

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER, SPRING 2019

AS WITH THE LAST NEWSLETTER, ALL MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE A PRINTED COPY AND ARE ASKED TO READ IT AND TO KEEP IT SAFELY, AS IT CONTAINS INFORMATION FOR THE WHOLE OF 2019. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE COST OF PRINTING AND POSTING THIS YEAR'S TWO NEWSLETTERS IS MORE THAN THE MEMBERSHIP FEE.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2018 was a record year in that our membership exceeded the magic 500 mark. Our Sales and Advice Hut had a very successful year and for that we must thank Sheila Yorke (Stock Controller) and her husband Graham. We must also thank those who brought in seedlings and other plants that they did not need and that we could sell to make a nice profit. We will again be raising and selling several varieties of clubroot resistant brassicas, rust resistant leeks, and Red Baron onions (that often go to seed from sets) as well as excess tomatoes, courgettes, squash, aubergines and peppers.

IF YOU HAVE ANY SPARE VEGETABLE SEEDLINGS, PLEASE BRING THEM TO THE HUT, MAKING SURE THAT THEY ARE LABELLED.

N.B. Potatoes and summer onions should be in stock at the Hut around January 19th.

The Thursday evening talks were (mostly) excellent and the trips well booked. We are planning three trips plus an evening out this year (see page 2), and those wishing to go should book early as last year some were disappointed.

Despite the awful weather of 2018 – a long cold spring followed by very hot drought – our Flower and Vegetable Show was very successful (see page 3).

Our finances are in good order thanks to Lynn Sumner, our Treasurer, a keen eye is kept on our membership by Netty McNulty, our Membership Secretary, Silvana Briers continues to work splendidly as our General Secretary and Dave Hemingway keeps our web site up to date.

Alas one of our staunchest committee members has had to resign because of other commitments, Tony Addison. Tony was chairman when I joined the committee, and for the years since has given great advice when needed. He is continuing to organize the Hut Helpers and Till Rota. Thank you Tony.

A MATTER OF CONCERN Did you know that Culcheth Gardeners' Association's 2018 Show was their last? And that the Association is no more? The reason is that those running the Association were getting too old and that younger members were not prepared to take over. Such a pattern is common in many walks of life, from playing football, cricket and golf to fly-fishing, younger folk are not getting involved. We need two sorts of volunteer:

Hut helpers: Are you young(ish) and capable of bagging-up Growmore or helping get bags of compost to members' cars? If so, why not volunteer to give a Saturday or Sunday morning, or (April-June) Wednesday evening once per month as a Hut Helper.

Committee members: Many of us are getting on in years. We could do with a couple or three of you, who are enthusiastic gardeners, can organize things and have a bit of drive, to join the committee and hopefully to take over running the Association when we oldies have had too much.

Malcolm Greenhalgh

NIWGA ACTIVITIES 2019

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, 24 January 2019 at 7.30pm at Newton Sports & Cricket Club, Crow Lane East.

HUT OPENING TIMES

Saturdays 5 January – 26 October, 10.30-12 noon

Sundays 6 January – 27 October, 10.30-12 noon

Wednesdays 3 April – 19 June, 7.00-8.00pm

Good Friday 19 April, 10.30-12 noon (see below).

TALKS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

These, with the exception of Good Friday, are held at Newton Sports & Cricket Club, Crow Lane East, on Thursdays at 7.30pm.

28 February: Malcolm Greenhalgh – The answer lies in the soil

28 March: Marguerite Hughes and Sue Gillon – Taking the fear out of pruning

25 April: Anne Britt – A garden designer's portfolio

30 May: Gardeners' Question Time....ask us anything about gardening

31 October: Margaret Robinson of Robinson's Mammoth Onions – Vegetables for every taste

Good Friday, 19 April, 10.30-12 noon: Coffee and Cake at the Rob Lane Sales Hut. Members may avail themselves of two "happenings": 1) Avoiding confusion...buying what you need...a tour of the Sales' Hut (newish members may find this especially useful); 2) Soil pH testing: members may bring a sample of DRY soil (dry it at home) and we will test its pH and advice on the need for liming; cost 50p per sample.

SHOWS

Spring Bank Holiday Monday, 27 May: Willow Park Rural Craft Fair

Saturday 3 August: Newton Town Show

We have had a stand at these two local shows in recent years and always welcome members who could 'give a hand' or just come and say 'Hello!'

Saturday 7 September: Newton-le-Willows Flower and Vegetable Show, Penkford School, Wharfe Road.

This is OUR show and we look forward to as many members as possible putting in exhibits, volunteering help, or just simply coming in the afternoon to admire the judged exhibits and having a cup of tea and piece of cake.

TRIPS

We are offering three trips in 2019 and, if bookings in 2018 were the same, they will be booked up early. Money with booking please, and keep your receipt.

Pick-up points: Newton High Street outside Stocks Tavern, or outside Lime House, Lowton.

Timing: Pick-up 9am. We aim to get back to Lime House or Stocks Tavern about 6pm.

1. Harlow Carr RHS Garden: Wednesday 3 July: Cost £15

The greatest garden in northern England; entry is free because we are affiliated to the RHS

2. Shrewsbury Flower Show: Saturday 10 August: Cost £35

A great Show at the home of Percy Thrower

3. Erddig Hall NT Garden, Wrexham: Saturday 19 October: Cost £15 NT members, £27 non-members

An outstanding garden and major Show about apples

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION FLOWER AND VEGETABLE SHOW 2018

Despite the bitterly cold spring and record heat of the summer, we had a lot more exhibits (560 from 60 exhibitors, including 18 newcomers) than in 2017 and were pleased with the judges commenting on the high quality of exhibits in this year's show. However we need more, especially from children (parents and grandparents, please!) in the children's category, and members who have never put what they have grown onto a Show bench. It is great fun.

There were a good number of visitors, all interested to see the exhibits, play tombola and purchase raffle tickets. All the judges did a sterling job and it was a frenzy of activity in the backroom when the results came in and we got busy writing and displaying the certificates and witnessing sheer delight on faces of the exhibitors when awarded a certificate for their prize apples, tomatoes or dahlias. We may not be the Chelsea Flower Show but the sheer joy I witnessed of a child winning a cup and a lady winning a certificate make all the effort worthwhile..... They will have lasting memories of a great experience at our Show...long may it continue.

The major prize winners were:

The Bert Jackson Memorial Cup for new growers: Louise Oakes

Arthur Green Perpetual Trophy for the most scented rose: Christine Painter

RHS Banksian Medal: Christopher Nightingale

Gordon Brooks Trophy: Ian Fairclough

Pot plants (most points): Ian Fairclough

Flowers (most points): Christopher Nightingale

National Vegetable Society's Silver Medal: Ian Fairclough

National Chrysanthemum Society's Silver Medal: Matt Lloyd

National Dahlia Society's Bronze and Silver Medals: Phil Nuttall

British Gladiolus Society Bronze Medal: Christopher Nightingale

Rose Shield: Silvana Briers

Top Vase: Christopher Nightingale

Top Tray and NLWGA Shield: Alan Holman

Photographic Challenge Cup: Kathryn Green

We couldn't put the Show on without sponsorship and we're very grateful to the Rotary Club of Newton-le-Willows, Jewellery by Silvana, Lapwing Gardening, Loach (Horticultural), Hilton's Holidays, Newton Hair Design and Kings Seeds. We also had numerous individual sponsors for some categories in the schedule. A massive thank you to you all.

If you would like to sponsor one or more fruit, vegetable or flower classes in this year's Show, please ask at the Hut.

The 2018 show was my last as Show Secretary, as I initially stepped in to fill a gap until someone more suited to the role could be found. So I'm handing over the reins to Marjorie McMahon and wish her every success in the role. We wouldn't have a show without the members, their family and friends in the community who exhibit items they have grown, baked, drawn or photographed so please keep up the good work and encourage others to exhibit and support our Show for generations to come.....I'd encourage everyone to take part, particularly the children, roll on the next Show.....get planning now.....

Angie Murray (Show Secretary)

Note: We are all very grateful to Angie for all her efforts and enthusiasm in the last two Shows and we wish Marj well as she organises our 2019 Show.

The 2019 Show categories for all fruit, vegetable and flower classes are as in the Show Schedule.

For Photography the topics are: Clouds; New Life; Rope/string.

For Art: Farming

For Cookery (recipes given): Large cake = Apple custard cake; Small individual cake = cappuccino chocolate brownie cupcakes.

Children's categories:

For Cookery: Free style decoration of 4 small cakes

For Art: Farming - a picture or model using any materials

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In 2018, I carried out two experiments on my fruit and vegetable plot:

1. Everyone knew that I could not grow large celeriac! So I took a tip from an expert. When I planted them, I fed with the usual Growmore, but then I fed the plants every fortnight with Chempak No 2 High Nitrogen feed and my celeriac are huge. I used the same on three cauliflowers and then, when I guessed that the plants would start producing the 'flowers' I fed with Chempak No 4 High Potash feed. The result: my best ever cauliflowers.
2. The 'green' experts reckon that they do not need to spray their apple trees for codlin moth but stop them with lots of codlin moth traps. I put one trap between every two bush and cordon apples and caught lots of male moths. But I lost 80% of my crop to codlin moth. In 2019 I will do as I have done for decades: one trap put out in early May; when 12 moths have been trapped, I will spray with insecticide and repeat spray a fortnight later. This has always given me a crop without the codlin moth infestation!

You recall the *Old Husband's Tale* in last summer's Newsletter about putting crocks in the bottom of pots to increase drainage. Well, the RHS have recently published a study that definitely demonstrated that crocks in the bottom of pots do NOT help drainage, and that the plants will do far better if we use more potting compost instead! MG