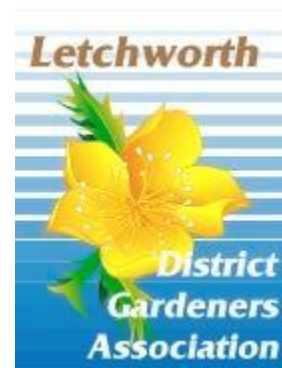


Affiliated to the B.F.S., N.C.S., N.D.S., N.S.P.S., R.H.S. & R.N.R.S.

President: Mr. Peter Harkness D.H.M.

Gleanings from the Compost Heap



Autumn 2003

Official Annual General Meeting Call

The Association's Annual General meeting will take place on Thursday November 20th 2003 at the Guide H.Q. 247a Icknield Way starting at 7.30pm

Editorial

It has always been one of the Association's aims to develop pride in our gardens – to put the Garden into Letchworth Garden City - and twice this summer we have done this in style.

In early July, as part of the Heritage Foundation's centenary celebrations, the town centre was closed to traffic and given a real old time atmosphere. Vintage cars and motorbikes were displayed, together with stalls on the pavements and displays by community organisations. One of these was a tremendous flower show in the Arcade. What a pity we cannot reproduce the photograph here – we are not wealthy enough to print "C.H." in colour!

Laurie Cook, together with a few friends, grew the plants, transported the flowers to and from his house, set up the stand and manned it all day. The team earned a large feather for the Association's cap as a result of his idea. Well done to all involved. The second event was the Front garden competition described further on in the "C.H."

Gardeners, like farmers, never seem to get it right and are forever wailing about their bad luck, pests and misfortunes. As ever the weather brought its share of problems. A few good rainy days and nights would have been welcome in July and August. There is a limit to what can be achieved using watering cans, no matter how often you use them. The weeks of blazing sunshine brought early maturity to many flowers and crops but the drought meant runner beans did not set properly, the flowers falling and leaving bare stalks. It also meant the soil soon became dust coated concrete. Despite my vow to give up growing tomatoes, I did give asylum to four plants unloaded onto me by a good (?) friend. They developed well and one bunch helped me to a second in the show. Other crops seem to have performed normally although there are whispers the apple harvest is below average. Most soft fruit benefited, although regular sessions with the hose were needed to make the berries swell. Press on regardless – there's always next year.

The Shows

The Summer Show, in July had fewer visitors than '02, but there was a 10% increase in the items on display.

In September, the Autumn Show was much more encouraging, with more exhibitors than last year and many more exhibits

Despite the unusually dry season, the standard was very high. The return after many years to St. Georges Hall passed smoothly. Compared with Norton School, which seemed a bit more spacious, it gave no problems over access or parking and was just able to cope with the increase in items for show.

The disappointing lack of interest for the floral art section has been a concern to the organisers for some time, with no entries in some classes. This autumn it was sad to know there were no exhibits at all in any of the classes.

After the prize giving in September, Roy Heydon announced his retirement from the show secretary's team. After 30 years in flower show administration in several parts of England, he felt the time had come for new blood to support Paul in his endeavours.

If you would like to help, give Paul a ring on 01462-686630

The Centenary Garden Competition

Early in August the two judges Mark Bickerdike and Gill Thompson toured Letchworth to examine a short list of eight candidates from which to select the winners.

These eight had scored the most points given to the 31 entries which the public sent in, as judged by a team of three Association members. Each entry was considered and marked in three categories, 10 in each category, maximum 30 points.

The categories were

1. The balance of planting and hard landscaping
2. The variety, layout and colour of the plants.
3. The overall tidiness of the garden.

The LDGA team studied every entry from the pavement, pinpointing and discussing the presentation. Since the residents were neither warned nor disturbed, their neighbours must have wondered what was going on. It's remarkable a police car didn't interrupt the proceedings – "Now then, what's all this 'ere? Casing the joint are we?"

A point made by the team was that there were several front gardens on their route that would have earned a high score, high enough to be included on the short list. What a pity they hadn't bothered to enter.

Among the delightful displays were small front gardens of the sort which irritate the LGCHF who will see them as "unsightly hard standings." The hanging baskets and terra cotta containers were a blaze of colour, which framed the residents' car park. It proved that with a little TLC such front gardens are a credit to the occupiers and an asset to any garden city. If the town centre car parks were enhanced to the same standards, LGCHF would exchange their annoyance for pride.

A month later the winners were presented with their trophies by Peter Harkness, wearing his Heritage Foundation chairman's hat. The trophy was a very attractive and stylish glass flower vase, suitably engraved, together with a framed photograph of the winning garden and a certificate. Second and third placing received framed photographs and certificates.

The award winners were: -

1. **Small gardens;** (less than 40' x 25')
Winner -Mr. And Mrs. J. Littlewood
146 Common View
Runner up – Mr. And Mrs P. Codd
49 Wheathill
Third place- Mrs F Hargreaves
18 Gaunts Way
- 2 **Large gardens**
Winner – Mr. And Mrs. J. Smith
7 Bell Acre
Runner up – Ann Hankin
24 Maycroft
Third place- Mrs V. Warner
111 Baldock Road

The Association was supported in this competition by the Heritage Foundation who not only provided all the prizes but also gave valuable assistance with professional photography, publicity and administration. Our grateful thanks to the LGHF and the Judges for all their help and co-operation. It was much appreciated.

Finally From your Chairman

Please put the AGM details in your diary, on your calendar and a post-it note on your fridge door! Set aside that evening to come. Brief formal agenda, seasonal snacks, a glass of something and then entertainment. I look forward to seeing you

Maureen Hersee

If you have any comments on the "Compost Heap", have an article suitable for future issues, or are willing to help with distribution in your area, please contact me Jack Collins on tel 01462 682723 or at:- 12 Cashio Lane Letchworth Herts SG6 1AX

Admin/ops

If you live in the Pixmore area you may recall receiving a letter last January from Steve Carr, to say he was giving up the job of area secretary for your area.

He has recently advised that he has been unable to find someone to take over and we urgently need to fill this vacancy. Ideally, you should reside in the area, but it is not essential. Steve will show you the ropes.

If you are willing, please contact your Membership Secretary: - Peter Hollingsworth tel. 01462 – 455266,

Email: phollingsworth@hypercom.com.

I.T.

Are you on the Internet? Would you like to receive your "CH" electronically rather than by snail mail? If so please let Maureen know Email maureen@hersee.net.

Have heard we now have a web site it is

www.ldga.org.uk

Telling All

Following the plea in the summer edition we are delighted to tell you we had two responses. The new faces are Andrew Smith of Lammas Way and Cathy Bee of Paddock Close. They will be looking after press releases and outside publicity.

Store News from Peter Faulkner

Winter onion sets are moving briskly with half our delivery already gone. The variety is "Radar" which, we are told, is the most reliable for bolting resistance and long storage.

Manufacturers are struggling to keep pace with the latest bans by the E.C. bureaucrats and we continue to get reports of items where there are predicted supply problems. Regular users may be pleased to know that "Jeyes Fluid", previously banned, is now back in a new pack but with all reference to soil sterilisation withdrawn. Roseclear II is being reformulated as Roseclear III. We will keep you informed

I am preparing the order for next year. I do urge you to tell me if there is something you would like us to have available in the store. If there is sufficient demand I will consider adding it to our Stocklist for next season.

May I remind you we close for two months on Sunday November 30th. Don't forget to stock up for your winter needs.