

Aston Clinton, Buckland & Drayton Beauchamp Horticultural Society

Volume 16 Issue 1

January 2013

President: Mrs Lorna Price

Chairman: Mrs. Sue Lipscomb

Dear Members,

As I write this letter, I can see the snow falling and possibly just beginning to turn to sleet! We must now hope that the year 2013 gives us more good fortune as gardeners than its predecessor. I suppose we are never happy, but it would be good this year if we could have rain and warmth at the right time and in the right quantity so that our gardens flourish. Those of us who show daffodils at the Spring Show are already anxiously looking at our pots of bulbs. The comparatively mild weather until now has encouraged many of them to push through the soil and one pot in particular is showing buds. This, of course, is a disaster as those blooms will be over well before the show! One reminder, if you do have daffodils in pots, is never to move them when the ground in them is frozen as this could cause the roots to be damaged.

We are pleased that so many of you take advantage of our D.T.Brown seed order; in fact 35 members and their friends to be precise. Maureen Ridler has handled £1,500 worth of orders and I would like to thank her for the time and effort she puts into this each year. As usual we were given a 50% discount on all seeds and 10% discount on non-seed items and this entire discount goes directly to those who have placed an order with no benefit to the Society.

I would just like to make one plea on behalf of those who organise the Spring Show this year. Any volunteer helpers would be gratefully received. Also, please do enter the Show, and if that is truly not possible, it would be great if you could attend, with your friends, on the day, which this year is Saturday April 6th.

I do hope that as many of you as possible will support our programme of talks in the Anthony Hall this year. Thanks to Elizabeth Weston we have another year of interesting talks and visits. One thing to note is that the Annual Social Supper is on Saturday March 9th and the tickets are on sale now. You can order the tickets using the form on page 2. The programme of talks will be delivered with this edition of the newsletter and also the Spring Show schedule.

Finally allow me to wish you all a very Happy New Year and a horticulturally productive one too!

*With very best wishes,
Sue Lipscomb*

The Annual Social Supper Saturday 9th March

The Annual Social Supper will be at the Anthony Hall on Saturday 9th March. We meet at 7 for 7.30 pm: The supper will be followed by 'Guider Adventures in Mexico', a talk with slides by Hilary Weston. We look forward to having as many of our members coming for this most enjoyable of evenings. John Seaton is providing a selection of hot and cold food. Tickets are £11 each. Please let us know if you require vegetarian selection.

Elizabeth Weston

Society Diary

All talks are held in the Anthony Hall, Aston Clinton and start at 8 pm. They are all free to members, but there will be a raffle and produce & plant stall to defray costs. Non-members are charged at £2. Coffee and tea are served in the interval.

Wednesday 13th February

Talk with slides: '**Butterflies in Bucks**' by Roger Kemp

Saturday 9th March

Annual Social Supper 7 for 7.30 pm:

Followed by '**Guider Adventures in Mexico**' by Hilary Weston

Thursday 4th April

Entry night for the Spring Show

Anthony Hall time 6.00 -7.45 pm

Saturday 6th April

17th Annual Spring Show and Plant sale

2 pm in the Aston Clinton School Hall. Entry £1

Wednesday 10th April

Talk about growing and showing vegetables by John Branham, Chairman of the local Branch of the National Vegetable Society.

The Society Website is now operating.

To access it go to: www.astonclintonhorticulturalsociety.co.uk

Or just type into your search engine

ASTON CLINTON, BUCKLAND & DRAYTON BEAUCHAMP HORTICULURAL SOCIETY

Booking Form for Social Supper on Saturday 9th March 2013.

Please send metickets at £11 each (Includes one complimentary glass of wine)

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO:- AC, B & DB Horticultural Society

I enclose a total of £..... to cover the cost of the tickets.

Please return the booking form and money to Elizabeth Weston, Social Secretary, ASAP.

Name:.....

Tel No:.....

Spring Show 2013

Our Spring Show this year will be on **Saturday 6th April**. Those of you who attended the AGM will recall that I announced that I will not be around for the Show and that Graham Thirkettle had kindly agreed to be Show Secretary.

Although the schedule is enclosed with this newsletter, here for your convenience, is a summary of the changes to the schedule –

Section 1 (daffodils) –

Class 1 Grow for Show is **Flower Record**.

Class 34 (The Society's Bloom) is **High Society**

Class 38 (Penrice Cup) is one bloom of **Barrett Browning**.

Class 39 (Master class) has been revised to read six (instead of 12) distinct cultivars, one bloom of each selected from Divisions 1 to 4, to be staged one bloom per vase. For this year, we will also remove the stipulation that the entry must include at least one cultivar from each division, to try and encourage more people to enter.

Class 39B – Miniatures grown and shown in a pot has been amended to read “in a pot no larger than **8** inches in diameter”.

Section 2 (Spring Flowers) –

Class 43 the Hyacinths class now reads “3 in a vase, *mixed colours allowed*”

Section 3 (Floral Art) –

Class 52 the NOVICE class this year will read as follows – “**Spring in Blossom**”. Maximum size 12" x 12" x 24" high. Any natural flowers and plant material may be used with suitable accessories. Not open to anyone who has previously gained a first prize in any floral art class at this show.

Class 55 Floral Art - the theme is “All Things Bright and Beautiful”

Section 4 (Domestic) –

Class 60 the jar of three fruits marmalade is **replaced** with a jar of soft fruit jam.

Section 5 (Children) –

Class 69 Children 6 to 8 years, reads “Collage picture of spring flowers no larger than A4”

Class 73 Children 9 to 14 years photo class entitled “**Our Feathered Friends**”. Photo 6" x 4" (digital or non-digital).

Class 75 Children 9 to 14 years, reads Spring flower arrangement in a vase not exceeding 18" (46cm)

Section 6 (Handicraft) –

Class 81 and 82 - same theme for both photo classes entitled "**Winter Scene**". Photo size - 6" x 4" mounted not framed for class 81 (non-digital), and not to exceed 8" x 6" mounted not framed for class 82 (digital).

Please try to enter the show as a competitor, and encourage your children, grandchildren, and friends and neighbours also. **Entry night is on Thursday 4th April 6.00 – 7.45pm at the Anthony Hall**. Those of you who have trophies, please return them to Graham by entry night at the latest.

If you have not entered before, there are a number of novice classes. If you need help to know what to enter and how to stage, please ask Ken Halls, Graham Thirkettle or one of the committee.

We are always grateful for gifts for the raffle and any spare plants you might have for our very popular plant stall. We also hope to have the usual commercial stalls.

We will need volunteers as always, to help put up show benches on the Friday afternoon (from 4pm), to help on the day as stewards etc. and to help dismantle everything at the end of the show. If you would like to learn to be a steward on the Saturday morning of the show, the committee would be delighted and you will get one of John and Evelyn's superb lunches, but please let a member of the committee know before the show date.

If you have any queries, please contact Graham Thirkettle.

Ralph is looking for volunteers to help sell plants at the show. You do not have to volunteer for the whole afternoon, just for the first half-hour, when all our customers are crowding round and it gets very hectic. If any of our members want us to look for specific plants, please contact Ralph Weston.

Ken Halls

Miniature Daffodils for the Spring Show

Last year we included in the Spring Show some miniature daffodil classes. An article by Sue Lipscomb, our chairman appeared in our newsletter last year. The term miniature daffodil usually refers to those that are less than 10" high and have a flower which measures less than 2" across. We shall be repeating these classes again. If you have grown and intend to stage them, they can be rather fiddly but very rewarding. They look best with stems cut rather short and in proportion to the flower size and the leaf size should be appropriate as well. Our Society will provide special container vases to display them on the showbench. One class requires a pot of miniatures to be entered. Fellow members will always help and guide you on growing and staging, however if you want further details or have queries please contact Graham Thirkettle.

Muchpottering

Welcome to 2013. Let's hope that this year will be better than the last. For myself, I suffered potatoes with the blight and I can now appreciate what it must have been like for the peasants of the Irish potato famine. With the lack of sun my sweet peas did not grow above about 18 ins, the tomatoes only ripened just in time for me to gain first prize and my runner beans did not fruit until September about a month late! However there were some successes with root crops such as parsnips, turnips and even carrots. I think that I have solved the problem of carrot root fly by building an open box some 9ins high and covering with fleece during germination. My problem is that I am not good at 'thinning' out, so many carrots are wasted because they do not grow big enough or get twisted and distorted.

As you know, The weather this year has been turbulent. The early spring began to look promising but then we had a dry cold spell when nothing much grew followed by drought when hosepipe bans were declared. Then the heavens opened and within the month the hosepipe ban was lifted. It has hardly stopped raining since. I reported the effects of this in the village Life magazine. However since then I have obtained some local rain data. If you remember, it rained most of the day on Sat 29th December when we had 6mm of rain. During the month of December the total rainfall was 92.8mm or 3.7ins and for the whole year we had 951.8 mm or 37 ins! This is over 3ft of rain and since the early part of the year was in drought conditions, this depth of water has fallen in the last 6 or 7 months. No wonder our gardens are soggy and the water table at the surface of the ground. It makes me wonder what effect this will have on our forthcoming growing season. Many perennials will have had their roots in water and so may suffer. Only time will tell which plants in our gardens are capable of surviving these harsh conditions.

The turn of the year always brings signs of new life and true to form, the first of my snowdrops appeared and flowered before the New Year. Over Christmas, the weather turned mild again and this has brought on many other bulbs and plants. The electronic version of this newsletter, which can also be found on our website, has several pictures from my garden. Of particular interest are my Alstroemerias. The instructions said to cover the plant stools with 6in of mulch to protect them from frost. So what happens when we have a period of mild weather but 'up pops' new shoots 6 ins above the mulch. After struggling to grow these lovely tall plants from seed I bought some plants and though they were expensive they have provided us with plenty of cut flowers that match those in the shops. I also have some in pots in the greenhouse that are still flowering now. Other plants I have invested in this last year are a fresh set of evergreen ferns that I brought on in pots but plan to plant out this spring. I was given '3 David Austin Roses' for Christmas. I was so impressed by the talk we had last year I thought that I would give bush roses a try again because my experience with ordinary hybrid 'T' varieties has not been very good.

So what of the forthcoming growing season? The weathermen are warning us that we are likely to have more extremes of weather again this summer, but please don't get put off. One thing they suggested was that our lawns are not likely to look as smooth and green all the time. The wet winter weather has encouraged the growth of moss in mine. If you have it, then apply iron sulphate dissolved in water (obtained from the Aylesbury Ggardening Society Shop). The moss will turn black and you will have to rake it out. The other recommendation about your lawn is not to cut it too short. This is important as it stops the lawn going brown in dry weather and moss growing in wet weather. The days are starting to draw out again, giving us more light. It is now time to prune your fruit trees remembering what we learnt on our visit last year; Apples and pears now and plums and other fruit when the sap is rising.

One thing I have learnt is that trees, bushes and plants do not last for ever even though some seem to. I have still got 2 apple trees that were in the garden when I moved in. but others have gone including plum and pear trees, blackberry, blackcurrant and last year gooseberry. Buckingham nurseries have a wide selection of bushes and hedging trees. The Society is purchasing some replacement trees for ours in the park and an extra one in memory of JeanAyling

If you are growing bulbs for the show in pots then the time to bring them into the greenhouse is 14th February. This will bring them on. Feed them with a high potash fertilizer to make good flowers. If the weather becomes too warm you may have to put them outside again

Whatever you are going to grow this year keep in mind our shows and sow & plant accordingly. I am sure we will have a good year this time.

Ralph Weston

Annual Subscriptions

Annual Subscriptions are now overdue. This is a reminder that our annual subscription is £5 per person. (£6 if your newsletter is delivered by Royal Mail). It is a big and sometimes embarrassing chore to remind members to pay up so if you have not yet subscribed, please do so now.