

Gardening in Bishops Waltham



Keith Fry
Sometime Chairman

Bishops Waltham Gardening Club

Preface

It is important that the development of an organisation from its inception to a later point in its life is recorded so that the details of events and changes which have taken place are not lost as the memories of older members fade.

This booklet is an attempt to record the activities of the various individuals and groups of people who have influenced the formation and activities of Bishops Waltham Gardening Club as it exists today.

The text has been developed from interviews with the "elder statesmen" – long serving members of the Gardening Club and its predecessors, the Bishops Waltham and District Horticultural Society and the Bishops Waltham Allotment Association. The photographs are from the collections of members of the Gardening Club and other people.

It is inevitable that further information comes to light and so this revised edition is published as an online only version to update knowledge on the club.

It has been a great pleasure both to produce this booklet and to do the research for it. I hope that some people derive some pleasure from its contents.

Keith Fry

Keith Fry
2010

Acknowledgements

I am particularly grateful to the following who gave freely of their knowledge, their memories and their photographs:

Les Powell
Pat Carty
Den Marriner
Ray Crookes
Joyce New
Chris Smith
John Price

Bishop Waltham Horticultural Society and Bishop Waltham and District Horticultural Society

Chronology and Activities

It is not certain when the first formal organisation to do with gardening in Bishops Waltham came into being. Sometime, probably in the 19th or 20th centuries, certainly prior to 1914, Bishops Waltham Horticultural Society was formed.



A copy of a Prize Certificate awarded by the Bishops Waltham Horticultural Society to Mr Walter Pink for "Meritorious Exhibits" on July 29th 1914



Detail from the picture above showing the stamp of Bishops Waltham Horticultural Society and the date

The Bishops Waltham Horticultural Society later became known as Bishops Waltham and District Horticultural Society. The earliest memory is from the 1940's when the Chairman was a Captain (Joe) Colville R.N. This society met about 3 times per year, once for an Annual General Meeting (November), once for the Annual Show (July – Members only) and once for a members' open meeting (February) which usually took the form of an illustrated talk about some aspect of horticulture. The Annual (Horticultural) Show was held in a marquee in various locations about the village as an integral part of the annual carnival organised by the British Legion which was held in the years after the second world war. The Annual General Meeting and the open meeting took place at the Institute in Bank Street, now apartments, and the Annual Show was held in the Drill Hall in Victory Road.

At the Annual Show, there were always two raffles – one for the usual sort of prizes and one for trout – often fresh, sometimes frozen!!- always provided by the Chairman.

The major prizes were two cups, one for 'professional gardeners and one for 'amateurs'. There was always keen competition for the former since only 2 members qualified! One was the gardener for Admiral Cunningham and one for Captain Colville – rank was never an issue here.



The Annual Show 1985

**Bishop's Waltham and District
Horticultural Society**

**OPEN ANNUAL
Flower Show**

President:
CAPTAIN G. C. COLVILLE, R.N.

to be held at

**THE DRILL HALL, School Hill
Bishop's Waltham**

on

**SATURDAY, 24th JULY, 1976
at 2 p.m.**

Auction of Produce at 4.30 p.m.

FREE CAR PARKING — REFRESHMENTS

★ ★ ★

ADMISSION: ADULTS 10p CHILDREN 5p

*Hon. Secretary: Mrs. P. CARTY
Garthead, Hoe Road, Bishop's Waltham
Telephone: Bishop's Waltham 2562*

*Asst. Hon. Secretary: Mrs. G. HALL
The Gables, Hoe Road, Bishop's Waltham
Telephone: Bishop's Waltham 2467*

Annual Show Catalogue Cover 1976

There was a committee which met from time to time in a room at the Crown Hotel. The office of Treasurer was always occupied by a local bank manager – a sort of ex-officio role – almost certainly not in his job specification!! During this time the Gardening Club Show Tables were made by Mr Featherstone and Mr Butcher. These tables were stored at SCATS store in the village which was run by Mr Edenbury, who was Chairman of the Bishops Waltham and District Horticultural Society following Captain Colville. These tables were then given to the Jubilee Hall in exchange for free storage under the stage and free use of the Hall for the Annual Show for five years. They are alas no more.

The annual Red Lion Street plant sale was started to subsidise the cost of staging the Annual Show.

During the sixties and seventies, the number of meetings increased until, in the late seventies monthly meetings were held in the smaller Jubilee Hall and an annual outing and annual dinner were a regular part of the proceedings.

Bishops Waltham Allotment and Garden Association

Chronology and Activities

Allotments have been part of gardening in Bishops Waltham for many years.

The first plots, which were unofficial, were on Hoe Road near what is now the Sports Field. The first official allotments, that is, those with a statutory basis under the allotments Act of 1948, were near what is now Blanchards Road. The plots were rented individually from the Parish Council for 5s. per year (25p!!). The Hoe Road site was terminated because it was used for development and the Blanchards Road site was terminated for similar reasons.

In 1974 allotments were established at the Albany Road site where they remain to this day. Initially very few allotments were tended. There was no planned use, considerable sub-letting, no paths and much rough grass and brambles. In the late 70's Chris Smith, John Price and Bob Hills formed the Bishops Waltham Allotment and Garden Association which was then asked to "help" in the management of the allotments in the early 1980's by the Parish Council. The cost and effectiveness of the management of the allotments were proving a significant burden to the Council. Agreement by all parties followed and a lease agreement drawn up. Over a period of years the quality of the site was improved with gradual clearing and bringing further land into cultivation. The allotment shed was established in 1986 which enabled the generation of revenue which as used further to improve the quality of the site.



March 1984 - March 1985

Bishop's Waltham Allotment & Garden Association

★ most prices reduced!

<u>ESSENTIALS</u>							
Guano	25kg	£3.55	Salphate of Petash	3kg	£0.80		
Salphate of Petash	25kg	£6.45	Superphosphate	3kg	£0.65		
Superphosphate	25kg	£4.75	Compost	3kg	£1.05		
Lime	25kg	£2.55	Fish & Blood & Bone meal	3kg	£0.85		
Compost	25kg	£0.75					
Fish & Blood & Bone meal	25kg	£6.75					
<u>POULTRY AND BIRD SUPPLY</u>							
Irish Moss Feat (NOL)	Guano	bale	£7.55	Giant	- £4.35	Large - (100L)	£3.55
Swiss Feat	56 lbs.	bale	£1.20				
John Innes	No. 1, No. 2, No. 3	(25 lbs.)	at	£1.65			
Levingtons multi-purpose compost	40L	-	£4.05	or	60L	-	£5.05
Levingtons Blacking Compost	40L	-	£3.50				
<u>PODS (SHAWSON - PLANTO)</u>							
3" - per ten	30p	(RSP	6p each)				
5" - per ten	£1.75	(RSP	30p each)				
<u>VERMICULITE</u>							
F.B.I. Growover insect control	500 ml.	-	£1.90 (RSP - £2.65)				
F.B.I. Droughton (In. 2)		-	£2.30				
<u>ROCKWELL</u>							
Murphy	Liquid Copper	227 ml (8 oz.)	-	£1.45			
I.G.I.	General garden fungicide	100 ml (makes 7 gallons)	-	£1.00			
<u>FOR LAWNS AND WOODS</u>							
Murphy	Dandelweed, couch grass destroyer.	500 ml	-	£4.50 (RSP £6.50)			
"	Lawn selective weed killer	500 ml	-	£1.55			
I.G.I.	Moss killer - (25 sq. yd.)	3kg	-	£5.50 (RSP £4.99)			
J Arthur Bowers	Weed and Feed (Lawn)	10kg	-	£3.50 (RSP £5.35)			
<u>SEED MIXTURE</u>							
I.G.I.	4kg mini pellets (blue)	700g	-	£1.40			
<u>FLUON</u>							
Fluon	Tumorite	2.5 litre	-	£3.50 (RSP £5.50)			

Allotment Shed Price List 1984

Orders should be given to Dave Varty, Moorlands House, Swansmoor Road, Swansmoor, Waltham: Bishops Waltham 4801 by Sunday, midday. For deliveries to have usually following Wednesday. Collect any evening.

Other items i.e. tools, hoses, propagators, heaters at a worthwhile saving.

Chris Smith

In 1993 initial informal discussions were held with the Horticultural Society about amalgamation.

Bishops Waltham Gardening Club

The suggestion was made by Ray Crookes, who was Chairman of the Bishops Waltham and District Horticultural Society following Mr Edenbury, that the Allotment Association and the Horticultural Society should merge. At this time members of the Horticultural Society could be associate members of the Allotment Association to enable them to use the facilities at the Albany Road allotments shed. Some people were also members of both groups. The thinking behind the idea was to do with improving recruitment and getting new blood into the Horticultural Society. There were not enough interested people to merit two such similar organisations – adapt or die!

The Gardening Club as such was formed by the formal amalgamation of the Allotments Association and the Horticultural Society at an extraordinary joint meeting on 11 May 1994; Bob Hills was the first Chairman. The new organisation was renamed in such a way that it was clearly different from either of its predecessors and that it had been formed by mutual agreement and amalgamation not take over!

Following amalgamation, the Gardening Club membership improved and the programme and activities became livelier. This was also due to the decision of some long serving committee members to stand down and this enabled new committee members to serve.

The Annual Dinner became a regular feature, as did entry into the Hampshire Federation of Horticultural Societies Quiz and entry initially to the Chelsea Flower Show and lately to the Hampton Court Flower Show as corporate members of the Royal Horticultural Society.



Bronze medal certificate 1997



Bronze medal 1997



Entry for the Hampton Court Flower Show 1998

One significant development has been the entry of The Annual Show in the Hampshire Federation Competition for Show Quality. This has achieved 3 gold medals! Membership of Garden Organic which is the working name of the Henry Doubleday Research Association (HDRA), the national charity for organic growing, reflects trends in organic gardening and growing crops without chemicals.

Bishops Waltham Gardening Club in 2010

The Gardening Club has in the region of 300 paid up members. It became a charity in 2007 and management is now by a Board of Trustees under a revised constitution. The Board consists of 3 elected officers: Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and 10 elected Trustees plus any additional co-opted Trustees which may from time to time be required.

Communication with the membership is achieved by a business section at the end of each monthly meeting, a newsletter some 3 or 4 times and year and a notice board at the allotments.

Monthly meetings are held throughout the year on horticultural or horticulturally related topics. These are attended by about 80 members per meeting and invariably are led by a paid speaker who also shows slides or gives demonstrations. One meeting in Spring also sees the Spring Show and one meeting in June the Rose and Sweet Pea Show. One monthly meeting is given over the Annual General Meeting and one meeting to the Annual Show.

The Annual Show is held in July and attracts in excess of 600 entries. Gold Medals have been awarded to the Club for the quality of the Show from the Hampshire Federation of Horticultural Societies. This competition is now sadly defunct.

The Club manages around 140 allotment plots on behalf of the Parish Council in return for which it receives the allotment rental income, currently £15 per annum for a whole plot and £10 per annum for a half plot. The management involves maintaining the hedges and grass drives in good condition and ensuring the plots are let and well tilled and the rent collected. Development is an important part of the Club's work and to this end a lottery bid of £10,000 was secured together with the Club's own resources and other fundraising activities raised the £25,000 necessary to replace the allotment shed with the Chris Smith Building which functions as a shop, meeting and social area and store. This is named after Chris Smith a founder member of the Gardening Club who sadly died before he saw the completion of the new shed which was his project.

The Trustees are pursuing policies which enable more people to have access to growing on an allotment. These include the provision of raised beds (with an independent rainwater supply) for disabled and less mobile members; the provision of smaller plots for people gardening for health reasons and who are recommended by their doctor and plots for children. All of these are provided at no cost to the user.

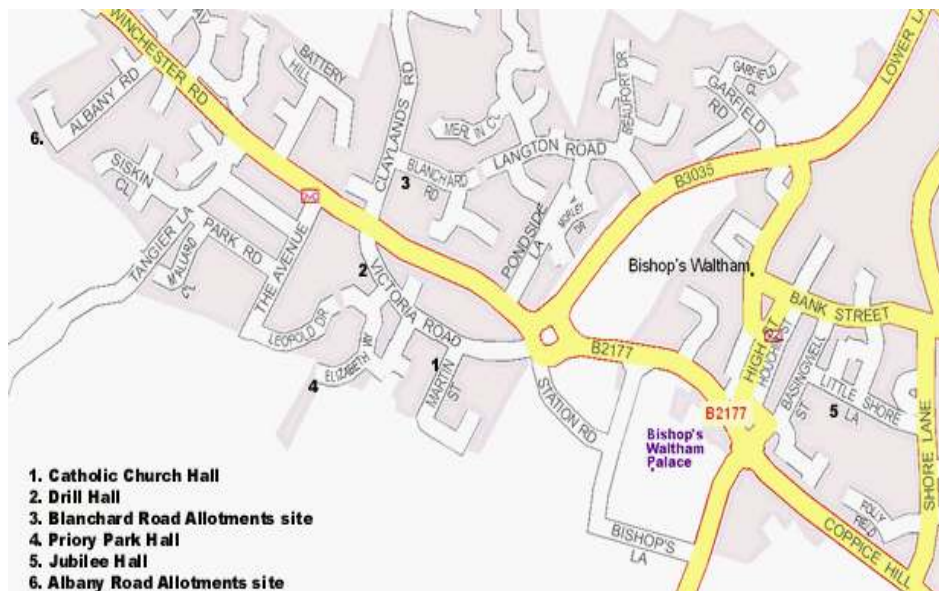
The Trustees are also improving their ability to maintain the allotments with extensive scrub clearance and the purchase of a ride on mower to keep the vegetation manageable once clearance has taken place.

An Annual Plant Sale is held in May in Red Lion Street in Bishops Waltham. This sale has been intensively promoted to enable its contribution to Club funds to rise from £150 about 5 years ago to £600+ in 2009.

Various social activities are held irregularly throughout the year and these involve visits to gardens, a barbeque, trips to gardening related events such as Gardeners' World Live, a Show preparation meeting and similar events. An Annual Dinner is organised and currently is used to raise money for charity. Guests are welcomed to all our meetings and are not required to pay (except at the Annual Dinner) to attend. It is hoped that they will enjoy the experience and wish to join us.

The Club organises a trading shed at the allotment site where members can purchase items for use in their gardens or allotments including seeds, fertilisers and garden sundries. An annual seed purchase scheme is run for members in which a bulk order is placed with a national seeds supplier in return for a substantial discount. Membership is open to anyone paying an annual fee currently £6.

As part of the Club's community projects, a pond has been constructed and stocked for the local Junior School; landscaping near the Station Roundabout at the beginning of a local long distance footpath (in conjunction with Hampshire County Council) and numerous planting schemes around Bishop's Waltham.



The places where the BWGC, BWAGA and BWADHS met

Each area of activity is managed to be self sustaining in terms of income and costs as far as is reasonable. In other words the income from the Social Activities matches the costs and so on. The administrative costs of managing the club and the costs of the monthly meetings are met from the subscription. A raffle is held at each monthly meeting as is a small scale sale of plants or materials from the shop. The Club year runs from 1st October to 30th September.

Currently the Gardening Club is flourishing, with a healthy financial position and a high level of membership. One theme which emerges from the "elder statesmen" is the need to renew and invigorate and not simply to stand still. Throughout all the changes which have taken place over the years, the Association and the Society and later the Club have always had very welcoming and friendly atmospheres. This great asset is retained to this day.

Bishops Waltham Gardening Club			
Show Trophies			
Name	Donor	Date Donated	Section/Class
Challenge Cup	Viscount Cunningham		Open Vegetables
Joan Powell Challenge Cup	Mrs. J. Powell	2005	Novice Vegetables
Challenge Rose Bowl	James Duke & Son		Open Floral
Challenge Trophy	Woodlea Nursery		Novice Floral
Challenge Trophy	Mrs I. F. Barnard		Combined Novice sections
Challenge Trophy	Col. P. D. Powell		Best exhibit in the Show
Challenge Rose Bowl	Capt. G. C. Colville RN		Best exhibit - Children's Section
Challenge Shield	Bath Travel		Best Hanging Basket
Challenge Trophy	Mr. W. F. Fowle		Best specimen rose
Bishop Cup	Mrs. G. Eustace		Best sweet pea exhibit
Sunshine Salver	Mrs. M. C. Dean		Best trough exhibit
Challenge Trophy	Bishops Waltham Chamber of Trade		Best exhibit - preserves and cookery
Challenge Cup	Bishops Waltham Wine Circle		Best home made wine
Challenge Salver	Bishops Waltham Chamber of Trade Ladies' Circle		Best open floral arrangement
Challenge Cup	Mrs. R. Flook		Best intermediate floral arrangement
Challenge Trophy	Mrs. A. M. E. Harvey		Best novice floral arrangement
Ken Baldock Challenge Trophy	Mr. K. Baldock		Best painting in the Show
Challenge Shield	Mr. A. Quiney		Best exhibit in cross stitch