

Good morning Everyone,



We have all enjoyed some glorious weather during the daylight hours of this, our second spring of lockdown, but there have been cold, cold winds and frosty nights to test the resilience of our plants. The hellebores bowed for protection overnight, but, as soon as the temperatures rose, so did they. Unfortunately my ceanothus, not the hardiest of plants but growing against a south facing wall has not fared quite so well, as unfortunately there is now more brown foliage than green. There are plenty of flower buds amongst the greenery, so I will wait to see what the real damage is once these have blossomed. Similarly, afflicted have been the bay tree and the rosemary, with the dicentra looking very sorry for themselves and even the primula denticulata taking a hammering. The humble primula vulgaris or common primrose has been totally unaffected and is brightening up many a corner. Regrettably, several of my epimediums have not recovered from being part of a deer's evening meal, so the delicate flowers have been somewhat sparse. On the other hand the trilliums, after many years of becoming used to the garden are really beginning to show their glory. The cold has not affected them at all. It is amazing though how the warmth of the past few days has changed the garden from a somewhat fragile state to something considerably more healthy and more positive for the weeks ahead. Thirteen months ago, when the pandemic restrictions came into force, those of us fortunate to have gardens really realised the importance they play in our everyday lives, especially as they have been, perhaps, the only diversion from the relentless oppression of other natural, or perhaps human induced and less hopeful occurrences. The plants in my garden continually surprise me, partly because they have survived my administrations, but also they mainly overcome different natural obstacles every year, like the Scottish weather!

Over the past few weeks the wildlife in the garden has become more evident. No pine marten in evidence this year, but the foxes and the owls, still unseen, have been creating their nightly rowdiness. Siskins in good numbers have returned to the bird feeders as have the goldfinches. Our less than perfect male pheasant has made an appearance, as has the reed bunting and the ducks have wandered down to hose up the scraps dropped by the starlings and tits from the feeders and a most handsome mistle thrush has been yanking a banquet of worms out of the "lawn".

Our April Meeting was the best attended of all our Zoom Monthly Meetings and, I think all who attended will agree, we were treated to a marvellous talk from

Simon Jones of NTS Scotland. His talk was fascinating and delivered in such a relaxed style. I reckon if he had given that talk to us as a live audience, the questioning could have gone on all night. Arduaine Gardens may well feature in quite a few day trips for members over the summer. Our May Meeting on **Tuesday 4th May 2021** will be a meeting in two parts. Firstly we will have our **AGM, which will begin at 19:00 and will be for Members only**. I am hopeful that will be completed by 19:20, when non-members and members who can't bear the excitement of the AGM will be able to join the assembled throng to learn what you can do with books you have read. Our Speaker is **Rosie Oglesby, the founder of Page and Bloom**, which is a paper florist, making handcrafted paper flowers from old books and scraps of paper. Page and Bloom, based in London, is a social enterprise, set up in 2018 to create employment and training for women who are rebuilding their lives after domestic abuse. Rosie has worked in disaster relief, has an English Literature Degree so she loves books as well as cutting them up to make flowers. She will be giving a demonstration of her art, so you may wish to have an old book (not a Burns first edition!), a pair of scissors, some glue, paint, crayons or whatever in an attempt to keep up with her. It will be a wee bit different from our normal presentation, but books and flowers are great for everyone's well-being and it should be fun as well supporting a worthwhile cause. **Full details of the registration details for this two part meeting will be issued next week**, but I know how keen some of you are, so you are welcome to register for the **AGM only** from now. Chat Rooms will be available at the end of the Meeting.

All members should have received the AGM Agenda and the Minutes of the Last Meeting. Members will receive the audited accounts before the AGM and all on the mailing list, Members and Guests, will receive the Speakers' Programme for the 2021/22 Season, which is now complete. All Speakers for next year are prepared for Zoom or an actual live gig and we have squeezed an extra evening in for February (such a dreary month) which will only be available on Zoom. The question about venues or a venue for next year will be resolved once we know if restrictions on indoor gatherings will be lifted.

Sandra Wilson, CEO of Outings, has tentatively arranged outings to Horatio's Garden, but details will not be released until we have a bit more certainty. Bus travel is not on the Agenda. As regards the Club's Summer Social, I still have a modicum of hope that this will happen in some form or other. With an election very much in the offing, there may well be no limits to the generosity of our law makers as they seek to improve our mental well-being, so the Committee haven't yet ruled out the horticultural knees-up. Mind you, the Summer Social is after the election, so.....!

That is it for this month. It has been a long year and we are still to a degree where we were last April. We have the vaccine (though I waiting for number two) we have our gardens, we can travel out of East Dunbartonshire, the Garden Centres and Nurseries are open again, plants are more expensive and life has become peat free so let us all trust that we can get to see each other

soon. By the way, the M8 has not changed much in the last six months, but the car was overjoyed to be going on a day out!

Keep enjoying your gardens and keep well,

With best wishes

Willie



