

Chair Vija Vilcins
Vice Chair Kathy Aitken
Secretary Paula Traquair
Treasurer Ron Roffey

President Nicolas Bevan
Vice President Joyce Snipp
Vice President Jillian Smith



Charlton & Blackheath
Amateur Horticultural Society
Founded 1950

www.cabahs.wordpress.com

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2020

Grow Friends, Grow Fit ... Grow a Garden!

The CABAHS Committee wish you all an excellent festive period and an even more excellent 2021!

For the first time we are sending you a December Newsletter! We hope you enjoy the bumper 4 page edition! This has been a year of 'firsts' in so many ways. The CABAHS Committee is now beginning to plan for 2021 and we look forward to creating an exciting and interesting programme of speakers and events for you. We still need some new members to come forward to help us with our work. At risk of repeating myself ad nauseum, we particularly need people who are comfortable and confident (not necessarily expert) with social media, someone who could manage our membership list and someone who could arrange our speaker programme. If you feel you can make a contribution to our organisation, please contact either Kathy or myself.

Anna is already thinking about Garden Visits for 2021. She writes:

Dear Members,

Our first major garden outing hopefully will be in May, subject to the vaccine rollout and any Tier restrictions at that time. This will be to Beth Chatto's garden in Elmstead Market, outside Colchester. This is a garden I absolutely love and there is something for everyone: a necklace/chain of ponds, herbaceous borders, an enchanting woodland, a large nursery stocked with unusual plants and cafe overlooking the famous gravel garden. This journey takes approximately an hour and a half door to door and is not to be missed.

Hyde Hall - this trip will be in September, as I particularly wanted everyone to see the Prairie Garden which was stunning last time we visited. but some of you missed. This journey also takes less than 90 minutes. I'm hoping that we can also arrange visits to various other gardens - these can be arranged on an ad-hoc and more spontaneous basis, and the sharing of cars (if allowed). It would be nice to visit a garden every four to six weeks throughout the year, starting in February for a snowdrop visit. I will keep you all informed.

Old Pond Garden: We are really pleased to announce that we have been awarded a grant of £500 from the Worshipful Company of Gardeners, which will go towards planting in the central beds at the Old Pond Garden. Many thanks to Melanie Aspey for handling the application process and being successful! I expect you have seen the excellent planting plan from garden designer Jason Carty on our website, this award will be very useful for that huge list of plants! If any member knows of similar organisations/awards please let us know.

Nice as it is to have the money to buy nursery-grown plants, it is lovely to include members skills in the garden too. Keep an eye on the website as there is always a list of plants we would love members to supply if they can (eg primroses at the moment, and snowdrops in the green later).

November Raffle: To select the winner for our Christmas raffle we asked our President, Nicolas Bevan, to make the draw outside his house. He got his trusty panama hat out for holding all the names and you can see a video of this occasion on the website. <https://cabahs.com/news/> The winner of the £30 garden gift voucher is Janet Hodgson, congratulations!



Thank you, Nicolas!

Local News: It is always interesting to find reference to local places and the little piece below comes from the Autumn/Winter issue of the members' magazine of the London Gardens Trust, which I thought I would share with you.

FEATURED PARK: LADYWELL FIELDS, LEWISHAM

Ladywell Fields get a mention in the Domesday Book, the UK's 11th Century version of a Lonely Planet guide. It was then three fields with the river Ravensbourne running through them. In 1472, a freshwater well was created; its waters were rich in minerals and were supposedly good for treating eye complaints, hence the name Lady's

Well Fields. It became so popular that a second well was built along with some public baths.

The river attracted some light industry to the area, with water mills used to process snuff and flour. By the late 1800s the area was landscaped with rustic footbridges, riverside planting and a variety of trees. The new landscape came with a name change, to Ladywell Recreation Ground.

Further work was undertaken in 2007, with the river diverted into the main area of the mile long "field" as a feature forming part of a winter flood storage scheme. In summer it is ideal for paddling or cooling hot feet. With its various sports facilities, cycleway, café, skate park, kingfishers, herons and playground it's a worthy recipient of one of this year's Green Flag awards.



Ladywell Fields

© FRIENDS OF LADYWELL FIELDS

Members news: One of our members, Lynda Fean, has sent us this interesting piece about being in the Virtual Audience of *Gardeners' Question Time*:

We usually listen to Gardeners Question Time at some point during the week and we've been registered with the BBC for Shows & Tours in our area for some time. We have attended some really interesting shows, including being in the audience at Sage Gateshead for the broadcast of an edition of

BBC Radio's "Today". We had to be there by 5.30am but it was worth it! Anyway, we told them we've moved to Greenwich and we now receive invitations to BBC Shows and Tours locally. We've been to Broadcasting House a few times but, since COVID, things have gone virtual! We've got ourselves organised with Chrome and Zoom and we've found how to plug in 2 sets of headphones so they can record our reactions without feedback from our speakers. We were in the audience for a recording a couple of weeks ago, before we had that really sorted and we had to share one set of earphones. Joe had the left ear and I had the right!

Kathy gave us a question to ask about the hoggin paths at the Old Pond Garden but it wasn't selected. The questions were obviously selected for being seasonal! Two shows were recorded in the session, one to be broadcast on Christmas Day after the Queen's Speech and the other on New Year's Day. Listen out for them. They were fairly jolly - James Wong had trouble with his video and Kathy Clugston worked her way through a load of awful jokes - possibly worse than CABAHS ones!!! We would definitely encourage anyone who's interested to join the mailing list. It's always interesting to see the people behind the voices on the radio!

Christmas Wreath:



A beautiful fully compostable wreath: ivy with osmanthus, rosemary, bay, honesty, rose hips, haws sent to us by Anne Robbins.

Cracker Jokes:

We have had a few submissions for the Christmas Cracker joke, some will make you smile and some will surely make you groan! I expect you can memorise a few to use at your Christmas festivities:

Why are Santa's reindeer allowed to travel on Christmas Eve? Because they have herd immunity

When is the best time to take a cutting? When nobody's looking

What is Dominic Cummings favourite song? Driving home for Christmas

But wait, there's Myrrh...

Why is the letter A like a flower? They both have bees coming after them

How do Santa and Mrs Claus travel? On an icicle made for two

So it turns out that my front lawn is chicken proof...It's impeccable

Why does Santa have trouble spelling? He thinks the Christmas alphabet has Noel

It's snow joke, never fir-get, it will soon be time to Spruce the garden up again, so hope you're feeling pine...

Gardening notes

- Biodiversity and the Wild West End Project, 11 January 2021, with Tom Gray £6. Part of the **London Garden Trust Lecture Series**. <https://londongardenstrust.org/whatson/talks/>
- If you are visiting the V&A, call into the John Madejski garden to view the work that has been done to get it blooming again.
- '*The Rose in Fashion: Ravishing*' by Amy de la Haye is an exploration of how the rose has inspired the way we look, feel and fantasise. RRP £30.00 published in association with the V&A.
- The NGS is offering the chance to take a virtual tour of some private gardens such as Bunny Guinness's garden at Sibberton Lodge and The Barn, home to Tom Stuart-Smith. Tours are free but donations are welcome. <https://ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits/>
- The **London Gardens Trust Blog** (simply enter the name in your browser search bar) has a fascinating entry on Downham by Candy Blackman
- On <https://www.rhs.org.uk/digital-collections> you can explore the varied forms of dahlias, illustrated with botanical images from the Lindley Library.
Do check out our website for further activities to get involved in & tell us if you know one.

Pat's 10 jobs for December

1. Now is your last chance for planting bulbs...narcissus and alliums will flower very late if at all when planted now and tulips really do need to be getting their roots down.
2. Plant or move something fragrant by your front or back door so you can benefit from it as you go in and out, to include Viburnum bodnantense, varieties of Sarcococca or a Daphne of which there are many.
3. Replenish birdfeeders as they run down and put out fresh supplies of water for drinking and bathing. We tend to forget the water for birds at this time of year.
4. Leave grasses uncut as the bases provide hibernating places for beneficial insects.
5. Brighten up a cool indoor room with hyacinths, cyclamen or hippeastrum but do remember they require good light or will grow tall and leggy.
6. Apply a mulch to borderline hardy plants such as agapanthus and lemon verbena or bring under cover until risk of frost has passed.
7. Prune Acer, if you must, before mid December to avoid bleeding from cuts and keep all pruning to a minimum or they may not survive.
8. Reduce watering frequency for indoor plants as their growth slows and make sure they are receiving maximum light. Making sure they are free of dust also helps them to absorb the light.
9. On mild days ventilate the greenhouse or conservatory to reduce the chance of diseases such as botrytis.
10. Raid your garden for natural decorations such as holly, ivy, berries of various types and pine cones to make a wreath for the front door.

And last of all, take heart, there's always next year for new ideas and plants. Season's greetings!

Our first meeting of 2021 will be on **18th January** with a talk from Graham Blunt of Plantbase Nursery on exotic plants. Graham also gives podcasts, so if we are still restricted due to the pandemic he will be able to offer this using Zoom.

Quote of the month: May you never be too old to search the skies on Christmas Eve (Anon).

Happy gardening all and take care!

Contact us on: cabahshortisoc@gmail.com