

South West Shropshire Gardening Club

Newsletter



June 2025

On 11th June, fifteen of us went to New Invention to visit Sarah and Simon Jameson's meadow project.

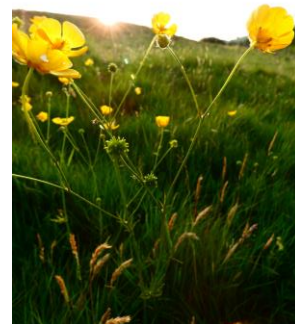


It was a beautiful sunny evening and we enjoyed a relaxing stroll around 11.4 acres which have been managed for nature, wildlife and biodiversity. There were many wild flowers to admire, including the tiny eye bright which I knew of years ago but had forgotten. Sarah shared her knowledge of yellow meadow ants which inhabit part of their hillside in ground that has never been cultivated and she recommended Dr



Tim King's webinar on You Tube for further information on these fascinating creatures. We also saw some of Sarah's lovely artwork which is inspired by her surroundings. She has agreed to do two workshops for us in the Autumn which will be great fun.

We finished a perfect visit with cool drinks and delicious cakes. I had a lovely email from Sarah later that evening saying how much she and Simon had enjoyed meeting our "friendly group" and thanking the club for our donation of £100 towards all the work that they do.



Sarah issued an open invitation for club members to visit the meadow in ones or twos whenever we would like to.

To find out more, go to <https://sarahnewinvention.wixsite.com/we-bought-a-field>

Annual Trip

Cholmondely Castle Gardens: Wednesday 25th June

The deadline for purchasing tickets for this trip has passed.

People attending should meet in the lay-by at Bishops Castle Community College at 9.30. Don't forget to bring your picnic, unless you are planning to eat at the café. We aim to return by 5pm approximately.

Mini trip to John's Garden and Ashwood Nursery

Monday 7th July

John's Garden is the private garden of John Massey VMH (Victoria Medal of Honour, the highest honour awarded by the RHS), owner of Ashwood Nurseries, Kingswinford. It is situated behind the nursery in a canal-side setting, in the lovely open countryside of South Staffordshire. John says, "A garden is a place full of memories and stories of friends who have inspired you and generously shared their knowledge and their plants...there is nothing wrong or right in a garden. It is what you like which is important".

John acquired the nursery as a teenager straight from school, with no formal training but was encouraged by his grandfather who taught him the principles of gardening. Now the speciality hepaticas, hardy cyclamen, hydrangeas, conifers, snowdrops, lewisias, salvias and primula auricula have won international acclaim and the award-winning hellebores are regarded as "simply the best strains ever produced". To date, the nursery has been awarded fifty-three RHS gold medals.

It should be no surprise that such a passionate gardener has developed one of the finest private gardens in the UK, featuring magnificent collections of trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials and conifers. There is all year-round interest with an abundance of rare plants as well as familiar favourites. Many fine features include a stunning pool and rock garden, an Anemone pavonina meadow, a rare tufa garden and a dramatic fern stumpery. John's Garden has been on TV and in numerous articles – Carol Klein said "It is the most loved and looked after garden I've ever had the pleasure of visiting".

We are having a brief introductory talk at 11.30 and then we will be free to explore the garden at our own pace. Gardeners will be on hand to answer any questions.

There will be time to look at the glasshouses, plant sales, garden shop, gift shop. Lunch is available in the tea rooms from 12-2pm. We are asked to stagger our lunchtimes to avoid long queues. Picnics are not allowed in the garden and there are no seating areas for eating your own food. Eating on the coach is the only option.

Bus: seats 34

Tickets:

Members will have priority but if there are spare seats after 23rd June, we will be able to invite guests.

£20 members (includes travel and tour of the garden, subsidised by the club).

£25 for non-members

Please contact Sara if you would like to come.

To pay by BACS please add reference JOHN and your surname as reference. Then email our Trip Organiser Sara to confirm your payment: spsararoberts@btopenworld.com See bank details below under membership, or you can email Sara to arrange payment by another method. Tickets are non-refundable.

Deadline for purchasing tickets Monday 23rd June

Leave BC Community College at 9.15 (not 9.30 as I wrote on last month's newsletter)

Return about 5pm

Bees

As part of our focus on bees this year, I am writing about different bumblebees each month.

In the UK, solitary bees are a diverse group, comprising of nearly 250 of 270 bee species found here. Unlike honeybees and bumblebees, solitary bees do not live in colonies with a queen and worker bees. Instead, each female constructs and provisions her own nest, often in solitary holes in the ground, in wood or walls. Common types include mining bees, mason bees, leaf cutter bees and hairy-footed flower bees.



Mining bees are among the most common solitary bees, with many species nesting in the ground. The Tawny Mining Bee is a well-known example, easily spotted by its fluffy, fox-red coat.

Becoming a Plant Guardian

As many of you know SWSGC subscribes to Plant Heritage home to the National Collections!

Part of the work PH does is safe guard plants that are either threatened with extinction or in need of further cultivation for fear of becoming threatened with extinction part of their extensive conservation program. Many establishments such as Great Dixter, Hampton Court palace, Wollerton old hall and Powis Castle hold many of these plants even Buckingham Palace etc.

Members of Plant Heritage can register as 'Plant Guardians'

Here is how it works; A plant guardian gets a free plant/s to look after and propagate and share into the wider community, each plant guardian registers the plant/s they hold with PH, the register is to help keep track of these precious and often exceedingly rare cultivars. Many of the plants are easy to care for and the full range of plants are offered in an annual 'plant exchange' for Plant Heritage members, sadly Shropshire does not have a group anymore so we don't get to be part of it, so I, Mellie, have registered myself with the Hereford group.

This year I have asked the conservation officer of Plant Heritage if as a 'group' the garden club could join the scheme.

I took the initiative and asked for quite a few plants from the plant exchange, as you can imagine garden plants and bulbs are very popular for ease of maintenance and for the rarity value, such as rare snowdrop bulbs, usually these have hundreds of people asking for the same bulb...often only one available! So, I went for some less popular plants such as pelargoniums, which need over wintering and succulents.

I have had delivered some absolute 'corkers'!! Just small young rooted cuttings that are all very special and endangered, many from Hampton Court Palace Surrey.

If members of the Garden Club would like to become a 'guardian' of a plant then I have a selection which I will bring to the July meeting. Mandy and I will be on hand to register you as a Plant Guardian and you can choice a plant from the selection on a first come first serve basis!

I stress, that if the plant dies there is no 'guilty' pressure you just need to let me know that it passed away. Each plant gets a special label.

Once the plants are big enough for propagation we can share with each other. There is no cost so even those on a tight budget can take part. I only ask that plants are not sold on, if anyone has propagated then it should

firstly be offered to the group and if not wanted by a group member please offer back to the scheme. Or if you have friends or relationships that would like to be a plant guardian they can register with Mandy or myself. I think this will be really good fun, and we will be adding to conservation of cultivated plants so that future generations can enjoy their beauty.

Mellie Lewis: runningwiththeredfox@gmail.com

Composting

For those of us into composting – here are a couple of initiatives which might be of interest



SHROPSHIRE MASTER COMPOSTERS

Shropshire Master Composters are a network of volunteers across Shropshire who promote home composting in their communities and provide advice and support for anyone with composting problems or questions.

SCAN HERE TO FIND OUT MORE

There's loads more composting info on our Linktree page

Become one of our dedicated volunteers in Shropshire

Learn how to compost via our FREE course
Guest password: Shrop_Rec21

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A SMART PHONE, TAKE A NOTE OF OUR WEBSITE AND EMAIL ADDRESS TO FIND OUT MORE OR GET IN TOUCH:
www.gardenorganic.org.uk MCSShropshire@gardenorganic.org.uk

garden. organic



A Garden Organic Volunteer Opportunity
Compost Champion: Shropshire

Working in partnership, Shropshire Council, Veolia, and Garden Organic are excited to champion 'home composting' as part of the Master Composter Programme. It's fair to say that at Garden Organic we love compost, and in our role as the UK's national charity for organic growing we take the opportunity to share this message amongst communities. By recruiting, training and supporting Volunteer 'Compost Champions' we inspire more people to take up composting and support those already doing so to continue. Our work embeds sustainability in gardening practices, demonstrating an achievable climate action that impacts positively on biodiversity.

What does it involve?
Compost Champions are volunteers who encourage people in their local community to compost their kitchen and garden waste. Sharing skills and inspiring others to connect with the natural environment around us. They also offer advice to people who are already composting and may be having difficulties or need encouragement. Anyone can be a Compost Champion, you don't have to be an expert. You'll join a network of like-minded volunteers, and with training and support from a local coordinator, together we can make a difference. Activities that you might get involved with include talking to friends, family, and neighbours, attending village fairs or giving talks to local groups.

How much commitment do I have to make?
There is no absolute commitment, we appreciate your support sharing the projects messages, however you choose to do it. Some volunteers will spend around 30 hours each year. These hours include all travel and preparation time. This figure however is not a requirement.

Is this for you?
We're looking for volunteers with an interest in composting and 'doing the right thing' with the waste we produce; people that care about the environment and the impact of climate change. You don't need to be an expert, you don't even need to have composted before. We will provide training, skills and support to equip you with the confidence to get composting yourself and go on to share these skills with others. With your support we will engage and inspire more people across Shropshire to start composting or give them the confidence and skills to keep composting effectively.

Find out more and get involved
This is an exciting project active around the county and we'd love to hear from you if you're interested in becoming a volunteer. If you follow the QR code it will take you straight through to the application form, alternatively you can contact Rachel and Wallis, your local project coordinators who will be happy to answer any questions and explain more about the project.

MCSShropshire@gardenorganic.org.uk or 024 7630 3517

www.gardenorganic.org.uk

Working in partnership
VEOLIA **garden. organic**

Monoprint Workshops



A small group of club members enjoyed a walk around Sarah Jameson's meadow on a balmy summer evening recently (see earlier article). She also displayed some of her artwork that she has created: using wild flowers and foliage to produce beautiful cards and prints. Sarah is holding two afternoon workshops for us, so that we can learn to learn the technique of monoprinting. These will be held at Lydbury North Village Hall on the afternoons of September 25th and October 2nd. She will provide all the paper and printing materials, and the participants are invited to bring their own favourite plants for printing. The cost is £32 for the afternoon's session at which we can create our own unique prints/cards.

If you would like to reserve a place on either workshop, please contact Elly Bibby (0780 2497780)

Plant Fairs

Plant fairs bring together some of the best independent plant nurseries from across the country with a brilliant choice of plants to delight every gardener. The entrance charges on these special days are such good value, often up to half the standard garden entry price.

The fairs are also valuable fundraisers for our venues and every penny of the entrance fees goes to the venues to help them keep going in these tough times.

When a plant fair takes place within a garden, we arrange a special reduced entry price to the garden. Some gardens on these days are half-price (or better) entry to the garden and entry to the fair is included. Other fairs are free or with a small charge or donation that all goes to maintaining the venue.

Always check event status before travelling at www.planthuntersfairs.co.uk



2025

Plant Hunters Fairs

Summer / Autumn Dates

(earlier dates overleaf)



Sunday 22 June Middleton Hall
Tamworth B78 2AE 9am-4pm Gardens and Fair £4.00 **TICKETED**

Sunday 29 June Whittington Castle
Oswestry SY11 4DF 10am-4pm Free Entry (Normal Parking Charges Apply)

Sunday 6 July Thoresby Park
Newark NG22 9EP 10am-4pm Free Entry (Normal Parking Charges Apply)

Wednesday 23 July Cholmondeley Castle Gardens
Malpas SY14 8ET 10am-5pm Gardens and Fair £5.00

Sunday 27 July 1620s House
Donington Le Heath LE67 2FW 10am-4pm Gardens and Fair £1.00 **TICKETED**

Sunday 3 August Southwell Minster
NG25 0HD 11am-4pm Plant Fair £2.00

Saturday 9 August Carsington Water
Ashbourne DE6 1ST 10am-4pm Free Entry (Normal Parking Charges Apply)

Sunday 10 August Capesthorpe Hall Gardens
Macclesfield SK11 9JY 10am-4pm Gardens and Fair £4.00

 **NEW Sunday 17 August Middleton Hall**
Tamworth B78 2AE 9am-4pm Gardens and Fair £4.00 **TICKETED**

Sunday - Monday 24 - 25 August Dorothy Clive Garden
Market Drayton TF9 4EU 10am-5pm Gardens and Fair £5.00

Saturday 30 August Bodenham Arboretum
Kidderminster DY11 5TB 10am-4pm Plant Fair Free Entry

 **NEW Sunday 31 August Chasewater Country Park**
Brownhills WS8 7NL 10am-4pm Free Entry (Normal Parking Charges Apply)

Sunday 7 September Weston Park
Shifnal TF11 8LE 10am-4pm Gardens and Fair £5.00 **TICKETED**

 **NEW Sunday 14 September Arley Hall Gardens**
Northwich CW9 6NA 10am-4pm Gardens and Fair £5.00

Clun Open Gardens Weekend

Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th June; 1 – 5pm

Tickets cost £7.50 and are valid for both days (accompanied schoolchildren are free). They can be purchased at the Memorial Hall (lots of parking available) and opposite Clun Bridge car park (Mont Cenise Garden).

There are 15 gardens to admire (including three new ones), plus floral displays in St George's Church celebrating the magic of music. There will be music in St George's on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and harpists in the Old Vicarage garden on Saturday afternoon.

There will be a plant stall and refreshments in Hightown Community Hall, Vicarage Lane.

I strongly recommend this as an excellent way to spend a weekend!

Diddlebury Open Gardens

Sunday 29th June, 12-6pm

Ten or more varied, interesting and beautiful gardens plus the Corvedale Plant sale. Tea and cake. Art exhibition by Val Alexander.

Tickets £7.50 or £6 in advance – see poster. For more information call 07396730342 or email diddleburyvillagehall@gmail.com.

New Hope Day Lilies Open Weekend

Colebatch Farm SY9 5JY

21/22 June; 28/29 June; 5/6 July; 12/13 July; 19/20 July; 26/27 July.

Day lilies flower from mid June-Sept but July is the best month to see the majority of blooms.

Open 11-4pm. Pop-up open air café with homemade cakes. Payments by cash or card. Toilets available.

Liz and Fi are coming to talk at our meeting on July 23rd.

Iolo Williams

Naturalist and broadcaster at The Sparc, Bishops Castle

Wednesday 17th September, 7.15

Talk and supper. £15 from ticketsource.co.uk or contact Noel's Swanson 01588 638246 or Nicky Boyd 01588 638780

Committee

If you would like to join our merry band and help with the running of the club, please feel free to ask questions or talk to any member of the current committee. You do not have to know anything about gardening!!

Gardener required

I received an email from Matt Sandford who lives at The Sytch in Dorrington, asking if anyone might be interested in this part-time role. His current gardener is retiring soon.



**Gardener
Required**
Dorrington, Shrewsbury

We are looking for an experienced gardener to join us on a part-time flexible basis. You must have a passion for plants with good horticultural knowledge and experience.

Light gardening duties will include dead heading, cutting back, feeding plants, treating roses and weeding. This is a truly lovely role based in large beautiful formal gardens and will be an all year-round position dealing with all the seasonal activities in a wonderful peaceful environment.

The position involves you working on your initiative with a well-planned schedule. Most importantly a love for the outdoors and a strong interest in plant care is essential.

Hedge cutting, lawn care and general garden maintenance will be handled by another member of the team.

Ideally this will be one full day per week, but we are prepared to discuss splitting it over two half days if required.

If this is of interest, please contact Maria on 07966 20 00 81.
References will be required.

RHS Affiliation

Don't forget that our club is affiliated to the RHS so I can lend you a discount card which offers 50% off entry to any RHS Garden (Bridgewater, Harlow Carr, Hyde Hall, Rosemoor and Wisley). It is not accepted for visits during Flower Shows and Glow Illumination events.

Next meeting: Wednesday 23rd July. (NB No meeting in June due to our trip)

New Hope Day Lilies – more information to follow in our July newsletter

Membership

Membership costs £20 to cover attendance at all our meetings for a year (from October); early access to trips and events with subsidised tickets; seed offers and plant sales. Only £10 from April to October, which includes subsidised tickets for trips. We are also affiliated to the RHS so you are able to borrow our discount card which provides 50% discount for two people to any RHS garden. Such a bargain!

Payment can be made with cash, cheque or card at our meetings or by transfer to:

South West Shropshire Gardening Club

sort code 20-53-22

account number 80754803.

Please add your name as reference and email our Treasurer Alleyne to let him know:

aandpcopestake@hotmail.com

Hampton Court Palace Festival

1-6 July

Our Vice Chair, Mellie Lewis will be attending again this year with her collection of Aeoniums. She is hoping for another medal, so keep your fingers and toes crossed for her!

Flower of the Month



Congratulations to our Programme Organiser Mandy Ford, who won the May competition with a stunning allium Christophii.

Please bring a single bloom or spray from your garden in order to participate. Points are given each month and then an overall winner is announced and rewarded in October.

Please note that to be fair, we can only accept **one** entry from each participant.

I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday 25th June if you are coming on the trip.

Angie Salmon
Chair

PS There will be no meeting in June, due to our annual trip.