

BGC November 2024 Newsletter: 'Tis the Night of Halloween when gardens are full of cotton-wool cobwebs and skeletons!

Good evening one and all,

Hopefully, the arrival of this email will not deflect your attention away from handing out handfuls of sweets to groups of children (and some young adults!) after they have told their wee joke. The carving of the pumpkins, I have to admit, are in many cases very creative, which is a far cry from what I had to do when "Tricking and Treating" several decades ago. Turnips were and are tough! Even trying to cut the darn things was hard work, let alone gouge them out, so the introduction of the pumpkin from the States has simplified that aspect of Hallo'een and has created quite a lucrative income for some farmers. I have never tried to grow any squashes. My nearest attempt was sowing seeds of aubergine (a berry, I know) and the outcome was one plant and one shrivelled fruit, from which the compost heap gained a little. So with witches and ghouls stalking the streets, followed by parents trying to look interested, we know that winter is nearly upon us and with the clocks having gone back, the hours of daily daylight are diminishing fast and time spent in the garden lessens.

I was very pleased to read Jo Swift's weekly gardening column, in which he urged us not to sweep up our leaves, except off paths and manicured lawns. I don't have the latter and fortunately the lawnmower fits on all the paths. I do think the leaf colours this year have been wonderful, though the leaves may not have hung onto the trees for so long. We have had some lovely autumn days and sometimes the tree displays take your breath away. Certainly the colours up here in Crossburn have been great. There is still colour from the borders; admittedly not much and, as a result of fair dollops of rain, some areas are looking very dishevelled, but at least it gives an indication of where I should be attempting more radical clearing rather than just cutting back. As each year passes though, this process does take a bit longer, especially the getting up from the kneeling position, and returning to an upright pose after bending is a bit like the pictures showing how humans developed over the eons. Nevertheless, bulbs have been planted, the grass has been cut hopefully for the last time until the spring, apples have been collected from the ground and a start has been made on pruning the climbing roses. My tasks have been followed closely by the resident volery of long-tailed tits, two gold crests and a tree creeper, who have formed a noisy gang that zoom about the gardens here. It is quite a sight and quite a noise and, of course, the ubiquitous robin is always there.

I have to admit that at the last meeting of the Club on 9th October 2024, when Mark Dunion and his associate Scott were the guest speakers, I did have a moment of mild panic. Scott gave us a talk on what garden lighting means and can achieve, but when his talk finished at 19:45, a mere 10 minutes after he started, I thought "HELP!". I should not have worried as we then had a good 45 minutes of questions, answers and demonstrations of various lighting systems. It was an evening when audience participation and interests excelled, with Mark and Scott fully engaged in answering everything. It was an evening with a difference and was very much enjoyed by everyone present, which was a surprise to some, but a great relief to the Committee.

In December, it is time for the **Annual Christmas Party (MEMBERS ONLY) on Wednesday 11th December**. The doors will be open for members from 19:00 and we should be able to settle down at our tables by around 19:30 eager and willing to participate in this year's Charmingly Challenging Quiz. As usual food and beverages will be served to accompany the celebrations amidst all the chat, laughter and observations about how difficult the Quiz was. It is a relaxed and fun evening so please if you are attending our November meeting, put your name down on the attendees list or if you can't make that Meeting then please let Marjorie Thorburn know that you wish to attend the party by Friday 6th December. Jayne Sellers has already asked for catering assistance on the evening of the Party and she has had a good response. Do come along, because it is a very pleasant and sociable evening and you don't have to do anything except eat, drink, talk and try to answer some questions and win a prize.

Caroline Preacher, Susan Brimelow and Jayne Sellers have formed a sub group within the Committee to organise Club Outings for 2025. They will be meeting after the New Year and hope to produce a calendar of forthcoming Outings for the months ahead, so that Members are aware, well in advance, of planned visits. They already have quite a few ideas, but all will require to be formalised and confirmed. Our Outings have always been a feature of the Club and I think we should all be grateful to these three Committee members, who have made an added commitment, and work, to what they already do for the Club. At the same time, we are looking at tweaking our website by making our programme of talks more prominent rather than having the current somewhat wordy front page. which will become an "About Us" page. The "Forthcoming Events" page will encourage visitors to attend and this will be supported, perhaps, and depending upon costs, with advertising our talks in the Community Magazine. It is to be hoped this will encourage visitors to join the Club and maybe widen our "gene pool" of volunteers for the future well-being of the Club.

The **Annual Christmas Tree Festival** will be occurring from Wednesday 30th November until Wednesday 6th December at St. Paul's Church, Milngavie. The Club's tree entry will be decorated by our very own elves Marjorie Thorburn and Colin Walker and all proceeds from the Festival will be donated to The Glasgow City Mission, Funding Neuro and CHS Glasgow. The Festival is well worth visiting and supporting and over the years, the BGC trees have always attracted good reviews and have helped in the fund-raising. After the festival is over, we donate our tree to Baldernock Childcare, which is run by Baldernock Primary School.

I know January 2025 is still a few weeks away, but just to remind you that our speaker on **Wednesday January 8th** will be **Timothy Walker**, who entertained us so well during lockdown. His talk will be given on Zoom and full details will be issued in next month's epistle.

That's all the waffle for this month and if all our plans work out, we should have even more to write about in the future! Now there is a thought for which to be concerned. Enjoy the last month of autumn and hone up upon your plant and general knowledge for the nearest thing to University Challenge that BGC can muster! Look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our meeting with Brian McDonough.

Best wishes

Willie

