



Oxenhope Gardening Club Newsletter

Tonight we welcome Roddy Llewellyn

March 2011

Thoughts from the Chair:

The garden is warming up! The ducks are back. They appear about this time each year and then disappear just after the ducklings have hatched, not to be seen again until the next year.

I have just got home to find that Green Thumb has been and scarified and aerated the lawns. What a mess it looks like a bog. Its not their fault its just that the lawn is not draining.

So onto Garden Club News. As you will have seen if you have been to the Community Centre in the daylight, the three trees have been planted at the front of the Centre. The alliums have also been planted so many thanks go to Anne, Andy and Frank. There is just the grasses to plant now.

At the next months meeting you will be asked to sign up for the trip to Jacqueline Iddons Garden which will take place in June. The full cost will be £25 per person. It may sound like a lot but this includes tea or coffee on arrival, a light lunch, a talk and a tour.

Ruth would like to ask if anyone is prepared to volunteer for the tea rota from September onwards. Please speak with Ruth if you are able to help.

Richard Berry

BROOKFIELD

My garden—now things are warming up a bit in the afternoons lots of jobs to do. I need to remove leaves from the Hellebores and the Epimediums. If the latter are left too late the flower stems emerge and make it difficult to avoid clipping them.

Today I got some logs to make two log gardens. I got the idea from some I saw on holiday and are ideal where the ground is full of roots. I made three a few years ago and they have weathered in well. You make a circle of logs which are about 10 inches long and put wire around to hold them together- a bit fiddling to do. Fill them with compost and put the plants in. I had some branches cut from a Yew tree and a Rowan by the pond which has let more light in but is full of roots so this should work.

Quite a few things in flower- the Witch Hazel has been out for some time- smelling good. A Cornus Mas across from the gate is lovely. Two Viburnums with pink flowers, masses of Snowdrops and Crocus- Aconites nearly over. Erythronium Dens Canis almost out and my top favourite Leucojum, a huge mass of white Jasmin in the conservatory, scenting the room.

I'm beginning to dream of spring and this morning 9th March frog spawn in the pond!

Hazel Belsey



THE MAGIC OF MADERIA

The plants of Madeira are wonderful. I was there at the end of April which was an ideal time of year to see the variety of plants and also the Annual Flower Festival. There were Jacaranda trees, Kapok, Oleander, Flamboyant, Plumbago and many more. The President's garden was interesting with a tiny chapel and lots of caged birds, peacocks, parrots etc.

I went on a coach trip into the mountains to see the Meens' valley. We climbed up and up round hairpin bends with lovely views. In 1506 the Meens left Funchal to escape from French pirates and went up into the mountains and then into the valley. There were marvellous views from a few thousand feet Eucalyptus trees were flowering and Chestnuts not yet breaking into leaf. We were encouraged to try chestnut soup. In a restaurant I tried Punch from a jug on the bar assuming it was non-alcoholic but I soon discovered I was wrong! The barman diluted it for me with free lemonade.

We went to an embroidery factory where all the designs and patterns are done, then sent out to country people to be embroidered.

Up in the mountains we were told about the unusual V framed thatched houses. The thatch is made from wheat stalks and lasts about 3 years. The cows and other animals are kept in little sheds also V shaped – two to a shed and never let out as the terrain is so steep. All the farming is done in lazy beds on the steep mountain side.

Everywhere we went there were beautiful plants. Arum lilies, Watsonia, Agapanthus, Hydrangea and Caesalpinia a favourite of mine, Cassia and Persica Indica. Huge tree Heathers, Geranium Maderense and Aeoniums growing all over the rocks and black ones in the gardens. Gorgeous Orchids and much more.

One very interesting garden called Palheiro had lovely shrubs – Sophora Japonica Pendula – a large knarled weeping tree, Hymenosporum- an Allspice tree maybe called Michela Fiscata, Streptosolen and Leptospernum. Another garden Montes had different plants again Protea, Clivia, Orchids and Erigerons

One day we did the Lavada walk- alongside the Lavada conduit- very steep on one side and water on the other, just a narrow path between.

We saw plants in the Carleton garden, Podranea, Scadoxies, Erythrina the coral tree, Leonotis, a bit like Phlomis but red flowers

In the hotel garden Cassia- flowers like popcorn, Callistemon and Swainsona. I sat there drinking iced coffee with whipped cream on top! Plants I don't know I Take photos of and hope to identify them when I get home.

Finally the Flower Festival. The children had done what was called a wall of flowers- laid head to head on the footpath- very colourful. The floats were fantastic- beautiful flowers in amazing displays, Orchids, Lilies, Carnations, Chrysanthemums, Athyriums, Leptospernum, Freesias Watsonias and many more.

An ideal holiday for a Plantaholic.

Hazel Belsey



Volunteer Gardening at Manorlands

I have a very small south facing back garden in which I grow some fruit and vegetables, but I wanted to grow more. Having been on the Waiting List for an allotment in Haworth for at least seven years I was getting somewhat frustrated.

There was a piece of land at Manorlands which I thought might be suitable, so went along with Mary a lady I met through Keighley Transition Group. That was in January 2010. We arranged to see Lynda Yewdall, Volunteers Co-ordinator and we were accepted as volunteers. Our idea was to transform this piece of neglected ground into a mini allotment, to supply fresh vegetables to Manorlands for the patients and staff.

We turned our first spade on April 14th. What hard work, but we had a lot of fun. We had to deal with nettles, dandelions, dock, brambles, creeping ivy, extra large sheets of polythene buried about one foot down, but worst of all was the amount of stones. Not just small stones but very large slabs which took two of us to move.

Having started at the bottom of the plot we cleared enough to plant three rows of potatoes. Next the broad beans, which I had started off at home. In mid-May we put in runner beans and peas. We had to keep the ground covered with netting just in case the squirrels decided to have a picnic. Steve Thorpe came along and built us four three feet high raised beds in which we grew dwarf beans, peas, carrots, lettuce, beetroot and one courgette plant. Manorlands provided us with a small greenhouse in which we grew tomatoes and peppers. By summer we had about half the plot in production having also put in cabbages, broccoli and sprouts. Throughout summer and autumn Manorlands received quite a lot of vegetables and salad. We had a few disasters but you learn by your mistakes. Mary is taking a break now from volunteering at Manorlands and has moved away for a year. I am determined to carry on but would greatly appreciate some help. So come on ladies and gents if you have an hour or two to spare a week, enjoy a challenge, and have fun at the same time please let Lynda or myself know.

Ruth Shepley

Club Outing 2011

The club outing on Saturday June ^{18th}~~19th~~ is to Jacqueline Idden's Garden and nursery at Bretherton near Leyland, Lancashire. We will be leaving by coach at 9-15am from Oxenhope Station.

The cost of £25 is totally inclusive of

- Coach fare
- Tea/coffee on arrival
- Tour of garden & nursery
- Lunch of sandwiches, side salad,
- Tea/coffee & home made cake
- 30 mins. demonstration/talk

The garden is one & half acres split into different areas, a hot Mediterranean garden with bottle wall and folly for sun loving plants, a Victorian fern house and a walled garden, a woodland walkway for shade loving plants and a large stream fed pond planted with a wide range of unusual foliage & flowering plants, alongside climbing roses, clematis, shrubs & herbaceous borders. In the garden there is a sculpture gallery and a hardy plant nursery, with a wide selection of perennial plants of interest to the keen gardener & flower arranger. There is a large garden studio & conservatory with indoor seating as an insurance against the weather. The garden has been featured in Lancashire Life, Flora Magazine, Gardens Illustrated & Lancashire Magazine.

Please pay, preferably by cheque, at the April meeting- our last meeting before the summer visit.

See our website www.oxenhopegardenclub.co.uk