



# Oxenhope

## Gardening Club News

June 2026

### Welcome to the June newsletter.

I hope you were able to enjoy the June open gardens at Midgley and Shipley – the ones I was able to visit in Shipley, were looking wonderful.



It seems to be a very blossom- heavy year, even in Scotland where I've been over the last month, garden visiting with my equally plant- mad, daughter. In May, I was treated to a day course at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh (RBGE) on Meconopsis: The Himalayan Poppy. The course was delivered by Matthew Edwards, an RBGE tutor and a committee member of the Meconopsis Group (a world-wide group for anyone interested in Meconopsis). The course covered the plant's history, the plant hunters that first brought them into cultivation and their historic links to Edinburgh and Scotland. It also included demonstrations of the cultivation of Meconopsis. The afternoon was spent touring the garden, looking at

examples of the different Meconopsis plants.

Two weeks later and I was back in Scotland on another series of garden visits, this time down in the south of Scotland in Dumfries and Galloway, a five- hour drive from Aberdeen. This four -day trip started with a visit to the National Trust of Scotland's garden at Threave, Castle Douglas, which is the home of the School of Heritage Gardening, a unique institution dedicated to training professional horticulturalists. The garden is divided into a series of smaller gardens to showcase different styles, including a rose garden, rockery and walled garden. Our favourite area was the walled garden.

From there we headed down to Ellenbank on the outskirts of Kirkcudbright, to the wonderful nursery and gardens of the esteemed plantsmen Elizabeth and Alasdair MacGregor, one of Scotland's most-admired growers of choice perennials. Apart from the wonderful brick-lined, stone-walled garden which was displaying a vast collection



of unusual perennials, shrubs and old roses (we were lucky enough to be there to see the wonderful white wisteria cascading over the entrance to the garden), there is also a large nursery with a mouthwatering collection of unusual plants. One I couldn't resist was anemone 'Wild Swan', an anemone bred by Elizabeth with elegant white flowers with lilac-blue bands on the reverse of the petals. Apparently, at twilight it closes to a nodding lilac-blue and white bell. It was awarded 'Chelsea 2011 Plant of the Year'.

Added to the delights of visiting Elizabeth's nursery, we visited the lovely town of Kircudbright which is famed for its artists and the location where, in 1794, Robert Burns reputedly wrote the Selkirk Grace. Broughton House & Garden, the next on our list of gardens visited, stands in the heart of this historic town and artists' colony on the Galloway coast. The house is dedicated to E. A. Hornel's life and work as an artist (he was one of the early 20th-century 'Glasgow Boys') and was bought by Hornel in 1901, who then transformed it into his studio and salesroom as well as his home.



Hornel and his sister shared a love of gardening and spent years cultivating the garden at Broughton House. The garden is partly Japanese-inspired, with a labyrinth of pathways, beautiful lawns, and plants rarely seen in Scotland.



The garden culminates in sweeping views over Kirkcudbright harbour and the River Dee: a truly memorable garden.



Our final garden visit in Galloway was to the Logan Botanic Garden, at the south-western tip of Scotland, part of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's Living Collection. It has been described as "Scotland's most exotic garden" and was established in 1869 before being gifted to Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in 1969. The area has a mild climate, with mild winters, due to the influence of the North Atlantic Current and the Gulf Stream. The combination of this, the acidic soils and the sheltered aspect of the garden enable plants to be cultivated, which would not normally survive outdoors, in Scotland. Species

from as far away as Chile, Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand all thrive in Logan's borders. The garden has about 2,500 species in total, 120 species of which are threatened with extinction. It is home to collections of gunnera, palm trees and tree ferns, including *Dicksonia Antarctica* and is also the home of several *Rhododendron* species including *Rhododendron kanehira*, which is extinct in the wild. Apart from enjoying the vibrant tapestry of exotic plants, one of the highlights of our visit was walking through the forest of rhubarb-like giant gunnera — an unforgettable sight!

Finally, we made our way back to Aberdeen via Dumfries House, the house and estate in Ayrshire, which until 2012 was overgrown and derelict. In 2007 a consortium headed by King Charles (as Prince of Wales) raised the £45 m needed to purchase it and save it because of its significance and the risk of its furniture collection being distributed and auctioned. Today the estate is the headquarters of the Kings Foundation, which offers courses in traditional skills and crafts. The intention was to renovate the estate to become self-sufficient, both to preserve it and regenerate the local economy.



After visiting the house, we only had time to visit the five-acre walled garden, one of the biggest walled gardens in Scotland. This has been restored from a derelict area (covered in Japanese Knotweed) into a beautiful garden with a mix of terraces, greenhouses and topiary. As well as having a traditional kitchen garden with heritage vegetables, it also has great floral interest, including a uniquely steep 11m drop of south-facing terraced beds. Within this are ornamental areas which feature peony borders, (which

we were there) topiary and formal parterres filled with pollinator-friendly plants such as *Agastache*, *Monarda* and *Verbena*. There are also four glasshouses and one of the largest collections of roses in the UK! **Sandra**

## Plant of the month: **Celmisia semicordata**: large mountain daisy.



**Celmisia semicordata**, commonly known as the Mountain daisy, is a perennial herbaceous plant belonging to the Asteraceae family. It is a native of the South Island of New Zealand, and thrives in its mountainous terrains, providing a splash of beauty among the rugged landscapes. I first saw this plant in Scotland in winter and was impressed by its spectacular architectural form which was of bold, tightly packed rosettes or large clumps of leaves which are sword-shaped, with a silvery or

silver-green foliage which provides a striking contrast against the backdrop of the garden.



In summer, it looks spectacular with stunning flower heads of numerous white petals surrounding a central cluster of yellow disc florets, making them not only beautiful but also attractive to pollinators. They are disease and pest free and non-toxic to animals. They are fully hardy and thrive in cool, moist climates in full sun or semi-shade, preferring slightly acid, humus-rich soil.

Perfect for the Oxenhope area!

## Our speaker for June, will be **Daniele Altieri**: His subject will be **Mystery, Surprise & Illusion**.



**Daniele Altieri**, was an Italian former scientist with a background in biology who has evolved into a passionate garden designer. He is also a speaker and teacher of garden design, a garden tour leader and a garden writer for Italian magazines. He believes that at its core, garden design is a creative, problem-solving exercise. It involves addressing the challenges and limitations of a space, while recognizing its unique potential to create a harmonious and inspiring environment. He has

worked at Sutton Place in Surrey, The Courts in Wiltshire, and Smallhythe Place, where he was Head Gardener.

## **Garden Events**

**Harlow Carr: Summer weekend June 19-21<sup>st</sup>**

**Goldsborough Hall: Summer Open Garden scheme:  
Sunday, July 26<sup>th</sup>.**

## **Garden Visits.**

**July 13<sup>th</sup> Visit to Hootons Walled Nursery, Rotherham.  
August 11<sup>th</sup> Visit to Jacqueline Iddon's garden.**

**Reminder! Members who have booked to visit in August  
will need to pay £22.50 at the June meeting. Thank you!**

Tea and Coffee: We always welcome volunteers to help with  
teas and coffees!

[www.oxenhopegardeningclub.co.uk](http://www.oxenhopegardeningclub.co.uk)