



Newsletter No 6, December, 2018

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HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Members

Another year has flown by! I thought it was because I'm getting older that time went more quickly but I'm assured by some younger people that time seems to go quickly for them also. So, I think we all need to slow down a bit.

The start of 2018 was cold, snowy and very wet, and winter really went on into April, which meant we were a month behind planting. Then we had that beautiful summer; it may have been too warm at times but surely that's better than miserable cloudy days. Some plants flourish in the heat but most gardens probably lost a few because of the lack of water. Personally, though, I'm happy to put up with that for a nice summer.

Both the Spring and Autumn Shows were great successes with more people participating in all classes. But we do need more children to enter as they represent the future. A big 'thank you' to Michael King and James Cadle for the many hours they spent organising the Shows to ensure smooth running on the day.

We also had some excellent day trips this year organised by Don Hide and Terry Owen. Don stood down at the AGM and I want to thank him publicly for his hard work over many years. Terry is carrying on and planning some interesting trips for 2019. As these are so well supported, remember to get your names down early to avoid disappointment.

At home, I have got the Christmas tree up with the help of my granddaughters. It's that time of year when we look forward to seeing the smiles on children's faces as they open their gifts – and then play with the boxes!

When we're having fun at Christmas, eating to excess and drinking far too much, perhaps we should think of people much worse off than ourselves through no fault of their own. They would often be very happy to eat the things we throw away in the waste bin at this time of the year – so, freeze it and use it later and don't waste good food.

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year



Tony Harper

HARVEST HOME LUNCH

Seventy members attended our annual celebration of the harvest on 14th October. The four course meal consisted of leek and potato soup, roast turkey with the accompaniments, a choice of puddings (including apple pie, of course) and cheese, followed by tea or coffee. Afterwards, Colin Oakes entertained us with a short talk on 'Dickens and Christmas'.

This was the first time we had used a new caterer, our previous one having retired last year, and people seemed to be generally very happy with the results.

James Cadle

CHRISTMAS VISIT TO ASCOT

It rained – heavily. Fortunately, the fair was all under cover in what a steward told me is a vast restaurant area on race meeting days. There was a very wide variety of stands – gifts, clothes, crafts, tools, you name it – and the fair was packed with eager shoppers. A man on the Woodland Trust stand told me that they are planning to plant millions – yes, millions! – of trees at numerous sites over the country, in addition to the coast to coast forest being established across the north of England. Downstairs were the food hall and restaurant and, after a large delicious turkey sandwich for lunch, I went for a walk.

The rain eventually petered out. I passed various ticket offices and gateways to the racecourse, a horse and jockey statue, a millennium clock, a war memorial and a war horse memorial (to horses killed in war work). The sun finally broke through when it was time to come home. Typical!

Our thanks go to Terry Owen for organising an interesting and successful day.

Sylvia Giles

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2018

The 74th AGM of the VPA was held on 21st November and was attended by 26 members (including 8 of the Committee Members). The main points were:

- A cheque for £500 was presented to Neil Spencer, representing the 1st Holmer Green Scouts, and Neil outlined how the donation will be used.
- Final membership for the year was 203 (2017 = 194), including 24 new members.
- The Trading Store had made a small profit, ably managed by Richard Chantler.
- Overall, the Association showed a very small surplus but effectively broke even. Pam Barnett was thanked for another year as Treasurer.
- Two successful shows were staged in 2018, with a good number of exhibits, especially considering the difficult weather, and some different classes from 2017; Michael King was thanked for his work as Show Secretary.
- Ten excellent talks had been well-received in 2018 and Linda Meatyard was thanked for her hard work as Talks Organiser.
- Don Hide and Terry Owen had organised five very good outings in 2018 and they were thanked for these.
- Events planned for 2019 include the usual two shows, the Garden Party and a varied programme of talks and outings. However, the Harvest Home Lunch would be abandoned for 2019.
- Subscription for 2019 will remain at £6 per family unit. This should enable the VPA to break even in 2019.

The 2018 Committee was re-elected for 2019, except that David Avery stood down as Catering Manager and Don Hide retired as Outings Organiser. Both were thanked for their efforts and a Vote of Thanks was proposed and agreed for Don's long and active service to the VPA. Pam Barnett has given notice that she will stand down as Treasurer at the next AGM.

Before and after the AGM, the members present enjoyed cheese and wine.

FORTHCOMING TALKS and MEETINGS

'Work Aid', with Roger Lane (16th January)

Work Aid is a charity based in Chesham that aims to provide people in developing countries with the tools they need to improve their lives and their livelihoods. Through a nationwide network, they collect and refurbish tools and send them where they are needed. Roger Lane will explain how this very practical charity works. At the Village Centre.

'A River Trip in Burma', with Tony Harper and Peter Overall (20th February)

VPA President Tony Harper, this time teamed with member Peter Overall, presents another travelogue, fully illustrated with their photographs. This time the subject is a river trip of exploration through Burma. At the Village Centre.

PLANNED EVENTS FOR 2019

Here is your calendar of the major VPA events planned for 2019:

6th January	Trading Store opens for 2019
16th January	Talk 'Work Aid', with Roger Lane
20th February	Talk 'A River Trip in Burma', with Tony Harper and Peter Overall
20th March	Talk 'Farming Life at Wren Davis, Prestwood', with Virginia Deradour
30th March	Spring Show
17th April	Talk 'The Adventures of an Old Bucks Boy', with Stuart King
15th May	Talk 'Experiences of the National Garden Scheme', with Brian Fisher
19th June	Talk 'Africa in Pictures', with Tom Way
17th July	Talk 'London to Venice on the Orient Express', with Mary Sibley
21st August	Talk 'Buckinghamshire Spies and Subversives', with Denise Beddows
7th September	Annual Show
18th September	Talk 'Romans in Britain', with Jill Ayres
29th September	Trading Store closes for the year
16th October	Talk 'Gutsy Women', with Colin Oakes
20th November	Annual General Meeting
5th January 2020	Trading Store opens for 2020

Don Hide and Terry Owen will let us all know about their programme of outings for 2017 once these are finalised.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2019

As mentioned in the report of the AGM, it has been decided that the subscription for 2019 will be kept at £6 per family unit. You can renew on Sundays at the Trading Store – once it opens on 6th January – or by sending your subscription to me at Boot Farm, Watchet Lane, Little Kingshill, HP16 ODR.

Richard Chantler, Membership Secretary

WINTER NEWS FROM THE TRADING STORE

The Store is currently closed and re-opens, fully stocked for the new year, on Sunday 6th January 2019.

We have noticed this year that trade dropped off almost totally in October, to the point where it seemed a waste of time for our volunteers to turn up and operate the Store. At the same time, we considered that it might be better not to close the Store in August. We discussed these ideas at the AGM and it was agreed that, **in 2019, the Store will remain open during August and will close for the year at the end of September.**

We look forward to serving you in 2019.

Richard Chantler, Trading Store Manager

PHOTOGRAPHIC CLASSES FOR THE 2019 SHOWS

The 2019 VPA Show Schedule will be published in January but, to enable you to get snapping over the winter, here are the photographic classes for the 2019 shows:

Spring Show – Juniors

- 1 Wildlife
- 2 In the Woods
- 3 Blue
- 4 On the Water

Annual Shows – Juniors

- 1 Something Red
- 2 Seaside
- 3 Food, Glorious Food
- 4 On the Farm

Spring Show – Adults

- 1 In Flight
- 2 A Cold Snap
- 3 In Uniform
- 4 A Pattern
- 5 Black and White
- 6 Autumn Colours
- 7 Spring is Sprung
- 8 A Pot Plant
- 9 Windows
- 10 A Favourite Garden

Annual Show – Adults

- 1 Sand
- 2 Roses
- 3 Water Display
- 4 Blooming Marvellous
- 5 Going Green
- 6 Heritage
- 7 Sky High
- 8 Coffee Time
- 9 Festival Fun
- 10 A Mansion

OUR VERY OWN GARDENING GURU!

Some members may already have met Brian Fisher, who moved to Holmer Green last year and promptly joined the VPA. What you may not know is that he holds the Master of Horticulture qualification, which is the Royal Horticultural Society's highest, degree-level, award for professional horticulturalists. Brian's knowledge was on display at our Annual Show, where he partnered with Brian Furner in judging the horticultural classes.

Anyway, at this year's AGM, Brian very kindly offered to put his expertise at the disposal of other VPA members. As a professional consultant, he is obviously not going to spend whole days sorting out members' problems but he is very happy to provide advice on specific topics free of charge to our members.

If you want to pick Brian's brains, you can contact him by phone, either on 01494 711896 or 07751 720060, or at the special new email address guru@hgvp.org.

MY CHRISTMAS 'THANK YOU'

At the AGM, I thanked various people for their efforts on behalf of the VPA during the year but, of course, only some of the members were present to hear that. So I'd now like to use this newsletter to acknowledge the sterling efforts of:

- Dorothy Kirby for compiling and distributing the Trading Store rota
- the 'mid-week crew' (who actually work on Mondays nowadays) at the Trading Store, who turn up each week to bag up products and generally make the place ready for Sunday
- the Sunday volunteers at the Trading Store, for coming along to assist customers with their purchases and collect the money
- the rota of people who provide teas and coffees at our monthly talks
- those who assist at our Shows, the Garden Party and other social events, by acting as stewards, providing and serving teas and cakes and in lots of other ways
- Brian and Sue Rogers, who made their garden available for our Garden Party in July
- everyone who entered our two Shows and made them a success.

And, finally, I'd like to thank everyone on the VPA Committee who do so much for us during the year.

Best wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year!

James Cadle, Chairman