



**FRENSHAM &  
DOCKENFIELD  
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER  
No 163 February 2022**

NEWS ...

By Sharon Bleach

We started 2022 with an excellent social event – a quiz with quiz master Harry Glover keeping everyone on their toes and in order.

It was a very enjoyable evening – some challenging questions and also some very interesting facts that emerged – for example the Hanging Gardens of Babylon were in what is now Iraq. The picture round was very popular but everyone failed to answer one question correctly.



*Wild service trees spring flowers – The Woodland Trust*



*Wild service trees – The Friends of Bourne Woods*

The pub name round was interesting – did you know that The Chequers could be linked to a tree rather than a chequers board. Caroline did, so we now know to look out for *Sorbus torminalis* aka the wild service or chequers tree. It is one of the trees considered to be an indicator of ancient woodland according to the Woodland Trust and can be found in Bourne Woods. Many thanks for such a good evening Harry.

**COMING UP:**

**Thursday 24th February 2022** Church of the Good Shepherd, Dockenfield – starting at 7:30pm with coffee and tea and the chance to catch up with other members. **Dan Bosence** will be talking about Vegetable Growing for all Seasons.

**Thursday 24th March 2022** Marindin Hall at 7:30pm **From Sting to Spin all about nettles**

Brigitte Kaltenbacher from BeeKayMakes is a sustainable handweaver & textile designer, and passionate about sustainable and ethical textiles. She works with nettle yarn, and other local and organic materials to create classic and contemporary low impact textiles.

Her talk will cover the history of nettles and its many uses, extensively as a textile for weaving into a cloth during pre-industrial times. Touching on how and why the use of nettle fizzled out and how she uses the fibre to create textiles in the 21st century. She will also bring a selection of exhibits to demonstrate the process from extraction to cloth.

NOTE - Change of Date – We have also arranged a Nettle Workshop with Brigitte Kaltenbacher for later in the year, however the date has changed and it is now scheduled for Saturday 17th September 2022 (all day) - booking details will be published in the next newsletter.

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March** at the Marindin Hall, Frensham. **FDHS Spring Show** on We would love to see many people (experienced and new to showing) put in entries, so do start to plan – more information in the blue members handbook with details of classes, recipes for home industries, photo categories etc. Do also remember that there are open classes so you can encourage non-members you know to put in entries for those too.

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April** at the Marindin Hall at 7:30pm Sarah Squires from Squires Frensham Garden Centre will be talking

## *FLOWERS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR*

*by Alison Bosence*

Sharon's comment in the 2022 FDHS members booklet about the challenge of having flowers in the garden to bring into the house all year round got me thinking. Many of us are lucky enough to have growing space which allows flower-picking for some of the year, but through the winter too? It is so cheering to bring something inside during the dark months, even if it's simply buds of willow which may open soon, and so satisfying if we can pick flowers or foliage from the garden all through the year: but as Sharon says, it's a challenge, especially to find actual fresh flowers all the year round. There are ways and means of preserving and drying things, but it's a tonic to watch things opening, and I resist buying flowers grown abroad, thinking of all those polytunnels and air miles.

In order to get a wider perspective on this, I've asked a few other members for their experience, so these suggestions come from both Frensham and Dockenfield with our very different types of soil.

Firstly, there are alternatives to fresh flowers, such as drying our own grasses and seedheads. So easy! Just pick the seed heads when at their most attractive and bring them in, stand in a dry vase, and they stay for months, although gradually losing any of the original colour. Nigella (love in the mist), opium poppies, and others with sculptural seed heads work beautifully, with decorative grasses such as Miscanthus, or the annual Briza Maxima.

One plant I want to try growing for its seed heads is *Physalis*, Chinese Lanterns, which definitely do retain their wonderful deep orange colour.

However, drying the actual flowers can also work well, as long as you have enough to spare. Hydrangeas have been mentioned, these can be spectacular and can also keep their colour, as do the heads of artichokes: the purple stamens are still holding their colour in February, set off against the silvery grey of the edible scales. I know there are various ways and means of drying flowers (that I haven't tried), but I found that roses, delphiniums, rudbeckia and other brightly coloured flowers will dry if simply hung upside down somewhere warm and dry for a few weeks. Although they shrink, the colour is retained well.



Bringing in fresh flowers and foliage from the garden is something else, so here is a brief summary of ideas. Beginning in autumn, I have plenty of late-flowering perennials that I'm sure go on later than they used to. One that does well in a damp place and flowers extraordinarily late with us (I sometimes wonder if the frost will arrive before the flowers) used to be called *Schizostylus* but I think is now *Hesperantha coccinea*. It's like a small gladiolus, coming mostly in shades of pink and red, and is very welcome mixed with *Rudbeckia*, *Zinnia* or anything else still going as late as November.

One surprise flower for cutting this winter has been a *Pelargonium* (tender geranium) I've grown from saved seed: it is in pots, tall and rangy, growing up the house in a very sheltered corner, and still flowering in February, with long-stemmed bunches of pink flowers. Another surprise this year is a marigold, a 'common or garden' plain orange, self-seeded, again in a sheltered place, which flowered until Christmas.

Once the frost has finished off the annuals and perennials, shrubs come into their own: *Viburnum Bodnantense* is the first with us. This has a gorgeous fragrance, but is really disappointing in the way it drops the flowers so quickly indoors: but it flowers from November till February.

Moving through past the winter solstice, there are evergreen leaves, of all sorts, *Pittosporum* and Portuguese laurel have been suggested, and I've found the new red growth on *Trachelospermum Jasminoides* will stay well in water (and in my Christmas wreath): but are there any other flowers? With warmer winters, we don't have to wait so long. It's a great bonus that so many winter shrubs have scented flowers. *Daphne*, winter honeysuckle, the *Viburnum* already mentioned, and by February, *Sarcococca* are all in flower, all of which have a wonderful scent. *Daphne* and *Sarcococca* are evergreen, as are *Skimmia* and *Rosemary*, also flowering early. My *Rosemary* is about to begin, have heard it can flower almost all year: or is that a combination of different varieties?

How to display them: I find the shock of a warm house means some don't last long, but with larger flowers, just floating the flower in water works well, for example some *Camellias* are

flowering now, and can be picked to save them from the frost and brought in. I remember learning early in my experience of garden club shows that Hellebores would flop if you pick them and try and display in a vase, but again, the heads look gorgeous floating in a bowl. From now on it gets easier with early bulbs starting, snowdrops, crocuses, and rumour has it that some already have daffodils!

I'm sure I've missed lots of possibilities: winter Jasmine and Witch Hazels for a start. It would be good to know what others have flowering through the winter months. We were inspired by a visit to Hillier's winter garden last week, which I strongly recommend, and Wisley has plenty of winter interest now, with West Dean gardens having wonderful drifts of early spring bulbs.

*FDHS History – taking you back in time...*

*by Neil Mumford*

## **The Captain Diver Cup**

Cyril Roper Pollock Diver CBE was born in 1892 in Huntingdonshire, the son of Lieutenant Colonel C Diver. Cyril served as a captain in France with the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment during the Great War of 1914-18. He married, his wife, Eleanor Joyce, just prior to going to war in 1941.



After serving as a Clerk of Committees at the House of Commons, in 1948, he was appointed Director-General of the Nature Conservancy and went on to draft much of our country's initial wildlife legislation, and devise and lead the Nature Conservancy. Known by some as Britain's greatest forgotten naturalist.

His team conducted a ground breaking ecological study of the wildlife on the Studland peninsular. He focussed on the peninsula itself: 350 hectares of diverse habitats, from sand dunes and heathland to wet woodland, mires and an internationally important lake known as Little Sea. In the 1930s Diver found around 2500 species there.

Diver's work painted a picture of the delicate balance of life that thrives on the Studland Peninsular, which is home to over 250 rare and threatened species. His work was one of the earliest whole eco-system accounts, positioning Diver as the leading ecologist of his time

In 2013-2015 the National Trust conducted a resurvey of the Studland Peninsula, known as the 'Cyril Diver Project' in his memory.

Cyril was a founding member of the society in 1948 and part of the original committee, involved in helping draft up the original rules of the society. He also, presented a cup to the society, to be awarded to the person with the highest aggregate points in the Summer Show,

known as the Captain Diver Cup. We currently do not know when he presented the cup to the society but from research so far, the earliest winner recorded is the 1951 winner, Ethel Perring (later known as Lady Perring).

Cyril lived at the Squirrels, Kennel Lane, Frensham until his death in 1969. Eleanor survived him and stayed living in Frensham until her death aged 92 on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1980.

At the age of 90, Eleanor won the Diver Cup at the 1978 Spring Show for the highest points in the flower section but refused to take it and had it presented to Mrs A Hill, the runner up. That year she also won the Wood Cup, which she did accept, having previously won it, in 1972, 1974 and 1975.

*A poem for the garden....*

*Suggested by Annette Clayson*

## **SLUG**

low-born land mollusc  
high-impact intruder  
easy oozer, slime exuder  
free-loader, sprout-spoiler  
meandering marauder  
disrespecter  
of my broad-beans' border  
you've a one-track mind  
in a one-track bodydiligent pillager  
soft-horned invisigoth  
slow silver scribbler  
paradoxically busy sloth  
tithe-taker, hole-maker  
indiscriminate direct debtor  
bold-as-brass brassica editor

you're a squishetty spoilsport  
a glistening drag  
the liquorice all-sort  
nobody wants to find in the bag

it's time that you were brought to book  
you're not as tasty as you look  
listen chum, you are disposable  
look at my thumb, it is opposable

unwelcome invertebrate  
this might just hurt a bit  
I pluck you and chuck you  
into distant dew-drenched greenery  
isn't that mean of me?

slug, when all is said and done  
you can hide but you can't run

By Matt Harvey





Sue Green has forwarded information on a European Citizen Science Experiment (CSE) on growing old varieties of the common bean. The deadline for participation is 15<sup>th</sup> March and all you need to register is a smart phone or an iPad. See the attached PDF file for more information. Just double click to open the information sheet.



INCREASE CSE\_call  
for participation.pdf

This is clearly timely with Dan's talk on growing vegetables coming this week!

As I write this, we are still in February with snowdrops putting on a fabulous display and daffodils just starting to emerge. We are also under the early influence of both March winds and April showers – or is that downpours. Sadly, today with Storm Eunice passing through, the fantastic old lime tree I mentioned in the last newsletter was toppled. It might have been due to the load from the mistletoe or just the severity of the wind, but looking from the path nearby there is a very big empty space and it will surely be missed. It was in the past a great source of nectar for local honey bees, where will they go now? So many trees seem to have fallen in the past few storms it is clearly going to change the landscape and views we see in the short term.

The daffodils are out and in our garden we also have rosemary, ranunculus, crocus and water marigold in flower already. I do feel that the seasons are changing sooner than in the past. A report I saw the other day suggest that some Spring plants are flowering 26 days earlier than they typically did in 1980. Clearly a major challenge for matching up pollinators and the plants that rely on them. This is expected to have a major impact on some plants that depend on a particular pollinator, and perhaps more worryingly on some pollinators that have a specific

plant they depend upon. Less of an issue for pollinators that are able to get their food from a broad range of plants.

The FDHS Spring Show is a great tradition to be sure we can enjoy the many different plants that are typically in good shape or flower at this time of year. Do come along and enter or at least come and view and see what is on show as well as enjoying the social aspects of tea and excellent cakes! We look forward to seeing you then.

### *SURREY HORTICULTURAL FEDERATION INFORMATION*

Please find attached the Surrey Horticultural Federation (SHF) **Early Spring Newsletter** as a link <https://surreyhorticulturalfederation.org/news/spring-newsletter-2022/>

This Newsletter has **important details** about the next event. The date is **Thursday 10th March 2022** at **2.30 pm** when the SHF will be welcoming Chris Beardshaw to hear his new talk on his commission to redesign the 13 Arts & Crafts Gardens at Mount Grace Priory. It also includes a list of many other societies talks and of course our own by Dan this month.

### *AND FINALLY....*

The next newsletter will be issued towards the end of May. Anything you would like to see included – just send it through!

I look forward to catching up with you at the different meetings in the coming 3 months.

Best wishes and happy gardening.

*Sharon*



All unattributed articles are by the Editor Sharon Bleach.