



## NEWSLETTER

July 2020

Dear Members,

During lockdown we had suspended formal newsletters, replacing them with occasional emails to those of you whose email addresses we hold, and keeping members informed of the cancellation of our summer events through our webpage. With a gradual easing of restrictions I am resuming newsletters, at least for the present. We hope that this one finds you and yours safe and well and that you have drawn some pleasure from your gardens and from the green spaces around us.

Those of you who receive our emails will already know that we have also decided that we are unable to hold this year's Show, at least in its usual form; instead, like many other garden societies, we are holding a **'virtual' Show online**. Instead of bringing your exhibits to us, you will take photos of them, send the photos in, and the judges will judge the exhibits, as best they can, from the photos. Then, on the afternoon of the day of the Show (which is still **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September**) you will be able to pay a 'visit' to the Show to view photographs of the exhibits online (sorry, no tea and cake this year!).

Those of you receiving this newsletter by email should find the Schedule of classes attached; paper copies will be accompanied by paper Schedules. The Schedule will also be available on our webpage (go to [www.brimpsfieldvillage.org.uk](http://www.brimpsfieldvillage.org.uk) and look for the Garden Society tab at the top of the page), and a pile of paper copies will be left in the Brimpsfield phone box for you to pick up as you need to.

There are quite a few changes this year, for this year only, because of the special circumstances. Usually our Show is for Garden Society members only, but this year no one has been able to renew their membership because of the lockdown, and we did not want to exclude those who might want to join the Society in order to exhibit at the Show (since we currently have no mechanism to create new members), so this year's Show is **open to all**. There are no entry fees, and we won't be awarding trophies or prize money, given that the judging necessarily cannot be to the usual standards, but those of you who win First Prizes will be able to download a certificate recording the fact. To keep things simple, there are considerably fewer classes, but they cover many of the usual subjects and some are very broad in scope, so there should be something for everyone (have you made your own face-mask? – there's a class for that too!). We have taken the opportunity to introduce a few classes which the Show Committee has discussed in the past but rejected on the grounds that they would be too difficult to stage in the confined space of a hall, but which would be fine as an exhibit photographed in your own garden or home – a hanging basket, for example, and a children's scarecrow; you can even enter your garden itself as an exhibit!

In the case of the Photography section, obviously it's the photos themselves that you will send us and that will be judged, but, just to be clear, for the other classes it won't be your photography skills but the exhibits themselves (your fruit, veg, flowers, cakes, crafts etc) that the judges will assess. Your photos must show all the features asked for in the Schedule, for example, in the 'tray of vegetables' classes all the types of vegetable must be visible; and in the 'Tea-time' class the label of your jam-jar must be readable. We have asked for some exhibits to be staged so that the judge has an opportunity to see details such as the inside of your Victoria sponge or the texture of your jam, so take note of exactly what the class says.

For new exhibitors: note that the Cakes & Preserves and Flower Arranging classes are not a test of your gardening skills; you can use bought flowers to arrange, and your jam does not have to be made with your own fruit (the jam in the Victoria sandwich can also be bought in), though obviously it's cheaper, and more fun, if you can use some of your own flowers / produce!

The entry process is set out in the Schedule, but in brief, you should send photos to a dedicated Show email address ([brimpsfieldmcgardensociety@gmail.com](mailto:brimpsfieldmcgardensociety@gmail.com) – please note that this is very similar to, but slightly different from, the Society's official email address). There is **no entry form**; just send us as many emails, with the photos attached, as you need to, provided that they arrive **between 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> August**; we **will not accept late entries** as there will be a lot of 'behind the scenes' work to get the photos prepared for judging. Remember to make clear in your emails the name of the exhibitor, the class to which each photo refers and, for entries in the Children's section, their age. If you have any questions, please ask me.

If you can't email photographs, you can send in prints (my address is on the Schedule) which will then be scanned in; but you will still only be able to view the Show online.

On the afternoon of 5<sup>th</sup> September we will email out, to exhibitors and members whose email addresses we hold, a link to the online folders where the exhibitors' photos, and the prizewinners' names, can be found, so that you can 'visit' the Show! A selection of winning photos will also be posted on the Society's webpage.

We're very grateful to our judges, most of them originally booked to judge our 'real' Show, who have undertaken to judge under these rather unusual circumstances; and to Jan Evans, who has masterminded all the online wizardry and the Zoom meetings required to make this work!

Even if you aren't going to take part in the Show, you might want to send us a **photo of your lockdown gardening** to add to the gallery on our webpage (see above for the link) – if so, please make clear to us whether it's for the webpage or the Show!

One of our members, Angela Lerwill, has taken up making **sourdough loaves** for a good cause while in lockdown. She is selling them to benefit the Burundi Education Foundation, a charity which is the sole support of a school in a rural area of Burundi, one of the poorest countries in the world, and which, like most charities, has suffered a loss of income during the pandemic. She will be delivering pre-ordered loaves, at £5 each, to Brimpsfield Village Hall car park at 11am on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July; to order, please contact her at 07423 080429 or [frithwoodfarm@gmail.com](mailto:frithwoodfarm@gmail.com) by 21<sup>st</sup> July (and bring your own bag on the 24<sup>th</sup> to carry the bread home in!). You can find a short article by Angela about this linked from our webpage.

Looking ahead, it's not possible at present to determine what will happen with planned events for the autumn and winter. As things stand, our next event after the Show would be our **Coffee Morning and talk on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October**, when we have booked Mike Bush, an 'eco-gardener', to talk to us about 'Composting and Beyond' – how to make our gardening (not just composting) as 'green' as possible. Save the date, and we will keep you posted on whether that can go ahead!

Meanwhile, we hope that you are enjoying the fruits of your gardening, either literally – there has been a most encouraging boom in fruit and veg gardening over the past months! – or figuratively, with your flowers blooming and your garden looking its best. Gardeners have to be optimistic, planning ahead for colour and crops in the months to come; it will soon be time to buy your spring bulbs for next year. Get your daffodils in early and your tulips in late (not before November), and remember that there is still time to sow seeds of some plants for winter cropping or for early colour next spring; you don't have to leave your garden empty over the winter!

Happy gardening and exhibiting!

Frances Ellery