

Just a few examples of some of Chris's fantastic photos.



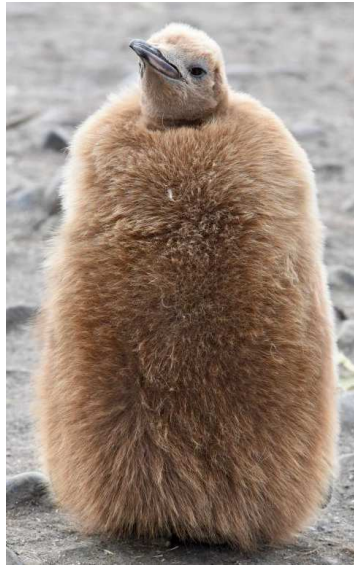
An Antarctic Tern captured in flight.



A contented mum feeding her Fur Seal pup.



Above: A Gentoo Penguin feeding her twins.



Right: A cuddly young King Penguin well protected from the cold.

We hope to have our website up and running ASAP, thanks to James Bullett we will be able to give you more details about club activities and other events on the website. Look out for information about this from Vic and find out how you can contribute.

The A.G.M. this year started with an introduction by our Chairperson, Vic Frampton and a short address from our President, David Matthews. Helen Tudge, the Secretary read the minutes, which were agreed, and the Treasurer read his report. We did have the resignation of two committee members. We would like to say a big thank you to Kathy Frampton for her contribution to the smooth running of the club, and to Jenny Hall for her brief but supportive contribution. We still need two new members to join the existing members who stood again for re-election and were voted back on. Please have a think about joining us, it isn't too onerous, supporting the club will ensure it continues and there is always cake at meetings! Get in touch with Vic if you would like to be a committee member or want to recommend someone who is shy, with their permission of course! The buffet afterwards was excellent as usual, thank you for your contributions. We then had a talk from Julie Ritchie about Alpines and other Low Growing Plants. Julie owns the Hoo House Nursery and supplied us with a comprehensive list of the plants she spoke about and brought plants for sale, always

popular with the members. An interesting look at plants with a lot of information about growing them.

Chan has been sorting through books again and came across 'The Virtuous Weed' Garnered by Joy Griffith-Jones. This small booklet sets out to praise the humble weed. "What did the Romans ever do for us?" Well, according to Joy they introduced us to the pleasures of Ground Elder (Dog Elder, Garden Plague, Herb Gerard) in our gardens. Believed to have been used by them for its ability to relieve gout; The plant was dedicated to St Gerard who was formerly invoked to cure the gout, so Ground Elder was cultivated by the monks in the Middle Ages as a herb of healing, as bishops seemed to suffer a good deal from the gout, hence some of its other names include Goutweed and Bishopsweed. The young leaves make a tasty vegetable if cooked in a little butter, a small amount of water and some seasoning. John Gerard's 'Herball' of 1597 reminds us that once it has taken root it will hardly be gotten out again. The only course of action, it seems, is to eat it!



Ground Elder

And now a plea here for contributions for the newsletter. Please! Could you write about 250 words to describe a visit to a garden (don't worry if you think everyone knows this garden, your observations will be of interest.) An event in your own garden, overcoming a problem, a success or a wildlife visit. Do you write poetry about flora and fauna? Have you got some gardening tips or advice? Anything to add interest and variety. (Photos gladly received too.)

The programme for 2019 – 2020 is on the back of the newsletter. The date of the Annual Dinner and venue will be circulated later. This year's Treasure Trail is being set by Chris Hall and will be on Wednesday, 7th August.

Carole Houghton
April 2019

Compiled by Vic Frampton

The WMGNC 2019-20 Events List.

21 st May 2019	Roger Umpelby	“Useful, Beautiful and Unloved – An Alternative Look at Weeds”
7 th Aug 2019	Treasure Hunt	Chris & Jenny Hall will send us on a local mystery tour and set us varied puzzles along the way. Don’t forget to bring your picnic.
Saturday 31 st August	Annual Show	Get busy in the kitchen, garden and hobbies room and enter your prize exhibits. Children’s entries especially welcome.
17 th Sep 2019	Tony Conder	'Canals in the Landscape'. How are canals affected by geography and geology & how do they relate to the natural environment?
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.