

Good evening everyone,

One piece of good news is that there are only 5 more days of diminishing daylight. I am not claiming we will receive more sunshine, but we should be able to notice the daylight hours lengthening. It is a small glimmer, but it is something, as due to the rather damp weather we are all enjoying, the hours of light are very limited. It is all a bit like these Icelandic crime sagas on BBC4 where they appear to be continually filmed in the dark and you end up watching a shadow show! The weather has been pretty foul over the past couple of months and the ground is just a squelchy pudding, in which it is well nigh impossible to do anything. I have started to tidy up some of the more sodden remains of plants, though it is a bit disconcerting to note how many spring bulbs are beginning to poke some green tips out into the rain. When cutting back some peonies, I found new shoots edging upwards, so I had better put down some more mulch. I am sure, too, I was attacked by midges the other morning, whilst one of the bird feeders, and its stand, was covered by a horde of long-tailed tits. There must have been at least 20 of them, but they didn't wait around for the photograph.

I am pleased to say that the Zooming Fabulous Christmas Party appeared to have been enjoyed by a goodly number of Members. The Floral Art Demonstration on making a Christmas Swag was followed very closely, but I am sure no one was able to match the speed of assembly of the presenter. I know that several members have asked for the video and are following the instructions and if you wish to photograph your finished article, we can display it on the website. The Quiz was, apparently, devilishly hard, though it seemed simple enough to me when I looked at the answers. The real joy of the Party, though, was the ability to chat in small groups as Zoom created "Break-Out Rooms", which was valuable when the answers were being sought. One group was so delighted to be able to chat that they almost forgot to answer the questions, not that it made much difference to their score when they did answer! The Committee put a lot of work into the Quiz, for which they are due many thanks (and have received many thank you emails), and a special thank you has to be extended to Ruth Rowlands who once again devised and performed on her musical Quiz section, which this year was a Creature Feature. We enjoyed a short concert whilst puzzling over the clues.

Our next Club Meeting after the Yuletide Festivities is on **Tuesday 5th January 2021** and the speaker, as you all know, is our own **Colin Walker** who will be guiding us through **Cacti and Succulents**. Having viewed Colin's collection, I cannot believe that there are very many he doesn't have, but he will provide us with an excellent start to 2021. I will be sending out a notice between Christmas and New Year asking Members, Waiting Listers and Subscribers to register for the talk, but if you wish to do so prior to that, then feel free to advise me. I will be asking Zoom to allocate Break-Out Rooms and I am going to try to organise this at the start when you logon. I am still trawling through the YouTube tutorials to learn how to do this simply! You will be advised in advance of my success or the lack of it, but I will certainly create "Rooms" at the end of the Meeting so you can chat in small groups, if you so wish.

The Club has all its Speakers arranged for February, March and April and the Committee will be "meeting" in January to start the process of selecting Speakers for later on in the year, because we are going to plough on and you will continue to be subjected to the monthly Newsletter. I am anticipating that Zoom will be our meeting venue for quite some considerable time as the governments will not, I am sure, allow largeish meetings to take place until they are confident the vaccines work, so that allows us to search much further afield for speakers as there won't be travel expenses! I am conscious, too, that quite a number of Members are missing out on these talks as they don't feel confident about using Zoom. Zoom is actually remarkably simple and can operate on a Desktop computer, laptop, tablet or phone. Sandra Wilson has very kindly forwarded instructions for "audiences" from another of her Clubs, of which she is a member and I will try to try to adapt this for the Club. But, if any Member would like some help on connecting and using Zoom in the meantime, then most of the Committee can

help, as can I. It would be really lovely to see those who perhaps have missed out joining in once again. As to the Plant Sale in May, we may be able to hold something outside, but there is one big problem with that - the weather! We will investigate the possibilities like stalls in Milngavie Main Street!

This is the last Newsletter for 2020 and what a year it has been. Who would have thought that our last meeting would have been a way back in March when our speaker was Kevin Hughes of Cally Gardens and he treated us to a great sign off! It has been a most peculiar year and thank goodness we had that lovely weather when we were all isolating. If we had had our wet spring, then life may not have been quite so bearable. It is not meeting people as we are meant to meet people that is the hard part of this pandemic, though nowhere as hard as actually getting Covid-19. Clubs survive on the chat and laughter and the exchange of knowledge and if it takes Zoom to maintain some element of all that, then we will use it as much as we can.

All that is left for me to say is a thank you to you all for your support for the Club throughout the past year and to wish, each and everyone of you, a Very Merry Christmas and the hope that the New Year of 2021 will be a considerable improvement. Enjoy the Festivities, but keep well and safe.

With best wishes

Willie



