

COLINTON GARDEN CLUB

www.colintongardens.org.uk

NEWSLETTER



No 116

November 2016

Coming soon...

Monday 28th
November 8 pm

Dreghorn Loan Hall

**'A World of
Gardens'**

**Stewart Rawlins
and Julia Corden**

Brightwater Holidays

Monday 12th
December 8 pm

**Our
Christmas
Party**

Entertainment,
good food, quizzes
and a few popular
carols

See page 4 for tickets

Dear CGC Members

You may remember in my last Newsletter that I talked about Gardeners' Question Time at the Botanics Summer Party and I said that it was the first visit of the GQT team to Edinburgh.

Well – what a mistake! At our first meeting this year Elizabeth Ferro and Jim Brass rapidly disabused me of this illusion and reported that not only had GQT been to Edinburgh before, in 1985, but the programme had taken place in our very own Dreghorn Loan Hall, and Jim produced the documentary evidence to prove it. I issue a wholehearted apology. I only quoted what the panel said. Thank you, Elizabeth and Jim, for putting things right. It all goes to show that you can't get away with wild statements in Colinton Garden Club.

A lot has been discussed in the press recently about the therapeutic aspects of gardening. There was a recent article in the British Medical Journal stating that *'putting the rake and secateurs to use improves mental and physical health of all ages'* and that *'among adults, allotment gardening has been shown to improve mood and self-esteem. In people with depression and anxiety, gardening reduced symptoms and improved social functioning'* (thanks to Penny McKee for this information). Also, in the Observer, a highlighted article about gardening in elderly care communities stated that *'gardening offers stimulation, exercise and social interaction, tackles inactivity and loneliness and improves health and quality of life'*. We are all very lucky to have our gardens to keep us active. Gardening clearly does us a lot of good.



Apart from actually gardening ourselves, our Summer Outing this year took us over to Fife to look at three very different and very interesting gardens. Our first visit was to Logie House at Crossford, near Dunfermline, where we strolled around an immaculately kept formal garden with a wonderful herbaceous border and a huge fully functioning MacKenzie and Moncur greenhouse. Carl, a very agreeable fully functioning gardener was on hand to answer our myriad questions. We went to Falkland Palace next, and enjoyed wandering round the centuries old gardens and some of us visited the Palace as well...

Glassmount House: the tearoom, deceptively sitting on two-metre-high brick piers, has been renovated since our Summer Outing

...It was easy to understand why it was a favourite residence of the Stuart monarchs for 200 years and especially loved by Mary Queen of Scots. Our third visit was to Glassmount House near Auchtertool, Kirkaldy and the most amazing garden most of us had ever seen. The description said that there was a densely planted walled garden – this was an understatement. It was as if Irene Thomson, the owner, had taken the plan for the walled area and drawn squiggles all over it. The squiggles became intersecting paths and the central areas were filled with shrubs, small trees and flowering plants to create a kind of labyrinth in which you couldn't see anyone else but you could hear them. It was a wonderful experience.

Our first meeting this year was a very interesting talk on tulips in Kyrgyzstan by Frazer Henderson. Frazer showed us wonderful photos of tiny little red and yellow tulips, small to withstand the extreme cold of the mountains in which they grow, and from which the huge selection we enjoy in Europe today has derived.



An early French poem in a watercolor - calligraphy album of wayside flowers and native species created by renowned Scottish artisan, Esther Inglis (1571 – 1624) – photo taken in the Gallery by Bob Jones

The Plant Sale was a great success again, and many thanks to all those who brought cuttings for sale, the bakers and jam makers and to you, our members, for coming along to enjoy the morning (see photos on our website and box below).

If you have not been to see 'Painting Paradise, the Art of the Garden' at the Queen's Gallery in the Palace of Holyrood, then I can only recommend that you make time to go along. It is a charming exhibition that explores the changing character of the garden from the 16th to the early 20th century. It starts with Persian gardens and includes wonderful studies of Renaissance, Baroque and Landscape gardens, with paintings by Leonardo and Rembrandt and some of the earliest botanical drawings of gardens and plants (see photo on left). The exhibition runs until 26th February 2017.

Elsbeth

Eradicating polio worldwide

At our recent Plant Sale we offered a selection of Parker's Spring bulbs, and also (through Jim Heardman) envelopes of Ruby Giant crocuses in aid of the Purple4Polio campaign. Organised by Rotary International (linked to its 100th Anniversary), the initiative aims to eradicate polio throughout the world. Furthermore, the Club's gardening volunteers have been working hard planting groups of the crocus bulbs in the public-space plots at the Library, Long Steps and Triangle.





While high winds occasionally shatter roof-panes in the glasshouses, one in the Arid Lands was deliberately removed this Summer to allow the huge flower spike of a *Yucca elata* to escape. It is a member of the Agavoideae subfamily and native to southwestern North America. Known as the Soaptree *Yucca*, it has / had a number of uses: pith from the...

A young example of *Nerine* 'Dorothy Palmer' seen in the Temperate Palm House.

...saponin-rich trunk and roots to make soap and shampoo; fibre from the leaves to fashion baskets, ropes, hats, sandals and even dental floss. Clearly the cooler air outside has not inhibited flowering.

Planning the Summer Outing in 2017

You may have recently visited a garden within the Lothians and Fife that might be suitable for inclusion in our Summer Outing next year? If so, please get in touch with the Club's Programme Convenor, Susan Plag: 0131 441 7936, events@colintongardens.org.uk

Garden implement loan to Club members

The Club has several types of (not-so-common) garden implements for loan to members, including two (heavy!) lawn scarifiers. Please contact Gill Perry: 0131 441 3074.

And glazing into the future...

Patsy Mair has a number of greenhouse panes that could be useful to members who want to replace damaged ones or even store a few spares for a rainy day. The toughened glass panes measure:

18" x 24" (56 panes) / 22" x 24" (8 panes)
 27¹/₂" x 24" (2 panes) / 24" x 24" (12 panes)
 20¹/₂" x 24" (6 right-angled triangle panes)

Some complimentary metal components are also available. Any or all items are open to offer. Please contact Patsy on 0131 445 1801.

Monday 28 November	A world of gardens by Stewart Rawlins and Julia Corden, Brightwater Holidays. 8 pm in Dreghorn Loan – Upper Hall
Monday 12 December	Christmas Party 8 pm in Dreghorn Loan – Upper Hall. See below
Monday 23 January	Member's Evening – three illustrated talks 8 pm in Dreghorn Loan – Upper Hall
Monday 27 February	Wild, wet and woodland gardening by David Rankin, Kevock Plants 8 pm in Dreghorn Loan – Upper Hall. Also a plant stall
Monday 27 March	Saughton – the restoration of an historic park by Peter McDougall Project Development Officer. 8 pm in Dreghorn Loan – Upper Hall
Monday 24 April	Annual General Meeting at 8 pm in Dreghorn Loan – Upper Hall
A Monday evening in May	Evening Open Garden A visit to Oakwood in Roslin Glen Details later
A Saturday in May / June	Local Open Gardens Details later
A Saturday in June / July	Summer Outing Details later

Christmas Party tickets

If you did not obtain tickets at the last Monday meeting, contact Chris Tonge 0131 662 4508
treasurer@colintongardens.org.uk

Doors open at 7.45 pm. £8-worth of jolly good fun!

Scottish Gardeners' Forum: Dalgety Bay

The Editor attended the Forum's AGM held at Dalgety Bay on 15th October. It was a dreich day and I inadvertently arrived at West Dalgety Bay with hints of the 'Three Bridges' on the horizon. Eventually I spied 'Link Road' and it was plain sailing from then on. However, with my resistance diminished and distracted by a cup of hot tea, I signed a white form and was duly elected to Council.

Newsletter Delivery

Not received your newsletter?
Contact Bob Jones
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Members' Recipes: Butternut Squash Soup from Elspeth MacGregor

Ingredients

1 butternut squash, about 1 kg, peeled and deseeded
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp butter
2 onions, diced
1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
2 mild red chillies, deseeded and finely chopped
850 ml hot vegetable stock
4 tbsp crème fraîche, plus more to serve



Method

Heat oven to 200°C / 180°C fan / gas 6. Cut the squash into large cubes, about 4 cm across, then toss in a large roasting tin with half the olive oil. Roast for 30 min, turning once during cooking, until golden and soft.

While the squash cooks, melt the butter with the remaining oil in a large saucepan, then add the onions, garlic and ¾ of the chillies. Cover and cook on a very low heat for 15-20 min until the onions are completely soft.

Tip the squash into the pan, add the stock and the crème fraîche, then whizz with a stick blender until smooth. For a really silky soup, blitz in a liquidiser in batches. Return to the pan, gently reheat, then season to taste. Serve the soup in bowls with swirls of crème fraîche and a scattering of the remaining chopped chillies.

Club Website

For details of all Club activities
and contact addresses
Webmaster: Sonia Duffy
www.colintongardens.org.uk