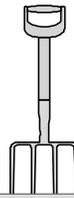
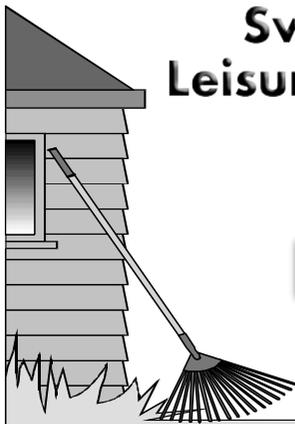


Swindon Allotments & Leisure Gardens Association

Registered Charity no. 1138814

Newsletter

Autumn 2019



A POTTED HISTORY OF SALGA

MONTHLY MEETINGS,

COACH TRIPS & HOLIDAYS



TASTY AUTUMN SOUP



TROPHIES, TENBY & TURNER

plus lots more!

Chairman's Report

What an amazing weekend weather wise as I write this! I love this time of year with the lovely colours of trees and shrubs, and the late summer blooms.

The society goes from strength to strength with our new people. We welcome Mick Northcott as our new Shop Manager and committee member. He is so full of new ideas that it is difficult for a Golden Oldie like me to keep pace with it.

Our Horticultural Show, under the new Chairmanship of Mick Carter, was – I understand – a great success. John and I had a wedding to attend, so I missed the event this year.

The evening meetings have been well attended. It's always lovely to welcome new members, and very encouraging when we see new faces as well as familiar ones.

Our coach trips have gone well. The trip to Portsmouth, to see the Mary Rose and to enjoy a harbour boat trip, will have taken place by the time you read this. The Kew Gardens trip, to take place on 10th October, is our last trip for this year and is already fully booked.

I retire from office next May. We have one volunteer who is prepared to take over. However, if anyone else wishes to volunteer, we would be pleased to hear from you.

I look forward to seeing you at a meeting or on a trip.

Marilyn Stott

A potted history of SALGA

A few weeks ago, I spent an interesting afternoon with Les Reeves and his wife Chris. Les, who is now 86 and not in the best of health, was chairman of SALGA from the late 1970's to mid 1980's. Les lives at 51 Pinehurst Road, which is the house next to the Pickards Field entrance.

Les, and his friend Roy Harrington, had allotments on the Pickards Field site and were becoming increasingly frustrated with the amount of petty theft that was going on. They decided to join SALGA to see if anything could be done. At this time the chairman was Ivor Maggs and there were approximately 40 members paying 50p each. Les and Roy were keen to increase membership and for the next couple of years visited many of the allotment sites in Swindon to encourage plot holders to join. When Ivor resigned as chairman, Les took over and a lady called Mrs Francis became secretary. Roy Harrington was elected as membership secretary and the number of members increased to approximately 1000.

A seed scheme was started and initially Les and his wife managed it. However, it proved to be too much for them as both Les and Chris were working and had 5 children to look after. The seed scheme was then taken on by Mrs Francis and her husband. Mrs Francis was also responsible for producing the newsletter.

In addition to running the seeds scheme, Mrs Francis also secured a good price for Gro Organic if they purchased a minimum of 200 bags at a time. Les' allotment was where the containers are now sited and the bags were delivered to him. This again proved to be somewhat chaotic for Les and Chris as people were arriving at all different times to collect their bags of Gro Organic.

As well as being on the SALGA committee, both Les and Mrs Francis were on a council leisure sub-committee together with Eddie Turner, Sid Manning and Pat Bown. It was at one of these meetings that SALGA was offered an old railway container that was on the Cheney Manor Industrial Estate. Les was planning to give up his allotment plot and managed to obtain permission to put the container onto his old plot. They now had somewhere to store the Gro Organic and opened the container for a couple of hours on Saturday and Sunday mornings from the end of February.

They then realised that the container was empty for a good part of the time and decided to buy in canes and fertilisers etc to sell on to members. As this increased another container was sourced and when another plot was given up, the council gave permission for a car park and provided the gravel. There was also a library of gardening books available to members.

The next step was the shop and this came from a church that was situated on The Circle. The church was now being used as a community centre and included a garage. The garage was made available to SALGA, at no cost. SALGA just had to cover the cost of dismantling and moving the building. An appeal was made to members to help lay the path and prepare the site for the shop/garage. Les told me that the members who laid the path put their initials into the concrete and the date – 1983. It is still visible today. Les resigned as chairman in the mid 1980's and was succeeded by John Aldridge.

Horticultural Show

This year's show was the last to be held at Gorse Hill Community Centre and my first year as Show Chairman. The hall was filled with colourful exhibits and many of you attended. We are extremely grateful to everyone who helped the show to be successful. This year we asked for sponsors and Pickards Field Community Garden, Barnes Travel and Highworth Travel responded. T4 Cameras donated a trophy for the photo competition and others donated raffle prizes. Thank you.

A special mention goes to Mick Northcott for all his help in the run-up to the show and as this was my first time as Chairman, I am still learning the ropes and am extremely grateful to Glenys Dingwall, the acting Show Secretary, for all the time she puts in both before and during the show.

Saturday 7th September was a warm and clear day. Members began to arrive early and place their exhibits for the judges. Just watching people with their bags and boxes, we could see that the number of exhibits were up on last year. The day went very well with only a few minor hiccups. This is all due to the hard work of the Show Committee and the volunteers who helped on the day. Special mention has to go to Barbara and Jean for their hard work in the kitchen. Everyone enjoyed the tea and cakes on sale. Thanks also to Sue Stevens for putting together the raffle prizes and selling

the tickets with her husband. We are grateful to everyone who donated a raffle prize.

Exhibits were of a very high standard and each year the pumpkins seem to get bigger and bigger. This year the largest weighed over 100lb and the runner beans get longer too! The dahlias were particularly good this year and all the flowers looked outstanding with increased entries in these classes. There were plenty of vegetables and fruit on display too, but cooked items were considerably down. Where are all you budding chefs? Likewise, very few children entered. Surely there are sons, daughters, or grandchildren who would like to try their hand at any of the children's classes?

Unfortunately, Ben Prater of Wiltshire Radio was unable to be with us due to a family illness. He had to cancel at short notice but many thanks to Doug Martin, our recently retired Chairman, for stepping in and being a great replacement.

Once again, many thanks to everyone who entered and was involved in the day. It was really good to see lots of members entering for the first time. I hope to see lots more new faces and a big increase in the children's entries at our new home for next year. We shall be at Pinetree Community Centre, Pinehurst on Saturday 5th September 2020. Without your entries there would be no show so come along and win one of those prizes. We look forward to seeing you.

Mick Carter

AWARDS

Winners 2019

R.H.S. BRONZE MEDAL

Awarded to the most meritorious exhibit in horticultural classes F1-F58 & V1-V50

Paddie Adams

R.H.S. BANKSIAN MEDAL

Awarded to winner of highest amount of prize money in horticultural classes F1-F58 & V1-V50. (Past winners in 2018 and 2017 are not eligible in 2019)

James Manley

N.V.S. SILVER MEDAL & CARD

Awarded to the most meritorious exhibit in vegetable classes V1-V50

Albert Persaud

PERPETUAL ROSE BOWL

Highest number of points in 'Show'. All classes

James Manley

THE VEGETABLE CUP

Highest number of points in 'Vegetable Section' classes V1-V50

Albert Persaud

THE ERNEST BRIGHT ROSE BOWL

Highest number of points in 'Dahlia Section' classes F1-F10

Paddie Adams

THE EDDIE JEFFRIES CUP

Winner of Chrysanthemum Class F11

Terry Reynolds

GLADYS PLUMLEY SHIELD

Highest number of points in 'Flower Section' classes F20-F28

Paddie Adams

THE REMEMBRANCE CUP

Highest number of points in 'Pot-plant Section' classes F31-F40

Michael Salter

W. RIMER PERPETUAL SHIELD

Highest number of points in 'Domestic Section' classes H1-H14

Maureen Martin

SWINDON ALLOTMENT SHIELD

Highest number of points in 'Handicrafts Section' classes H31-H41

Sue Stevens

SKIPPER CUP

Highest number of points in 'Fruit Section' classes F51-F58

Cindy Matthews

SMALL CUP

Highest number of points in 'Wine Section' classes H21-H23

Sandra Carter

TOOMER CUP

Best exhibit in 'Floral Art' classes H51-H52

Janet Flanagan

GREEN-FINGER TROPHY

Winner of Novice class V61

Sue Stevens

D & T BROWN CUP

Awarded to Children's classes C1-C7

Jessica Way

CHAIRMAN'S CUP

Winner of Salad Class V39

Alan Stevens

ALICE MORROW POSY BOWL

Winner of Posy Class H53

Valerie Nicks

T4 CAMERAS CUP

Photographic class

Elizabeth Strange

GROUP VEGETABLE CUP

Trug of Vegetables

Open Door

GROUP FLOWERS SHIELD

Vase of mixed Flowers

Open Door

GROUP FRUIT CUP

Bowl of Fruit (New Class this year)

Open Door

THE SCHOOLS TROPHY

Winner of the Schools Garden Competition

The Chalet School

Are there any Tens in Tenby?

When I was given the unenviable task of writing up a report on the June SALGA holiday, I thought I would go straight to our members for their views so I phrased a questionnaire - On a scale of 0 to 10. How did you rate the holiday to Tenby? “

The highest rating of all went to transport for comfort in a new Barnes coach with Phil Dixon as an excellent and patient driver.

The score for organisation for planning, paperwork and information did well. There were no complaints there, so that must have worked.

On accommodation, the hotel was comfortable, and no one could fault where it was situated on the cliff top with sea views. The hotel scored well on food, but perhaps in such a packed restaurant, it could seem that the service was slow. After the stay, the staff thanked us as we had left the highest level of tips ever! That is due to our policy of including gratuities in our total costings. It saves all that anxiety of what to give, and to whom. No –one challenged value for money with trips every day and all entry costs included, so that was okay.

I asked people to name the one most memorable visit from the programme. Their answers covered the total spread of a cathedral, a museum, a stately home, three gardens, a steam train ride and a transporter bridge. Scores were just too random to rank. However, most mentioned was the restored walled garden at Picton House and surely Jan’s choice must have been the Newport transporter bridge, which passed safety checks, just in time for our visit!



The weather got the lowest scores with some “precipitation” most days. Strong wind prevented a ferry crossing to Caldey Island and kept people off the sandy beaches. Still, we are a hardy lot and in true British holiday style, it did not spoil our trip. At least our gardens were watered whilst we were away!

I found that the most satisfied of people did not reply to my questionnaire but when pressed, one of us said that he “liked it all! “so that must be the **Tenby Ten** that I was looking for!

Irene Cooke

Programme of Speakers for Autumn 2019 into Spring 2020

As part of our brief to educate and support gardeners, we have a mix of subjects this coming season. Talks last about 45 minutes, with a chance to ask individual questions too.

October 17th “The answer lies in the soil” from Philip Aubury
Philip claims “good gardening starts here”. He will talk about soil improvement, fertilisers and compost making.

November 21st “Last orders “ by John Stokes.
He will look back at the 100 and more alehouses and pubs that have disappeared from urban Swindon since 1700.

December 19th Christmas Social

This year we have changed the format to a quiz night. There will still be the table arrangement competition and a bumper raffle as well as a buffet.

January 16th 2020 “For the love of Snowdrops” Lyn Miles
A talk & demonstration from a specialist grower, who will bring various merchandise and if all is well- snowdrop plants for sale.

February 20th “What to do with a glut of fruit and veg?” by Jane Cudwell & Philip Baylay.

A local ex- food teacher and her husband, they will give ideas on making jams, pickles, chutneys and wine and ways to preserve your home-grown food.

March 19th “Pest and disease control without chemical?” Can it be done ? asks Roger Umpleby, who describes himself as “**the bugman**”. He is an entomologist, who knows all about the friends and foes in our gardens.

April 16th “The story of Michaelmas daisies and other asters,” by Helen Picton from the Old Court Nurseries, Colwell, Malvern, Worcs. This nursery also has gardens which are well worth an autumn visit.

May 21st A.G.M. and plant sale

An Annual General Meeting is a legal requirement for our Association. You need to know who is running the club and where the money is coming from and going too! This is an opportunity for all members to voice any concerns they may have or even tell the committee what you are happy with! You can sell surplus plants to each other and have a chance to socialise with other members.

SALGA meetings are held at Gorse Hill Community Centre, from 7.30 on the third Thursday of each month so if you have forgotten **what** the subject of the talk is at least you know **when** it is. If you are a wise old sage, who already knows these subjects, please still come along to help, as we have new members wanting to know as much as you!

Irene Cooke

Proposed Coach Trips for 2020

Saturday 18th April – Visit to Cardiff for RHS Flower Show

We shall enjoy the Plant Village and Floral Marquee. The gardens on display should offer inspiration for your own garden – whatever the size. You may wish to listen to the talks in the Theatre. There are also plenty of opportunities to spend your money!! This is provisionally booked but not yet costed.

Tuesday 7th July – Visit to Moreton in Marsh & Bourton House Gardens

My intention is to visit Moreton in Marsh on market day. We would spend the morning there and get our lunch. After lunch, we would move on to Bourton House Gardens – but I have yet to contact them. Cost to be advised.

Saturday 26th September – Visit to Malvern Autumn Show

Several of you have said how much you enjoyed our trip to the Spring Show this year – so it would be my intention to lay on a trip to the Autumn Show. They are not yet taking bookings for this event – so cost to be advised.

Marilyn Stott

SALGA Holiday 8th - 12th June 2020

The Salga holiday next year will be based at the Smith's Court Hotel overlooking the sea at Cliftonville near Margate, East Kent.

The cost of coach travel (Barnes), 4 night's accommodation with breakfast and evening meal, entrances to various venues and gardens, plus the driver's gratuity, will be no more than £400. The costs are based on 30 people and may be reduced if more want to sign up. The hotel is offering us a number of rooms for single occupancy, without charging a single supplement.

You may be aware that the Margate area is undergoing regeneration and a key component of this is the new Turner Contemporary Art Gallery in Margate, which people can visit (it is free!) on a "free" afternoon we have put into the schedule.



We plan to visit Eltham Palace and Gardens on the outward journey ands Down House (Darwin's home) on the return. Other proposed venues include Canterbury, Sandwich, the Ramsgate Tunnels, the Manston RAF Museum and two other special gardens.

If you are interested please contact Jan Flanagan on Swindon 523048, or Cindy Matthews (Swindon 644388) or Irene Cooke on Swindon 339170 or email Cindy on deniswmatthews@gmail.com.

The £40 deposit (payable to Salga) needs to be with us by Friday the 15th November 2019.

School Gardening Competition 2019

This year 13 schools entered, and the worthy winner was the Chalet School in Liden. This school is for children with autism and they had worked very hard over the year to make their garden something special.

There is always the problem of finding enough volunteers and we were very lucky this year to have Janet Cook, Mick Northcot, Josie Lewis and Viv Dipper helping Don & Glenys with the judging and many of you would have seen the photos on display at the horticultural show.

All of the schools have different needs, varying levels of staffing and financial restrictions which makes it difficult to pick a winner as each school has something different to show us. To try and solve this we are contacting each primary school during this term to ask for their opinions as to what would work best. Several ideas have been mentioned including planting out a wheelbarrow, tallest sunflower and the most potatoes from one tuber to name but a few. We also hope to encourage schools to visit Pickards Field.

If any of you have any ideas or would like to help, please let me know.

Sue Stevens

Many thanks to the following for donating raffle prizes at the Horticultural show:

Barnes Travel - £25 voucher
Greatfield Nurseries – hose pipe
The Flower Shop - bouquet
Mick Carter – honey
Graham Sly – hanging baskets

Look out for Nerines!



You might want to think beyond spring flowers towards a surprise plant for autumn when seasonal flowers have finished. Look out for Nerines! They are a dramatic plant, most frequently pink. The flowers are twisted and reflexed and about three inches across. They stand tall on stems without their leaves.

We brought ours to Swindon from the South Coast where temperatures are just that much warmer and there is little likelihood of frost. With that in mind we have them in a sheltered spot behind a wall. They are always a scene stealer from behind our parked car for passers-by.

Our elderly neighbour, in Worthing, had been Head Gardener to “the Captain (retired)” and had grown these in large pots. In his day, they had to be put away for winter to save them. In recent years they survived outside, even here in Swindon too. Yes, we do believe in Global warming!

It is not that we treated them kindly. We noticed that they kept mounding up from the base to make big clumps. We duly covered them up again with extra soil but that was wrong. They are not bulbs but corms and like Flag Irises they need warmth on their bases to grow. Now we allow their exposure in summer and protection from peat or bracken in winter keeps their crowns safe.

We regularly pass a garden in Bramdene, Hampshire that holds the National Collection of Nerines. Their success must be due to a dry warm south facing site in front of the brick walls of their greenhouses. We have seen other varieties and did order some but none of those survived, so we are sticking to the “common” pink one: *Nerine bowdenii*. That is good enough for us!

Irene Cooke

Seed Orders

As many of you will know by now, seed catalogues are again available in the Shop at Pickards Field in September. If you haven't already done so by the time you are reading this, please collect your catalogue as soon as possible and certainly before the end of October. Catalogues have been reserved for those of you who placed an order last year and any new members in 2019. There are a few spare catalogues available. We have been using Kings Seeds for a few years now as you get large discounts on your orders and SALGA earns a commission based on the value of the orders we send through to them.

All packet seeds plus onion sets and shallot sets are available at a 45% discount on the catalogue price. There is no discount on asparagus crowns, artichoke tubers or mushroom spawn. Everything else (apart from seed potatoes and soft fruit – see next paragraph) in the catalogue has a 10% discount available. There is only a single £1.50 delivery charge for all these discounted items.

However, all seed potatoes are sold at the lowest pack price shown in the catalogue, but these do incur a £3.50 delivery charge to be added to your order. There is no discount on any soft fruit bushes or trees, and these also incur a £3.50 delivery charge if ordered.

At the same time you may wish to order bulk bags of fertilizer to collect from the Pickards Field shop. These represent quite a saving on the 1 kilogram bags and by pre-ordering you help Mick Northcott work out how much stock to get in from Proctors.

Completed orders should be sent to me by Sunday 1st December 2019. My address is Flat 5 Apple Grove House, Belmont Crescent, Swindon SN1 4DD. Unfortunately you will be unable to gain access to the building or my post-box if you wished to deliver your order by hand.

I look forward to receiving your orders as soon as you wish to send them to me and to claiming that commission again from Kings.

Glenys Dingwall

Diary date – Potato day January 11th 2020.

Gorse Hill Community Centre doors open at 9.30. Up to 60 varieties of seed potato sold by individual tubers, plus fruit trees & bushes, onion sets, heritage seeds, rhubarb crowns & much, much more.

Teas, coffees and cakes for sale.



We are going to keep the member's shop open during the winter on Saturdays only from November 2nd until February 22nd from 9.00am – 12 noon and hope to be selling loose peas, loose beans and onions sets etc.



Improvements to Pickards Field

Regular visitors to the member's shop will be aware of how bad the drainage is after heavy rain. We have applied for a lottery grant for £5,800 to try and correct the problem. Further information will be sent when we know more.



Check out our Facebook page – Swindon Allotment Leisure Garden Association. Take a look, like and share



We urgently need volunteers to serve on the show committee and a show committee secretary. If you'd like to help, contact Mick Carter

Autumn Vegetable Soup with Cheesy toasts

Serves 4

1 leek, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1 potato, chopped
1 tbsp finely chopped rosemary
½ tsp sugar
410g chickpeas, drained
3 tbp chopped, fresh parsley
2 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
425ml vegetable stock



For the toasts

8 slices of baguette, cut on the diagonal
1 garlic clove cut in half
50g edam cheese, grated

1. Put the vegetables into a large saucepan with the garlic, rosemary, stock and sugar. Season well, stir, bring to a simmer and cover. Cook gently for 15 minutes or until the vegetables are just tender.
2. Preheat the grill to high. Whizz the tomatoes in a food processor or blender until smooth, then tip into the vegetables with the chickpeas and parsley. Gently heat through, stirring now and then.
3. For the toasts: rub both sides of the bread with the garlic. Grill on one side until golden, turn the bread over, cover with edam and grill until it's bubbling. Serve at once with the piping hot soup.

Recipe from Good Food magazine, [November 2002](#)

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