

# Colinton Garden Club

[www.colintongardens.org.uk](http://www.colintongardens.org.uk)

Newsletter 97

February 2012



Coming soon...

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup>  
February 8 pm**

“Gardens of  
the NTS”  
Melissa Simpson  
National Trust  
for Scotland

**Members’  
Evening**

See p3 for details

**Spring Fertilizer  
Orders**

An order form is  
attached to this  
newsletter - return  
to Dawn Ellis by  
**Monday  
27<sup>th</sup> February**

## *From the pen of our Chair...*

Dear Friends,

Already, with signs of light returning after the dark days of winter we can sense the first stirrings of Spring. Not only by the pale sun directing our attention to the premature splashes of colour throughout our gardens, but also by the awakening panorama of the garden reclaiming our engagement, to get out and join in.



Gardening is one way of communing with nature, but it is more than “exercise, fresh air and enjoying the view” – it means dialogue and active involvement. It satisfies our physical, intellectual and creative needs. We have to know something about our plants, the environment, the conditions under which they prosper, when they are at their best, how quickly they grow. Some of you know more than others, some have an instinctive talent, but all of us are constantly learning. There is that sense of partnership and respect, the unpredictable – weather, seasons and pests – and the unexpected. The surprise results, the disappointments, the acceptance of compromise. It is participation in creation, both inspiring and humbling.

Our Christmas Party on 14<sup>th</sup> December was a memorable success. The Dreghorn Loan Hall looked magical with tables decorated and laid for 120 people. The stage, in anticipation of the performance of the annual play, was transformed into a garden landscape. The expectation was electric, “the conviviality enormous”, as one of those present said.

“Frozen Assets and Meltdown”, written and produced by Isobel Lodge, deals with the archetypal confrontation of good versus evil, in this case Mr Snow – myself (“good”) and the Queen of Ice and Snow – Isobel (“evil”), whose desire is to dominate the world. Both protagonists die, but the world is saved. Spring comes again. The supporting cast, snowbound plants, rustic gardeners, two little snowdrops and on-stage choir directed by Audrey Dobson, were impressively professional and provided much merriment.



*The Ice Queen cometh –  
a dramatic entrance in the  
Christmas Party Play*

## *From the pen of our Chair... continued*

The evening which included a buffet and drinks, quizzes with prize-giving, the play, lots of fun, mingling, talking and laughing, finished with singing carols, and was special in its own particular way. It captured the spirit of Christmas, peace and goodwill, and we all went home with a smile. Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make this possible.

At our November meeting, Andrew Lear, Fruit Tree Expert spoke to us on "Apples & Orchards", commenting on rare species of fruit and appropriately illustrating his talk with pictures of splendid fruit from gnarled old trees in various Perthshire locations. Our first meeting of the new year, in January, concerned "Allotments – Theory and Practice" with Jenny Mollison (Scottish Allotment and Garden Society) giving the broader perspective, and our well-known members Jo and Murdo McEwan speaking about and illustrating life at their allotment at the Dean Gallery. We were particularly entertained by Murdo's pithy observations on their obviously enjoyable communal experience.

The rest of our programme up to July, which includes our outdoor events, is listed in the separate feature in this newsletter. The March meeting – Members' Evening – with its exhibition of artistic work, promises to be special. See the article on this and make sure you bring your exhibit along.

At last! It looks like we will be submitting an entry to the Pallet Gardens at Gardening Scotland. Billy Whelan (Tel 538 4965) has come forward to organise this. All he needs is some extra support. Phone him, please. We have been regular participants until last year and I think it is very good for CGC to demonstrate hands-on skills.

On Monday, February 20<sup>th</sup> we have arranged breakfast at the John Hope restaurant at the Botanics. The bonus is that our friend, Alan Bennell will be joining us. Alan is Head of External Relations at RBGE, is a consummate enthusiast and will bring us up to date with what is going on in the Botanics and behind the scenes there. After breakfast we have arranged for David Binnie, our guide from last year to take us on the snowdrop walk. If you are coming, please phone me (Tel 441 2152).

We have had a goodly number of new members this year, all of whom are welcome. We hope that you are finding new friends at the meetings and will take part in the events over the summer. Further, we are always on the look-out for new ideas for topics or activities to keep the club interesting and up-to-date. If you have an idea speak to me or a committee member at a meeting or phone or email.

Then please make a note that our AGM is on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. We try to make our AGM more than a formality. It is an opportunity to take stock, to get feedback and to share ideas. Afterwards, as is our custom, to enliven the informal part we offer a glass of wine.

Now that is enough of words. With the departing day still a glimmer in the west, it is time to get ready for this evening's meeting and then to follow the example of our inspiring members by going out into the garden and getting involved. I have mentioned my friend, the robin, before. He may be waiting for me to reappear?

Happy Gardening and a fruitful 2012.

### **Royal Botanic Garden: Snowdrop Tour**

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012**

We shall meet at the Gateway Restaurant (by West Entrance) at 10 am for breakfast; Alan Bennell, Head of External Relations, will give a short talk. Afterwards David Binnie will guide us through the snowdrop areas

Numbers are limited: cost £6 (breakfast extra)

To book a place, contact Christopher Davies:  
Tel: 441 2152, e-mail: [chair@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:chair@colintongardens.org.uk)

Christopher



## Members' Evening

Our Members Evening on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> March offers an opportunity for each of us to display some element of our artistic talent. This year we are widening the scope of this part of the evening and making the display an exhibition of Members Art and Craft Work.

Please do consider what you can contribute to help make this a most enjoyable evening. We are looking for offerings with a gardening theme, be they photographs, drawings, paintings, collages, embroideries, quilts or models - indeed, any work of Art or Craft you have made that relates to the world of gardening and plants.

Naturally, the more contributions we have the more interesting and entertaining the evening will be for us all. There will be plenty of time to admire these works and also an opportunity for Members to vote on their favourite.

So please do take part in this display and bring your piece(s) of work on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> March. If your contribution is more than 15 inches by 15 inches, contact Chris Tonge: [christonge@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:christonge@yahoo.co.uk) (Mobile 07840193305) by the middle of March to ensure that we can arrange an adequate display area. For any queries please also contact Chris in the first instance.

Once again we look forward to seeing how creative we all can be!



## Gardening Scotland 2012 Pallet Garden and Planter Challenges

Gardening Scotland 2012 will take place on 1 – 3 June at the Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh. The Pallet Garden Competition is organised by the Scottish Gardeners' Forum. The Club has a good record in this event, but has found it difficult of late to field a team. Billy Whelan has volunteered to lead the group – all we now require is three helpers – surely from a membership of 250 we can manage this!

If you would like to be involved, please contact Billy (538 4965) or the Chairman as soon as possible.

[www.gardeningscotland.com](http://www.gardeningscotland.com)  
[www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk](http://www.scottishgardenersforum.org.uk) for further information

### Club Website

Members are invited to visit our website, which contains details of all the Club's activities

Webmaster: Sonia Duffy

[www.colintongardens.org.uk](http://www.colintongardens.org.uk)

### New members

Please direct anyone interested in joining the Club to the Membership Secretary  
Colin Whitehead  
21 Laverockdale Park, Edinburgh EH13 0QE  
[membership@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:membership@colintongardens.org.uk)

If you do not receive your newsletter, please contact Bob Jones (Communications Officer). You may also send him interesting photos taken at any of our events

**0131 445 2745**

[publicity@colintongardens.org.uk](mailto:publicity@colintongardens.org.uk)

**Good stuff!**

The variable nature of horse manure was a hot topic at the last Meeting, reminding me (as a townie) of my grandmother's pace in the '50-yard dash with bucket and shovel' after the passage of the milk cart.



Seriously, a member has requested information on a source of good farmyard manure – must be straw based. Contact [allan.ainslie@btinternet.com](mailto:allan.ainslie@btinternet.com) or the Editor.

**Green-fingered ladies and gentlemen**

We are so addressed in the web-blurb to the book by Monty Don and Derry Moore: 'Great Gardens of Italy' is now in our Library.

**Down under**

The website of the Australian Native Plants Society contains a wealth of information on all those wonderful Banksias (opposite), Grevillias and Eucalypts. <http://anpsa.org.au>



**Suntrap update**

The Battle to save Suntrap Garden as an educational / therapeutic resource for the public continues. NTS and Oatridge want to sell the property. Historic Scotland is in consultation about listing Millbuies house. Recently, Save Our Suntrap was awarded £57,000 from the George Boyd Anderson Trust by Edinburgh City Council, but matching funding is needed. Can you help in any way – funding / volunteer support? Contact: Isobel Lodge 441 3934; Google: suntrapgarden.org

**Fern Gardens in Scotland**

The British Pteridological Society's leaflet lists twelve 'Fern Gardens' in Scotland: see [http://www.nhm.ac.uk/hosted\\_sites/bps/wtsfi.htm](http://www.nhm.ac.uk/hosted_sites/bps/wtsfi.htm)

*Editor*

**Open Gardens**

We are still looking for gardens for the evening (14 May) and morning (16 June) events. Contact the Chairman (441 2152) if you wish to take part

**Garden equipment**

The lawn scarifier, our most borrowed item, has been repaired. A second scarifier is to be purchased

**Club Library**

Gill Perry requests that overdue items be returned promptly for stocktaking  
The library has about 25 volumes of The Rock Garden (The Journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club) for members to take away at no cost – hardback, colour plates

*Dates for your diary.....*

<b>Monday</b> <b>27 February 2012</b>	<b>Meeting: "Gardens of the NTS"</b> Melissa Simpson (National Trust for Scotland)
<b>Monday</b> <b>26 March 2012</b>	<b>Members' Evening</b> Talks and display of artistic work
<b>Monday</b> <b>23 April 2012</b>	<b>Annual General Meeting</b> 8 pm in Dreghorn Loan – Upper Hall
<b>Monday</b> <b>14 May 2012</b>	<b>Evening Open Garden</b> Details later
<b>Saturday</b> <b>16 June 2012</b>	<b>Local Gardens Open</b> Details later
<b>A Saturday</b> <b>in June / July</b>	<b>Summer Outing</b> Details later



**Pink Porcelain Lily**