



**FRENSHAM &
DOCKENFIELD
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER**

No 168 May 2023

NEWS and recent events...

by Sharon Bleach



Well what a slow Spring! At least now the garden seems to really be coming to life and trees are gradually coming into leaf. Some of our badly damaged shrubs now seem to have a hint of life coming back – it is just a question of do we wait and see or replace now!

The Spring Show was a fabulously colourful event, we have had interesting talks from Belinda Allen and Mark Rosling as well as a guided tour of Wisley in the rain!

We also have a very busy summer ahead for FDHS members see below for more details.....

COMING UP...

Wednesday 17th May 10:00am a guided tour of Millais nursery for FDHS members.

Meet at 10:00 at the nursery for a guided tour by Dan the nursery manager and there will be tea or coffee available afterwards. Please let me know by email bleachsharon@gmail.com if you would like to come along so that the nursery know roughly how many teas of coffees will be needed.

Thursday 25th May 7:30pm at The Church of the Good Shepherd, Dockenfield, Gardeners Question Time: Note – change of venue, timing stays the same and there will be tea and coffee available.

Our panel of esteemed gardeners will be taking questions and giving us the benefit of their experience on what does or does not work, or what else to try....to help organise the session it would be very helpful if you have anything you already know you would like to ask about, if you would email me your questions so that I can group things by topic to keep the session flowing!

Saturday 3rd June Dockenfield Day plant sale: see more later in the newsletter

Saturday 17th June: Frensham Fayre and FDHS plant sale plus FDHS Rose Competition, Hollowdene Recreation Ground. More information on the rose competition nearer the time but be ready to enter

and do also come along and vote for the people's choice award. It would also be good if you have any spare plants if you could bring these along to the recreation ground on the morning of the Fayre.

Thursday 15th June - FDHS special open gardens at Binsted Place and Wheatley House: Harry Glover has very kindly arranged what promises to be a great afternoon visiting two local gardens that have previously been open under the NGS scheme. We have the opportunity to tour both gardens and have teas at Binsted Place. The tour starts at Wheatley House, Wheatley Lane, Kingsley at 2:00pm – cost of £5 per person which will go to NGS. The tour then moves on to Binsted Place, River Hill, Binsted (parking in the adjacent paddock) where for a further £5 per person (which will go to Phyllis Tuckwell) we get to see this garden and have the opportunity for tea and cake for £3 per person. Please bring cash to pay for these donations and teas. This date was chosen as the gardener will be at Binsted House on this date and loves to talk to people who enjoy gardening – what an opportunity! Places are limited to just 30 and so you need to 'book' a place by emailing events@fdhs.org.uk

Thursday 22nd June 7:30pm FDHS Social at Marindin Hall, Elizabeth Barralet will give a talk and demonstration of flower arranging.

Sunday 2nd July FDHS 75th Anniversary Lunch at Quinettes, Churt. We will have a delicious lunch and a talk by Jim Buttress on 70 years in Horticulture. Jim is a well known RHS judge and has worked at Wisley, Croydon Parks and then the Royal Parks. He was also a judge on the Big Allotment Challenge and will talk about all of these when he joins us. Ticket numbers are limited and so if you would like to attend please 'book your spot' by sending an email to events@fdhs.org.uk more details will be sent soon to everyone who books their spot. Let's hope for wonderful sunny weather on the day!

Thursday 20th July 7:30pm Marindin Hall Social evening – 'My Favourite Plant' – more details to come nearer the time.

FDHS SPRING SHOW

by Caroline Plant

The Spring Show in the Marindin Hall, timed to take place before schools break up for Easter, was in late March this year; as it was one of those Springs that came late and cold, our gardens had not really woken up and started growing - indeed, it is really only Spring now - a month later! Certain later flowering blooms (such as tulips) had not even thought of getting out of bed in March. All the same, we still had a very respectable 166 entries in the Show from 33 entrants - thanks to all who took part!

In this Show we trialled a People's Choice award - everybody who came to view the Show entries was able to choose the overall best entry in any section (care to compare the merits of the best flower with the best photo?) - and all seemed to enjoy being able to exercise their ability to participate. Interestingly, the People's Choice winner was the same as the judges' choice of Best in Show - a fantabulous pot of bright pink tender cyclamen nursed by Annabel Sommerfelt.

Other noteworthy prize winning entries included:



Huitfeldt cup for a floral rendition of "Fit for a King" - also awarded to Annabel Sommerfelt

Pat Mattin cup for the best Junior floral arrangement - won by Kari Kleiven

Barnes cup for the most points in Home Industries - also won by Kari

Dene Cup for the highest points for a Junior - awarded to Imogen Huband

Peattie cup for the best photo - won by Lyla Brown (as it happens, a Junior) for her charming take on "Boots"

Different classes attracted varying numbers of entries -

- **Floral arrangements** - There were very impressive displays even though there were not as many exhibits as usual. The judge recognised that the weather was having a significant impact on all the recent shows she had been to.
 - She thought that the "Fit for a King" crown arrangement by Annabel Sommerfelt was a beautiful interpretation and included a lot of very pretty wild and garden flowers which were very well matched to the size of the containers.
 - In the Open Class of "Easter Bonnet" she particularly liked the way in which Kari Kleiven had propped the hat on top of the arrangement rather than use the hat as the container. This really enabled the bonnet to be seen well. This exhibit won first prize in this class and was the nominated arrangement from the Floral Arrangement Classes for the People's Choice award.
 - She also commented that any exhibit involving live plant material must be shown in water or moisture containing material (e.g. moss). There had one exhibit which did not include water and so was excluded from the judging - so all of us need to remember this for the future.
- **Flowers** - The judge gave some pointers about showing flowers at their best. If it is, say, a class of five daffodils, any variety, it is best to try and show only one variety. The daffodil should not be fading on the petals, and have no bulb development behind the flower head. She also told us that if the class is a mixture of flowers (e.g. miniature corms/bulbs), you should put in a variety, not just one variety. She seemed to think growing and showing hyacinths was more difficult, and good showing of these might warrant more merit.
- **Produce** - there was an unsurprisingly small number of entries in the produce classes given the weather (many of which were won by Dan Bosence) - despite him having an unprecedented massacre of his Swiss chard during the cold snap in December.
- **Home industries** - the open home industries classes were once again full of entries from members and non members ranging from chutneys to jams and, of course, the ever popular Victoria Sponge entries (this is a category hotly contested - and that is just about who gets

the stewarding role!). The junior entries for the Victoria Sponge were very good, Elin and Kari Kleiven both doing exceptionally well. The top tip from the judge for anything in the preserves category is to make sure that the jar is properly filled up to the top, and that it has the right cover and lid for presentation.

- **Photography** - this section attracted a lot of very creative ideas in entrants' interpretations of the categories, which presented a very colourful set of photographs. This made life quite difficult for the judge in finally coming to some decisions about the winners.

Sarah Squire Chairman of Squires garden centres, who kindly supported the Show, gave out the prizes, and praised the historical display of information and newspaper cuttings relating to the last 75 years of FDHS Shows, put together by Neil Mumford in the Cobb room of the Marindin Hall.

Do take a look at the write up's of the Show in the local free magazines and hopefully many of you saw the excellent report in the Farnham Herald

Belinda Allen's talk on showing tips February 2023

Belinda gave us a very interesting talk on what RHS judges look for when comparing exhibits within a class.

- How to show daffodils to best effect by making sure they stand upright so that the trumpets can be seen - use moss or Sellotape across the top of the vase and make sure you select matched flowers as far as possible so that they are at the same stage of opening as well as the same size.
- For exhibits such as floating hellebores there will be more points for well matched flowers of the same variety as these are much harder to get to be equally ready to show.
- For vegetables and fruit - again exhibits need to be well matched in terms of size and shape in order to score best points. For the mixed baskets, points are given for the variety of vegetables shown and account is taken for just how beautifully presented they are. Belinda did say that some items can be washed with a dilute mix of milk in water to give them a really good shine!

There was a lively discussion between Belinda and some members of the audience about how rigorous judges should be in amateur shows such as ours. We agreed that we would continue to welcome entries from everyone which represented the best that they could show from their garden, even if it might not be perfect.

FDHS is about bringing the gardening community together and inspiring people to garden and enjoy doing so - however we still think we have a great many fabulous entries to our shows whether or not they have been tweaked and prepared as extensively as might be the case for a national show. Our hope is that this high standard to entry and the enjoyment (or frustration) that it brings that continues for years to come!

Dockenfield Day plant sale

by Alison and Dan Bosence

We will be running the plant stall, and welcome any plants Dockenfield (or any) members have to spare! As well as perennials, annuals etc, members might like to know there will be veg plants for sale, just in time for planting out. The following should be available: -

Winter Greens:

Brussel Sprouts
Kalettes (Flower Sprouts)
Curly Kale
Cavalo Nero

Swiss Chard
Courgettes
Cucumber

Leeks
French beans (climbing)
Runner Beans
Sweet corn
Chilis
Tomatoes
Winter Squash

FDHS Wisley Garden Outing

by Ben Berthoud



We had not chosen the best day to visit RHS Garden Wisley, as the forecast was for rain all morning. This was certainly true and it was raining heavily when members of FDHS met for our tour. Maureen, our tour guide was a delightful lady who started the tour by telling us a bit about the history of the gardens.

In 1903 the RHS was given the 24-acre site by George Wilson, who had purchased the site with the idea of making 'difficult plants grow successfully'. 1904 saw the RHS move its headquarters from London to Wisley. Following the move to Wisley, the trials of flowers, vegetables and fruit were resumed and expanded.

The walled garden was our first stop. This garden looked rather sad as most of the Pittosporum planted as an alternative to box hedging had been badly hit by frost. Berberis and Lonicera were the only splashes of green. We can conclude from this trial that most of the trial species did not survive a hard frost when closely clipped. The rear walled garden has a wonderful collection of foliage plants and evergreens. It had a lovely atmosphere even on a rainy wet day. We then moved on into the oakwood that was the first experimental garden at Wisley. Not many of these oaks survived and some of the tree stumps have been given a new lease of life by the sculpture Paul Sivell who sculpted a tree trunk into enormous pods of the giant himalayan lily, (*Condiocrinum giganteum*). The area is dotted with small ponds where the oak tree roots were removed by explosives. That must have been fun! The witch hazels, (*Hamamelis*) were at the end of their flowering season but you could still get a waft of scent even in the rain. Narcissus cyclamineus and large snowflake, (*Leucojum*) brightened up the edge of the small ponds. The rockery always looks impressive, one wonders how they managed to place the rocks back in 1912 without the lifting gear we have today. Most of the plants were grown from seed or cuttings and a few more mature plants were imported, like the Japanese Larch, (*Larix kaempferi*) which was 100 years old when planted. From the rockery we had a good view of Wisley's famous glass house surrounded by a large pond. The pond serves as a reservoir for watering the garden which would not survive the hot summers, we have due to climate change and Wisley gardens are on sandy soil.



Our next stop was the alpine greenhouse which is a riot of colour at this time of year. Not to be missed. 6500 alpines are grown in pots and the best plants are on display in the green house. We then made our way through the Herons Bonsai Walk which is a major permanent bonsai collection in the UK. The bonsai walk led us to the top of the Alpine meadow where purple crocuses were still in flower and the narcissus and daffodils were just starting to appear.

Maureen our guide was so knowledgeable, she made the tour so interesting, a thoroughly enjoyable experience even on a wet and rainy day.

Our April speaker event was a great talk by Mark Rosling accompanied by delicious tasters of food which used some the plants he spoke about, made by Lesley Rosling. Mark and Lesley took 8 weeks off to walk the entire length (630 miles) of the South West Coastal path between April and June last year. A fantastic achievement by both of them.

Mark showed the route they took and spoke about the geology of the areas they walked through – ably supported by Dan of course! He talked about photos of a few of his favourite plants from the walk along with great glimpses of the views of the areas they grew in. Some interesting plants which are specific to coastal environments such as Alexanders (Horse Parsley) and some which we should be able to successfully grow in our own gardens here including Mark’s personal favourite Thrift.



Mark also highlighted just how many different names many of these plants have in local areas and linked to history of their usage. Lesley had kindly provided Alexanders scones and some tasty pizza for people to try – I don’t think she had any to take home! A great evening and much appreciated by the large audience.

This year in the productive garden, alongside my courgettes, beetroot, lettuce, carrots, tomatoes and chillies, I shall be growing a two squared metre patch of flax (*Linum usitatissimum*).

Why you may ask? As an advocate of sustainable fashion, I am taking part in a community project to gain hands on experience of growing and processing flax as a textile crop. As an agricultural crop flax is a nutrient and omega-3 fatty acid rich food source but for thousands of years, flax was grown in the British Isles to produce linen cloth. The demise of the British textile industry during the 20th century meant that important inherited skills of fibre processing and linen spinning, alongside many associated crafts such as natural dyeing were lost and have since been consigned to hobbies.

The Community Flax Project initiative has been set up by Brigitte Kaltenbacher of BeeKayMakes Sustainable Textiles and Ginny Farquhar, Farnham based natural dyer and textiles expert. It aims to collaboratively grow around 60sqm of flax by way of using containers, gardens, allotments and local spaces. Once harvested, the crop will be pooled for processing and community processing days and workshops will enable the flax straw to become fibre, cloth and hopefully a garment that will be showcased at Sustainable Fashion Week.

So very early days, as I have only just sown 20g of seed into my prepared area (it will be around 100 days before harvest). Throughout the growing period, project contributors will be guided by Brigitte and Ginny by way of webinars and emails and I plan to keep you updated on how my little patch progresses in the next newsletter.

In the meantime, if you want to understand more about the project and sustainable fashion, or just wish to follow the projects progress you can use the following social media and website links:

[instagram.com/lets_grow_flax/](https://www.instagram.com/lets_grow_flax/)

sustainablefashionweek.uk/

northwestenglandfibreshed.org/homegrown-homespun-sowing-a-regenerative-future-for-fashion/

[instagram.com/beekaymakes](https://www.instagram.com/beekaymakes)

beekaymakes.co.uk/



Seed bed prepared with 18 drills approx 10cm apart, ready for seed that I had separated into 18 folded post it note envelopes – it’s all in the detail, you know!

Other garden related activities – dates for your diary...

 NATIONAL GARDEN SCHEME
Garden Open For Charity

The Old Vicarage
The Street, Frensham,
Farnham, GU10 3DU

Saturday 10 June
10.30am - 2.30pm

Sunday 11 June
12.30 - 6pm
Adults £5 Children free
Light refreshments





More information at ngs.org.uk

NGS gardens open days: as we move towards the Summer we have the opportunity to see other people’s gardens via the NGS scheme which raises money for charity.

One of our members Kate Smith will be opening her garden. See the poster on the left for details.



Also **Millais nurseries** are opening their garden this coming weekend and sent us this information –

Crosswater Farm Gardens will open on Sunday 7th May and Coronation Holiday Monday 8th May in aid of the **National Gardens Scheme** from 10am to 4.30pm. This year marks the 30th Anniversary that the garden has opened in aid of the NGS and the Millais family aim to reach £30,000 raised for the charity during this time.

The idyllic 6 acres of woodland garden feature thousands of varieties of rhododendrons and azaleas as well as companion trees such as Sorbus, Magnolias and Acers, in a beautiful setting including ponds and a stream. The garden contains one of the areas' most comprehensive collections of rhododendrons, many of which have been raised by the Millais family from seed collected in the Himalayas or from their breeding programme.

Adjoining the garden is the specialist rhododendron grower Millais Nurseries, who are Royal Warrant holders and RHS Chelsea Flower Show Gold Medalists. Over 900 different varieties are grown ranging from tiny alpine dwarfs to architectural big leaved specimens. The plant centre and trials garden featuring new varieties from around the world should be in full bloom.

Crosswater Farm can be found in the village of Churt, just off Jumps Road. Admission £6, children free. Teas are in aid of Christian Aid.

Ramster Gardens in Chiddingfold are hosting a sculpture trail organised by the Surrey Sculpture Society from April 28th to May 29th. The timing should coincide with the rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias at Ramster being in flower. More information see www.ramsterevents.com and www.surreysculpture.org.uk

St. Marys Church Coronation Celebration: FDHS has been asked to contribute a window ledge decoration as part of the Church Coronation Celebrations so if you are in the Church take a look – it promises to be a very colourful place over the Coronation weekend.

FDHS 75th Anniversary Celebrations: the celebration the 75th will be held at Quinettes in Churt on Sunday 2nd July. We have space for 60 people at this event and as numbers are limited tickets will be sold on a first come first served basis. There will be meat, fish and vegetarian food options and it would be very helpful to say which option you require when you send in a request to be added to the list – events@fdhs.org.uk.

Best wishes and happy gardening, let's hope it is not quite such a scorching summer as last year, or at least that we have rain (overnight only of course) on a regular basis. I look forward to seeing many of you over the next few months.

Sharon



All unattributed articles are by the Editor Sharon Bleach.