

March 2010



No. 71

PREVIEW

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

January brings the snow, makes our feet and fingers glow,
February brings the rain, thaws the frozen lakes again.

That's what we learned at primary school, but here in sunny Joppa the bird bath is still frozen most mornings yet there are signs from the brave blooms of crocus, iris, aconites and daphne that Spring is just around the corner.

In this *Preview* we record the low temperatures over the winter past, and show how such hard weather can have its small bonuses in the shape of the unusual birds that come to our feeders and bird tables to seek out nourishment to get them through the coldest periods. Many thanks to all members who responded to the request for information. Winter cold has lots of different effects on evergreen plants. Some it kills completely and their leaves mirror exactly the simple 'touch test' that Bill Tait suggests. Others it kills much later or so it would appear. This is especially the case with the likes of *Griselinia* where the plant can look and feel healthy after the frost has past but later in the season it just dies. The cold has done for its roots, either killing them completely or freezing the stem at soil level to such an extent that it cannot conduct water to the foliage.

Meanwhile the daffodil bulbs for the Spring Show are getting their annual 'hurry up' under polythene or in full sun in the dining room. As ever I am full of anticipation of the year ahead; my 'glass is half full' not 'half empty' - our Study Tour to the Low Countries, Gardening Scotland, visits to more exciting Scottish gardens and meeting new and old friends as we all expand the life and influence of the Caley.

Our recent AGM (see the photos on the website) saw Sir Peter Hutchison step down as the Honorary President of the Society. It is a role that he has fulfilled with great enthusiasm and he has been of great assistance to me in the bicentenary celebrations. You all thanked him on the evening but I add my personal thanks here. Jim McColll has agreed to be our new Honorary President and I look forward very much to working with him. Welcome to Jim and to all the other newly elected members of Council. I look forward to working with you as we take the Caley forward.

Many thanks to you all for your generous support in the year past.



George Anderson

FROM WINTER

AN OLD FASHIONED WINTER

It has certainly been cold and the frost has been prolonged. The minimum daily temperature recorded at the Botanics was zero or below almost continuously from 18th December until 9th January and snow cover was continuous from 18th December to 15th January. The coldest temperature at the Botanics was on the 8th January with -7.6°C . But at Romanno Bridge, where Pam Whittle keeps efficient temperature records, it was far colder, with -19.6°C recorded on 7th January. February has seen further low temperatures with -6.6° at the Botanics on 23rd and -12° at Romanno Bridge.

It is too early to say which plants have succumbed and the advice is not to grub anything up hastily. Bill Tait has a good test which can be applied to evergreens – “take hold of the leaves in your bare hand and if they feel warm to the touch, the plant is expiring (i.e. moribund). If they feel cold, it is transpiring (i.e. alive and kicking).”

In George Anderson's garden, *Berberidopsis corallina* is looking the worse for wear and his *Melianthus major* has been frosted back to soil level. Mine has too in Murrayfield and with no sign of new growth, I am not as confident as he is that it will regrow from the roots. Pam Whittle reports that her *Viburnum tinus* is badly frosted, and of my two clipped plants of *Teucrium fruticans* - the most heavily clipped looks dead, the one allowed a bit more freedom looks relatively unscathed.

Margaret Ann Crawford's *Hebe hulkeana* is looking sad, and so are many other hebes. I am worried about my 3 large *Euphorbia mellifera* (which the book says does not grow north of Birmingham). They are not dead but they look distinctly unhappy.

Sally Heron's cyclamen in a trough have turned to mush, but her blue pansies lift their faces again and again after being flattened by the snow. And Rosemary Buchanan in Loanhead is surprised that her variegated *Griselinia*, has shown no adverse signs of the big freeze, and thinks perhaps the snow has insulated it. In Falkirk, Corrie Cuthbertson recorded -7° in her unheated greenhouse and some surprising survivors included all the oriental leaves in the greenhouse, pak choi, mizuna etc.

Many members have been visited by unusual birds: Corrie Cuthbert says redwings and fieldfares have devoured her cotoneaster and honeysuckle berries and here they have been feasting on fallen apples too. In North Berwick Margaret Ann Crawford has had siskins, a great spotted woodpecker and bramblings. George has had a good collection – yellowhammers, reed buntings, bramblings, chaffinches, greenfinches and 9 or 10 goldfinches and Margaret Forrester has had 2 blackcaps enjoying peanut butter in a coconut shell. Sally Heron has seen both grey and pied wagtails perched outside her window and Pam Whittle saw a weasel looking in through her kitchen window – all agog at the cornucopia of delicacies on show.

Anna Buxton

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?
Shelley



TO SPRING

SPRING SHOW, SATURDAY 27th, SUNDAY 28th MARCH, 11am-5pm

The Spring Show will be held in the same place as last year, the Fletcher Building (formerly the Exhibition Hall) in the Botanics. This is at the East side of the modern glasshouses. The East Gate will be CLOSED throughout March but the North Gate will be open. Exhibitors enter through Inverleith Place Lane to drop off plants.

This is a difficult season, so please make every effort to bring along plenty of exhibits so that there are full benches for visitors. There will be help on the Friday from the experts during set-up. A list of your possible entries by Wednesday 24th is helpful although late entries will be accepted. E-mail to standaprato@talktalk.net is fine. Copies of the Show Schedule can be downloaded from the website www.rchs.co.uk. A team from The Beechgrove Garden will be filming on Friday and Saturday. Don't trip over a cable and drop your potential best bloom in show!

It would be unthinkable to have The Spring Show without a Pallet Garden from the Caley. There is still time to put something together. Volunteers needed, please.

Free entry for Members who show membership cards, £2.00 for others, children free. Bring money as there are plants, home-made cakes and jams, and a tombola. Donations for home produce and tombola stalls welcome - bring items from Friday onwards. Please remember that edible items **must** be brought already wrapped in cling-film or poly-bags. Thanks to everyone who has already volunteered to help at the Show. Further volunteers needed, contact Stan da Prato as above. Volunteers will be contacted in the week before the Show. Lastly, keep knitting so that we have a good display for the Show and a generous number of garments to send to The Vine Trust - a well-established Scottish charity working with street boys in Peru.

SPRING SHOW SECRETARY

Due to other commitments, the current Show Secretary, Stan da Prato, is unable to continue. The Spring Show is one of the big events of the Caley calendar and cannot function without a Secretary. The duties are the usual ones of a Secretary - writing letters, organising volunteers, minutes of meetings, etc. Access to a computer is an asset. There must be someone out there who can help to keep the show on the road.

If you feel you might be able to help please phone me for a discussion, on 0131 441 6528 or email rchs@colinton.f9.co.uk.

Elizabeth Ferro, Show Convener

*...Daffodils that come before the swallow dares,
and take the winds of March with beauty.
Shakespeare*



JIM DAVIDSON MEMORIAL

It has been decided, as a way of remembering Jim Davidson who did so much to improve the standard of daffodil showing in Scotland, to run a competition in his name among the Scottish societies i.e. Banff, Dundee, Keith, Aberdeen Royal Horticultural Society and ourselves. The idea is to enter Daffodils from Divisions 1 to 4 in as many of the 5 shows as possible. The person with most points wins the cup which is being loaned by the Caley. The idea came from Don and Hazel Elder of Dundee who are the prime organisers. Although there has not been much notice, Don is hoping that the competition can start this season. For more information contact Elizabeth Ferro on 0131 441 6528 or email rchs@colinton.f9.co.uk.

STILL THINKING OF THE SHOW ...

Easter Biscuits

The cookery writer of yesteryear, Ambrose Heath, recalled a childhood memory of tins of Huntley and Palmers' Easter Biscuits and recreated the biscuits. Here is the recipe.

Cream four and a half ounces (90g) of butter and three ounces (80g) of caster sugar. Beat in 2 egg yolks, add a scant ounce (20g) of currants. Add 1 tablespoon of brandy or rum, (optional). Mix in six ounces (170g) plain flour, a pinch of salt and an eighth teaspoon each of mixed spice and powdered cinnamon. Knead to a pliable paste, roll out to an eighth of an inch (4mm) and cut into rounds. Bake on a lightly greased baking sheet for 15 to 20 minutes in a moderate oven. (180 – 200°C, ovens vary!). Either take out when yellowish–brown, or when nearly done, and brush over with beaten egg, dust with caster sugar and then finish baking them.

Enjoy baking these, or your own recipes, to sell at the Spring Show.

Constance Gilleghan

THE CALEY HERITAGE LOTTERY PROJECT

Soon Caley members should see the installation of three information boards at the Botanics on aspects of the Caley's early years and its activities today. Work on the content was researched and compiled by a group of volunteers. There is now considerable evidence to show the importance of Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster's campaign from 1793 for improvement based on knowledge and experiment in a range of topics, one being "husbandry and gardening." The content of the displays will identify how his enthusiasm is as relevant today when, to quote Patrick Geddes, "it is by leaves we live." Please take time to read the promotional material and welcome any who may be attracted to join the Caley as it prepares to continue with the challenge set out in 1811, "to unite the exertions of intelligent professional gardeners and of zealous amateurs in every part of the kingdom for the improvement of the art."

David Affleck

*Loveliest of trees, the cherry now is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride wearing white for Eastertide.*

Housman

TO SUMMER

THE CALEY SUMMER PROGRAMME 2010

DAY TRIPS AND GARDEN VISITS

Saturday 22nd May: Day visit to two gardens near Peebles

The morning will be spent at **Dawyck Botanic Garden**, part of the RBGE, where rhododendrons, azaleas and Himalayan poppies abound among trees of special interest. Soup and sandwich lunch will be in the new visitor centre followed by a visit to a nearby private garden, **Meldonfoot**. Lunch is included in the cost but teas, coffee & cakes must be purchased separately. Travel by coach.

Tuesday 15th June: All day trip to 2 gardens in Fife (details tbc)

Kellie Garden, Pittenweem. The castle was restored by James Lorimer and son Robert. The outer south wall is a mass of climbers, vines and fruit. The organic walled garden is a mix of productive and ornamental plants. The spectacular borders and rambler rose arches make this a truly romantic garden.

Balcarres. Some of the finest perennial borders in Scotland may be found here. There is a formal garden with clipped yews and box parterres, a gravel area planted with sun-loving plants, some mature trees, a pond garden and a 17th Century chapel. A singular garden, unlike any other in Scotland.

Travel by coach. Lunch at the Upper Largo Hotel is included in the cost.

Thursday 1st July: Afternoon visit: **The Old Sun Inn, Newbattle Road, Dalkeith**

The group is limited to a maximum of 30 people. Own transport. Booking essential. A former coaching inn dating back to 1690. The enthusiastic, knowledgeable owners have lived here for 40 years, creating a plantsman's paradise from a pile of rubble. The garden is packed with rare plants. Collections of rhododendrons, Daphne, Meconopsis, lilies, Fritillaria and gentians with two linked ponds and waterside favourites, dwarf conifers, climbers, lawn and conservatory. Refreshments included.

Wednesday 14th July (date tbc): Evening visit to **Redbraes Community Garden, Edinburgh**. Own transport. Buses 36 and 11 stop nearby.

A recently designed garden in an urban setting alongside the Water of Leith. The garden is a recreational area for the use of residents and families living in the surrounding flats, and who provided ideas for the concept of the garden. Beds of flowers and vegetables are tended by the local community.

Winner of an 'Edinburgh in Bloom' Award in 2009.

Refreshments included.

My contact numbers are: tel. 0131 449 3452,

email: sally.heron@blueyonder.co.uk

A booking form with full information, including costs, is included in this mailing.

Sally Heron

*I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine.
Shakespeare*



5-DAY STUDY TOUR, Monday 26th – Friday 30th July 2010

A study tour to gardens of the **North-East of Scotland** is proposed. Accommodation for 4 nights, mainly in single rooms, 6 twin rooms available, will be at the SAC College at the Craibstone Estate, near Aberdeen. All rooms have ensuite facilities. Three course evening meals are included. There is a range of varied and interesting gardens in the area, with one to visit on the outward journey to Aberdeen and one on the return trip. A selection will be made from the following gardens: Castle Fraser Garden & Estate, Crathes Castle, Cruikshank Botanic Garden, Professor Tom Smith's Garden at Rubislaw Den North, Daluaine, Duthie Park & David Welsh Winter Garden, Glenbervie, Inchmarlo House Garden, Pitmedden, Craigie, and Raemoir Garden Centre. Travel will be by coach with AAA Coaches Limited. A booking form for the Study Tour is included in this mailing.

My contact numbers are: tel: 0131 449 3452, email: sally.heron@blueyonder.co.uk

Sally Heron

GARDENING SCOTLAND JUNE 2010 Can You Help?

The Caley has been asked again to recruit volunteers to help at this year's Gardening Scotland Show which takes place on 4th, 5th & 6th June at the Royal Highland Centre at Ingliston. Can you help on any of these days with stewarding and liaison duties to ensure that the Show will again be a really enjoyable and successful occasion for not only the public who come to the Show but also for the exhibitors and stallholders? Volunteers will have their travel expenses paid, have free entry to the Show, as well as special parking arrangements and snack meals and refreshments available while on duty. Volunteers are encouraged to attend a preparation meeting to be held at the Show Ground at Ingliston at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday 2nd June when duties and responsibilities involved will be described, health and safety issues clarified and opportunity will be given for familiarisation of the site. If you can help this year for a morning shift (from 9am) and/or an afternoon shift (from 1pm) on Friday 4th and/or Saturday 5th and/or Sunday 6th June, and I haven't been in touch with you already as someone who has volunteered before, just contact me by phone at 01506 844107, by email at davidcsinclair@btinternet.com or by post to David C Sinclair, 12 Jock's Hill Crescent, Linlithgow, EH49 7BJ as soon as possible. I shall send you a form to complete so that full information can be sent out before the Show.

David C Sinclair, Volunteer Co-ordinator

CALEY ALLOTMENT OPEN DAY

Our allotment will be open to visitors on Sunday 8 August 2pm - 4.30pm. Come and visit the Caley's demonstration allotment at Bridgend allotment site on Old Dalkeith Road, Edinburgh, opposite the Inch nursery entrance. Bridgend is the first organic allotment site in UK and is now in its fourth season. Teas, produce for sale.

Moirra Stevenson

*On the coast of Coromandel where the early pumpkins blow,
In the middle of the woods, lived the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bó
Edward Lear*

CALEY'S RECOGNITION AWARD GETS LOTTERY FUNDING

The Caley has been successful in obtaining a grant of £8,555 from the Awards for All programme of the Big Lottery Fund for its **Recognition of Individual Achievement in Horticulture Award**. The Grow and Learn project will run for a year to make the Award available across Scotland to more people with complex learning needs.



**AWARDS
FOR ALL
SCOTLAND**

LOTTERY FUNDED

The work developing the Recognition Award started in 2006. Through its work with Oatridge College at Suntrap Garden, the Education Committee of the Caley became aware of a need to recognise the achievements of people with complex learning needs who work in garden or horticultural settings. Existing courses were not considered suitable for this group; so a number of people brought together by the Caley devised a pilot scheme that was flexible in approach and would suit projects and organisations working with people with complex learning needs. It was piloted by three organisations in 2006/2007 and reviewed in the autumn of 2008.

The Recognition Award is centred on the student, based on a personal learning plan tailored to individual needs, including giving opportunities for making progress or maintaining current achievement. To obtain the Recognition Award learners have to complete a programme of core horticultural activities and a menu of further optional activities linked to gardening and horticulture. The award will normally only be made after a minimum of 12 months, or an academic year. The student must attend the garden for at least 80 hours during that period. Assessment is through compiling a portfolio and recording progress.

The structure of the Award is designed to recognise and fit in with organisations' existing programmes. To date, over 40 Awards have been presented to learners from three Agencies, and currently thirteen organisations across Scotland have registered learners with the Award programme and four others are considering doing so.

The Lottery funding will allow us to make the Award programme sustainable for the future. Over the next few months we will be streamlining the administration and designing a pack of materials which will be made available to organisations interested in offering the Award. It will include samples of recording materials and ideas for compiling evidence of achievement.

We will also be looking for people to champion the Award across Scotland and to act as volunteer verifiers. If you are interested please contact Margaret Teale on 0131-449-6596, Margaret.Teale@blueyonder.co.uk or David Sinclair at 01506 844107, davidcsinclair@btinternet.com.

Margaret Teale, member of Council

*June brings tulips, lilies, roses,
fills the children's hands with posies.
Nursery Rhyme*

CUTTINGS

GARDENING CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS AT SUNTRAP

Places are still available for some of the classes at Suntrap. For details see December's *Preview* or the Caley website (www.rchs.co.uk/page12.html).

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

The Caley is grateful to the following Corporate Members: Lyle Crawford & Co, CA, North Berwick, Dow's Garden Supplies, Armadale, Oatridge College, Perennial, Ronaash Ltd (Root Trainers), Kelso, The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland. Please support these organisations. For more information on corporate membership contact: John Murison, Membership Secretary, 0131 478 2141, e-mail: johnmurison@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Last year our cards showed amaryllis flowers from Spring Show 2008. This year's cards show *Gentiana* 'The Caley'.

SERVICES TO HORTICULTURE

Congratulations to Professor Mary Gibby, OBE, of the RBGE and Willie Duncan, MBE who were honoured at the New Year.

TIMELINE: Erratum

Jennifer Woods has noticed an error which crept into the bicentenary Timeline. It was implied there that the Memoirs of the Society commenced publication in 1819. In fact volume 1 was first printed in 1814, the 1819 publication being a delayed reprint.

ARDTORNISH

Faith Raven's interesting book, *The Ardtornish Garden*, may be obtained by sending a cheque for £10 to The Estate Office, Ardtornish, Morvern, by Oban, Argyll PA34 5UZ.

AND FINALLY

Remember to keep looking at the website www.rchs.co.uk. You will find George's Spring Show Bulb Watch and the very lively speech which George Reid gave at the Bicentennial Dinner last November there. If anyone would like a printed copy of it apply to the Secretary, Mrs Alison Murison, 17 Jordan Lane, Edinburgh EH10 4RA, telephone 0131 478 2141 by 1st May.

We are planning to have a Caley Christmas card this year. If you have an image of winter which would be suitable please send it to Clive Davies at 27cgd@tiscali.co.uk. Clive is also the webmaster. Send him any material for the website.

The deadline for the next issue of *Preview* is Monday 23rd August, please send unformatted copy to annabuxtonb@aol.com.

Anna Buxton and Margaret Forrester, Editors



Illustrations are by Clare Leighton