



Castle Cary Gardening Association Newsletter 2018

We introduced a Castle Cary Gardening Association website and Facebook page in 2017. So, if you need to check a date for an event, get a copy of the show schedule, or just want to catch up with a talk you missed – just go to <http://ccga.btck.co.uk/>. These are some of the stories from 2018 covered on the website.

Around 40 members enjoyed the member's lunch in January at the Stag's Head, Yarlinton.

Erica & Fiona organised a table at the 'Potato Day' in Caryford Hall, and gained some new members. So welcome to them!

Our February talk was extremely popular, with around 70 people in attendance. We heard a very entertaining and informative talk by Damian Mitchell, head gardener at **Lytes Cary**. Damian took us through some fabulous pictures of life at Lytes Cary, beginning with some photos from the early years of the 20th Century, which really showed how the garden evolved into the well-known gardens that are to be seen today. Along the way, Damian talked enthusiastically about the volunteers and Malteser cakes (!) as well as traditional gardening themes such as composting & planting schemes. Clearly, a lot of hard work has gone into rejuvenating parts of the garden - such as the hedges that divide the various garden rooms. Some of us will also have come away enthused by the benefits of double-digging, having seen the results achieved by Damian's team on a compacted border

Sadly, our March talk was defeated by the adverse weather, and we had to cancel the talk by Paul Cumbleton on 'A growing Addiction: bulbs from the winter rainfall area of South Africa'. It is rescheduled for 2019.

Members also brought their blooms of 'Pipe Major' to the meeting, the results of growing the bulbs kindly supplied by Castle Gardens in the autumn.



Our talk on 5th April, '**Going Wild in the Garden**', by Dr Anne Bebbington was fantastic. We were treated to some wonderful photos of both plants and animals in Anne & John's garden. They had developed the garden from what had been a rather overgrown space when they moved in, but with plenty of hidden treasures which emerged as the first year went on. We learnt about the importance of having plants to feed both the adult and larval stages of insects close together. We were surprised to hear that they had seen over 70 different birds, over 20 types of butterfly and hundreds of moths in their garden.



We picked up the plug plants from Castle Gardens for this year's club challenge on 22 March - Fuchsia Winston Churchill. They were available (free) to members at our April meeting.

The **discount evening at Castle Gardens** was in April, and began with a talk at 6.45pm. This year we joined forces with two other clubs

Our talk on 3 May was '**Herps for the Hignorant (reptiles and amphibians)**' by Paul Newman. Paul took us through a tour of odd, interesting and curious facts about reptiles and amphibians, including how as an accident of history they were 'lumped together' in the 18th century.....when they are, in fact, quite different!



The **plant sale** was held in glorious weather at the Market House on 5th May. We were joined by the Beekeepers and Tools for Self Reliance. Everyone enjoyed a great day in the sunshine, and the sale of plants will help support the club's activities for another year - chiefly the running of the 70th Annual Show in August.



We had a wonderful talk in June by Sally Nex. Sally took us on an entertaining journey through '**A Rogues Gallery for Gardeners - organic ways to tackle pests and diseases**'. There were some very familiar pests - such as slugs - and some not so familiar such as the Alder leaf beetle. Sally took us through the top reported pests and diseases by RHS members. All illustrated with some great slides and a very engaging presentation.



Our club evening on 5th July, was a talk on **'Marianne North - Victorian botanic artist, her travels and her Kew connections'** by Mrs Merrett-Smith. This gave us the story of her fascinating travels around the world, a look at her paintings, and also the story of how the gallery of her paintings at Kew came to pass, and how it was restored.

Annual Show. After much worrying that the very dry conditions of the past few months would make it impossible for people to enter, we were amazed to see near record levels of entries in the horticultural classes. People really pulled out the stops to support our 70th Annual Show. It was a wonderful success and enjoyed by all who attended. Thank you again to everyone who grew stuff, baked, sewed, crafted, painted, photographed, wrote, arranged flowers and guided children to make and bake. Without your efforts, ours would be unnecessary. Thank you also to all those who visited and enjoyed a drink and cake while taking in the sights. And a big thank you to everyone who helped.



Right: The 'Club Challenge' Class

Left: Cup winners. Back row: Jean Constantine, Rosie Meek, Melissa Meek, Mrs D M Clothier, Don Humpage, Catherine Millar, Lesley Ridgley, Neal Hatch, Mark Jones
Front Row: Rebecca Choyce, Toby Choyce, Janet Hutchfield the club President, Alice Choyce, Zara Palmer, Karen Pepper



2018 was also the **70th Anniversary of our show (1949-2018)**. Neal organised a display board at the show, and printed a small commemorative brochure which was available at the show and at the September meeting. Many thanks to all those who provided material for that. Members and exhibitors also received a special pencil to mark the event!

Our September talk by Clair Hart was on **'How to show vegetables'**. We now know what we should and shouldn't be doing to grow and exhibit different vegetables and fruit. In particular, we'll be sorting out our drain pipes for our carrots. And we also know the secret techniques required to get straight runner beans. Some of us may even try for a heavyweight pumpkin, though not sure we will quite manage the size of the one Clair has grown!

The 2019 Spring Bulb Growing Competition for 2019 will be Narcissus Golden Aura (kindly supplied by Castle Gardens). Bulbs were available for members to collect at the October Meeting. The idea is to grow them, and then bring a single bloom to the regular March/April/May meeting.



October's talk was **'Gardens of the Rich and Famous'**, by David Moon. David had prepared some lovely photos of various gardens at home and abroad, set to music. So we moved from Nymans and Batemans in the South East, to Powis Castle in Wales, with trips to the Netherlands and France as well.

Our November meeting was the Annual AGM. The formal business was kept quite short, and we heard reports from our Chairperson and Treasurer. If you want to add any ideas, or become more involved in the running of the club, then do feel free to input your thoughts at any stage through the year - to the Committee or via the 'Contacts' page of the website. Erica announced the winner of this year's **'Flower of the Month'** competition for club members. Congratulations to Audrey Hills, who wins the trophy for 2018. The AGM was followed by a talk on Canine Partners – our supported charity this year.



After a small trial run in 2018, we ran a seed exchange at the AGM in 2018. This was well supported by the members, with hundreds of packets on the table. In fact, so many, that we still have plenty left for a future meeting!

In December we round off the year with a talk and demonstration by the Castle Gardens team – **'Alternative Plants, Alternative Places'**.

Heather is planning to coordinate the CCGA entry for this year's Christmas Tree display in Castle Cary.

Details of 2019 events can to be found on your membership card, or the website