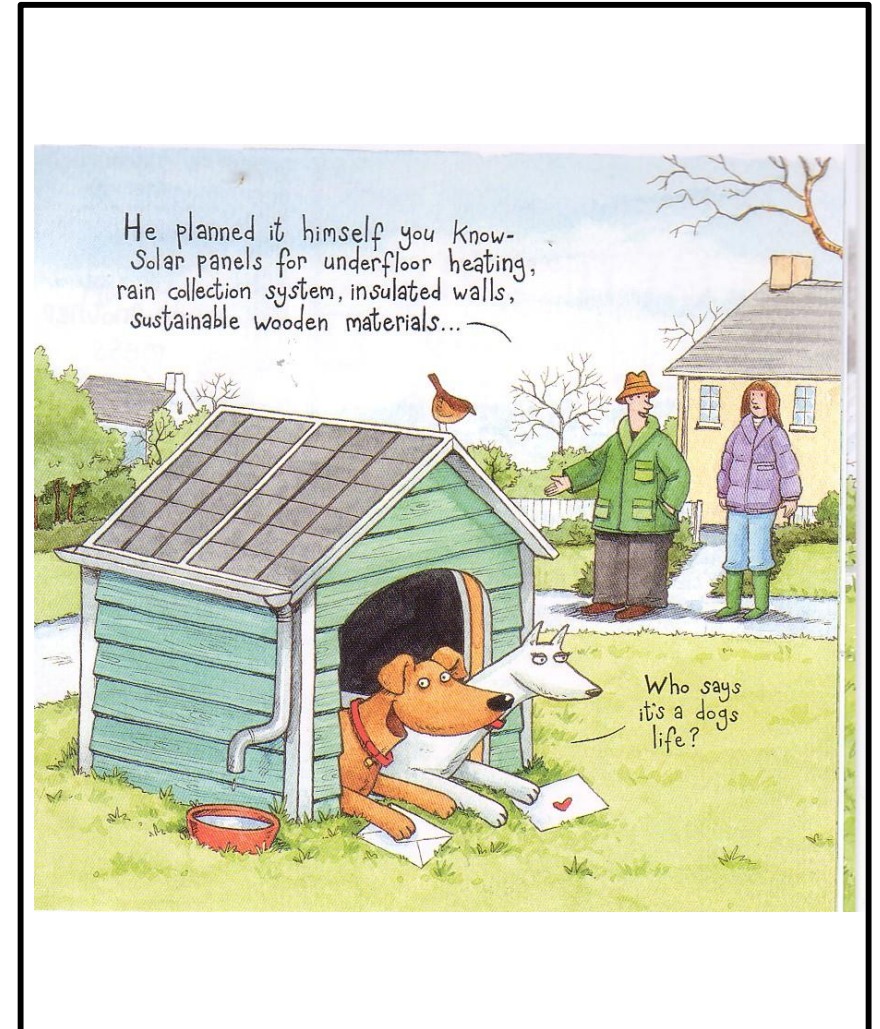
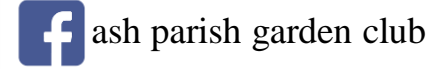


Ash Parish Garden Club

www.ashparishgardenclub.org.uk



Monthly Newsletter Feb 2020

ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS

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EDITORS NOTES

Brian –Stories to ernestperry33@gmail.com hard copy to Chris

R.H.S. LONDON AND WISLEY

We are affiliated to the RHS who's benefits include competitive insurance cover, free gardening advice, a free group visit to an RHS garden, (54 members to visit Wisley *club trip in Summer*) access to medals (*Banksian medal*) and show stationery and a free monthly copy of The Garden magazine (*see Brenda Winton if you wish to view*).

Our membership number is 10564709.

GARDEN GURU TURNS 90

DAVID WHEELER

Seven years ago, aged 83, Penelope Hobhouse considered herself too old to carry on working as a garden designer.

As she celebrates her 90th birthday on 20th November 2019, she looks back over a gilded career which was never anticipated, nor planned or studied for.

A few weeks ago, we chatted animatedly, allowing me to remind her of the clever if somewhat underhand way she enhanced the garden at Tintinhull House in Somerset, where she lived as a National Trust tenant for 14 years.

'I told white lies,' she tells me.

The garden was made by Phyllis Reiss and, under unwritten NT rules, tenants should be curators, not creators - meaning, 'Leave things as they are!'

I knew Phyllis,' Penelope says, 'and I knew the plants she loved but was unable to find in nurseries before her death in 1961. During my time at Tintinhull they did become available, so I added them to the garden as she would have liked.'

That small scenario illustrates Mrs Hobhouse's strength of will and determination - characteristics that, later, clients came to recognise and respect when paying significant sums of money for her to design gardens in both the UK and North America (the latter involving nine transatlantic flights one year).

Before Tintinhull, Penelope gardened at Hadspen House after marrying Paul Hobhouse in 1952. (Her brother was the late James Chichester-Clark, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland from 1969 to 1971.)

Having learnt her trade by observation and from knowledge passed on by gardening friends, she borrowed heavily an Italian style of design that flourished in the Renaissance.

I learnt English gardens weren't the first and best in the world. The Italians had mastered the craft much earlier.'

Her love affair with the Italianate gave way only years later when, in her 70s, visiting Iran, she fell headlong for Islamic design. 'The Persians had done it all before, centuries before...'

Hobhouse was succeeded at Hadspen by Canadian colourists Nori and Sandra Pope (Nori died in July last year). The house now has a new life as The Newt, a hotel - with remodelled walled parabola - which, to Penelope's immense delight, employs some 30 local people.

Since leaving Hadspen, she has made two more gardens for herself. The present one, smaller than any before, still bears her distinctive formal signature, despite almost totally forsaking perennials in favour of less-demanding trees and shrubs.

As a revised edition of her heavyweight History of Gardening has just been published, I wanted to know which of her books she's most proud of. She nominates her 1992 Plants in Garden History, a union of two great loves - plants and history; flames of past times fanned by a fruitful membership of the Garden History Society.

And the garden she's most pleased with? 'You won't know it. It's small, private, and occupies an isolated position on the west coast of Scotland, designed for an American couple many years ago. It wasn't the perfect site but I enjoyed circumventing the wind, which threatened it from every direction; but the Gulf Stream meant tender trees and shrubs might thrive.'

Regrets? 'The Queen Mother's Garden I designed at Walmer Castle: they did not stick to my designs. I haven't been back for years.'

Honours have rightfully been bestowed, including the RHS's most prestigious medal, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Guild of Garden Writers, crowned in 2014 by the MBE.

And to what, at 90, does Mrs Hobhouse most look forward? 'Next year in the garden and, hopefully, not being too old to look after it.'

Chapeau!

THIS MONTHS RECIPE

PORK CHOP with ORANGE (nice for a dinner party)

You will need

6 pork fillets or pork chops

1-2oz butter

6oz can undiluted orange juice or fresh orange juice

2 tablespoons demerera sugar

1.5ozs ground ginger

Half teaspoon mixed spice

Quarter teaspoon tabasco

To do

Trim off fat and brown in butter on both sides.

Blend orange juice, sugar, ginger, spice and tabasco sauce.

Put chops in oven proof dish,

Add the above, and cover the dish.

Baste once or twice during cooking.

Gas mark 4 / 180c -55 minutes

I like to slice the meat and serve with rice

POETS CORNER

The Snowdrop

Yes, punctual to the time, thou'rt here again,
As still thou art: though frost or rain may vary,
And icicles blockade the rockbirds' aery,
Or sluggish snow lie heavy on the plain,
Yet thou, sweet child of hoary January,
Art here to harbinger the laggard train
Of vernal flowers, a duteous missionary.
Nor cold can blight, nor fog thy pureness stain.
Beneath the dripping eaves, or on the slope
Of cottage garden, whether mark'd or no,
Thy meek head bends in undistinguish'd row.
Blessings upon thee, gentle bud of hope!
And Nature bless the spot where thou dost grow -
Young life emerging from thy kindred snow!

HARTLEY COLERIDGE (19th century)

CARING FOR AIR PLANTS

Air plants or Tillandsias require warmth, air, water and light. These plants are robust and require less attention than other houseplants, but because they grow differently they need some special care.

Temperature

Air plants enjoy temperatures above 12°C up to a maximum of 30°C if humidity is high.

Light

Air plants enjoy bright but gentle light, so provide shade from direct sunshine especially in spring and summer. South-facing rooms are ideal, especially kitchens and bathrooms, but remember to place the plant behind a blind or net curtain so they are not damaged by direct sunlight. Air plants need natural light so they can colour - the more light the better the colour.

If growing your plants in an environment with artificial light then full-spectrum fluorescent lighting is best. You can also use halogen and grow lights. We would recommend a four-tube 48" T5 light unit, set on a timer for 12 hours per day.

Watering

When growing your plant indoors, because the air is dry you will need to put your plant in water for 2-3 hours every two weeks. Do this by completely covering the plant in tap water or filtered water at room temperature. Rain, pond and aquarium water work well too. When removing the plant from the water turn it upside down, gently shake and allow it to dry out almost completely before placing it back into the display pot or surface. Morning submersions are best rather than at night.

Air plants cannot get water from their roots like other houseplants, or draw on internal reserves like a succulent. Like other houseplants, air plants' leaves begin to curl more than usual or even turn brown as a sign that they require more watering. Remember, however, if you over-water your air plant many plants, it will die.

Humidity

The higher the humidity in the environment the air plant is being stored in, the more light it can tolerate. We would recommend using Air Plant Myst once or twice a week to provide adequate humidity.

An environment with good air circulation is also important to prevent fungal problems.

Feeding

To keep your plant healthy, feed using a low-strength fertiliser such as Orchid Focus **Grow** - orchids and air plants are both low nutrient requiring plants. Include in the water when immersing, at the recommended rate for orchids. Use with every other watering, throughout the year. For best results also spray regularly with Air Plant Myst.

Orchid Focus

Flowering

Air plants may bloom from mid-winter through to late-summer, with each plant flowering just once in its lifetime. The flowers can last from several days to many months depending on the species, care and environment.

New Plants

New plants are called pups or offshoots and are produced at the base of the plant. A small number of species grow babies from the center of the plant around the flower spike and other species' offsets are produced on 'stolons' or short stems. Most plants will produce between two and eight baby plants. The time between bloom and producing pups can be several years.

To remove baby plants from their mother plant, they should be a good size (between a third to half the size). Hold both plants at their bases and gently twist in a downward motion. The mother plant should not be discarded as it will still produce more pups. Pups receive nutrients from their mother so be careful not to remove them too early.

Air plants originate from South America and Mexico. They get their name because rather than growing in soil, they use their short, thin roots to attach themselves around tree branches and rocks. Air plants were very popular in the 70s and are now making a comeback.

Normally flowering from mid-winter to autumn, they grow perfectly in your home or conservatory. In the UK plants can be kept outside in the summer to enjoy the bright conditions, rainfall and humidity found at this time of the year. Remember to bring the plants back indoors before the autumn sets in, as air plants will die in frosty conditions. There are several species of air plant; those with silver leaves tend to be the type of plant that needs less water and the greener species dry out quicker.

DISAPPOINTMENT AT HAMPTON COURT PALACE

After some years of hearing how the Hampton Court Palace Flower Show compared favourably with the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, my husband treated me to a visit to the former as part of my birthday present. "Great" I thought and the visit was eagerly anticipated.

After a very early start, the coach reached the designated parking area at around 10.30 in the morning. It was immediately clear that the world had got there ahead of us. After a trek across the field and climbing the steps up the flyover bridge, we made it to the entrance approximately twenty minutes later.

There is no doubt that the setting is fantastic for such an event but, expecting to see rows of immaculate show gardens as I was, I was sorely disappointed. It was

more a case of hunt the show garden in amongst the rows of immaculate retail outlets! Unquestionably what was on offer was of very high quality and there were some good offers if you wanted a conservatory or a Jacuzzi but it was more trade show than flower show.

The massive marquee housing wonderful floral exhibits should have been a fantastic experience. Instead it turned into a soft shoe shuffle with elbows out and not much hope of taking any good photos. The same can be said for the tent selling plants.

Who in their right mind would take a small child and/or a dog to such an event? Seemingly thousands of people, not to mention the plastic boxes on wheels containing a picnic lunch or various tall plants ready to impale ones eyes upon.

The saving grace of the day were the wonderful herbaceous borders of Hampton Court itself which we sat opposite on the last remaining vacant park bench after we escaped the show.

Next year I am watching it on the telly.
Janet Huges

GARDENING CALENDAR FEBRUARY

A lot can be achieved in your garden during February, particularly on days when the ground isn't frozen or waterlogged.

Plant

Plant bare-root trees and shrubs, and 'in-the-green' snowdrops (snowdrops with leaves). This is also a good month for planting Jerusalem artichokes, shallots, raspberries and blackberry canes, if weather conditions permit.

Prune

February is also the time to hard-prune your hedges, if you didn't do it in the autumn. Deciduous garden hedges can all be cut back fairly hard now. Make sure the frosts haven't lifted newly planted trees and shrubs, re-firm around them lightly using your hands or heels if necessary.

In terms of plant maintenance, now is the time to cut back deciduous grasses, ideally down to 15-20cm before new shoots emerge. Deadhead winter bedding plants for bushier displays later in the year, and start preparing seed beds for spring vegetable sowings.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SPRING SHOW	11 April
PLANT SALE	9 May
RHS Malvern (spring)	7 - 10 May
RHS Chelsea	19 - 23 May
SUMMER SHOW	6 July
Gardeners World Live	18 - 21 June
RHS Hampton Court	6 - 12 July
RHS Tatton Park	22 - 26 July
AUTUMN SHOW	12 Sep
RHS Malvern (autumn)	26 - 27 Sep

CLUB EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES –

4th	Ewhurst	Rhodos from the Himalayas to Chelsea, with David Millais John Dyball 01483-271812
4th	Jacobs Well	Shrubs and climbers for your garden, with G. Pattinson Pam Lomax 01483-767225
4th	Lightwater	Native orchids of Britain & Ireland, with Maren Talbot Jackie Hayler 01276-475622
6th	Aldershot Floral Design.	Demo: Oriental Express, with Stephen McDonnell Dee Kelly 01252-350944
6th	Fernhurst	From ground to glass, Langham Brewery, with L. Foulkes John Hargrove 01428-641896
7th	Woodham/New Haw	Cacti, our road to Chelsea Gold, by Daniel Jackson Louise Clubley 01932-347297
10th	Elstead	Summer in the Garden, with Steve Bradley Alison Gravett 01252-703318
11th	Ashford (Middx)	58 years on my allotment, with Bob Calder B. Baghapour 01784-247907
11th	Brooklands	All about Roses, with Thomas Stone Ann Cochrane 01932-889722
11th	Wokingham	Herbs and their culinary & medicinal uses. Belinda Allen P. MacBrayne 01189-789040
11th	Worplesdon	New plants for free, with Keith Hine Sheila Dyke 01483-481841
12th	Ashtead	Preparing for your shows, with Barry Newman Jennie Pilfold 01372-373348
12th	Virginia Water	Drought and dry gardening, with Kelvin Mason Linda Gillham 01932-564834
13th	Egham	The Andes and the Incas, with Paul Whittle Wendy Flight 01932-455910

ASH PARISH GARDEN CLUB February 2020

- 15th Hardy Plant Soc. What to do with this space, with Darren Lerigo. Plant Sale.
 Sandra Hartley 01372-727715
- 17th Brockham Green Crop Circles, talk by Andy Thomas
 Mary Golding 01737-842326
- 19th Banstead Seeds for Pleasure, with Andy Morriss. 10 am
 Diana Beck 01737-271243
- 19th Chiddingfold Gertrude and her beautiful gardens, by Annabel Watts
 Els Trovo 01428-684548
- 19th Sandhurst AGM and Flower Villages of Alsace Lorraine, by Chris Stewart
 Chris. Dresler 01420-768965
- 20th Bramshott/Liphook The Art of Propagation, with Marina Christopher
 Ann Haussauer 01428-723045
- 20th Headley (Hants) Gardening with Flair, with John Negus
 Jill Howard-Duff 01428-714073
- 20th New Soc. Camberley Wildside Nursery, Devon, with Jon Evans
 Chris.Thompson 01252-837640
- 26th Haslemere Rhodos from the Himalayas to Chelsea, by David Millais
 Roger Smith 01428-658606
- 26th Horsley Fuchsias my way, with Derek Dexter
 Terry Lazenby 01483-284232
- 27th Blechingley Unusual Edibles, by Paul Barney of Edulis Nursery
 Anne Fowler 01883-744710
- 27th Frensham/Dockenfield Planting summer bulbs, with Tim Woodland
 Ruth Murphy 01252-793267