



**FRENSHAM &
DOCKENFIELD
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER
No 158 July 2021**

NEWS

By Sharon Bleach

We had a great visit to Wisley last week. As the country starts to open up more it is good to be able to plan ahead with more confidence. We will be running another set of teas with garden visits on Thursday 19th August in the afternoon.

Anyone wishing to join one of these visits please let me know by 12th August so that I can allocate members to garden hosts. The mixing up of people we tried last time seemed to work well and so we will continue with that next time too. The idea is you should be able to chat the small group and hopefully see a garden that you are not familiar with.



*The Cottage Garden at Wisley featuring Mark Swan's sculpture "Diva"
taken by Ruth Murphy*

COMING UP: The Council met face to face this month, and were able to see Chas and Jilly's garden too – a great treat having seen their presentation on how they designed and built the garden a few years ago. Upcoming dates for your diary for the Society activities are:

- **Thursday 19th August (afternoon) – Members Garden visits and tea**
- **Saturday 4th September – Autumn Show, Marindin Hall**
- **Thursday 7th October – Talk by Peter Herring on Winkworth Arboretum, Marindin Hall**
- **Tuesday 12th October (morning) – Tour of Winkworth Arboretum**

Thank you to those people who have come up with a few ideas for the next series of talks and visits. Any other ideas welcome before we go into planning and booking the events for next year? Where have you seen that you think others might like?

Perhaps some more before and after talks on members gardens would be good....

TEA AND GARDEN VISITS: Our next garden visits and teas (which should come first?) will be on Thursday 19th August in the afternoon. Let me know if you wish to attend or would like to host a group of 4 to 6 people.

AUTUMN SHOW NEWS: We are really looking forward to the opportunity to get members together for the Autumn Show. Chas and Ruth are the organisers and are working to get a suitably Covid safe plan to allow one way flow of people through the hall. We will be doing tea and coffee during the afternoon, again thinking Covid caution we have decided to use disposable plates and cups this year. Anyone willing to make a cake for the teas please let Chas and Ruth know (email: cpell5253@aol.com).

We have also decided to simplify and reduce the number of classes a bit to ensure there is sufficient space for the displays as well as enough space for people to distance – more on this next month when we will send out the revised/reduced list of classes and the entry form for this year's show. In the meantime, do take photographs and prepare for the Home Industry classes which you can find in the member's handbook.

Finally for those of you who are holding on to those cups you won in 2019.... please can you get them back to Annabel Sommerfelt (email: annabelsommerfelt@gmail.com) in plenty of time for the show - in a beautifully clean condition please!

FDHS Council update

by Caroline Plant



WINKWORTH ARBORETUM –

a bit like the NHS, we are catching up on all the things we have been unable to do for the last year! We have announced previously that Dr. Peter Herring, Head Gardener, will be giving a talk at the Marindin Hall on Tuesday 7th October at 7.30 pm about the Winkworth Arboretum.

We can now confirm that he will take us on a guided walk of the Arboretum on Tuesday 12th October at 10.00 am – having heard of all the lovelies to be seen the week previously. So a couple of entries for your diaries, and more details nearer the time.

WISLEY OUTING – well what a good time we all had last Monday, being taken on a tour of items of interest in the garden by a volunteer guide – ending up with the newly developed areas and what must be the most attractively laid out garden café anywhere!

A number of members have said that the commentary from somebody so keen and knowledgeable enhanced the experience. And, amazingly, it did not rain all day – until the evening, after we had all got home. There were many requests to do it again, with the Spring generally and May in particular being put forward as suitable times. I think most people enjoyed the camaraderie and relative independence of being in small groups in people's cars, yet mingling with others while we strolled through the gardens (with the exception of a certain boy racer on a motability buggy who took a little while to control the angle of swerve – yes, you know who you are...).



WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

by Neil Mumford

In 2023, the Society will celebrate its 75th anniversary, formed the same year as the NHS in 1948. To celebrate this iconic date, the committee are hoping to produce a detailed history of the society, so that we can provide each member with a commemorative souvenir booklet to celebrate this landmark occasion. This information will also ensure that the history of the society, is preserved for future generations of members.

But we need your help, we would love to hear from you, with your stories and recollections, also, if you have any information, such as photos of events, newspaper cuttings, old society newsletters (pre 2010), council agenda's (pre 1996), other memorabilia, or other information, please get in touch. We want to make the archive as comprehensive as possible.

If you can help us, please contact me on marketing@fdhs.org.uk or neilmumford@hotmail.com or by telephone on 01252 793591.

With this in mind, I thought I would share some information we have already gathered. It seems that the origins of a flower and produce society extend far further back than any of us originally realised.

This is the text from an article printed in 'The West Surrey Times and County Express' dated Saturday 16th July 1887. Courtesy of the British Newspaper archive.

Frensham – Cottage Gardeners Show

The local horticultural exhibition, the third of its kind was held in the beautiful grounds of Pierrepont on Wednesday last. The show is held alternately at Frensham and Churt and considerable interest is manifested in connection with it in the district.

Perhaps this year's display, which was contained in a spacious marque was not so large as that of last year, but the hot dry season has had a good deal to answer for in this respect and moreover the show was held earlier than usual. Some of the vegetables were very fine but others, went to the other extreme. Parsnips for instance usually so successful in a sandy soil with a fair supply of genial moisture from the clouds, were quite pitiable to look at. Broad beans were prodigious.

Some fine fruit such as cherries and raspberries, not included in the classes were exhibited 'not for competition'. There were several designs in model gardens, the best being disqualified owing, it I understood to the exhibitor holding a professional appointment as a horticulturist.

The judges were Messrs Joy (Witley) and Bide (Farnham), the table decorations being adjudicated upon by Mrs R H Combe. The band of the 1st Royal Sussex Regt (Mr C W Hewitt) was in attendance and performed an excellent programme of music. The prizes were distributed by Mrs Combe in the evening.

Some of the classes included were: 12 Kidney Potatoes, 12 round potatoes, 24 pods of Peas, 12 Onions, 6 Parsnips, 6 Turnips, 12 Radishes, 24 Gooseberries, 24 bunches of red currants, Sweet Williams, 4 Trusses, Geranium (any kind), 3 ferns and 6 roses. Honey (4lb in the comb)

RECIPE – Edible flowers

extract from the RHS website



I have been admiring the lovely flower filled ice cubes in pictures of cocktails and the decoration that chefs use on the creations and thought it would be useful to find out more about which are safe to use so here is an extract from the RHS website – I thought it should be more reliable than some others. There is more information on the website. Happy tasting and decoration!

“Home-grown flowers, free from pesticides and soiling by dogs and other pets are best. Many of the plants listed here as having edible flowers are widely offered for sale. However, unless they're labelled for 'culinary purposes', grow them on for at least three months to reduce the risk of pesticide residues, and only harvest subsequent flowerings. Many garden favourites are edible and a few are listed below:

- **Alpine pinks** (*Dianthus*) – a clove-like flavour ideal for adding to cakes as flavoured sugar, oils and vinegars
- **Bergamot** (*Monarda didyma*) – a strong spicy scent, makes good tea and complements bacon, poultry, rice and pasta
- **Chrysanthemum** (*Chrysanthemum*) – petals flavour and colour creamy soups, fish chowder and egg dishes in the same way as calendula
- **Daisy** (*Bellis perennis*) – not a strong flavour but petals make an interesting garnish for cakes and salads
- **Day lily** (*Hemerocallis*) – add buds and flowers to stir fries, salads and soups. Crunchy with a peppery aftertaste but may have a laxative effect. Avoid buds damaged by gall midge
- **Elderflower** (*Sambucus nigra*) – used to make wine and cordials, or place in a muslin bag to flavour tarts and jellies, remove before serving. Elderflowers can be dipped in batter and deep fried
- **Hibiscus** (*H. rosa-sinensis*) – refreshing citrus-flavoured tea, enhanced by rosemary
- **Hollyhock** (*Alcea rosea*) – remove all traces of pollen and decorate cakes with crystallized petals
- **Lavender** (*Lavandula augustifolia*) – flavoured sugar, honey or vinegar can be used to in cakes and biscuits while sprigs compliment roast pork, lamb and chicken
- **Nasturtium** (*Tropaeolum majus*) – brightly-coloured, peppery flowers are good in salads and pasta dishes. The whole flower, leaves, and buds can be used or just the petals for a milder flavour
- **Pot marigold** (*Calendula officinalis*) – intense colour and a peppery taste useful in soups, stews and puddings. Petals can be dried or pickled in vinegar or added to oil or butter
- **Primrose** (*Primula vulgaris*) – decorate cakes with crystallized or fresh primrose or cowslip flowers. They can be frozen in ice cubes
- **Rose** (*Rosa*) – all roses are edible with the more fragrant roses being the best. Petals can be crystallized, used to flavour drinks, sugar and even icing for summer cakes
- **Scented geraniums** (*Pelagonium*) – flowers are milder than leaves and can be crystallized or frozen in ice cubes for summer cordials
- **Sunflower** (*Helianthus annuus*) – blanch whole buds and serve with garlic butter. Petals can be used in salads or stir fries
- **Sweet violet** (*Viola odorata*) – delicate flavour, suitable for sweet or savoury dishes as well as tea. Use candied violets and pansies as a garnish on cakes and soufflés
- **Tiger lily** (*Lilium leucanthemum* var. *tigrinum*) – delicate fragrance and flavour enhances salads, omelettes and poultry, plus can be used to stuff fish

Herb flowers like basil, chives, lavender, mint, rosemary and thyme impart a more subtle flavour to food than the leaves:

- **Borage** (*Borago officinalis*) – the cucumber flavour of these attractive blue flowers adds interest to cakes, salads and pate. Flowers are easily removed and can be frozen in ice cubes or crystallized
- **Basil** (*Ocimum basilicum*) – sweet, clove-like flavour compliments tomato dishes as well as oils, salad dressings and soups. Use aromatic leaves of both green and purple in Mediterranean dishes
- **Dill** (*Anethum graveolens*) – aniseed flavour, ideal addition to salads, vegetables and fish dishes. Add flowers to mayonnaise, white sauce and pickles
- **Chives** (*Allium schoenoprasum*) – mild onion flavour, good in salads, egg dishes and sauces for fish
- **Clover** (*Trifolium pratense*) – both red and white clover flowers can be used to garnish fruit and green salads or make wine from whole red flowers
- **Courgette or marrow flowers** (*Cucurbita cvs*) – can be eaten hot in a tomato sauce or cold stuffed with cooked rice, cheese, nuts or meat. Use male flowers so as not to reduce yield (unless you're suffering from a glut!)
- **Fennel** (*Foeniculum vulgare*) – all parts are edible and enhance salmon, pâtés and salads. Flowers preserved in vinegar can be used in winter
- **Garden pea** (*Pisum sativum*) – add flowers and young shoots to salad for a fresh pea taste
- **Mint** (*Mentha spp*) – apple, pineapple and ginger mint, plus peppermint and spearmint flowers can all be used in vinegar and butter for both sweet and savoury dishes
- **Pumpkins and squashes** (*Cucurbita cvs*)– pick male flowers once the females are pollinated. Use in the same way as courgette flowers.
- **Rosemary** (*Salvia* [formerly *Rosmarinus*] *officinalis*) – a sweet flavour similar to the leaves can be used fresh to garnish salads and tomato dishes or to flavour butter”

AND FINALLY....

Items for the next newsletter to Sharon Bleach by 12th August please.

- As you will have seen from Neil’s piece above, we are looking to capture the history of the Society to make sure that it is not lost, so all contributions would be welcome, as would volunteers to help put this together. What FDHS historic moment do you remember that we could share with others?
- What recipes do you have that you might like to recommend for in season fruits, herbs and/or vegetables? Or which flowers worked well in your drinks and food.

I look forward to hearing from you. *Sharon*

All unattributed articles are by the Editor Sharon Bleach.
Items for next Newsletter please to be sent by email bleachsharon@gmail.com