

Chair Report - David Bingley

The Newsletter gives me the opportunity to thank everyone involved with staging a wonderful Spring Show. Thank you to the committee, family members and helpers who made the day a success.

The Northcourt Centre is in urgent need of major roof replacement work. The estimated cost of this work is £100,000.

At our recent Committee meeting a suggestion was made that we contribute £500 to the Northcourt Centre 'Roof Fund',

I have highlighted this suggestion at various meetings and only received positive comments. We will make the decision very soon - this means comments and views related to this need to be with me in the very near future so that a well informed decision may be made. The Northcourt Centre is very important for the continued running of our Society.

We have experienced a stop start spring so far, with some very warm days followed by some frosty mornings with cold winds. The allotment soil is still wet and cold and certainly not ready for extensive sowing or planting. I did sow broad beans on the 23rd so I hope this will not prove too early. The overcrowded/shaded Victoria plum that I transplanted in January is covered in blossom and is looking quite happy in its new position. Unfortunately, the forecast frosts may well spoil this year's harvest. I was worried about the dahlia tubers that I had overwintered in the garden. I decided to dig some up to see if those little black slugs had started to damage them or if the -5C nights had killed them earlier in the winter. However, I was pleased with their condition as I dug them and they are now stored in compost in the greenhouse. I am going to dig up my Salvia 'Amistad' soon to see if the slugs are eating its new shoots – like last year.

I hope it is a successful growing year but more importantly that you enjoy your gardens.

Show Secretary Report - Barbara Bingley

After a frosty start, our Spring Show day on the 21st developed into a beautiful sunny spring day, with no more than a gentle breeze. Good weather is always a bonus for exhibitors carrying their entries into the Northcourt Centre!

This year there were 31 entrants (3 more than last year) and 199 entries (up 32 on 2025). So, despite the Show being early, this was an excellent result. As always, the rooms were filled with colour and scent.

Most classes had several entries with the tulips being the most popular. The flower judge remarked on the careful presentation of the exhibits & the photography judge said that the standard was high. The exhibits showed that our members are skilled at growing, baking and preserving, taking photographs, and crafting. The Junior entries made a lovely display.

Thank you to everyone who was able to support the show, the committee, stewards, helpers and our show judges. Thank you also to members who provided raffle prizes, plants and cakes for sale & everyone who visited and enjoyed the Show.

Congratulations to the following members who received their cups and also congratulations from the Mayor, Cllr. Rawda Jehanli:

David Bingley - the J&M Barber Cup (Flowers and Plants)

Diana Wiggins - the Scott Challenge Cup (Preserves & Baking)

Rae Matthews - most points Junior classes

David Hastings - most points Photography classes

Lisa Coles & Karen Fisher - joint winners of the Challenor Cup (Handicrafts)

Treasurer & Members Secretary - Karen Fisher

Dear Members, from myself and the rest of the committee. Thank you for your input into the Spring Show. It was lovely to see so many of you attend, and the colourful entries made the day.

The proceeds from the Show are broken down below: -

Door entries (visitors)	£52.00
Raffle	£67.00
Cakes	£75.50
Teas	£31.00
Plant Sales	£127.00

Thanks again

We have received 110 subscriptions this year so far. Family members 43, single members 67 there are still some who have not responded and the deadline is 1st April 2026. After this date names and details will be removed from the list.

Thank you to all who have paid their subscriptions this year.

Day Trips 2026 - Robin Carter

Our first outing is to Spetchley Park and Gardens on Thursday 14th May and is fully booked, having said that Robin can squeeze in one or two more if you let him know ASAP (01235 202990 or email: robin.carter78@yahoo.com)

Robin will be contacting the venue and coach company in the next few days with numbers. Members attending will get a reminder at the beginning of May.

Our second visit will be to Kiftsgate Court Gardens on the 26th August. This will be an afternoon trip as the gardens do not open until 12 noon (unless things change). We would like to arrive there just before, pick up times will be starting at 10 am or 10.15 and we will leave Kiftsgate about 4pm. Please look out for the information / application form on the AHS website towards the end of May.

Hopefully, the weather will be kind to us and we will have two brilliant days out.

2026 Holiday to Kent - Suzanne Hamblin

Pleased to say that we have 34 people signed up for the holiday to Kent scheduled for 30th July to 4th August staying at the Bridgewood Manor Hotel and Spa. We will be visiting:

Chartwell (National Trust), Lullingstone Castle & the World Garden, Sissinghurst Castle Garden (National Trust), Hever Castle & Garden, Leeds Castle and Hughenden (National Trust)

If anyone else is interested in joining the holiday we do have one single room and two twin rooms still available. Please contact Suzanne Hamblin - mobile number 07490 581673 email: suzanneis@hotmail.co.uk - the cost per person is £833 for non members of the National Trust and £773 for those who are National Trust members.

Quick heads up - the holiday balance will be due on the 21st May and Suzanne will write to everyone separately in this respect.

Requests

If any members have any useful garden tips, tasty menus they wish to share or any other items of interest they would like to have considered for the next newsletter then please forward these to Suzanne Hamblin, suzanneis@hotmail.co.uk for future newsletters.

Donations for the raffle would be greatly appreciated. Barry and Diana Wiggins, who organise the raffles, would like to thank all those who have already donated this year.

Anyone who has unwanted packets of seeds please bring them along to a talk to pass on to members who would like them.

Dates for your diary

- 21st April 2026 Talk - Michael Brown (The Historic Gardener) 21st Century Interpretation of Historical Horticulture
- 9th May Plant Sale 10 am to 12 noon Northcourt Centre Car Park
- 14th May Outing - Spetchley Park Gardens
- 19th May Talk - to be confirmed

Items of interest

Bryan Hitchman is a keen philatelist - he has been collecting stamps for over 60 years and has stamps related to many subjects. Bryan thought our members may be interested in the topic of stamps highlighting Flowers. The UK has had a number of commemorative sets of both Wild and Garden Flowers. An example is pictured of the British Wild Flower stamps from April 1967.

1967 — British Wildflowers

- **Issue Date:** 24 April 1967
- **Designer:** Miss Grierson and Reverend W. Keble Marti
- **Printer:** Harrison & Sons
- **Method:** Photogravure
- **Perforation:** 15×14
- **Notes:** This set is often considered the **first major UK floral issue**, and it influenced the 1979 and 1987 flower sets that followed.
- This one has the post mark for Kew Gardens


4d stamps: Hawthorn/Bramble, Bindweed/Bugloss, Daisy/Coltsfoot/Buttercup, and Bluebell/Campion/Anemone.

9d stamp: Dog Violet.

1s 9d stamp: Primroses

KEBLE MARTIN, MA, FLS, DSc, was born in 1877; he went to school at Marlborough and later studied at Oxford. He was a lifelong botanist, taking a degree in the subject at university, and being elected a Fellow of the Linnaean Society in 1928. His 'Concise British Flora' was described as 'the triumphant outcome of 60 years of meticulous and devoted study, research, notetaking and draughtsmanship'.

MARY GRIERSON was born in North Wales and attended Bangor County School before training in domestic science. Following wartime service as a flight officer in the WAAF, she took up a career in aerial survey work from 1947. In her spare time she studied drawing (under John Nash, among others) and was awarded the Diploma of the Royal Drawing Society. She also won the very rarely awarded Gold Medal of the Royal Horticultural Society for an exhibition of her botanical drawings and in 1961 became official artist at Kew



Evenley Wood Garden (EWG) - Discover what makes this 60-acre family run woodland garden surprisingly special. The gardens are situated at Evenley, Northants, NN13 5SH - 3 miles from Brackley – 10 miles from Bicester – 8 miles from Buckingham

Further and full details may be found on their - website
www.evenleywoodgarden.co.uk

Help Wanted

If you are interested in joining the committee please come forward, it does not take up much time and would help support the society.

Blue Sky Eco Cafe

Susan Hammersley, an AHS committee member, is one of the volunteers who open the Blue Sky Eco Cafe on the first Tuesday of every month (except January and August) from 12 noon – 2 pm at Long Furlong Community Centre OX14 1XP. Menus and more details are available at <https://blueskyecocafe.org.uk>

Sponsor

Charlton Park Garden Centre - Wantage, sponsors our Society by supplying us with plants for raffles. Their Garden Centre has an extensive range of quality plants and garden requisites. They also bring a wide range of seasonal plants and bulbs to the Abingdon Market on a Monday. We hope you will continue to support them.

Website: www.abingdon-hort-soc.org.uk