



Scottish Gardeners' Forum Newsletter

PROMOTING SCOTLAND'S GARDEN CLUBS



Snowdrops in Newbattle by Charles Black

Spring 2023

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Letter from the Chair

It is a cold and frosty day today so all gardening is being done visually through the window. Now that the leaves are away, I can see where I need to prune and I'm making notes to ensure that I do it at the appropriate time. I have a *Verbena bonariensis* against the boundary fence and my neighbour usually comments on the bunches of pink blossom clinging to the bare stems. Otherwise, there isn't much interest apart from an abundance of bright berries. Before Christmas I stood on my doorstep shouting at the Blackbirds "Not the Holly berries", but they ignored me and enjoyed a feast anyway. There are still plenty left to see them through the hard days ahead and I am supplementing them with apples and seeds.

The AGM in Nairn was a great success and was well attended by local members as well as those from further afield. We had excellent speakers. Ed Bollom spoke about the



development of Gordon Castle Walled Garden. We were amazed to see the abundance of fruit and vegetables produced in the garden. Much of this is used in the restaurant or sold to local people, but a great deal goes towards the production of goods for sale such as cider, flavoured gin and cosmetics.

Jim Jermyn gave us a celebration of Branklyn Garden where he has been a most attentive curator. Branklyn celebrated its centenary year in 2022 and Jim reflected on the legacy left by Dorothy Renton who was an avid collector. The garden has many rare and unique plants, all arranged to provide spectacular vistas from the house. Jim has since retired as curator and while I am sure he will miss the garden there can be no such regrets at leaving a draughty Arts and Crafts house.

We also had a talk from Max Leslie, which touched on food security and the control by supermarkets on the

variety of goods available. This was his first talk and I think he did well considering his nerves.

We were delighted to see Jim McColl, our Honorary President, at the AGM. Overcoming his mobility difficulties, he had arranged a lift in order to be with us. He expressed a wish to resign his role and recommended that we ask Jim Jermyn to take his place. I am happy to confirm that Jim agreed and is now our Honorary President. We have also been able to persuade Brian Cunningham of Scone Palace and Beechgrove to accept the role of Honorary Vice President. I am sure that we will enjoy working together.

Before Christmas I made a trip to Munich with family to enjoy the culture by day and the Weihnachtsmarkt in the evening, fortified by delicious Gluhwein. In addition to the art galleries, where we found nervous guards watching for visitors carrying tins of soup, we also found *The Englischer Garten*. This is known as Munich's green lung and is one of the largest public parks in the world. Modelled on English landscaped gardens, it is popular with walkers, cyclists and picnicking families but when we were there in -5° temperatures, we were amazed to see Eisbach (Ice brook) surfers on the weir on the river Isar.

I was very pleased to hear from Tiphereth School in Edinburgh. Their students had previously enjoyed participating in the Pallet and Planter Challenge which was held at Gardening Scotland. The students had asked if there were plans to re-introduce the challenge and staff decided to hold their own event on school premises.

I have given them some guidance, offered judges and promised awards to the participants. This is something that we would very much like to see replicated across the country. Nairn and District Gardening Club have included it as part of their annual show with great success. Please get in touch for more information and ways in which we can support you.

As dates for the notable flower shows are announced, we are making plans to have a presence at Scone Palace Flower Show on 2nd and 3rd June 2023, and also at Ayr in August. It seems that Dundee Council will not be supporting the Dundee Food and Flower Festival but we are hopeful of other sponsors.

Do keep us informed of plans in your local area. We thrive on your ideas and contributions.

I wish you success for the coming growing season and some good weather to enjoy the spectacular displays of spring.

**Kathryn Pitts
Chair**



Our stand at Scone 2022

My favourite flower

Our garden is mainly a mix of shrubs, perennials and bulbs: the choice of plants is to satisfy our love of year-round colour and to provide food for insects. My choice of flower isn't influenced by scent, a major factor in some people's criteria, as I lost my sense of smell over 20 years ago. I'm now influenced by looks and by how attractive they are to wildlife.

Snowdrops, daffodils and tulips are lovely to look at, a great harbinger of spring and help to early bees but maybe not my favourite. Peony roses are fabulous and blowsy but have become too complex for pollinators to get at – so maybe not. Roses come in all shapes and sizes and are loved by the bees but seem not to attract butterflies – so, no, again. Hardy geraniums are great in the garden, many varieties have lovely petal markings and are good for bees – but again not attractive to butterflies.

Other plants we grow, too many to mention, fail as favourites for the same reason and I'm coming down to a choice of two, namely Inula and Buddleia. Inula have a very interesting bud which unfurls to provide an open yellow flower which feeds bees, butterflies and hoverflies, so that is

a strong contender. Buddleia – we have a June flowering orange Globosa and a white flowered variety of Davidii which flowers in late August and these also attract bees, butterflies and hoverflies. Decision time – Inula wins. (However, if asked again in a couple of months maybe something else will win.)

Donald Hepburn



Buddleia Globosa



Inula

A Pre-Show Idea

In the past, the meeting before our annual show has ranged from having a speaker talk about how to grow and display your produce to best effect at the show to tips from the committee. We decided we needed a change to make the meeting more interactive and interesting even for those who were not thinking of entering.

Each committee member chose 1 or 2 classes from the show. We prepared 3 exhibits for each class: one would be according to schedule, one would have an error (Not As Schedule) and the third might just be of poor quality. The sets of 3 exhibits were laid out on tables, labelled A, B and C, with a description of the class, just like a mini show. The audience, armed with paper and pencil, were then invited to judge each class, placing the 3 exhibits as 1st, 2nd and 3rd (or Not As Schedule). Then we talked about how people had

judged the classes and revealed the thinking behind each exhibit. It was quite a revelation to me as to how they had judged. I had prepared 3 Sweet pea exhibits (same variety, 5 stems):

A: 5 stems, same variety

B: 5 stems: but starting to go to seed

C: 6 stems

Everyone managed to discount the 6 stems but, to my surprise, many people chose B as 1st.

Other examples of mistakes were:

5 Bunches of herbs - wrong number or a single stem not a bunch

Potatoes - scrubbed too much

Rhubarb- base chopped off

The meeting was a great success and succeeded in educating members as to what was required for a possible winning entry while being entertaining.

Sue Thomas

Badenoch Gardening Club

Changes to Speakers Register

Claire Reaney

We are very sorry to hear of the death of Claire Reaney. Claire previously worked as a Horticultural Technician at Dundee Botanic Garden where she specialised in conservation of native plants. She was a valued contributor to the register and a knowledgeable and enthusiastic speaker.

We send our condolences to her friends and family.

Calum Clunie

We are delighted to welcome Calum Clunie (Beechgrove) to the Speakers Register. Calum is happy to travel and will talk in person or by Zoom. He offers

talks on various subjects including:

Show Growing

Getting started with fruit and vegetables

The Growing Season

TV Gardening

My Horticultural Journey so far

Giant Gardening

Please contact Calum on email: ctclunie@hotmail.co.uk to discuss availability, fees and expenses.

Calum has also kindly agreed to speak at the AGM and Forum to be held in Colinton, Edinburgh on Saturday 28th October 2023.

Kathryn Pitts

Dollar Horticulture and Gardening Club with Dollar in Bloom

We had a few projects to keep us occupied in the autumn of 2022.

The revival of our memorial garden has continued: the major bed has now been planted with a variety of perennials, shrubs and small trees. The whole area is much improved and we are all looking forward to seeing the garden grow and flourish in the years ahead.

The club had fallen heir to a large number of small terracotta pots which we planted with either Iris Reticulata or Mascari bulbs; these were (in January) on sale to the public at our local Dollar's Deli.

In October we held our annual bulb sale, this year selling narcissi and tulips. The local tubs and Memorial Gardens were also planted with mixed narcissi. The Dollar Winter Festival provided a



good opportunity to run a stall for children making Christmas wreaths, with most of the material coming from members' gardens and bric-à-brac supplies.

Last summer we were visited and assessed by a representative from It's Your Neighbourhood (a section of

Keep Scotland Beautiful). We heard in the autumn that we had achieved the highest level award of "Outstanding". We were later given joint first place in a discretionary award for Parks and Green Spaces. Now we have to maintain that standard!

We are looking forward to getting back into the garden, greenhouse, getting on with plant sales and – the event of the year – the flower show.

Fiona Roe



Bridge of Weir Horticultural Society – Gardening Club

Our session of activities for 2023 has been organised and is (almost) fully in place. We started off on 9th March with a “Sow, Grow and Show” activities evening – encouraging new folk to come along and find out how to get started.

The majority of the monthly evenings are aimed at showing how to grow particular species, e.g. Samuel Kennedy will discuss begonias on 13th April; or answering questions and dealing with problems which our members and visitors have, e.g. our Local Gardeners' Question Time on 18th May.

The March meeting is open to all and the sunflower seeds and potatoes, the main focus of the event, are to feed into fun competitions at the Garden Festival on 19th August.

We've been helping our local Early Learning Centre with development of a

garden for their young scholars to enjoy, and provided hyacinth and amaryllis to keep interest over the winter. The staff are on-board with taking some of the seeds and potatoes in bags for growing – to provide further encouragement for their scholars. Although our evening meetings limit the ability of the youngsters to join in, we're looking forward to their participation in the Garden Festival.

Our other outreach activities are our Plant Sale (13th May in the Village Centre) and a Gala Day stall in June, where we'll promote gardening and remind folk of what we aim to do.

We think we have a fun and informative plan for this year; fingers crossed the members do too.

Donald Hepburn

Callander & District Horticultural Society

Callander & District Horticultural Society are delighted this year to be celebrating their 150th anniversary. In addition to the Annual Show, we are holding a Skills Sharing Event on Sunday 23rd April at the Callander Youth Project Trust with demonstrations, hands-on activities and presentations relating to gardening and other competitions.

We have introduced a Victorian theme in some of our competitions

in this year's Annual Show which will be held on Saturday 19th August at East Torrie Farm, Callander. This year we are also introducing a digital photography competition in advance of the show.

Detailed information is available at

www.cadhs.co.uk

We look forward to welcoming competitors and visitors at these events.

Jacquie



SOCIETY	EVENT	
Alness HS	Spring Show, Bulbs, Handicrafts and Baking	T
Badenoch GC	Spring Show	M
Royal Caledonian HS	Spring Bulb Show Free	M
Skye Gardening Society's	Spring Show	M
Pathhead & District HS	Inter Society Horti Quiz	C
Callander & District HS	Spring Fayre Skills Share event	C
Kilmalcolm HS	Spring Bulb Competition	k
Kilmalcolm HS	Plant Sale and Royal Coffee Morning Pre-Coronation Celebration	k
Bridge of Weir HS	Gala Day	H
Scottish Bonsai Association	Scottish National Bonsai Exhibition	T T
Baldernock GC	Annual Plant Sale	E E
Pathhead & District HS	Plant Sale & Coffee Morning	C
Stewarton GC	Plant Sale and Coffee Morning	J S
Bridge of Weir HS	Plant Sale	V
Royal Caledonian HS	Auricula & Primula Show. Free	M
Kilmalcolm HS	Summer Outing to Dumfries House & Gardens	k
Royal Caledonian HS	Cacti & Succulent Show. Free	M
Brighter Bervie	Gardens Open Daily to the Public	M M

	Venue	DATE
	The Perrins Centre, Alness	March 18th
	Newtonmore Village Hall	March 22nd
	McHattie Room at Saughton Park	April 1st 12noon-5pm
	Minginish Village Hall.	April 8th from 1.30pm
	Community Hall, Main St,	April 11th 7.30pm
	Callander Youth Project, Bridgend	April 23rd 1pm and 4pm
	Kilmacolm Community Centre	April 19th
	Kilmacolm Community Centre	April 29th
	Houston Road Park	June
	Troon Walker and Concert Halls, Troon	May 21st
	Baljaffray Parish Church Hall in Bearsden	May 13th
	Callander Pavillion, Pathhead	May 13th 10am-12noon
	John Knox Church Hall, Stewarton, KA3 5BZ	May 13th
	Village Centre	May 13th
	McHattie Room at Saughton Park	May 14th 12.15-3.45pm
	Kilmacolm Community Centre	June 7th
	McHattie Room at Saughton	June 11th
c	Montrose Road, Inverbervie, Montrose	Daily

SOCIETY	EVENT
Stonehaven & District HS	Flowers/veg/fruit/culinary/craft
Nairn and District GC	Annual Show
Cupar Flower Show	Cupar Flower and Craft Show
Callander & District HS	Annual Show
Ormiston HS	Annual Flower Show
Ayr and District Flower Show	Ayr and District Flower Show
Bridge of Weir HS	Garden Festival
Pathhead & District HS	71st Annual Flower Show
Currie Parish H & I Soc	Currie Flower Show
Alness HS	Autumn Show
Scottish National Chrysanthemum & Dahlia Society	Annual Show
Kilmalcolm HS	Annual Plant Show
Mauchline Horti & Agric Soc	Flower Show
Paisley Florist Society GC	Annual Show
East Lothian HS	E.L.H.S Show
Stewarton GC	Flower Show -
Skye Gardening Soc	Flower and Produce Show
Dunbar Flower Show	Flower Show
Fife Flower Show	Annual Show
Brighter Bervie	Gardens Open Daily to the Public

	Venue	DATE
	Stonehaven Town Hall	July 29th 10.30am-4pm
	Nairn Community and Arts Centre	Aug 12th 1pm-4pm
	Corn Exchange, Cupar. More info	Aug 19th
	East Torrie Farm, Callander, FK17 8JL on B8032.	Aug 19th 2-4pm
	the Community Centre	Aug 19th 1pm-4.30pm
	Ayr Race Course	Aug 19th & 20th
	Freeland Church Hall	Aug 19th
	Community Hall, Main St, Pathhead	Aug 26th 2-4pm
	Balerno High School, EH14 7AQ,	Aug 26th 1.30-4.00pm
	Alness Bowling Club, Alness	Aug 26th
	Leven Parish Church Hall, Durie Street, Leven, KY8 4HA. Admission by donation	Sept 1st 11am-5pm Sept 2nd 11am-2pm
	Kilmacolm Community Centre	Sept 2nd
	Mauchline Parish Church Hall	Sept 2nd
	St Mirin's Cathedral Halls, Paisley	Sept 2nd 1pm-4pm
	Aubigny Sports Centre, Mill Wynd, Haddington, EH41 4DB	Sept 2nd 2pm-4.30pm
	John Knox Church Hall,	Sept 2nd
	Portree High School, Portree	Sept 2nd 1.30pm
	Dunbar Parish Church Hall	Sept 9th 1-4.30pm
	Leven Parish Church Hall, Durie Street, Leven, KY8 4HA.	Sept 16th 11am-5pm Sept 17th 11am-2pm
	Montrose Road, Inverbervie, Montrose	Daily

Stewarton Gardening Club

As the days lengthen it is a good time to do some early preparations and give the greenhouse a tidy up and a good wash to get rid of any moss and unwanted visitors that have overwintered in all the corners. (Sorting through the seed packets and realising you have ordered another packet of the ones you never got around to sowing last year...)

There is nothing better than a country walk on a crisp sunny Spring day when the snowdrops are in full bloom and the daffodils' flowers are just waking up, and early bees are having a fly round in the midday sun in the hope of some early nectar.

This year I have noticed a marked absence of small garden birds; the peanuts and fat balls seem to be ignored. However the dippers are very active in the burn, swimming underwater and then bobbing up to feast on the May fly larvae.



Floral arrangement entirely made of sugar

We are preparing for the Plant Sale on Saturday 13th May and encouraging the members to start sowing annuals and taking cuttings of existing plants ready for the Sale.

Hazel Mulberry
Secretary

Colinton Garden Club

Colinton Garden Club was established over 40 years ago. Club members share a love of gardening and nature, and work together to preserve and add value to our quality of life here in south-west Edinburgh. On 27th March we will have Andrew Cathcart talking about *Planting Summer Containers* and on 24th April we hold our AGM.

On 28th October we will be welcoming the **SGF AGM and Forum**.

For further information about the talks, and details about

how to become a member, please see www.colintongardens.org.uk

Jon Gibson, Treasurer



Fun and games at the Christmas Party

Ayr & District Flower Show

The planning for the 5th Ayr & District Flower Show at Ayr Racecourse is underway. This year it will be held on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th August.

This change of days is outwith our control, as a Race meeting is being held on the Thursday night. It will make the set up for entries and traders very tight but we are determined the show will go on. We will have the usual wide range of classes – Vegetables, Begonias, Cacti, Chrysanthemums, Dahlias, Fuchsias, Pelargoniums, Pot Plants, Roses, Sweet Peas and more for the growers. There are of course the Handicrafts, Baking and Preserves to try your hand at too. Lego Models and a Miniature Garden in a seed tray are among the classes in the Junior Section.

As in previous years there will be no charge to enter exhibits. Children will receive prize money in the Junior Section but for adults, instead of money, they will receive an engraved keepsake to be presented for the best exhibit in each section.

There will be a wide range of trade stands including craft stalls and musical entertainment will also be on offer.

To run the show we rely on the good will of the many volunteers who give up their time not only to steward on the show days but to build and dismantle all the staging for the exhibits, collect gate money, sell programmes and do all the unseen work in the background to make the show possible. We must thank everyone who has helped make Ayr & District Flower Show the success it has been over the last four shows and hope they will keep up the good work again this year.

The Racecourse is an excellent venue for the show. It is on a main bus route, handy for Bed & Breakfast and the many hotels in the area. A large part of the show is undercover so even on a typical Ayrshire day the show can still be enjoyed. The site is wheel-chair friendly and accessible to everyone.

Unfortunately no dogs except assistance dogs are allowed in the show ground.

Schedules will be sent to everyone who has exhibited in the past, hopefully by April but anyone who wishes a schedule or more information about the show can either email

ayrandedistrictflowershow@gmail.com

or Tel 07803 782821

A Schedule will also appear at;

www.ayrandedistrictflowershow.com

Check out the website and Facebook page for updates and photograph of previous shows.

Irene Yuill



Little Green Shoots and Little Green Fingers

We're very fortunate here in Inverbervie that Aberdeenshire Council is promoting a Growing Living Greenspaces initiative for 2023 by supporting local groups to plant-up unused patches in their communities with native species of trees, perennials, wild flowers and bulbs. The scheme aims to provide habitat and food sources for



wildlife, and will help to improve plant pollination. It will also create a more attractive environment for residents and visitors to enjoy. Hopefully they will appreciate and take-up the benefits that gardening can bring to their wellbeing.

Every year Brighter Bervie participates in Beautiful Scotland. It is working with the staff and pupils of Bervie Primary School and Nursery to plant-up Living Greenspaces in the school grounds.

Unfortunately, by the time we obtained our bulbs for planting, Christmas activities and school holidays were upon us. However, in mid-January the enthusiastic pupils rolled-up their sleeves and got their hands dirty planting crocus, daffodil, hyacinth, narcissus and tulip bulbs. Because we were so late with this activity we chose to plant in pots. I'm glad to say that the hardy bulbs are growing well.

Later in the year, after they've finished flowering, we'll transplant them into their *permanent* spots outside where

they can continue to develop in subsequent seasons.

Five school classes each planted two trays of 15 bulbs (three of each species). One tray is being nurtured indoors and the other is kept outside. For added interest. The pupils have a worksheet to record when the various flowers appear and how tall they grow.

They'll be able to compare indoor and outdoor progress.

The nursery pupils have planted five single-species trays. All the young gardeners of the future are waiting excitedly to see the results of their labours, and so are we.

We'll soon be receiving our perennial plants and trees, and come March the wildflower plugs are scheduled to arrive, so there's lots to be done around Bervie this Spring by young and old alike.

We'd like to thank our supportive partners, the Council Greenspace Officer, the Landscape Services Supervisor, all at Bervie School and Nursery and our Brighter Bervie volunteers without whom this worthwhile work couldn't happen.

Tom Campbell
Brighter Bervie

find us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/search/top?q=brighter%20bervie

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SGF Pallet & Planter Challenge, 2023

Scone Palace Garden Fair, 2nd & 3rd June

Many readers will have fond memories of the now defunct Gardening Scotland Show held each year at the Ingliston Showground near Edinburgh Airport. At it, the SGF ran the very popular Pallets and Planters Challenge, which encouraged participation by schools, clubs and community groups to create and display attractive living plant exhibits with a theme of their own choice.

Now we're over COVID, large events are taking place again, some related to gardening.



Kathryn's Planter 2022

The Scone Palace Garden Fair, was inaugurated last year by Head Gardener Brian Cunningham of Beechgrove TV renown. Brian intends to grow the *Garden Fair* in the beautiful grounds of Scone Palace into a worthy successor to Gardening Scotland.

This year's Scone Palace Garden Fair is being held on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd June. Please see the Scone Palace website for more information :

www.scone-palace.co.uk

We are delighted to announce that this year the SGF will be running a Pallet Garden & Planter Challenge as part of the Garden Fair. Detailed requirements for entries and application forms will appear shortly on the SGF website.

We'd love to see all our member clubs taking part and encouraging other groups and schools in your locality to do likewise.

Tom Campbell



Tom's Pallet at Scone Palace Garden Fair 2022

