



THE SOMERSET FEDERATION OF GARDENING CLUBS



Newsletter XVIII

Winter 1998

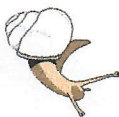
*Oh! pardon me thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers.*

Julius Caesar

If I remember correctly Valentine's Day was marvellous. After that things seemed to take a down turn. Looking back among all the debris of what was a pretty underwhelming summer there lay something of a challenge. The gauntlet was clearly thrown down.

The Gastropod War

Did anyone out there win the war of the Gastropods? Onions nibbled to oblivion, petunias decapitated and when enormous snails had chewed off all the labels on the paint tins in the garage it was obvious the hostas and lettuces never stood a chance. All this, of course, in the face of a whole battery of defensive positions, traps and lures, which transformed the garden into a battlefield. I know our gardens don't always look as we would wish, but we can do without these disfigurements.



Breakfast in the garden?



What's going on? A member of our local club claims that *they* don't like bran. Neither do I for that matter, but I might try it out in the garden next year.

Recently I read a report that the Danish Rose Society has been trialling a number of different sprays against Black Spot. Apparently easily the most effective has proved to be a mixture of equal parts of water and skimmed milk. I don't like skimmed milk either, so perhaps we are on to something here. I can see my garden next spring taking on the appearance of my breakfast table. A change from the former tactical warfare. Tea leaves on the shrubs, toast on the rhubarb, and scrambled egg on the chrysanthemums! I wonder if the tomatoes would like the bacon?

Philip Harwood Hon: Sec:

It is with a deep sense of loss and sadness that the Federation records the death of Fred Daw A.H. R.H.S. of Bath. He was a Committee member since the Federation's foundation and his great expertise and unique experience and personality will be greatly missed. An obituary appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

Chairman's Corner

How many secretaries can honestly confirm that their members know what the Federation does for their club? After all they are the ones who contribute towards your subscription. Do they know that many of the lecturers you invite come from our Speakers and Judges Book? (if indeed they do).

- ◆ Do they know of the Gardens Open Scheme?
- ◆ Do they know of the Guide for exhibitors pamphlet which will help them to carry off main prizes at your Flower Show, perhaps?
- ◆ Do they know of the Public liability Insurance which many clubs enjoy and thereby save a lot of money?
- ◆ Do you ask them if they would like to enter the Federation Quiz which has been running successfully for two years?

One of the most convenient occasions to inform your members of the Federation's work is at an A.G.M. Most clubs have their A.G.M.s in the winter or spring, and I am asking all the secretaries if they would please make a special effort at their next A.G.M. to tell the members about our work.

I doubt if many members know that we are now 160 clubs strong, so even just telling them that will show them that they belong to a really thriving and important organisation. By the way, do ask them for any new suggestions or ideas which we might be able to introduce which we haven't thought of up to now.

There might be a brilliant idea out there somewhere
- you never know. It is a bit like a packet of mixed seeds
- you never know what is going to come up!

John Starnes - Chairman S.F.G.C.

Judges Courses

At the Annual General Meeting in May a club raised the matter of the organisation of courses for trainee judges. A few years ago the Federation attempted to provide such a course after a great deal of hard work but the response was very disappointing. However, the Dorset Federation in conjunction with Norton Maurward College have run a course this year. Chris Hunter of the College tells me there is a possibility of a course next year providing there is sufficient interest. These courses are expensive to run and minimum numbers are required to make them viable.



Supplement to Speakers and Judges List 1998

The enclosed list contains all the changes and additions to the last complete edition, the Green Booklet. A full revision of the whole register is envisaged for the millennium, as a lot of things are.

I am very grateful to a number of secretaries who have notified me of potential additions to the list. In particular my thanks to Eric Potter of Timsbury who keeps supplying me with names in the north east area of the county, formerly known as Avon.

If you know a name to contact then please let me know. I send off relevant forms to all potential speakers and if you do not find their name in the list it is solely because they have not replied - yet!

Use the lists with confidence. Ensure that all deletions are properly made. Be ambitious and aim for a variety of subjects, there are lots of lovely topics to be enjoyed from the specific to the general via the historic. Mix and match is the key. Now you have the supplement in your hands don't neglect the Green Booklet!

Grow Organic

Organico Limited, Hayes Road, Compton Dundon, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6PF

Tel: Somerton (01458) 272202 Fax (01458) 273337

Grow organic delivered prices to Federation Garden Clubs for Autumn 1998/Spring 1999

| | | |
|---------|---------------|----------------------|
| 15/24 | 40 litre bags | £3.20 + vat = £3.76 |
| 25 plus | 40 litre bags | £3.00 + vat = £3.53 |
| 8kg. | Tub Pellets | £3.50 + vat = £4.11 |
| 10 kg. | Bag Pellets | £3.95 + vat = £4.64 |
| 25 kg. | Bag Pellets | £9.25 + vat = £10.87 |

Please mention the Federation when you order.
Bags delivered to one address in the Federation.

Federation quiz 1998

Nearly twenty clubs have so far entered the Federation Quiz for next year. The final will take place at the Annual General Meeting in May next year. If you have a couple of stalwart teams of three willing to have a go, then please contact Lyn Spencer-Mills or return that blue form you received earlier.

Dates for the Diary

1998

| | | |
|-----|--------|---|
| Sat | 14 Nov | North Somerset Late Chrysanthemum Show, Conygre Hall, Timsbury. |
| Sat | 21 Nov | Yeovil Late Chrysanthemum Show Trinity Hall, Lysander Rd, Yeovil. |
| Sun | 22 Nov | ditto |

1999

| | | |
|-----|--------|---|
| Sat | 27 Mar | Banwell Spring Show, Village Hall. |
| Wed | 7 Apr | Milbourne Port Spring Show, 8.15pm. Church House. |
| Sat | 24 Apr | NCCPG Specialist Plant Sale, Hatch Court. £ 2.50 admission. |
| Sat | 24 Apr | Plant Sale, Milbourne Port. |
| Sat | 8 May | NCCPG Plant Sale, Backwell. 50p |
| Sat | 22 May | West of England Cactus and House Plants Society, Weston-super-mare, Annual Show, Hutton Village Hall. |

Queen Camel and District Horticultural Society Local Honours



Helen Croft, of the Queen Camel and District Horticultural society was awarded third prize in the National Finals of Sutton Prism Sunshine Competition at Gardener's World Live Show NEC Birmingham 1998. The judges were gardening experts Peter Seabrook and Anne Swithinbank and flower breeder Tony Hender. Helen won first prize at the Regional competition at Trowbridge, Wiltshire and Arthur Soper, another member of the Society gained second.

Jean Pilgrim Hon: Sec:

Brilliant! - Editor



Combe-St-Nicholas

They obviously enjoy their gardening down at Combe-St-Nicholas. Here are a couple of articles from their previous newsletters

Why be a gardener?

Someone skis down Everest or crosses Antarctica single handed, facing frostbite and death. An old countryman puts a ferret down his trousers risking worse, and then there are gardeners. What makes them do it?

Why be a gardener? If you want a beautiful garden you can visit a stately home for the price of a decent pot plant. No worries about seasonal display, colour combinations or gardener's knee. In 12 seconds you can buy a cabbage, so why spend 12 weeks or more growing one?

Tilling the soil, sowing, transplanting, pests and diseases, stings, bites, thorns, tetanus, to say nothing of the weather which is always wrong. Millions of us do it instead of being sensible and just watching gardening programmes on T.V. and buy produce from the supermarket or greengrocer. **Why?**

Gardeners do it because it is healthy. Obviously they enjoy getting soaked, frozen, overheated while suffering aches, pains and injuries such as rake in the eye.

- It's cheaper. Not if you cost time and equipment! The fruit and vegetables taste better. Now there is something in that.
- It's creative. Well it can certainly create a mess.
- It's fun. Is that why the language is sometimes more colourful than the flowers?

Whatever the reasons given, the simple fact is that we need a challenge in our everyday lives. Whether a round-the-world yachtsman or a humble gardener the common thread is

- The Challenge

The noble gardener takes up the garden gauntlet and sallies forth with one aim in mind - to achieve success in whatever field (plot, patch, pot or container). He/she is out to win, hopefully with nature. or for the more ambitious, against nature, such as picking your home grown pineapples from the flower border in January. The old Victorian gardeners were particularly adept at accepting this kind of challenge.

Gardeners will now be thinking of, and planning, the tasks ahead. Some will already have committed themselves to another season. So if you are going to all that trouble why not accept one extra little challenge? Decide to enter some of your plants, produce and flowers in the local show next summer.

**Mists and mellow fruitfulness**

The days grow shorter and the countryside cloaks itself in a riot of glorious colours as though defying the onset of dull and dreary winter. Autumn arrives with brilliant tints and berries. Leaves turn through rich orange and crimson to volcanic red and bronze purple. Warm, glowing days alternate with chilly nights to sharpen up the foliage colours, and the seasonal flowers have hot, strong colours or cool blues of the icy days to come.

This is the time for the gardener to take stock, tidy up his domain, prepare and plan for the future, but also to appreciate the pure beauty of the season, smell the fresh crisp air and enjoy the fruits (and veg.) of his labour. This is the time of harvest when both body and soul can be satisfied. It is a time of joy and thanksgiving.

Boyhood memories of parish church profusely decorated with the bounty of garden, field and hedgerow. Against a background of dark evergreen the glow of a crop of red and gold topped with a sheaf of corn or large plaited loaf. The wonderful smell that was a mixture of pine, pew and produce.

The sight of farmers on the church with polished faces, shiny, creaky boots and arthritic joints to match. The familiar tunes and words of harvest hymns. All who attended this occasion appreciated the toil of Man and the work of Nature.

Today there are fewer and fewer working on the land, and even those that do are often insulated from it by some mechanical monster. It almost seems that only the gardener is left to get to grips with the soil, and create those oases of plant and wildlife that add up to the beauty and value of our land which Nature is so willing to bestow on us. Not only are we gardeners, but guardians. So revel in the Autumn splendour, and enjoy the darker evenings browsing through the pages of seed catalogues, selecting old favourites and making new discoveries for the coming year.

Tony Fathers

**Milborne Port and District Horticultural Society**

An advanced warning

The inaugural meeting of our Society was on 5 October 1949, so we are aiming to devise a special programme for our 1999-2000 Anniversary Year. This will inevitably overshadow the Millennium Dome and related celebrations, especially as we start earlier, but that is their bad luck, I am afraid!

Hamish Archibald Hon: Sec:

Chilcompton Gardening Club

We are very pleased to report that we have made a very successful start after forming the Chilcompton Gardening Club in January, 1998. With guidance from the Federation we have managed to enlist interesting speakers and also nearby well established Gardening and Horticultural Clubs have offered help and advice. Our membership at the moment stands at 77 and the interest seems to be increasing. The aim now is to cover all aspects of gardening - for novices or experts and to maintain the interest of our members. We have already had an excellent "Gardener's Question Time" and will be organising a "Road Show" later in the year. In addition to its gardening activities, members have found the Club is proving to be of general social benefit to the community.

Julie Ellis Hon: Sec:



A Lovely letter from Banwell

I attended the AGM for the Somerset Federation of Garden Clubs for the first time as a guest from the Banwell Garden Club.

It was a most enjoyable evening and I felt I must write to thank you first of all for the organised walk through the grounds of Cannington Agricultural College. Mr Addison was an excellent guide and to see such a wonderful collection of plants, shrubs and trees was a privilege. The wisteria and ceanothus took your breath away. For someone who is very much an amateur gardener I learnt a great deal and I have to say, it was very encouraging to know the professionals do not always have time to do the weeding and can make mistakes sometimes!

As a visitor I was made very welcome to the actual meeting, later in the evening and soon found other people with a common interest to chat to. The finals to the regional quiz was great fun, but I think perhaps the bell ringers gained the final points!

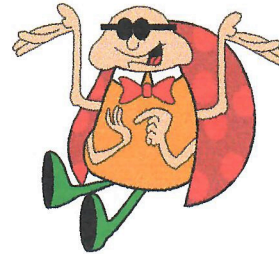
Thank you again for a most enjoyable evening.

Yours Sincerely
Pam Grant



A kind reader sent in this hymn which was new to me and will be read as our local Christmas Social!

(or even sung!)



All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.

But what we never mention, though gardeners know its true,
Is when He made the goodies, He made the baddies too.

All things spray and swatable, disasters great and small,
All things paraquatable, the Lord God made them all.

The green fly on the roses, the maggots in the peas,
Manure that fills our noses, He also gave us these.

The fungus on the goose-gogs, the club root on the greens,
The slugs that eat the lettuce and chew the aubergines.

The drought that kills the fuchsias-the frost that nips the buds.
The rain that drowned the seedlings, the blight that hits the
spuds.

The midges and mosquitoes, the nettles and the weeds,
The pigeons in the green stuff, the sparrows on the seeds.

The fly that gets the carrots, the wasp that eats the plums.
How black the gardener's outlook, though green may be his
thumb.

But still we gardeners labour, midst vegetables and flowers,
And pray what hits our neighbours, will somehow by pass
ours.



The full **S.F.G.C. Committee** is as follows.
 They are there to be contacted if you encounter a difficulty.
 They may not be able to remove it but they will try!

Officers

Chairman

Mr J.L. Starnes 01935 881308
 Stoneleigh, Duckpool Lane, West Chinnock, Crewkerne.
 TA18 7QD

Vice Chairman

Mrs L. Spencer- Mills 01460 76389
 Hooper's Holding, High Street, Hinton St George TA17 8SE

Secretary

Mr P.R. Harwood 01749 679182
 Fernville, Bath Road, Wells BA5 3HR

Treasurer

Mr W.J. Thomas 01934 822627
 Littleton, 3, Littlefields Avenue, Banwell
 BS29 6BE

Members of Committee

Mr J.H.R. Box 01716 434415
 Tramore, 25, New Bath Road, Radstock BA3 3ED

Miss B.M. Child 01984 640765
 20, Castlemead, Washford, Watchet TA23 0PZ

Mr E.P. Gill 01934 628758
 30, Brighton Road, Weston-super-mare BS23 3QG

Mrs M.P. Kellett 01823 601530
 Springdale, Smeatharpe, Honiton, Devon EX14 9RF

Mr N.H Rigden 01278 671376
 Cridlands West, High Street, Spaxton, Bridgwater

Mrs M.G. Vernon-Samuels 01823 480402
 Byeways, Slough Green, Taunton TA3 5RR

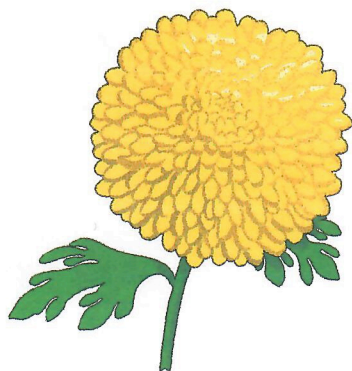
Ex Officio

Mr J.P. Addison 01278 655000
 Cannington College, Cannington TA5 2LS

Changes to the S.F.G.C. Committee

Nick Rigden, the former Head of Horticulture at Cannington College has been the Federation's liaison officer with the College for a number of years. In fact his connection with the Federation goes back to the earliest days when we were so grateful for his efforts and support at the Federation's foundation. The Federation is deeply indebted to him for his work on our behalf. Since he now no longer works full-time at the College he has decided to step down. However, his expertise and experience are not lost, as he has accepted an invitation to join the Committee.

His replacement as liaison officer at Cannington will be John Addison, Section Manager of Horticulture at the College. Many will know him already and we are grateful to him and fortunate in maintaining the worthwhile connection with Cannington.



Obituary

Frederick Daw 1913 - 1998

It is with great sadness the death of Fred Daw is reported. A Committee member of the Federation, Fred had devoted his life to horticulture and gardening.

Fred was born on the Royal Estate at Sandringham, son of the Royal Shepherd to King George V.

His horticultural education was via the John Innes Horticultural Institute and he then worked on various gardens in the Midlands. Local Authority Parks and Gardens benefited from his immense talents including Stourbridge which preceded his move to Bath in 1952 as Director of Parks and Gardens.

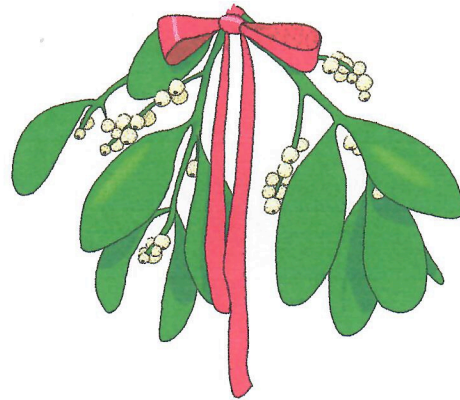
He was instrumental in transforming the post war landscape on the city into the internationally renowned Parks and Gardens that they are now. Bath has scooped the Britain in Bloom city category on numerous occasions thanks to his vision and belief in the maintenance of quality in plants and gardens.

He retired in 1973 but continued for a further quarter of a century to serve horticulture in many different ways. He established the Garden Centre in Prior Park Road, Bath, which carries his name and continued in judging at local and national Flower Shows, and in the Britain in Bloom Competition.

In 1968 he became one of the exclusive holders of the Royal Horticultural Society's Associate of Honour.

Always interested in education and the training of young gardeners and horticulturists, Fred was, for over thirty years, associated with the Horticultural Industry Advisory Panel at Cannington College and a similar body at Lackam College.

A keen home gardener, a wonderful teller of stories, he will be sadly missed by his wife Kath, his family, the Federation and many, many gardeners throughout the South West and beyond.



Final cuttings

Since the last newsletter the Federation membership has increased to 161. So a warm welcome to Theale Flower Show, Stockland Village Flower Show, Corton Denham, Dowlish Wake, Uffculme, Fagus, Abbotsleigh and Henton and District.

I should like to thank all those of you who keep me informed of this and that.

I am also truly grateful to Pam Kellett who transforms my scribblings and cuttings into what you see before you.

Now **-show it to your membership!**

Enjoy your gardening seasons, if you can tell them apart, and have a successful winter's programme.

And when it arrives, have a really good Christmas and a blightless New Year.

Pip Harwood Hon: Sec: S.F.G.C.
 Fernville, Bath Road, Wells
 Tel: 01749 679182

