



Somerset Federation of Gardening Clubs

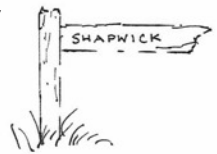
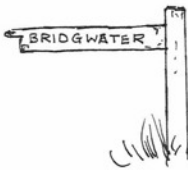
Issue LVIII

Spring 2019

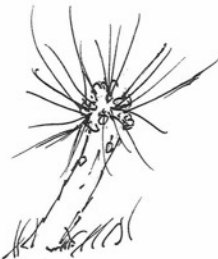


Cowslips and Larks

I hear it said yon land is poor,
In spite of those rich cowslips there -
And all the singing larks it shoots
To heaven from the cowslips' roots.
But I, with eyes that beauty find,
And music ever in my mind,
Feed my thoughts well upon that grass
Which starves the horde, the ox, and ass.
So here I stand, two miles to come
To Shapwick and my ten-days-home,
Taking my summer's joy, although
The distant clouds are dark and low,
And comes a storm that, fierce and strong,
Has brought the Mendip hills along:
Those hills that, when the light is there,
Are many a sunny mile from here.



W. H. Davies (1871 - 1940)



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Introduction

Fair-headed Spring unbosoms every grace
James Thomson

Long ago, too long to dwell upon, I hosted a small meeting in my newly acquired garden in Wells. I had just volunteered to fill the role of secretary to the Federation, vacated by Alan Eason. Also present, were John Starnes of West Chinnock and Bill Johns of Evercreech, whose idea the Federation was. Jane and I had had little time to make an impact on the garden, most of which was "laid to lawn" in the Agent's phrase. There was lots of grass.

As Bill strolled up the garden his critical gardener's eye came to rest on a small clump of daisies, brilliant in Spring sunshine. After a few tuts, he said "You'll have to get rid of that little lot or else the whole area will be covered in daisies." "Oh, I don't know ", I replied. "Solomon in all his glory....." Though I didn't say it aloud. Of course, Bill was quite right. Now in the early months of the year thousands of daisies cheerily greet the Spring. I love them. And so do the bees and insects, who are in need of a bit of help. Einstein calculated that if all the bees were exterminated the planet would come to an end in 14 years.

So let us allow Spring to get on with its unbosoming and we must do the same. If you find anything of significance in this newsletter, use it or pass it on to someone else who can. Many clubs, I know, email it completely to all those members who are able to receive it.

And oft the shepherd in his path will spye
The little daisy in the wet grass lye
That to the peeping sun enlivens gay
Like labour smiling on a holiday.

John Clare



Chairman's Corner Spring 2019



Well, time passes by and my trip out to Australia last year is an almost forgotten memory, but I'd like to share with you some of those memories which took me, with my brother and sister in law down to Canberra, from their home close to the border of Queensland to see our friend Bill Upton, who has written articles for our newsletter and who indeed has provided us with a wonderful story about his ancestry in this current issue. I'm sure you'll enjoy reading it... on that note, that article and my own on this occasion, have nothing whatsoever to do with horticulture or gardening or 'how

to grow your carrots', but I think our newsletters should contain snippets on more wider subjects, so members, do please indulge me in my jottings and I hope you find them interesting!

Our itinerary in Canberra was well mapped out by Bill, who had taken considerable time and effort to arrange a very comprehensive and interesting visit to his home city over our four days.

Our first adventure was to the Parliament, where we spent two hours watching members of the house debating a number of issues. Having watched our own Parliament and the way they conduct themselves, it is no different in Australia, however, to our amusement one member had placed on his desk in front of him, a collection of Sesame Street 'muppets'... who sat there 'watching' the proceedings until the Speaker told the member in question to leave the chamber, and to take his 'friends' with him!

The War Museum was our next visit and well worth seeing, I would consider it on par with our own Imperial War Museum in London.

The National Art Gallery was next on our list to visit and on display there was a large selection of paintings and sculptures, including an exhibition of work by Prince Charles. I am not a good judge of art but I did find his paintings inspiring.

The following days were full of more interesting places, including the National Arboretum and the Australian Satellite Monitoring Station. Within the city are many of the worlds' Embassies, ours included, and some beautiful buildings, one in particular is the Supreme Court, an architectural delight on three floors comprising of courts - all of which are accessible to the general public. It really is a 'must see' visit should you ever go to Canberra...!!

I learnt a few facts of interest about Canberra, but please bear in mind that I am no travel writer! The first is that the capital of Australia could not be agreed between Melbourne and Sydney. The site of the new capital had to be at least 100 miles from Sydney, within the State of New South Wales. An area of

approximately 300 sq. miles of New South Wales was transferred to the Australian Capital Territory, where the Capital - Canberra was built.

Canberra was ready in 1927 and became the capital of Australia and although Parliament moved to the city, government offices were slow to follow. Development accelerated after the Second World War, championed by the then Prime Minister, Robert Menzies who regarded it as an embarrassment as it had not evolved as quickly as it should have!

Well it certainly is not an embarrassment now, it's a lovely city, with plenty of open spaces, wide roads, a large lake and beautiful public buildings.

Bill certainly made our visit special and was very proud to show off his home town, and so he should be!

Well, now it's your turn! Do send us some snippets, stories, articles and as mentioned earlier, not necessarily garden related; there are lots of garden magazines out there for you to read, so it would be nice to hear about your experiences or your interests in our own newsletter!

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the AGM in May, details of which are in this newsletter, and until then, with the warmer weather hopefully approaching and the nights' getting lighter, I hope you enjoy your gardening and any projects you have listed for the summer.

God Bless

Erl



Seasonal Interchange

In Winter, when the trees are bare,
We mortals don our winter wear.
In Spring, when trees begin to dress,
We mortals then start wearing less,
Until, for some, with Summer's heat
The role reversal is complete.

Michael Aitken

A Letter from Canberra

Something different this time-a badge of honour



A report in Molecular Psychiatry identified a "warrior gene" connected to criminal behaviour. This inspired renewed speculation that a convict ancestry might make Australians more predisposed to violent crime.

This fear of genetic contamination from convict ancestors existed in Australia since early settlement. Between 1788 and the end of transportation in 1868, around 162,000 convicts were sent to the colonies of New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land and Western Australia.

An estimated one in five Australians has convict ancestry. Today, a convict ancestor is a matter of pride, a connection to the rough and tumble of early Australia.

This is my story.

Old Bailey Trial – Thomas Upton

A Captain John Williamson had returned to London from India with more than 500 linen shirts. When 49 of the shirts went missing, he sent his 14-year-old Indian servant John Cooper to report the theft to Justice Addington at the Bow Street Public Office. The Justice, probably sensing the servant's discomfort, said "you have robbed your master, haven't you".

The young servant, who wore a footman's livery, confessed and led Captain Williamson and some constables to Mrs Banbury's boarding house at 40 Windmill St, (probably near the corner of modern Great Windmill St and Shaftsbury Ave); where they found Thomas Upton's wife Mary hard at work in their upstairs room converting some of the shirts to table linen. Her husband had bought 4 of the stolen shirts from Cooper.

Mary was arrested and was being conducted to Bow Street when she spotted her husband, who gave out handbills in the street for a living, in Leicester Square. She was apparently unable to resist calling out to him and the constables arrested him when he admitted to being her husband.

"He began to cry and seemed very much frightened", a constable said in court. Three other men who were also charged with receiving the stolen shirts were convicted but the assistance of Mr Garrow as their defence counsel delayed and possibly aborted their sentencing because of an error in their indictment.

Thomas Upton, age given as 20, was sentenced to 14 years transportation on 12 September 1787 at the Old Bailey Sessions for receiving stolen shirts.

In April 1788, he was sent from Newgate to the Thames hulk 'Stanislaus' whence he was transferred on 30 November to the 'Justita', also on the Thames.

On 12 Nov 1789, he embarked on the ship 'Neptune' for Australia as a 2nd Fleet convict without his wife. The 'Neptune' embarked with 424 men and 78 women. The voyage took 160 days. 147 men and 11 women died on the voyage.

By 1800, Thomas Upton was self-employed by the Governor's leave as a carpenter. The 25 acres he was farming in 1806 could conceivably have been a personal gift from commandant McKellar. Upton's marriage to a landed widow - *albeit* of modest estate - doubtless assisted his subsequent climb to reasonable affluence. He was granted a very useful 70 acres on South Creek west of Sydney.

The rest is history.

Bill Upton - February 2019

With thanks

- *The Conversation*
- Old bailey records
- Ancestry.com



Bicton House - East Budleigh 1850

The Gardener at a hole looks out
And holes are plenty hereabout
A pair of pistols by his lug
One load with ball the other with slug
A blunderbuss of canon shape
Just ready to discharge with grape
Let midnight thief or robber stand
And pause ere puts out his hand
While those who come in open day
May look but carry nought away.

*An inscription that used to be on a splendidly refurbished
Bicton House Palm House*

Getting into the Spring of Things

I wonder what it is about the request at this time of the year from Dave Talling that I might be able to submit a piece for the SFGC magazine that seems instantly to change the weather. There we were, for a fair bit of February, relishing unaccustomed sunshine and most un-February-like temperatures; whereas, today, while I write this, the wind is howling, the rain is lashing down, it's cold and definitely a day for staying indoors. Luckily, though, I'm feeling fairly (well, perhaps just a tiny bit) relaxed about my horticultural progress, made possible mainly thanks to the good weather in the run-up to spring proper.

On my allotment I've dug up the very last of the winter root vegetables; I've bundled up the cut canes of the autumn raspberries – they'll make excellent lightweight stakes for things like broad bean plants and emerging pea plants; I've repositioned the weed control covers and made sure they're still firmly anchored down; I've looked at the sticks, now about 12" long, of the early rhubarb and told them to get a move on and I've made a mental note that I really must weed the strawberry patch at the earliest opportunity. Having completed a sizeable order on-line, I received my new season's seeds during the latter part of January and the seed potatoes are now happily chitting, propped up in a small seed tray on the window sill in the sun room. I now just await the heat-treated onion sets which are scheduled to arrive later this month or in early April.

In the garden I've been having a good old sort-out as well. All the clematis - there are 8 of them, mostly Viticella varieties, in various parts of the garden or courtyard - are now all cut back and tied-in so that, hopefully, they'll grow up their supports rather than just sprawl about like couch potatoes. I've trimmed right back the four large clumps of erigeron (so pretty) that grow in gaps between the courtyard paving slabs so that they'll now each fit roughly under a 1-litre pudding basin. I've weeded right round the garden and cut down the dead and now seedless stems of last summer's herbaceous plants. To keep things under control, I've pruned some shrubs and I have completed the first forking over of all the borders. So, all is well - or is it? I'm upset and puzzled over one plant that seems to be giving up: a Bronze Baby phormium that I planted some 5 years ago and which had grown spectacularly to a height of about 5'. It started to look sorry for itself towards the end of last summer and only this weekend, I filled two large sacks with its dead leaves ready to go either to the tip or my compost bin at the allotment. Was it damaged by the cold brought by last year's Easterly Beast? Did I water it too much during last summer's drought? – or not enough? Is it really suffering from an infestation of phormium mealybug? – some of my plant looks worryingly similar to the rather gruesome picture on the RHS website which is also not very encouraging about possible pest eradication controls. The obvious answer, I suppose, is to

wait and see what happens come the warmer weather. It will either get worse or start to produce new growth. Watch this space!

So, can I really sit back and relax knowing that I'm up-to-date gardening-wise? I don't think so! In no time at all there will be broad bean and then pea seeds to sow and put in the greenhouse to germinate. The hippeastrums which live in the sun room and are already just starting into new growth urgently require dividing up and repotting. The mower is back from its annual service and so there is really no excuse to delay much longer cutting the grass (mowing the green space) although some of the lawn is still being dug up by who knows what. And doing all the edges for the first time after the winter is bound to take ten times longer than expected. I'll need to clean out the water feature – not my favourite task in the garden - and so on and so on. There are always a million and one things to do even in a fairly modest sized garden and on an allotment as we swing from the dark dreariness of winter into the brightness of spring. Have a great gardening year!

Vee Cockerell
West & Middle Chinnock

Dust if You Must

Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better,
To paint a picture or write a letter,
Bake a cake or plant a seed,
Ponder the difference between want and need?

Dust if you must, but there's not much time,
With rivers to swim and mountains to climb,
Music to hear and books to read,
Friends to cherish and life to lead.

Dust if you must, but the world's out there,
With the sun in your eyes, the wind in your hair,
A flurry of snow, a shower of rain,
The day will not come 'round again.

Dust if you must, but bear in mind,
Old age will come and it's not always kind.
And when you go and (go you must)
You, yourself, will make more dust.

Rose Milligan

The Name of the Rose.

Last spring we decided it was time to tackle a corner of the garden under some tree's that had got a bit out of hand. Some years previously I had bought a rose in memory of a friend because they shared a name. Mrs Johnson was described on the label as a white bush rose. Unlike my friend she turned out to be a bit of a thug. She had completely smothered a couple of *Elaeagnus* bushes and was heading for the top of a mulberry tree. She had to be tamed. Having cleared the bushes and cut back the rose we were left with a bare patch of ground.

My husband Mike has never been able to resist anything offered to him that looks even vaguely useful. It was no surprise therefore when our neighbouring farmer tipped two thirty five foot electricity poles complete with hefty metal crossbars and ceramic insulators over the hedge.

"What on earth are you going to do with those?" I asked, "no idea" he replied happily. "Well you always wanted a tree house" I said. I should have known better!

After a whole morning of brute force and WD40 the insulators came off and Mike set about the poles with a chain saw. In the heat of last summer our clay soil dried out and set like concrete. Digging holes deep enough for the poles took some time and effort. Eventually after a lot of messing about with a spirit level and concrete we had four poles set into the patch of ground left bare by our spring pruning efforts. After reinstating the metal cross pieces and their stays on two of the poles we had a very solid base for our tree house albeit nine feet off the ground. We discovered it would be cheaper and easier to buy a small shed than to buy the timber and construct one ourselves. Assembling a shed on the skeleton of a platform from a couple of ladders was not the easiest or most sensible thing we have ever done, but we now had our tree house and room for a small balcony. We put down some decking and thought about a means of access. I vetoed the idea of a fireman's pole or a rope ladder on the grounds that our oldest grandchild was only two and a half, so Mike built some steps, then put post and rails and a gate around the balcony.

Having finished we sat on our balcony with a couple of glasses of wine and mused at how long it will take Mrs Johnson to conquer her new climbing frame.

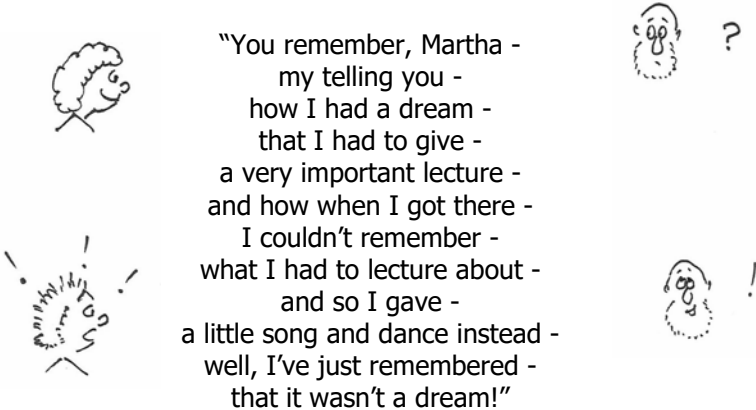
The tree house has been a great success and each time he visits, our grandson can't wait to see what grandpa has put inside for him to find.

Sally Hawkes

Fougasse Cartoon 1936

The following monologue provides the captions to a social cartoon by Fougasse which may have resonance one way or another.

An absent-minded professor is talking.



Garden Upmanship

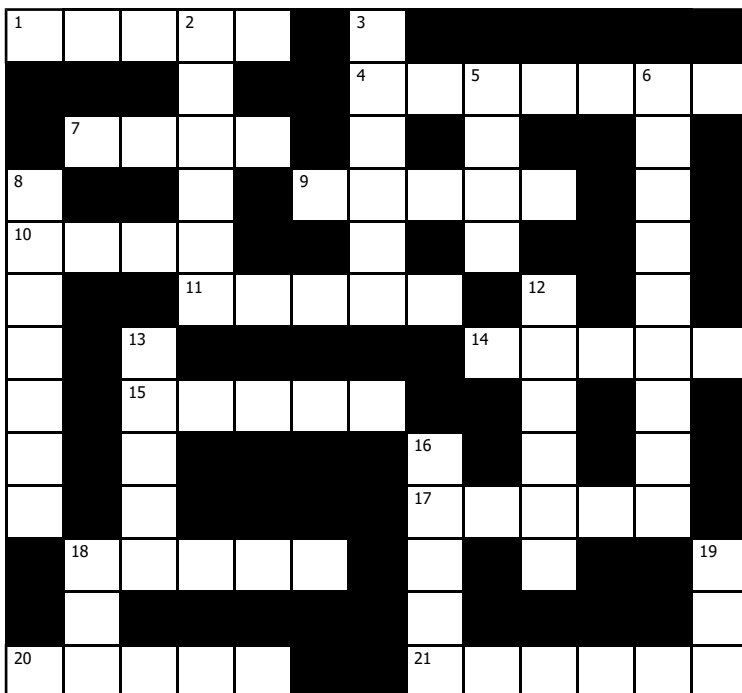
Things to say to go one up on gardener know-alls.

Or taking the wind out of the sales of over inquisitive visitors.



1. I've got the biggest stand of Leylandii in the region.
2. Beth Chatto *insisted* on my having this little rarity.
3. I only ever use ammonia-based derivatives.
4. They all said it wouldn't grow in England - now look at it.
5. The old Duke almost caught me bagging this one at the garden party.
6. The natives use it to cure baldness. As you can see, it does the trick.
7. Blue marigolds are a speciality of mine, and turnips of course.
8. I just managed to clinch the last one at the Sissinghurst Auction. Titchmarsh was furious.
9. All my tools are handmade by a little man near Hereford.
10. I just can't get enough Japanese Knotweed.

Gardening Crossword



Across

1. It grows on both sides of an upright
4. Edelweiss etc. a fellow longs for.
7. She may be blue.
9. In the garden to sing for us is a good thing.
10. Some seed germinating in the border.
11. Fruits of which there is a bad lose out east.
14. A tree horse out west.
15. It blooms in a monastery garden.
17. Blooming awful louts.
18. Where cabbages grow.
20. Ways of getting around to gardening.
21. Diggers home in the south east.

Down

2. Nothing survives on fruit it seems.
3. Earthy enrichment a chap can possibly rue.
5. A juicy lump perhaps.
6. Does its fruit have shells on.
8. A growing source of border security.
12. It usually changes from green to red.
13. Grub of the popular variety
16. Coshes slimy pest.
18. Sweet one is flowering.
19. Costly contribution to the salad.

Autumn 2018 Crossword answers on page 18

Crossword submitted by John Dunster

The Bishop's Palace

It has been a very easy winter for working outside, very little rain, very mild, lots of sunshine in February and very few frosts which has led to another record early spring. Phenology (the study of plants/wildlife and the effect of climate and changes from year to year) is often used to examine just how much the seasons have changed. I have gardened since the 1980s and the climate has changed significantly in that time, many would say for the better when compared to the 1960s, 70s and 80s which were all on average much colder and spring considerably later! I keep records of the first signs of spring right through to autumn colour. Today gardeners are closer to nature than anyone else and I think it is important to keep these records. The majority of people are aware of the seasons but get used to changes quickly and used to the mild winters and springs that we now get, if we were to experience the winters and springs of the 1980s people would be very shocked! This warming has brought great opportunities gardens up and down the country are full of more exotic plants and visitor numbers to gardens are also higher due to the improved climate. It is difficult to imagine similar winter and early spring visitor numbers if we had the climate of thirty years ago and the same goes for garden centres which are currently booming and out performing most other parts of the economy. There was a warm spell in the medieval period when Britain was probably nearly as warm as today and society boomed mostly due to increased yields. Today our economy is much more diverse but the improved climate has a positive effect on the economy. Of course the question is where does the warming stop! And that is where I hope the planet it is more resilient than we think.

In the gardens there is lots to look forward to and plenty to enjoy now. The spring bulbs are filling the outer gardens with colour and the three thousand red tulips in the quiet garden will look stunning in early April. We have planted a new knot garden with a portcullis theme taken from a crest in the oriel window and containing yew pyramids and balls. The Bishops Dahlia collection will be moved into the large border behind. We have also emptied and will replant the prairie garden with lots of new colourful plants including plenty more Asters for autumn interest and Helenium's for July and August. Our volunteer team remains strong with more than 20 brilliant volunteers often giving a day a week. The garden team has welcomed Natalie and Suzy since last spring and we said goodbye to Jane and Liz. The garden team is myself, Rob, Colin, Natalie and Suzy who is part time. We are always happy to answer any queries that you might have, only on gardening though!

We have lots of exciting events this year including the fifth Garden Festival on June 14th, 15th and 16th where Chris Beardshaw will be opening and speaking on the Friday. We also welcome back Tamsin Westhorpe who will be speaking

on Saturday afternoon. There will be lots of food and drink, music and plant sales too.

We look forward to welcoming you here in 2019.

James Cross



Smiling by Spike Milligan

Smiling is infectious
You catch it like the flu.
When someone smiled at me today
I started smiling too.

I walked around the corner
And someone saw me grin.
When he smiled I realised
I had passed it on to him.

I thought about the smile
And realised its worth.
A single smile like mine
Could travel round the Earth.

So if you feel a smile begin
Don't leave it undetected.
Start an epidemic
And get the world infected.

Directions for the SFGC AGM

From Crewkerne take the B3165, signed Lyme Regis, up Hermitage Street, (narrow and with parked cars on the left). Stay on this road to Clapton. Turn left immediately after the bridge onto Axe Road. Continue on this road, do not turn off! Two sharp bends then at the junction by the Royal Oak pub, turn right onto B3162, down a hill, over a bridge and the Village Hall can be found shortly afterwards on your left.

SOMERSET FEDERATION OF GARDENING CLUBS A.G.M.

THURSDAY 23RD MAY '19

**Drimpton Village Hall
Chard Rd, Drimpton
DT8 3RF**

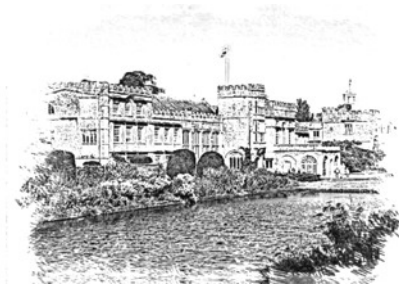
**Doors open 6.15pm
7pm start followed by
an Illustrated Talk by
Susannah Applegate**

**Kindly hosted by
Clapton, Wayford,
Drimpton & District
Horticultural Society**

**Refreshments -
Raffle - Plant Sale**



Forde Abbey and Gardens



Hidden in a valley on the Dorset and Somerset border is a little gem....a C12 Cistercian abbey. Begun in 1141, over the years it was improved and expanded, mostly by Thomas Chard, the last abbot, in the C16th. They do say that if the monks were to return, they would recognise much of the abbey. Sadly the Abbey church was demolished and it's stones used no doubt

in buildings in the area. Since the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539, the abbey had absentee landlords for 100 years but then the abbey and it's land was bought by Edmund Prideaux and transformed into a fine private residence. After the Prideaux family and the Gwyn family the house fell into neglect until in 1863 when Mrs Bertram Evans bought the house and began a restoration plan which restored the abbey to it's former grandeur and it is through her line that the house came into the Roper family and now the responsibility of running the abbey and gardens has passed to Alice Kennard, one of the three daughters of Mark Roper.

But now to the gardens....

The landscaping of the gardens as we see them today was started by Francis Gwyn early in the C18th and now extends to 30 acres. As you approach the abbey you walk through a kitchen garden which at the height of the season is a sight to behold providing vegetables for the tea rooms. Then as you walk to the front of the abbey the extent of the gardens is visible with the long herbaceous border, cascades of water into the Long Pond, the Bog garden and the Rock Garden.

Forde Abbey is renowned for the beauty of the gardens and throughout the year has opened it's gates to the public to enjoy snowdrops, crocus and soon....tulips.

From Mid April to Mid May 44,000 tulips will be in bloom...colours carefully chosen with red, purple, orange, white and pink flowers carving waves of colour throughout the gardens. Tulips have also been planted to grow through the emerging foliage of the summer perennials. The gardener has a perennial scheme in mind (or short-lived perennials) so varieties are needed that have not been bred too much as over breeding makes them more of an annual and inhibits their life in the soil. With this in mind Appeldorn, Negrita, Paul Scherer and Ballerina are being used this years varieties.

I live close by and have watched the gardens flourish under the care of Forde

Abbey's gardeners over the years. There is no time when there is not something of interest to see and there is always the beauty of the abbey as a backdrop to the gardens.

Information about the abbey and it's gardens, opening hours and other events can be found at:- fordeabbey.co.uk

Diana

*Clapton, Wayford, Drimpton & District
Horticultural Society*



Chanson des Escargots



One fine evening, dressed in their mourning gear two snails set off for the interment of a dead leaf.

By the time they arrive it's Spring. To the disappointment of the snails all the dead leaves are reviving.

But here comes the sun telling them to sit down, have a rest, have a glass of beer and take a coach trip to Paris.

They must throw away their mourning dress, take on their colours again, the colours of life. And all the animals and plants began to sing out loud together, singing the song of Summer. So they had another drink and everybody drank each other's health.

And on this lovely summer evening the snails made their way homewards, happy and tipsy, staggering a little on the journey watched over by the moon in the sky.

Jacques Prevert 1900 - 1977

World Naked Gardening Day - May 4th

Be careful how you trim your foliage folks, World Naked Gardening Day is back for 2019.

Across the country, more and more people are taking part in the garment-free gathering, held annually since 2005. Initially held in September (for the first two years) it was moved to May because, well, you know it can be a tad breezy battling bushes in the buff.

This year the event incidentally falls on another 'holiday' - Star Wars Day: May the Fourth Be with You.

Started as a shared pun amongst Star Wars fans, May 4 became a globally recognised celebration of all things Star Wars some years ago and this year it will also be World Naked Gardening Day.

Perhaps it'd be fun to combine the two, if you are feeling adventurous.

According to the World Naked Gardening Day website the premise behind the annual event is simple. "First of all, it's fun! Second only to swimming, gardening is at the top of the list of family-friendly activities people are most ready to consider doing nude. "Moreover, our culture needs to move toward a healthy sense of both body acceptance and our relation to the natural environment. "Gardening naked is not only a simple joy, it reminds us - even if only for those few sun-kissed minutes - that we can be honest with who we are as humans and as part of this planet."

From the 'Nottingham Post'



NEW SPEAKERS AND JUDGES LIST

A new Speakers and Judges list is being compiled this year. We rely to a large extent on recommendations from our membership. If you have had anyone not on the present list whom you feel worthy of recommendation, please let us know so we can invite them to join our lists.

Sally Hawkes

Autumn 2018 Crossword Answers

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Federation Website - SFGC.org.uk



The biggest change to the website, since the last Newsletter, is the greater security we now have. If you look at the web address at the top of the web page you will see a padlock symbol (usually to the left but with some to the right). This means the site is encrypted and is safe to use. Going forward when using Google search you will be warned of using sites that do not have encryption and the padlock

symbol. Your safe use of the Federation website is important to us therefore the purchase of encryption.

We try our hardest to keep Club details up to date but occasionally these details may be out of date. Please do check your Club details on the website and send in a correction if needed. The website is updated at least weekly but usually daily.

Your events are listed on the Noticeboard and are taken from the details you send in for the Events Calendar. Posters have much more impact so if you have a poster to display then please do send in a copy in electronic form.

David Talling webmaster@SFGC.org.uk

Orkney

My cousin died last year and the family got together on the North Yorkshire coast for a celebration of her life and to scatter her ashes in area she was brought up. She left the beautiful North Yorkshire coast in 1985 and moved to the also beautiful South Walls, Orkney to join her lighthouse keeper husband. There she was a keen observer of the flora and fauna recording it in verse, writing and sketches. She loved it in Orkney and that comes out in her writings. Below is one of her poems and I hope you like it.

David Talling

King Cups

I know a secret vein of ore,
Which never fails to yield its' store.
I go prospecting in the spring,
When soaring larks begin to sing.

Along the grassy banks that reach
Down to the ditch, then to the beach,
The gold is scattered freely, so I need no pan to sift the sand.
The prize is lying close at hand.

I only have to stand and stare,
And fill my heart with treasure there.
For shining marigolds are strewn,
Along the margin of the stream.

Their yellow flowers
with scalloped leaves,
Are open now, to light the way
From winter's gloom, to merry May.

*Mavis E Strudwick
Orkney 1990*



Concerning Lawns

I am not a lover of lawns; on the contrary, I regard them, next to the garden, as the least interesting adjuncts of the country house. Grass, albeit the commonest, is yet one of the most beautiful things in nature when allowed to grow as nature intended, or when not too carefully trimmed and brushed. Rather would I see daisies in their thousands, ground ivy, hawkweed, even the hated plantain with tall stems, and dandelions with splendid flowers and fairy down, than the too well tendered lawn grass. This may be regarded as the mental attitude of the wild man from the woods but something maybe said for it. Sir Walter Raleigh explained, centuries ago, the reason for our desire for and pleasure in trim gardens, lawns, parks, and neatly cut hedges of box and privet and holly: those surroundings of the house were invented as a refuge from the harsh, brambly outside wilderness, the stinging nettle, scratching thorns, sharp hurtful stones and hidden pits - from all the roughness and general horribleness of an incult Nature.

But that's all a feeling of long ago, it may be answered; it has just gone out now, and we have come back to Nature - the dear old beautiful mother! Have we indeed? Lawns have not gone out; on the contrary it appears to me that the idea of the lawn, like the idea of clothes, has entered into our souls and manifests itself more and more in all our surroundings and dwellings. When Nathaniel Hawthorne came to the Old Home from an outlandish United States of America where this idea of the lawn has not yet penetrated so deeply, he spent some time at a great country house we stayed in running about the lawns and park in search of a nettle, or weed, or wilding or some kind to rest his eyes on. The novel smoothness of artificiality of everything made him mad.

W. H. Hudson 1841 - 1922

The book of the Naturalist



The green Hawthorne buds prophesy on the hedge; the reed pushes up in the earth like a spear thrust through a shield; the eggs of the starling are laid in the knot-hole of the pollard elm - common eggs, but within each a speck that is not to be found in the cut diamond of 200 carats - the dot of protoplasm, the atom of life.

Spring of the year

Richard Jefferies 1848 - 1887

Some of you know that my wife has Alzheimer's and I make no excuses for giving another article of how Alzheimer sufferers can be helped. More and more people are being affected by this disease and it will be surprising if everyone reading this will not know someone who has or will have dementia.

David Talling

Gardening Therapy Tips for People with Alzheimer's

The weather is warm and many of us are looking for more ways to spend time outside. Gardening is a great way to be active and out of the house, and a great opportunity to spend time with loved ones. Learn how to create a meaningful and safe garden with your loved one with Alzheimer's disease.



Aside from creating a beautiful place to spend time and enjoy the great outdoors, gardening has several mental and physical benefits to people with Alzheimer's. Research shows activities that engage the senses provides those with Alzheimer's positive emotions that they may no longer experience regularly. Using principles from the Montessori Method, gardening therapy engages all of the senses, and can help people with Alzheimer's rediscover their world.

Benefits to Gardening

Although those faced with Alzheimer's may become more paranoid and withdrawn as the disease progresses, many long-term memories will be retained. Gardening therapy may help people recall those pleasant long-term memories and bring them back to a healthier time.

Other benefits to gardening include:

1. **Allowing loved ones to experience success**, ultimately building confidence
2. **Boosting energy levels** and promoting a good night's sleep
3. **Creating a sense of community** of gardening with others
4. **Creating a sense of purpose** for a loved one faced with Alzheimer's
5. **Great exercise** for the mind and body
6. **Helping to maintain** an existing skill set

From: alzheimers.net

Final Cuttings

March is roaring through the garden, ripping twigs off the birch trees and bowling over the empty watering cans outside the bedroom window. Plenty to be done and we do like to have everything shipshape and Bristol fashion in time for the Easter week-end. We could follow the model of one Victorian gent who grew a heap of roses and boasted that he liked to start his pruning in September and aimed to finish by Easter. What with one thing and another I do the garden tidy when I feel like it - which is not always. There must be time for other things and for organising our summer.

For instance, you will receive a Calendar of Events as well as the NGS booklet for your garden and show visiting. Check the noticeboard on the website David updates frequently. It is easy to access. Just type in SFGC.org.uk and there you are. No, we are not the San Francisco girl's chorus....

The Speakers and Judges Register is being completely reviewed this year with a view to a new addition early next year. We need new entries and the onus is on you. Please complete the form when you have it and Sally will issue an invitation. That is, if you feel you could recommend the speaker to another club. And we do need more judges - not RHS style,- just village show judges. The Federation also has a small booklet of quiz questions which could be a stop gap or fill-in at the AGM. Just ask the Secretary 01749 679182.

My sincere thanks go to Mo, David & Wendy for all their help in keeping things straight.

I hope to see many of you on the 23rd of May at Drimpton Village Hall.

Happy Easter

Pip Harwood



