



COLINTON GARDEN CLUB

NEWSLETTER

Newsletter
No 145
November 2023

**A late Autumn in
Colinton: this was
taken on 6th November**



**CGC hosts Scottish
Gardeners' Forum
AGM, October 2023**
Feature on page 2...



**CGC Christmas Party
on Monday 10th
December! More
information on page 4**



Dear fellow members

It has been so nice to see so many of you at our meetings thus far this season, and especially to welcome new members. Gardening has never been more important for so many of us lucky enough to have access to such a great hobby, recreation, call it what you will. It's not just for retirees either- for example, children are fascinated by growing plants, and young couples buying a house for the first time want to learn about gardening.



The hunter-gatherers amongst us get great satisfaction from harvesting and sharing produce - and how tasty the really fresh produce is! Not only are there some excellent TV and radio gardening programmes, books as well, but nowadays the internet holds a vast amount of instant information. I still think nothing beats person to person exchange though- there's an innate social side to gardening too.

I recently revisited Redhall Walled Garden (in the October rain, as it happened!); what a wonderful well-monitored place for people with emotional/mental health problems or learning difficulties. Incidentally the Redhall Garden has improved a lot since the club last visited 8 or so years ago-a wide range of plants for sale too.

Colinton must be an exceptional area of Edinburgh in having so much accommodation with gardens, but as our last speaker Stuart MacKenzie, commented, it is so disappointing that the waiting list for an allotment is about 10 years. Ground is so expensive.....

I announced the death of a longtime supporter of our club at our meeting last month - John Lodge will be sadly missed. He and his also deceased wife Isobel wrote and produced the annual Christmas pantomime for many years. For...

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Edinburgh Tool Library

Shona Harrower writes: 'I was very impressed by a recent trial of the new tool sharpening service being offered by the Edinburgh Tool Library, operating out of the CVE shed. Paul Bullen arrived on the Monday evening on an SW20 e-cargo bike and took away about a dozen items, which included various old rusty spades, forks, shears and secateurs, as well as the CGC turfing iron, aerators, and tree loppers. I then collected the serviced items from the CVE shed that Friday, and what a difference! They are currently seeking volunteers to get involved with both helping run the tool library and also perform sharpening of tools. No experience is necessary as training will be provided. In exchange for volunteering, access to the tool library would be free of charge. Members should email sw20.etl@gmail.com if interested. Alternatively, CGC members can benefit from an introductory 50% discount on the standard tool sharpening prices listed online at <https://bit.ly/etl-sharp-pricing>. They have a range of membership options available ranging from £10 to £40 per year and can join online at https://bit.ly/join_etl.

Paid up ETL members can borrow as many items as they wish from the inventory free of charge. The process for booking and borrowing tools can be found at https://bit.ly/fag_etl. CGC also has a loan equipment scheme, which is completely free of charge. Details can be found on the club website under 'Services'

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...those who have joined recently, this was a huge and special source of entertainment always with a loose gardening theme, performed in the vintage Dreghorn Loan Church Hall. Great fun - but hard work! John also served on the CGC committee and opened his garden to members several times. Thank you, John (and Isobel), for doing so much to enhance Colinton Garden Club.

The autumn weather has been pretty dismal, but this didn't deter members coming along to a highly successful plant sale which took place on Saturday 7th October 2023. Everyone is talking about bumper apple crops - what a versatile fruit!

Looking forward, we have a varied selection of speakers for you to enjoy this winter at our monthly meetings and a Christmas party coming up at the Bowling Club on Redford Rd. See our 'dates for your diary' feature on page 4 of this newsletter). At the Christmas Party, Simmerdim will entertain us, and Murdo our librarian is working on the quiz to end all quizzes! Our resident caterers, Margaret and Carol will head the catering team, and Jan will lead the choir with his wonderful accordion playing. All for £10! - tickets available AFTER THE TALK on the 27th November meeting, when the very personable Thomas Gifford from Dawyck Botanical Gardens will tell us what he's been up to this last year.

In the meantime enjoy what gardening is left this year, get planning for next year, and have a very happy festive season

Penny

Scottish Gardeners' Forum (SGF) AGM 2023

Cliff Dalley, CGC Programme Co-ordinator writes:

'In October, the CGC had the honour of hosting the SGF AGM & Forum. For those of you who are not familiar with the Scottish Gardeners' Forum (as I was until a few weeks ago), it provides a vital communications link between Scotland's many horticultural organisations, with the aim of encouraging the exchange of information, ideas and promoting the non-professional sector of gardening in Scotland. This year, considering the recent weather, the attendance was fair – approximately 50 – with members from local garden clubs across Scotland, including a group from as far away as Nairn who were making a weekend of it. As it turned out, the event was a lot more interesting than the name suggests.

'After preliminaries, e.g. election of committee officers, it was onto matters of greater importance: gardening and gardens. We had four very interesting speakers from different backgrounds in horticulture. First up was our very own Shona Harrower, who showed a film she had put together about the Friends of Campbell Park and the sterling work the volunteers have done there, such as the orchard tree adoption scheme and the fabulous native woodland trail. Next was Calum Clunie of Beechgrove Garden giving a very enlightening talk on growing and showing bulbs at flower shows, explaining the precision required and what the judges are looking for in bulb presentation. I hadn't realised what a science it is! After lunch, the speaker was Liz Stewart of the Scottish Garden Scheme. This was a very inspiring talk with the emphasis on the smaller amateur gardeners' gardens. As we well know from our own members open garden days, it isn't all National Trust and Chatsworth, and I think all the listeners made a note of visiting more private gardens in the future. To finish the days' talks, it was Billy Carruthers of Binny Plants, a specialist in peonies. The event ended with Kathryn Pitts of the SGF concluding followed by general socialising. I managed to do some valuable networking on the day and, as speaker organiser for next year, I identified and invited one or two speakers to come and do a presentation for the CGC. Fingers crossed.

'All in all, a good day... and much to Kens' relief, the audio system held out!'

Campbell Park news

On Friday 13th October 2023 the **Orchard Adoption Party took place!**

Here we see CGC committee members Shona Harrower and Cliff Dalley with Ally Price and MSP Sue Webber at the happy event. The handover of the CGC Jubilee plaque is in the bottom photo.



Polite notice: no spitting, intrusive use of a mobile phone or inappropriate wearing of the kilt!

Orchid lover Bob Jones writes about the Blackadder family, following a recent outing to Ayr...:

'The Blackadder family name first appears in the historical record in the early 14th Century as Adam Blacater, one-time Professor of Philosophy at Bologna University. The scene then shifts to Berwickshire, where Cuthbert Blackadder became known as 'Chieftain of the South' for his efforts in repelling English marauders in the Scottish Borderlands; he and his seven sons were indeed darkly complexioned.

At the mention of 'Blackadder', many might immediately think of Rowan Atkinson's performances through four stages of British history, and of course Tony Robinston's Baldrick, who starts off as a castle servant and dung gatherer. More seriously, earlier this year Vera and I took time off from orchid-tending duties at the Ayr Flower Show to visit nearby Rozzelle House Museum and Galleries, where there were four ongoing exhibitions. One of these featured the work of the The Glasgow Print Studio founded in 1972, and that of an influential member (Dame) Elizabeth Blackadder (1931 – 2021). As a Scottish painter and etcher, one of the processes she perfected was *spit-bite and aquatint etching*: Wikipedia defines the former so: a mixture of nitric acid and Gum Arabic (or rosin, or almost never saliva) is dripped, spattered or painted onto a metal surface to give interesting effects. An example of her work shown on the left: detail of (the orchid) **Dracula bella** (1993); unfortunately, the paper has darkened with time. Compare this to the vibrancy and impressive detail obtainable for the same species with a state-of-the-art camera (full-frame Canon / macro lens, Chris Barker, Darlington Orchid Society). Each medium has its merits of course. After lunch at the café, we wandered around the parkland, where Vera soon acquired a new admirer (middle photo below).

As an aside, Jean Blackadder, Elizabeth's sister, was a much-respected headmistress of Buckstone Primary School for many years. The club visited her beautiful garden in Gifford some years ago now.

Returning to the flower show the next day, we encountered a group of scarecrows in a marquee. They had all donned their best togs for the judges. One braw lad had been a proud supporter of the Scottish Team at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014. Libby Clegg, seen here with her support runner, won Gold in the 100 metres Women's Para-sport event.



Plant Sale on Saturday 7th October 2023

The Autumn Plant Sale was a huge success – see some photos below. The CGC website is kept constantly up-to-date regularly with lots of photos of recent outings and activities, and many more photos are available at www.colintongardens.org.uk/galleries - enjoy reminiscing about last year's Christmas party, or enjoying the Summer Outing again in the middle of winter! And of course our resident photographer Bob regularly sends us photos of plants that he has spotted on his wide-ranging travels!



MEETINGS AND SPEAKERS 2023/24

Monday 27 th November 2023 8.00 pm	Thomas Gifford, Supervisor at Dawyck Garden: 'A Year at Dawyck Botanical Garden'
Monday 11 th December 2023 8.00 pm	CGC XMAS PARTY! With buffet, quiz, carols and entertainment at COLINTON BOWLING CLUB, REDFORD RD.
Friday 12 th January 2024 7.00 pm	Welcome evening for new CGC members who have joined the club since COVID (see below). THE COLINTON INN, BRIDGE ROAD
Monday 22 nd January 2024, 8.00 pm	Ewan Paterson from the Juniper Green Merryhatton Plant shop: 'Types and Care of House Plants'
Monday 26 th February 2024, 8.00 pm	Members' evening! Speakers Ian McKee, Liz Windle and Douglas Tullis
Monday 25 th March 2024, 8.00 pm	Stephen McGregor, Technical Officer Dept of Parks: 'Edinburgh's Green Spaces and Parks – they're your spaces!'
Monday 22 nd April 2024, 8.00 pm	AGM & Craft Show: members are invited to submit entries. Details to follow
	ALL EVENTS ARE IN DREGHORN LOAN HALL UNLESS STATED (more information will be sent to members before each meeting)

Christmas Party!

The Colinton Garden Club Xmas Party will take place on Monday 11th December at the Colinton Bowling Club, 49a Redford Road from 8pm - 10 pm. The ticket price is £10 to include one free drink on arrival (thereafter it is a pay bar). Tickets will be available **at the end of the meeting** on Monday 27th November. Hope to see you there!



Calling new CGC members!

Membership Secretary Shona Harrower writes: 'Have you joined the CGC since the covid epidemic? If so, you are warmly invited to join us for an informal evening at **The Colinton Inn, on Friday, January 12th at 7pm**. Our Committee will be there to offer you a drink with nibbles, answer questions about the club, introduce you to other members and listen to hear what you are hoping to get out of joining. More details nearer the time, but put the date in your diary now. We look forward to meeting you!'

Diana's Beetroot Chutney Recipe

Ingredients

- 1.5 kg Cooked beetroot cut into cubes (0.5 to 1 cm cubes)
- 1 kg Skinned finely chopped onions
- 750 gms Peeled, cored and chopped apples (any type will do, but may influence flavour)
- 500 mls Brown malt vinegar
- 500 gms White sugar
- 2 tsp Cumin
- 2 tsp Ground ginger
- 4 cloves Garlic
- 1 tsp Salt
- 1 tsp Ground black pepper
- 0.5 to 1 tsp Chilli powder or fresh chillies according to your taste.
- 1Tbsp Olive oil

Method

Boil beetroot in their skins until cooked and tender. The skins should slip off easily. Cut beetroot into small cubes. Place olive oil and chopped onions in a large preserving pan. Gently simmer onions until tender. Add cumin, ginger, chopped garlic, salt, pepper and chilli to the onions and simmer gently for a few minutes. (You can vary the spices and seasonings according to your preferences). Add the beetroot and vinegar to the onions. Peel and chop the apples and add to the pan too. Bring the mix to the boil and cook gently until the apple is soft and cooked. Stir in the sugar. When it has dissolved, bring the mix to the boil. Continue boiling until the mixture is sufficiently thickened. Stir gently on occasions to prevent burning.

Prepare clean jam jars by warming them in an oven at 100 centigrade. Fill the jars with the chutney mix while it is still **very hot** (take care). Seal the jars tightly with their lids **immediately**. (This ensures a good seal, and keeps the contents sterile, allowing them to keep well). Allow jars to cool and then label.

The chutney can be eaten straight away but is best matured for several weeks. Once the jar is opened keep in the fridge and eat within 2 weeks.