



California Gardeners' Club

Newsletter July 2019

www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk

On July 1st Geoff Peach came to give us a talk on the Basingstoke Canal. Like other canals, it was constructed to transport goods easily round the country but went out of use when the railways came as they were much faster. It was dug by hand, using spades, barrows and carts, mainly by Irish "navigators", all 39 miles of it!

The original lock gates were 9 x 9 inch solid oak planks held together with blacksmith made iron straps, so sound that some of the ironwork was still usable in the restoration (1970s/1990s).

Despite its name, the canal no longer reaches Basingstoke; obstacles include a bus station and a motorway bridge, and the Greywell tunnel is unsafe due to slippage of the land. Since restoration 32 miles of the canal are now navigable, though the aquifers and springs which provide the water are very low owing to increased extraction.

When the canal was built, trees were cleared from the banks, though now only ones likely to cause problems are removed. If a tree falls into the water, a barge must be brought in to remove it, and if it falls inland the root ball can make a hole in the bank, causing leaks.

Many animals use it as a corridor, waterfowl of course, roe and muntjac deer, badgers, squirrels, foxes, mink, and many others. Roe deer swim well, and often cross the canal. The approach of otters is a threat to other species.

Lynn Potts

Things to remember

1. Our next meeting is on 5th August when Mark Saunders will be telling us about the 'Wildlife in the Garden'.
2. Trading Hut now open every Sunday 10:00 to 12:00
Remember, the hut will close for the whole of August.
3. Annual membership is now due (£5).

Rose & Sweet Pea Competition



The Rose and Sweet Pea competition entries were better than last year: roses up from 3 to 16 and sweet pea up from 4 to 10. Well done everyone for trying and giving the meeting a beautiful display.

The winner of the Rose section was D. Salter
The winner of the Sweet Peas was Ian Gillott

Topical tip

The beginning of July is a good time to take cuttings of herbaceous plants. Verbenas, penstemons and scabious are all examples of plants which can be propagated by softwood cuttings. Rooting is often helped by dipping the base of the cutting in rooting powder. The Trading Hut is currently stocking organic rooting powder.

Finchampstead Fete



Finchampstead Fete was again a success. We made new contacts both young and older in the community. Despite the very hot weather we managed to keep our plants looking perky and with a contribution from the children's tombola we took getting on for £100. Thank you to everyone who help and supported us on the day.

Visit to Kew

The Club's outing to Kew Gardens at the beginning of June was a great success. The previous day to our visit saw 63 mls of rain fall in Wokingham. However, the gods were on our side and apart from a bit of light drizzle when we were waiting to catch the coach to take us back to Wokingham, we had a dry day.



There is so much to see at Kew. The delightful rockery, the Temperate and the Palm houses in addition to both the formal and informal gardens. There is never enough time in one day to see everything.

Congratulations to everybody on arriving in time to meet the coach and assembling at the Elizabeth Gate in good time prior to our departure. Well done everybody. Finally, many thanks to Chris Spinks – ably assisted by husband David – in organizing such an enjoyable event.

Farley Hill Gardens visit



Farley Hill Garden visit. There are still 4 places available and it promises to be a most enjoyable afternoon.

18th July 2.00 £9 includes tea and cake as well as a chat about the gardens as well as time to explore the delightful walled garden.

If you would like to join in, call. Peter on 01344 774310

Membership

***Over the past six months our membership continues to steadily grow.
Why not tell your neighbours and friends about us and invite them to a meeting?***

Keeping annual membership at £5 makes us a great club to be a member of.

So, don't keep it a secret

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Monthly Table Competition

First with 20 points was Peter Radband, 2nd Ian Gillott with 14points, 3rd Jean Potter 13 points, joint 4th Anne Blakeman and Hermione Lewis with 12 points, 5th Betty Mold with 11 points, 6th Jayne Male with 10 points.

The subject for August is:

Any plants, flowers, vegetables or fruit.

All exhibits must have been in the exhibitor's possession for at least three months and you must be present on the night for your points to be counted towards the annual prize.

Monthly talks

This is a call to all members: if you have any ideas/requests for the subjects of the monthly talks, please let us know. Either reply to this email or give Hermione a ring (number below).

Chairman: Dick Hawes 0118 979 3730	Hon. Treasurer: Peter Radband 01344 774310	Programmes: Hermione Lewis 0118 989 1671	Committee Member Jayne Male
Deputy Chairman Ian Gillott 0118 9892649	Trading Hut: Stuart Slocombe 0118 9734531	Membership: Kerry Eaton 07736 022361	Co-opted Member Marise Radband 01344 774310
Hon. Secretary: Chris Spinks 0118 978 1432	Show Secretary: Peter Turner 0118 9730424	Committee Member: Lynn Potts 0118 977 1852	Co-opted Member Shirley Brown 0118 9734571