

Over The Fence

The West Malvern Garden & Nature Club News Letter

Lockdown No 1



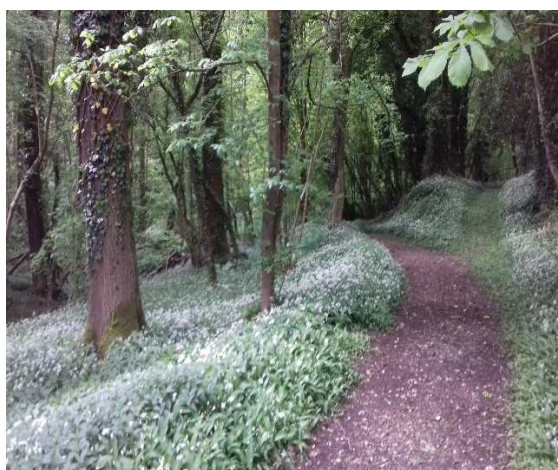
June 2020

Welcome to this first edition of The Lockdown Over the Fence!

I am grateful to Hilary Ward, Barbara Meddowes and Rosemary Herbert for the bulk of this edition. Thanks to them you are spared (to some extent) the Carole Blog.

As someone who doesn't travel very far now, being able to walk the area surrounding the village during lockdown and exploring in relative peace and quiet, has been a blessing. The weather has provided the opportunity to spend all day out of doors whether walking or in the garden. There has been a lifting of some sort of pressure to be doing something. This is from my perspective; I realise that there are people on their own who have had to cope with loneliness, and we have all missed our families (and friends.) so I hope that we might still keep in touch through the Over the Fence. Don't forget that most of the club members would be happy to hear from you if you need a friendly ear. If you do have time on your hands, please find a photo or write something to share with all of us. I look forward to receiving something from everyone!

The picture on the front cover, and below is one of the magical places that I have found while walking round the village. You may recognise it as the woods in Elim College. I confess to climbing over the gate onto the public footpath! I had to miss the bluebells at Black Hill this year as we didn't take the car out, (I did enjoy the sight and smell of the bluebells along Park Road and West Malvern Road.) so couldn't miss the wild garlic at Elim. Not everyone's favourite but the sight of the white flowers and the scent of garlic in a green woodland was most uplifting.



This is the first piece which Rosemary sent me. It's about a garden visit she enjoyed. Send me your visit memories, it may inspire someone to put it on their 'After Lockdown' list.

The Rose Garden at Mottisfont.

Mottisfont is a National Trust property, near Romsey in Hampshire, with clear chalk streams flowing through the estate, an interesting art collection, a crocodile in one of the bathrooms, and much more! David and I went in June 2017 specially to see the wonderful rose garden. We were very glad that we did, even though it was busy - the season is quite short, so that everyone goes at once! Mottisfont is home to the National Collection of pre-1900 old-fashioned roses, based on the collection of Graham Stuart Thomas (for some years Gardens Adviser to the Trust). His roses were moved there in the early 1970's, and to quote the guidebook, 'Thomas's love of all plants was consuming, but when it came to roses – especially the old shrubs and climbers, his enthusiasm knew no bounds.' For many years, old roses had become very much out of fashion, and 'it would not be an understatement to say that he saved them.'



There are many more pictures of the rose garden on the Mottisfont website, together with fascinating information about the history of the house, which was originally a 13th century Augustinian Priory, and its surroundings. It came to the Trust in 1957.

Rosemary Herbert.

Open Garden

Hilary Ward has sent a photographic tour of her garden for us to enjoy. We were looking forward to visiting her beautiful garden on the 4th of June.

She says,

'This year's blossom has been, tremendous, but you had to be in the garden to appreciate the lovely scents from roses, clematis, wisteria and mock orange etc. Hopefully, we can get together here next year for the Club's social evening.'

Thank you, Hilary, something for us all to look forward to in the future. Thank you again for offering to open your garden for the club!

Hilary's Tour

Japanese Wisteria, Norwegian Angelica in foreground

(an annual which self-sows reliably)



Malvern Hills Rose

bred by David Austin in 2013



Wildlife pond –a magnet for dragonflies and damselflies

Below are a few of my favourite plants, some not commonly grown

.Bearded iris of many hues – (wonderful range of colours)



False Mallow *Malvastrum lateritium* an evergreen, frost tender plant from S. America. Has survived outdoors for many years in a sheltered position.



3 Birds Flying *Linaria triornithophora* Hardy perennial from Spain/Portugal. Buds look like tiny budgies. Flowers usually purple, sometimes pink.



White Perennial Cornflower *Centaurea montana alba* from mountainous regions of Europe.



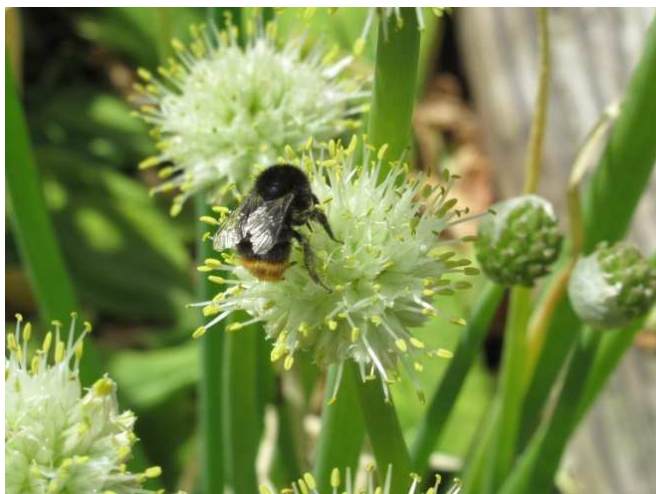
Iris Holden Clough A hybrid between *I. pseudacorus* and *I. chrysographes* which arose by chance at Holden Clough Nursery in Lancashire in 1971.



Silver Geranium *Geranium harveyi* Good for dry ground



Welsh Onion *Allium fistulosum*, Great for bumblebees



Himalayan Peony *Paeonia emodi*

Emerging leaves are a rich burgundy and autumn colour is also good



Sometimes foliage is the star of the show:

Plume Poppy *Macleaya cordata* – a handsome plant but spreads rapidly. Ideal for flower arrangers.



I hope that you enjoyed Hilary's photos, a lot of interesting plants to stimulate the imagination! Visiting gardens often opens our eyes to something we can do in our own garden, or in this case add a plant.

I know that many of you have allotments or large gardens so has it been a bonus to be able to have the time to work on it? The weather was worrying at first with the continuing drought, watering is a time-consuming issue. The change of weather in mid-June has brought some relief. Perhaps you could write a small piece about your garden or allotment.

Barbara Meddowes writes

Time for the Allotment

The allotment had been fairly neglected for a long time and so when lockdown happened, and I wondered how I was going to keep busy. I turned my attention to tidying it up. It was a long process which took pretty well, daily work, for several weeks. I had to dig out lots of weeds being careful not to damage the plants I wanted to keep. My fruit bushes didn't look too healthy and so I turned my attention to bags of manure and gave them a feed.

Going to the allotment on a regular basis has given me the chance to really appreciate the beauty here. The early flowering of the Mirabelle plum was closely followed by the Victoria plum and then the delight when I saw that tiny plums are forming, and I have the promise of a really good crop this year. The medlar tree followed and was studded with pretty white flowers which have turned into small fruits which will become medlar jelly in the autumn. I mainly grow fruit and flowers (food for the soul) but I do have a small raised veg patch.

There is a lovely view from the allotment up to the hills so when I get exhausted I sit and enjoy this view, which is opposite to the one at home, where I look out towards Bromyard and Clee Hill.

Another blessing of the allotment is that you get to talk to people! We have neighbours but we are all safely separated by being on our own plots and in this time of isolation, especially if you live on your own, it's marvellous to be able to chat to people. I'm so glad that I hung on to the allotment!

Rosemary Herbert has contributed several items, including a quiz. Have you taken part in Rosemary's Golden Quiz and more recently her Silver Quiz? I have really enjoyed the both quizzes as Rosemary's questions require some research, something I enjoy, and have introduced me to new authors or I have been reminded of things or people that I had forgotten. So, I look forward to tackling the one that she sent in for the Over the Fence. I hope that you enjoy doing it too.

A Short Garden Quiz.

(All the answers refer to a 'garden', or include the word 'garden').

1 In which Herefordshire garden is there a giant cuckoo clock?

2 Queen Katherine Parr and Lady Jane Gray once walked here in Gloucestershire, and they are now represented by topiary figures.

3 Where is naught heard but Paradise bird, harp, dulcimer, lute, cymbal, trump, tymbal and flute?

4 These Worcestershire gardens include a mythological fountain and a delightful tearoom!

5 Where in Herefordshire can you sometimes find Christmas pudding bushes?

6 Mary and Marguerita began this.

7 Lawrence Johnston gave this Gloucestershire garden to the NT.

8 A garden close to Malvern which includes a maze and a synthetic rockery.

9 'And the roses – the roses! Rising out of the grass, tangled round the sundial, wreathing the tree-trunks, and hanging from their branches, climbing up the walls and spreading over them with long garlands falling in cascades – they came alive day by day, hour by hour.' All this in a story-book garden, where the door hadn't been opened for ten years.

10 You are advised to 'Beware!' if you are considering planting this amazing Gloucestershire rose in your garden! It can be found near 7.

11 Elgar is pictured fishing from a boat on the lake in this garden near Worcester.

12 'For where the old thick laurels grow, along the thin red wall, You find the tool- and potting-sheds which are the heart of all; The cold-frames and the hot-houses, the dung pits and the tanks, The rollers, carts and drain-pipes, with the barrows and the planks.' In which poem are these lines found?

Answers later!

Marwood Hill Gardens, near Barnstaple, North Devon.

David and I have visited these lovely and varied gardens, 'covering an area of 20 acres with three lakes and set in a valley tucked away in North Devon', many times, whilst on holiday in Lynton, and we still sometimes manage to get lost on the way! Dr. Jimmy Smart, who had been a ship's doctor throughout WW2, moved to Marwood with his family in 1949, and began to develop the neglected garden gradually, alongside his medical work. Its delights include a wonderful collection of camellias (which we've never yet seen in flower!), a bog garden with many candelabra primulas, and the beautiful National Collection of astilbes. (There is much to enjoy on the website, if you are interested.)



For us, a trip to Marwood Hill would be incomplete without a visit to the excellent tearooms for a light lunch (trout salad for David), and later on for a cream tea, with ginger scones, honey and cream - very rich but delicious. (It sounds a bit like Winnie the Pooh - honey and condensed milk please!) You can get the more usual kind of cream tea too, and there is a lovely view over the garden. Marwood even has a link with West Malvern - we learned that one of the lay ministers at the nearby church had grown up in Lower Road!

Rosemary



Visitors to my garden on Lower Road.. I named the first group 'Gladys Knight and the Pips', Word labelled them 'a group of sheep on the grass'. This fine looking fellow arrived afterwards and there was a lot of chasing round the flower bed, like Road Runner, until he turned up with just one of the ladies and called on us regularly, 10a.m. and 3p.m. daily for a snack. The hen was much braver than the cock and would happily peck around me as I sat outside reading. (One of my major lockdown activities during the heatwave.) We had about four weeks of their company but one day they didn't turn up and although we could hear them, and occasionally spot them in the field behind us we haven't had the pleasure of their company since.

Remember to put your writing in Word and don't worry about having nothing to say. Your garden, allotment, trips, walks, visitors to your garden and photos, recipes and quizzes.

I'll finish for now and hope that I can do another edition, please send me something! (You will want the answers to the quiz!)

Carole Houghton June 2020