



Message from the Chairman

The gardening year has so far got off to a mild start with crocus, hellebore, daphne and winter honeysuckle all doing their stuff: raising our spirits and scenting the air. The KHS year is also gearing up with the AGM due to take place on March 15th. In this newsletter you will see an exhortation from the Treasurer to attend because there will be a discussion about giving away money from the Society's very healthy general bank account to local charities. The Committee would like your views. The AGM agenda will reach you shortly. In the meantime, save the date in your diaries.

Another reason to attend the AGM is to elect a new Chairman. As I have said before, I shall be retiring after serving for four years. I would like to think that the KHS is in a strong position: there is an enthusiastic Committee, the summer party and a day trip are already arranged, a specialist coach trip to gardens in North Wales is fully booked and the Flower and Produce Show is being planned for August 24th again at St Anne's. But at the moment I still have no successor as Chairman. With a new Chairman the Society can continue its current wave of success. There are plenty of you reading this to whom chairing a meeting is second nature and steering the ship is a pleasure. Please step forward and take up the challenge.

Photos from KHS Social Media:



Narcissus bulbocodium in late January



Viburnum bringing joy in December



Winter flowering clematis

Money, Money, Money

At a recent committee meeting we discussed the healthy balance sitting in our bank account amounting to just over £19,000. But perhaps it wasn't so healthy after all? How had it come there and did we want to keep it?

The General Reserve (about £15,000) has arisen as an accumulation of small surpluses arising each year from the events, lectures, outings that we organise. Obviously when planning these activities, we do not want lose money on any of them, but is it desirable to have this considerable sum in the bank? The Show Reserve (about £4,000) again has arisen from regular surpluses from the large show on the Green, occasionally losing money if torrential rain fell. This year we made a small loss on our smaller show but it is probable that it will roughly break even in future, if the weather is no worse than grey! We should keep some funds in the Show Reserve in case some wonderful person wanted to start the large show again, but perhaps we should give some away as we always tell people that the surplus is given to charity? If so, which charities and how much?

Please do give some thought to this and let us know your views; better still come to the AGM on 15th March and let's discuss this. If you know you are not going to be able to come to the AGM and you would like your views to be taken into account please contact the Chairman - chair@kewhorticulturalsociety.org

Harriet Enthoven - Treasurer

Membership Reminder and Update

Firstly, thanks to all of you who have already paid your subscription for 2019, especially those of you who pay by standing order. For everybody else, you are reminded that **subs fell due on 1 Jan 2019**. If your renewal is not received by 31 March, sadly it will be assumed that your membership has lapsed. It is still only £5 per member or £10 per couple, a snip and the same as last year (please see the end of the newsletter for a subscription form including a standard order mandate).

We say goodbye to Anne Drummond-Hay and Francis and Madeleine Brown, long standing members of the KHS who are moving away and pass on the sad news of the recent death of Barbara Cooper.

Diary Dates

15 March - *KHS AGM. St Winefride's Church Hall, Leyborne Park*

The doors open at 7.45pm and meeting will start at 8pm. Free glass of wine on arrival. After the formal business there will be a plant identification quiz kindly arranged by Richard Ward with a bottle of champagne for the winner! The AGM is hoped it will conclude at 9pm. This is an important meeting as you will note from the Treasurer's Report. Please send Apologies if you are unable to attend to ann.scurfield@zen.co.uk

17 May - *KHS Summer Party*

As last year, we are holding the Summer Party at the Priory Park Tennis Club. There will be a cash bar and canapes and other nibbles will be served. This is always a wonderful opportunity to meet other members in a highly attractive setting. In addition, as always, there will be a plant stall. Further details will be sent to all members nearer the date.

20 May - *KHS Trip to Snowdonia*

This is now fully booked and has a waiting list. 5 days are to be spent looking at gardens in Snowdonia with Tony Russell. The climate and landscape make for unusual and dramatic gardens and so this should be a real treat.

19 June - *A Coach Trip to Wisley (plus an optional behind the Scenes tour)*

The gardens at Wisley will be looking their best at midsummer and as a society affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society, KHS is able to organize a visit with free entry. The cost of transport by coach is £15 per person. As an optional extra we can arrange a 'Behind the Scenes tour' of Wisley Laboratory showing areas not accessible to the public. There is an extra charge of £15 a person for a 90 minute tour to see their Science Library, Entomology, Pathology and Botany departments. A member of the team will explain the work they do to support the charitable remit of the RHS. Provided 10 of our group apply the visit can go ahead, but there is a maximum of 15 so apply early.

This coach trip is also open to friends and relations for an additional charge of £5 a person, which in effect means they join Kew Horticultural Society for 2019. We aim to have a relaxed day out with a departure time of 10 am. The journey should take well under an hour and we expect to get back to Kew by 5.30 pm. Please apply on the application form which is attached at the end of this newsletter. A new Welcome Building has been under construction at Wisley for the last two years. Opening is due in May so we hope to be some of the first visitors to experience the new 100-seater café and restaurant, an expanded indoor plant centre and gift shop.

24 August - *KHS Summer Show*

We have been fortunate in securing St Anne's Church Hall as last year for the summer show. While of course details will be sent to you nearer the time put the date in your diary now.

Crocus corms

KHS members may recall that as an affiliated member of the RHS the KHS acquired 1000 crocus corms from the RHS for community projects. KHS shared the corms equally between The Kew Society, who planted them at the station, The Pensford Field Environmental Trust who planted theirs in the walkway into their field and ourselves. We chose to plant them at St Anne's Church Kew Green by way of a thank you to them for hosting our Summer Show. The entire endeavour was done in a partnership between the RHS and The Rotary Club of Great Britain to raise funds for

charity. Accordingly a group of KHS members armed with trowels and bulb planters descended on St Anne's late last year to plant the corms. The trick was to plant them in places that the mower could not reach but where those visiting the Church were likely to see them and enjoy them. In addition the Church Warden asked us to plant them in a way that was 'aesthetically pleasing.' A demanding brief I think you will agree but we did our best. So now if you go to St Anne's you will have to keep an eye out for blooms in the corners and nooks and crannies between the grave stones. While at work we got a kindly visit from Father Nigel and as always the efficiency of the KHS members shone through because it took only just over an hour to plant about 300 corms.

After all that talk of trips and outings we thought the following might amuse you:

Coach Reproach

Why is it when I'm travelling on a coach
On other people's talk I love to poach?
Now, normally I've got a lot to say
But on a coach my chatter melts away.
I realise that nothing in my life
(Which, on the whole, is fairly free from strife)
Is half so interesting or such fun
As any other travellers - bar none.

I earwig what I can from all around
And scandal mixed with calumny abound;
There's endless foreign travel, weird disease,
Computer traumas, how to deal with fleas –
I hardly ever need to watch TV,
I hear it all reported next to me!

I get so cross if someone speaks to me
Because it interrupts the flow, you see.
A newspaper held high before my face
Goes some way to securing me my space.
I hate it when they drop their voice and hiss
'Coz that way all the juicy bits I miss.
But worst of all is when they rise to leave
With how the story ends still up their sleeve.

I really can't run after them and say
'I need to hear the ending, so please stay!'
So, lest things turn to fisticuffs and strife,
I'd better mend my ways and get a life.
It's no more chatty coaches and the like-
I'm going solo on my dear old bike.

By Grace Dives

Who kindly gave us permission to print her poem.

Grace also reads books for an audible book charity called Calibre Audio Library. Grace thought KHS members might like one of their books 'The Brother Gardeners by Andrea Wulf' a book she has recently recorded, and describes as, 'utterly fascinating, informative, absorbing, hugely entertaining! Much mention of the early days of Kew.' Why not give it a try through www.calibre.org.uk?

Six degrees of Separation?

There is a back story to this poem and our contact with Grace Dives. Margaret Blair Gould sent the poem to Ann Sandall, our Chair. Ann suggested at the last KHS Committee meeting that we print the poem in the newsletter, because



Photo credit: Unsplash - Annie Spratt

she thought it funny and attractive and also because KHS members enjoy the coach trips that we arrange. It was agreed, however, that to do this we first had to secure the permission of the poet. Ann asked the Committee if anyone knew Grace Dives. Ann Scurfield recalled that in about 1978 she had heard a singer called Grace Dives perform at a concert and she would try and find her. Eventually, Grace was tracked down through Calibre, the audio books charity mentioned above. Thus, a lovely voice, that had remained an enduring memory for 40 years, meant that Ann and Grace made contact and Grace kindly gave permission for us to print her poem.

Gardening and Climate Change

I suspect like others of you I still have roses in bloom in my garden. They have been flowering almost continuously since June. Until the recent cold snap, I also had cosmos and dahlias in flower. Luckily, I brought my pelargoniums inside, also still in flower, just in time. Last Autumn my flowering cherry was shedding its leaves while at the same time putting out a scattering of blossoms, that properly should arrive in the spring. A world turned upside down.

I began to wonder what the right response was to this behaviour. Would the long flowering period exhaust and weaken the plants? Should I feed them more vigorously when the growing season starts or feed them more than once during the summer? I asked the Henry Doubleday Research Foundation for their advice with the thought that I would pass it on as I thought other KHS members might find useful.

Sally Cunningham responded as follows: 'Do not feed plants which are in flower now, because this will only encourage them into growth further during the winter months, when they should be resting. The low levels of light in winter prevent plants from being able to utilize any nutrients in the soil (there is a spell of around 6 weeks near mid winter, when even in warm conditions plants cease to grow because of insufficient daylight), so feeding them won't help. Soft growth caused by rich feeding once the light improves will be very liable to frost damage, so you are much better waiting until things are really starting to grow away properly in late March to May, depending on where you live and feed then with a mulch of garden compost or a slow release substance such as bone meal or a balanced organic fertilizer.

This general view was also endorsed by Lorna Sinnamon of www.gardenadvice.co.uk who added that any flowering plants such as pelargoniums and campanula should be dead headed to allow the plant to put its energy into producing more robust growth rather than flowers, and that roses need to be pruned now to keep the plants open and ready to flower next season.

The Quiz - Friday 8th February

This year's Quiz took place with more contestants than last year, including two new teams of people who have never come before which was cheering. The new teams, in their different ways, turned out to be the stars of the event. One new team, The Argy Bargies which was a family team, gave the KHS a very generous donation which was most kind and suggests they were having a very good time. The second group of newcomers were the Goosefoots team who were the winners. They pipped The President's Team, headed by David Collison, to the post in a sudden death play off because at the end of the Quiz both were tied in first position. As usual Richard Ward was in charge of the bar in his



Roses in January!?



Fun times at The Quiz



Pelargoniums safely indoors

own inimitable style and a ploughman's supper was served by a group of KHS volunteers. Special thanks, however, should be given to Ann Sandall, who was responsible for much of the organisation of the event and to Alan Sandall the Quizmaster who not only kept a firm but kindly hand on the proceedings but also set the questions. Altogether this was a most successful and enjoyable evening.

Did you hear about the Kew Gardens monthly Health Walks?

Kew Gardens are offering free monthly health walks for people living nearby, either a gentle stroll or a more exhilarating brisker walk. Free entry to the Gardens is included. The walks are led by Kew's volunteer walk leaders and take place on the first Wednesday of each month at 11 am and last about an hour. They start from Victoria Gate and have a focus each month on a certain subject, perhaps a plant like lavender or roses. You will find more about the walks through this link: <https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/health-walks-for-local-residents>. Places are limited and the walks are proving very popular indeed and book up quickly, so to be certain of a place we suggest you register well in advance by emailing discovery@kew.org with your name, postcode and the date and level of walk you wish to attend. Booking opens one month before the date of the walk.

The next few dates are as follows: March 6, April 3 and May 1.

We did contact Kew to see if there was a telephone number that people who do not have email could use. Sadly, the answer was they do not have the resources to man a phone line and instead suggested non-email users might ask a 'connected' friend to help out and register them online.

And Finally.....

Those of you who visited the KHS Summer Show may recall there was a class for children namely entries for the 'Longest Bean Competition'. It must be said it was a very small class with just three entries. One of the entries was from an eight year old friend of mine. He won 3rd prize. As he had been unable to attend the Show on the day, I sent him his third prize certificate in the post. I thought there was no need to burden my young friend with the information that he was the third out of just three entries. Anyway, he was mighty pleased with his certificate which he proudly hung in his bedroom.

Time passed and at the end of last year his school issued their December Newsletter. Under the paragraph headed 'Awards and Scholarships' and among illustrious entries such as 'Rupert Fotherington Thomas has been awarded a place on the Royal Academy of Music's Gifted Young Musician Course' and 'Bertie Molesworth has got a place on the MCC's Gifted Young Cricketer Coaching School.' I was somewhat startled by the entry 'Noah Bamsey was awarded a third place in the Kew Horticultural Society's Longest Bean Competition.'

So, there you are, the KHS appears to be on a par with the MCC and the Royal Academy in terms of lustre and reputation. Personally, I am not at all surprised.

Happy Gardening to you all from the Editorial Team!



Crocus emerging at St.Anne's



The three 'Longest Beans'



Crocus in detail



KEW HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY: One of the oldest horticultural societies in London. No gardening experience necessary. Lectures, events and outings throughout the year. Newsletters. Annual Summer Flower and Produce Show

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2019 – due 1 January 2019. Subscription is £5 per year per adult, children free. The membership year is the same as the calendar year but members who joined at the 2018 Summer Show or later in 2018, are covered for 2019.

Your name(s).....

Address.....

Post code

Phone number.....

Email

Date.....

Please circle one of the following:

1 I enclose cash/cheque payable to Kew Horticultural Society for £5.00/£10 for my/our subscription.

Please return this form to our Membership Secretary, Carole Brougham, 58 Bushwood Road, Kew, TW9 3BW
(020 8948 7254).

2 I have completed a standing order mandate (see below) for my/our bank/building society to pay my/our annual subscription(s) and I will give/send it to my bank.

3 I bank online and have instructed my bank to pay KHS by Standing Order and am emailing this application form for your records.

4 I confirm that I pay by standing order

5 I confirm that I joined at or after the 2018 Summer Show and my subs are paid for 2019.

If 2 -5 apply, please email this form to membership@kewhorticulturalsociety.org for our records. Thank you,

Help is always welcome with social events, deliveries of newsletters, committee membership, and organization of the annual Show – please indicate below any which interest you:

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VISIT TO WISLEY (with a voluntary behind the scenes tour) - Wednesday JUNE 19 2019

We do hope you will be able to join us for our summer coach trip and here are the financial details!

- There are no entry fees to Wisley on this occasion
- The payment of £15 is for return transport by coach from Kew Green.
- We welcome friends or relatives who are non-members for an additional charge of £5 a person which makes them a member of KHS until the end of 2019.
- For those interested in the 90-minute voluntary 'Behind the Scenes' tour there is a charge of £15 a head.

We need a minimum number of 10 for the tour with a maximum of 15 so don't delay!

PROGRAMME:

9.50 am	Arrive promptly to leave Elizabeth Gate, Kew Green at 10 am.
10.45 approx	Arrive at Wisley with free time to spend the day as you like.
LUNCH	There are various options for lunch or alternatively picnics are allowed in the gardens.
2.00	Optional visit to the Wisley Laboratory (book below)
4.30	We depart (after tea and a visit to the plant and gift shop!) for our return journey to Kew which should take us less than an hour.

APPLICATION FOR TICKETS TO VISIT WISLEY on June 19 2019

Please send to Jenny Long, Maze Lodge, Forest Road, Richmond TW9 3BZ.

On receipt of your application, email confirmation of your place on the trip will be sent.

Name: _____

Email address: _____

Mobile No: (in case of problems on the day) _____

Please reserve me _____ members coach tickets @ £15 each
(includes tip for the driver) £ _____

I am bringing a non-member with me @ £20

Name: _____ £ _____

I enclose a cheque made payable to *Kew Horticultural Society*

TOTAL : £ _____

Please apply for the 'Behind the Scenes' tour with a **second cheque** for £15 to help with admin if we have too many or too few applications.

I/we would like to go on the 'Behind the Scenes' tour @ £15 a person

£ _____