

## **Baldernock Gardening Club; December 2024 Newsletter: Winter has arrived and with some snow**

Good morning everyone,

For several years now the apples, for which I have no more storage space to keep or are too mangy to use or the slugs have got to them first, I have been piling up under hedges for the birds and other creatures (presumably slugs too) to munch through the winter. For the past three years a lonely fieldfare has enjoyed an apple banquet, but this year he/she has been accompanied by a mate plus a single redwing. They are working their ways through the piles and single apples lying in the beds, but they have had competition from a blackbird. The fieldfares, therefore, have developed a Protect-Our-Apples strategy, entailing one to chase off the blackbird and the occasional magpie, whilst the other scoffs; they then swap duties. It is quite amusing to see one bird happily eating whilst its mate and the blackbird chase each other all around the dining area. By the time spring arrives, the apples have all gone and the fieldfares go away on their summer holidays. Over the past week, though, they have continued to enjoy their frozen apples. One morning a moorhen disturbed the breakfast, but only fleetingly. The moorhen was travelling to and fro between our neighbours' pond and ours, but it was hurrying across the garden like a prim lady in high heels, who was attempting to maintain her dignity whilst giving the appearance of really not being in a rush.

The first winter snow lasted a day, which in many ways was a bit of a relief. Undisturbed new snow is a beautiful sight, but after that when it becomes all dirty and slushy, everything just looks a mess. Fortunately Storm Bert, who delivered the snow quickly, followed that up with rain and gusty winds. The rain washed away the snow, and the wind destroyed my mini greenhouse (one of those green covered things), which fortunately only had some empty pots in it. The snow and the cold bent over, almost to being flat on the ground, my hydrangeas at the front of the house and now the leaves have that somewhat rotten, decomposing look, whilst the flowerheads definitely give the appearance of having fallen on hard times. The rest of the garden has a neglected look, but on frosty mornings the allium seed heads are impressive and the tree fern is still alive. The ground is hard, so it is into the house to do a few paint jobs, or hide in the garage pretending to clean tools.

Our last meeting in November was a marvellous evening with Brian McDonough, who impressed us with his photographs of plants. His indoor shots were awesome. He contended, convincingly, that photography is a true artform with his photos fully supporting that argument. Your epistoler is more of a point and shoot artist, who doesn't have the will to get up at the break of dawn for the best garden shots. It was a good evening. Our next Speaker is Timothy Walker, who was Horti Praefectus of the University of Oxford Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum. Timothy has spoken to us before just as we were emerging from Covid Lockdown and when all our talks were on Zoom. His talk on **Wednesday 8th January 2025 will also be on ZOOM**. I will send you full details between Christmas and New Year, but he will be Zooming into the hall in Baljaffray Church as well as into the comfort of your own homes. His talk is The Shrunken Garden, which is all about moving from a large space to a much smaller one. He is a very amusing and knowledgeable speaker.

Before the words of Timothy, we have our Christmas Party (**for MEMBERS ONLY**) on **Wednesday 11th December in Baljaffray Church**. The doors will be open at 19:00, wine and soft drinks awaiting you, with the highlight of the year, the Charmingly Challenging Quiz beginning around 19:30. It is an evening of relaxation, buffet chat, social interaction and usually a lot of fun. If you haven't signed up yet, please do so by email to Marjorie Thorburn by Friday 6th December. If you are a new member, this is the perfect occasion to meet and enjoy the company of other club members. You don't have to bring anything apart from your badge and your garden knowledge; everything else is provided by the club. I look forward to it all, especially the sighs of frustration during the quiz.

I have attached the programme for the Christmas Tree Festival being held in St Paul's Church, Milngavie from Saturday 30th November till Saturday 6th December. The programme lists the opening times and all the concerts and recitals that are held during the festival. As usual, we have decorated a tree thanks to the experienced tree decorators Marjorie and Colin. It is well worth visiting and supporting the various charities the festival supports. After the display the club donates our tree to Baldernock Childcare Group.

I and the rest of the Committee are delighted to announce that Hilary Macnaughton has agreed, subject to surviving the first committee meeting in January, to joining your Committee. This is good news for us all as I am certain she will contribute greatly to the well-being of the club.

We have had a varied and interesting series of talks so far this season, whilst the second half, after Christmas, promises to be a set with more traditional aspects of gardening being covered. In January, of course, the Committee will start the process of arranging speakers for the 2025/26 season. Also, in January, we hope to introduce minor changes to our website highlighting more prominently our annual programme. We are planning, too, a series of outings thanks to the work of Caroline Preacher, Susan Brimelow and Jayne Sellars who have set up a sub-committee. If members have ideas or suggestions for places to visit, then please contact any one of the three organisers. With all that imminent, you all have to start thinking about the Annual Plant Sale on Saturday 10th May 2025. It is never too early to start the thinking process.

You have just under two weeks to brush up your gardening knowledge, before I have the pleasure of unveiling this year's questions to an expectant gathering. It is always a bit of a laugh, but the winning table invariably enjoys their evening, or five minutes, of glory without having to resort to AI. In the meantime, be careful on the icy pavements, stay warm and stay healthy.

With best wishes

Willie







**CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL**  
(Association of Milngavie Churches)  
in St. Paul's Church

**30th November – 6th December**  
**10am – 4pm**  
**(Sunday 1pm – 4pm)**

Refreshments and musical entertainment

**2024 Christmas Tree Festival – Music Programme**

**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November**

- 10.15 Opening Ceremony Piper: Ally Mulligan  
10.30 St. Paul's Church Choir  
12.00 Rachel Rutherford, Clarsach  
1.00 Brennan Brass  
2.00 David Crooks and Pupils, Classical Guitar  
3.00 Douglas Academy Instrumental Ensemble

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December**

- 2.00 Close Shave Chorus

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December**

- 11.00 Angela Welsh, Cello and Esther McColl, Piano

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December**

- 11.00 Janet and Adrian Bowman, Piano and Voice  
2.00 Jordanhill Handbell Ringers

## 2024 Christmas Tree Festival – Music Programme (cont.)

### Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December

- 10.30 Esther McColl, Piano  
2.30 Christine Furnish, Organ



### Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December

- 10.00 New Kilpatrick Ceilidh Band  
10.30 Noah's Ark Toddler Group, Singing  
11.00 New Kilpatrick Ceilidh Band  
1.30 Milngavie Primary School Choir  
2.30 Julian Pombo, Guitar and Voice

### Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December

- 11.00 Group from Milngavie Choir  
2.30 Derek Norval, Organ

All donations to:  
Glasgow City Mission, Funding Neuro & CHAS