



NEWSLETTER

February - March 2015

Affiliated to



www.algs.org.uk

Secretary Mrs Jane Lay, The Gleanings, Marlin Square, Abbots Langley, WD5 OEG
Tel: 01923 447281

SPRING SHOW

SATURDAY MARCH 26TH

11am to 1pm

To be held in the Henderson Hall

SPRING QUIZ

NIGHT

FRIDAY APRIL 29TH

7pm for 7.30 start

To be held in the Manor House



ABBOTS LANGLEY FESTIVAL OF ARTS 2016

We have exciting news!

Together with the Abbots Langley Local History Society we have asked the well-known **DR ANNIE GRAY** who is an historian, cook, lecturer, broadcaster, writer and food consultant to talk to us on **THURSDAY 16TH JUNE** entitled -

“To please the palate, charm the eye: 400 years of food as ephemeral art”

Food is a brilliant way to get under the skin of past societies: everyone eats, and the choices we make reflect who we are and what we believe - and that's as true for the Georgians as it is for us today. By exploring what was eaten, and by whom, how it was cooked and how it was consumed, we can explore a wide range of beliefs and behaviour, shedding light on everything from malnutrition among the poor, to the innermost workings of the country house.

The cost will be £5.00 per ticket.

Time - 8pm

Venue - Manor House Sports Pavilion in Gallows Hill Lane

Book your ticket with Jo Bromwich

TRAVEL CLUB

SCOTLAND

For 2016 Adrienne is taking us to Scotland on the 1st July for 4 days for the cost of £475 which includes travel by air from Luton up to Edinburgh and travel back to Abbots Langley by coach, dinner, bed and breakfast. Accommodation is two nights at the Golden Lion Hotel in Stirling and one night at the Cumbria Grand Hotel in Grange-over-Sands. All rooms have private facilities. Single room supplement of £75 and insurance is extra if required. There is an itinerary which you can get from Adrienne or look on our web site for more information of this exciting visit.

Adrienne is waiting to hear from you NOW if you are interested in going to Scotland. She will give you a form for you to fill in and she will take your deposit.

SIR HAROLD HILLIER GARDENS IN HAMPSHIRE

This will be the destination for our summer coach outing and will take place on SUNDAY 15TH MAY. It will take approximately 1hr 35mins to get there and we will have a guided tour round the gardens. It is held in 180 acres of land, it is one of the biggest winter gardens in Europe, 250 metre long Centenary Border, spring walk, Magnolia Avenue, 120 seater restaurant. If you want to know more look on www.hilliergardens.org.uk.

HAVE YOU BOOKED TO GO TO SCOTLAND YET?

Adrienne is waiting to hear from you as she has to book the flights, the earlier you book - the better the price!!

Have you put your name down to go to the Hillier Gardens? Don't be left behind !!!!

To book your place on any of these trips please contact
Adrienne tel: 077121 90656

BUTTERFLY WORLD NEWS

I was hoping to give you news of when Butterfly World opens again for this year but unfortunately I expect you may have heard that sadly this exciting venture will not now open again due to the lack of investment in building the biome. I expect that lots of you have visited with your children or grandchildren, as I have, and you all have found it a very interesting project. My grandchildren always looked forward to going into the large greenhouse which housed the large colourful non-British butterflies and I have many photographs of them sitting on clothing or even your hand.

There is a petition going round so if it is not too late you can sign it on line. Thank you to Mandy Floyd, who kept us informed about our British butterflies at Butterfly World.

**** In the news today (29th January) it looks as though all of us signing the petition may have worked and the biome may get built after all. I hope I will be able to give you good news in the next Newsletter. Keep an eye on the newspapers and the butterfly conservation web site. ****

KEEP ON SIGNING AND GET YOUR FRIENDS TO SIGN THE PETITION!!

OUR SMALL 4oz HEXAGONAL HONEY JARS

Please don't forget to return your empty honey jars if you have purchased honey from us.

SAVE BRITAIN'S POLLINATORS ?

Please do not spray with pesticides unless it is really necessary – you may be killing some of OUR bees from OUR beehives or other bee's hives or other beneficial insects rather than the baddies! Let the birds (sparrows, blue tits, great tits, wrens etc.) eat your black and green flies. Give them a chance before you spray as they have babies to feed with the soft flesh before feeding them with bird seed!

PLEASE SPRAY WITH CARE IF REALLY, REALLY NECESSARY

DAHLIAS

Your dahlias should be having a lovely time being fast asleep in a frost free place. It may be worth a check on them as the weather is too warm this year to go into hibernation and they could be starting to shoot and you could take cuttings earlier than usual this year. If you do take any cuttings keep them indoors or in a propagator. Look out for rotting on tubers especially if they have not been dried off in the autumn sufficiently and sprayed with sulphur. Watch out as we may still have frosts and snow before the spring!

Abbots Langley Local History Society meeting on Monday 29th February is on the Watford Football Club. Starts at 8pm. Guests £2. Held at Manor House Pavilion, Gallows Hill Lane, Abbots Langley

THINGS TO DO IN THE GARDEN

This is difficult this year as I expect you too have not really stopped gardening due to the warmer weather we are having this winter.

1. Plant bare rooted hedging, trees, shrubs and fruit trees now. Don't forget to sprinkle a growing agent to help the roots, (this can be purchased from our own shop).
2. Top dress indoor citrus plants or repot with John Innes No 2 adding a little grit.
3. If you did not purchase these through us buy your seed potatoes and chit in old egg boxes. Buy your onion sets and either plant in the soil or in pots to give them a good start.
4. Sow broad beans and lettuce and place in greenhouse or cold frames.
5. Apply a general fertilizer such as Growmore or blood fish and bone to the soil
6. Mulch trees and fruit trees after pruning
7. Spray dormant fruit trees and bushes with a plant oil-based winter wash such as Growing success Winter Tree Wash or Vitax Winter Tree Wash to kill overwintering eggs of aphids and pests.
8. Prune wisterias
9. Plant new clematis and honeysuckles.
10. Prune autumn fruiting raspberries (not summer types), buddleia, hydrangea, lavatera and deciduous ceanothus and roses.
11. Cut back overwintering fuchsia to 2 buds to encourage a bushy compact plant.
12. Sow hardy annual seeds indoors for early growth, also tomato seeds and sweet peas.
13. If weather is warm enough do a little light digging, possibly digging in your green manure ready for spring planting.
14. Check your bird feeders for mouldy food caused by the rain and damp. Empty and clean with a weak solution of disinfectant and refill when dry.
15. On a warmer day search for hibernating snails and put into your brown bin. Slugs escape from the brown bins unless you put a heavy weight on the lid! Knock both down the night before the bin men collect your brown bins as they can survive if stuck to the brown bin lid! Clever aren't they?
16. Feed your bulbs as they pop up through the soil with Vitax Q4 to encourage flowering next year.
17. If your bulbs do not flower this year, it could be that the bulbs are too old or need splitting up, or need feeding or planted too shallow. I often find bulbs which are dug up by the birds, squirrel, cats, foxes and they need replanting.
18. Snip off dead flowers as you see them, but not snowdrops and snakes head fritillary as they will increase if seed heads left on.
19. After your snowdrops have flowered then is the time to split the big clumps up and plant elsewhere in your garden. This is called planting in "the green". It is also time to order new stock from growers and they will send you them in the green to plant.

MANURE

NOW IS THE TIME TO PUT MANURE ON YOUR GARDEN AND ALLOTMENTS IF THERE IS NO FROST ON THE GROUND. DO NOT LOCK IN THE COLD SOIL AND SPREAD MANURE ON FROSTED GROUND.

From our Depot - horse manure per bag. Don't forget that our Depot is well stocked with manure in bags for you to collect, and is ideal if you only want small quantities and instantly. We also stock a different type of manure which is for mulching not digging in.



Gardening tip – you really should not get the manure on your hands as there are micro-organisms in the manure that could affect your health. Please wash your hands when you have finished. Are you up to date with your tetanus injections as this is most important when you are a gardener?

For delivery -

Dave Birkin Tel: 01442 832997 - £45 approx. for a 5 tonne load. It is a mixture of horse and cow manure and is around 18 months old.

Braziers Dairies - 07956945114

For collection – don't forget to take your gloves, wellington boots, fork/spade and bags

a. Mansion House stables (opposite the AL School entrance on the Bedmond Road) also provides horse manure for free to collect in the right hand side far corner. You have to go there when someone is working at the stables and ask if you can take some. They usually will be pleased to see you as they have to pay to get it removed!

b. There is a house on the right hand side going down Chequers Lane, just before the bridge, where you can acquire manure. Knock on the door before helping yourself.

c. There are stables run by Debbie Randall (07721327763) on the A405 on the same side as Burston's. Due to the dual carriage way you need to go past Burston's, over the next small roundabout to the big M10 roundabout, come back on yourself about 100yds BEFORE you reach the next small roundabout (Park Street/Tippendell Lane) the stables are on the left hand side. The stables are usually open each afternoon between 2 – 3.30pm and often on Saturday mornings. The manure is usually well matured. Note you must telephone Debbie BEFORE you go as she is not always there.

d. There are several horse stables around so keep an eye out when travelling around the area for other supplies.

EMAIL ADDRESSES

Chris sends out your newsletters to you and is coming across several email addresses which bounce back, so please let me know any changes on leon.lay@ntlworld.com or contactus@algs.org.uk as we cannot send you up to date news, Bulletins or bi-monthly Newsletters if we have the wrong email address.

FUND RAISING

This is a most important part of our Society which gives benefits to all members in some form. Please support where you can.

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE
NOW
BEFORE 31ST MARCH 2016
£5.00**

IMPORTANT - if you pay by post or hand deliver through my door please include a stamped addressed envelope or a 2nd class stamp or add 54p to your cheque. If you do not your membership card can be collected from the depot, social event or myself.

Thank you.

Don't forget to pay extra the postage of £3.00 if you get your newsletters by post



Have you thought of paying by standing order in December, January or February? By doing this it would maintain that you have paid early in the year and would be easier for Myles and me. Please contact either of us if you would like to pay by standing order or use contactus@algs.org.uk.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We had an excellent AGM in January, I hope you did not miss it. This time Chris emailed all the paperwork to you so you should be up to date about the reports. Those who are not on email can pick up the reports from the Depot if you want to read them. Our President Bella took the chair and officers added information to their interesting reports. You will be pleased that the officers and committee stay the same except that Jeremy and Pat have retired. They were both presented with Honorary Life Memberships as well as a David Austin rose each to thank them for all their hard work over many years.

YOUR 2016 COMMITTEE –

Officers-	President	Bella Stuart-Smith	268414
	Chairman	Chris Bromwich	443758
	Secretary	Jane Lay	447281
	Treasurer	Myles Darbyshire	262685
	Trading Secretary	Joe Johnston	269964
	Assist Trading Sec.	Peter Barnes	265507
Committee –	Talks Organiser & Quiz Box Office	Jo Bromwich	443758
	Depot Rota	Sue North	264645
	Tours/outings	Adrienne Barnes	265507
	Apiary Manager	Kate Macnish	07880813739
	Carnival organiser & Show computer	Sue North	264645
	Quiz compiler/	Yvonne Merry	264802
	Website	John Merry	264802
	Show Schedules & Raffles	David Sutherland	265402
	Publicity	Pam Cotton	269720
	Auditor -	Norman Meldrum	

Please note the telephone numbers for future reference, please keep them safe.

At the AGM it was proposed that starting **next** year (1st December **2016**) that the subscriptions would be increased by £2 to £7, BUT if you pay BEFORE 31st March 2017 you will only pay £6. We used to have this incentive before and it was decided not necessary but I had to chase up over 40 members last year for their subscriptions and it was felt that this was unacceptable for me to spend time contacting those of you who had not paid. I do hope that you will renew your current year subscriptions (£5) before the end of March so that I do not have to contact YOU?

FLOWERS FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Jo designs flower arrangements for any occasion at prices below the florist shops. These are ideal for weddings, funerals, anniversaries, etc. contact Jo Bromwich on 01923 443758. Note - Jo does not provide flowers only.

NEXT QUIZ NIGHT FRIDAY 29th APRIL

We had a wonderful evening in the Manor House under all the snowflakes hanging from the ceiling. The next Quiz Night is being held on APRIL 29TH and Jo is waiting to hear from you if you would like to take part.

BARBEQUE BREAKFAST AT THE DEPOT

SATURDAY 11TH APRIL

Come and enjoy egg and bacon rolls with coffee/tea and a very sociable morning organised by Chris, Jo and Kate and other helpers.

WEB SITE - www.algs.org.uk

Our web site has lots of useful information and we are regularly updating the site. If you want to contact us by email use - contactus@algs.org.uk

NEW RHS GARDEN

Our local famous landscape gardener Tom Stuart-Smith has been appointed master planner and designer for the Society's fifth RHS Garden which is in Bridgewater and due to be opened in 2019. The 63ha site is near Salford in Greater Manchester where Worsley New Hall, part of the historic Bridgewater Estate once stood. Full restoration of the 1846 William Nesfield garden is not planned but will provide the framework and inspiration for the new garden, which, like the four other gardens, will become a centre for horticultural excellence. If you want to keep with this project look on www.rhs.org.uk/bridgewater.

I am sure we all wish Tom good luck with this exciting project and perhaps he would come and talk to us on his journey in making RHS Garden Bridgewater? Don't forget he has a lovely garden in Serge Hill Lane which is usually opened to the public during the year.



DEPOT NEWS

**PLEASE SHOW YOUR GREEN MEMBERSHIP CARD
WHEN PURCHASING AT THE DEPOT TO PROVE YOU ARE A PAID UP
MEMBER**

OUR DEPOT STOCKS A LARGE RANGE OF WILD BIRD FOOD AND AT VERY
REASONABLE PRICES AND GOOD QUALITY

(All seed is sold in 1 kilo bags and prices can change with new stock)

Mixed seed	£1.10	Feeder seed	80p
No waste mix	£1.90	Peanuts	£2.00
Sunflower seeds black	£1.40	Niger seed	£1.40
Sunflower seeds stripy	£1.30	Fat Balls	20p or 6 for a £1
Sunflower hearts	£1.90	Square Fat blocks	£1.00
Suet Pellets 1k	£3.00	Coconut shells	£1.00
Suet pellets 3.5k box	£10.00	Plastic and metal bird feeders	assorted prices

Do you have thoughts on items that we may like to sell in our Depot? I am sure you have looked at the shelves and asked if we stock such and such. Now is your chance to let us know. Please email us your ideas on contactus@algs.org.uk. Or speak to Joe Johnston the Trading Secretary.

DEPOT DUTY ROTA

(please note that these are correct at going to print and are constantly changing)

**MAY I SUGGEST YOU CUT THE ROTA OUT AND PUT IT ON YOUR CALENDER FOR
EASY REFERENCE?**

Sue North has taken over the job of compiling the Depot Rota as Pat has retired but you will still see him on depot duty. If you want to join the depot rota or be removed please to let Sue or Jane know as soon as possible. May I mention that Jeremy Foster has also retired and our Society owes them both a big debt in organising the depot and the rota.

FEBRUARY

- 06 Jane Lay 447281, Jean Bell, Terry Bray
- 13 Jo Bromwich 443758, Bob Cockerell, Pat Colwell
- 20 Kate Macnish 07880813739, Jeremy Foster, Mary Miller
- 27 Myles Darbyshire 262685, John and Brenda Kersey

MARCH

- 05 David Sutherland 265402, Norman Meldrum, Roy Jenner
- 12 Chris Bromwich 443758, Lesley Campbell, Richard Tovell
- 19 Sue North 264645, Pauline Bryant, Roger Silvester
- 26 Joe Johnston 269964, Steve Crane, Ann Donato

**PLEASE PUT THESE DATES DOWN NOW ON YOUR CALENDAR
AND/OR DIARY**

Please look through them and if they are NOT OK please swap NOW to make life easier for Sue. I appreciate you could be ill at the last minute on the Saturday morning
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so please phone me on 01923 447281 before 8.30am so that I can inform the committee member not to expect you. Several of you have not turned up at all which is very bad for the committee member who may have had to work on their own and could be vulnerable with the money in the depot.

COMPOST FOR RAISING PLANTS – THE PEAT QUESTION - Sue North

Peat is a natural substance. It is an organic material that forms in the waterlogged, sterile, acidic conditions of bogs and fens. These conditions favour the growth of mosses. As plants die, they do not decompose. Instead, the organic matter is laid down, and slowly accumulates as peat because of the lack of oxygen in the bog. The peat we see today has taken thousands of years to form.

Historical use of peat: in the 1970s, peat was adopted by the UK horticultural industry as a material in which to grow plants. Peat was readily available and relatively cheap and easy to extract, transport and package but the environmental damage caused by peat extraction was not fully appreciated. Today, the industry consumes just under 3 million cubic metres per annum, 69% of which is consumed by the amateur market through multi-purpose composts, grow bags, etc.

The rate at which we use peat is unsustainable for various reasons including:

- Peat is not renewable: it accumulates very slowly and cannot be replaced to its original layer of thickness in our lifetime.
- Peat bogs support unique wildlife and some have been designated as conservation areas for this reason e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- Peat bogs are the UK's largest store of carbon – greater than trees: peat bogs play a global role in locking up carbon from the atmosphere. This carbon is released to the environment during extraction and contributes to global warming. The amount of carbon released due to peat extraction is orders of magnitude larger than, for example, annual corporate mileage.

The government has set targets for reducing the use of peat in horticulture including

- ❖ a voluntary phase-out target of 2020 for amateur gardeners;
- ❖ a final voluntary phase-out target of 2030 for professional growers of fruit, vegetables and plants.

So, what can Abbots Langley Gardeners do about this?

Peat-free compost

You may have tried various peat-free composts in recent years, but may also have been disappointed with the results.

'Which?' Gardening magazine regularly reviews potting composts and this year for the first time has found a peat-free one that performs **better** than their 'Best Buy' peat-based multipurpose compost.

So Joe Johnston and I are going to try to get hold of some of this to try it out, and plan to get a small amount of stock to sell at the depot.

It is called **Melcourt Sylvagrow** and we think it will cost about £7.00 for 50 litres. So keep a look out for this and if you try it, please let me have your opinion at the end of the growing season. If it is successful we can add it to our regular stock.

Other composts

Gro-well compost that comes from our suppliers has not been tested by 'Which?', but I find it is a good all-round compost; it is peat-based, however, so I try to mix it with my own compost to reduce my use of peat.

If you are looking for a reduced peat multipurpose compost that performs well, according to 'Which?', others to try include Thomson and Morgan 'incredicompost' from Thomson and Morgan (80% peat), or Verve from B&Q (58% peat).



SPECIAL DEPOT HELPERS

This is a completely different function to the Saturday depot rota members. We are asking for several members to offer their services to be called upon to help manage the depot. You will not be committee members so you will not be called upon to attend meetings, but we do need help in organising, refilling, stocking up, cleaning the depot. We cannot just leave it to 2 people to run the depot plus the committee so if you think you would be able to help please contact me on leon.lay@ntlworld.com or my phone number 01923 447281.

SPRING SHOW SCHEDULE

We still have the children's class of potted up daffodil bulbs in pots. We provided the bulbs and pots at the Depot in the autumn and will be judged at the spring show for your children/grandchildren and we look forward to seeing the results.

POTATO GROWN IN A BUCKET ENTRY IN AUTUMN SHOW

We are again holding this fun class for the autumn show and again this will be done on the weight of the potatoes grown and you can collect your one potato plus bucket to grow it in from the Depot soon for £2 or only £1 if you still have last year's bucket. You will then be required to bring your bucket with soil not removed and disturbed to the Autumn Show to have your potato bucket emptied and the potatoes weighed. The winner will receive a trophy and a £5 voucher to spend in our depot.

FRENCH MARKET IN ABBOTS LANGLEY

The next French Market will be in Abbots Langley again on 17th APRIL. I am sure you will be delighted and we all look forward to the next French Market which was so successful last time.

SEED ORDERS

I hope all your orders are correct? We still have a few items outstanding – plants and non-seeds but if you find that your order is short PLEASE LET ME KNOW so that I can contact them and chase them up.

SUNNYSIDE RURAL TRUST

SPRING OPEN DAY

Saturday 19th March between 11am – 3pm

Natural crafts, spring plants for sale, wildlife activities and information, making a nesting ball for birds, adopt a chicken for Easter, local produce in farm shop, hanging basket workshops (pre book), tea, coffee and cake.

Held at Hemel Food Garden off Two Waters Way, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 9BY

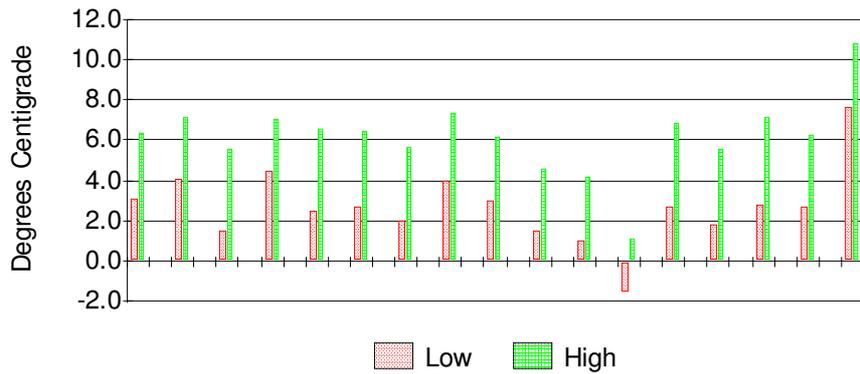


TEMPERATURES

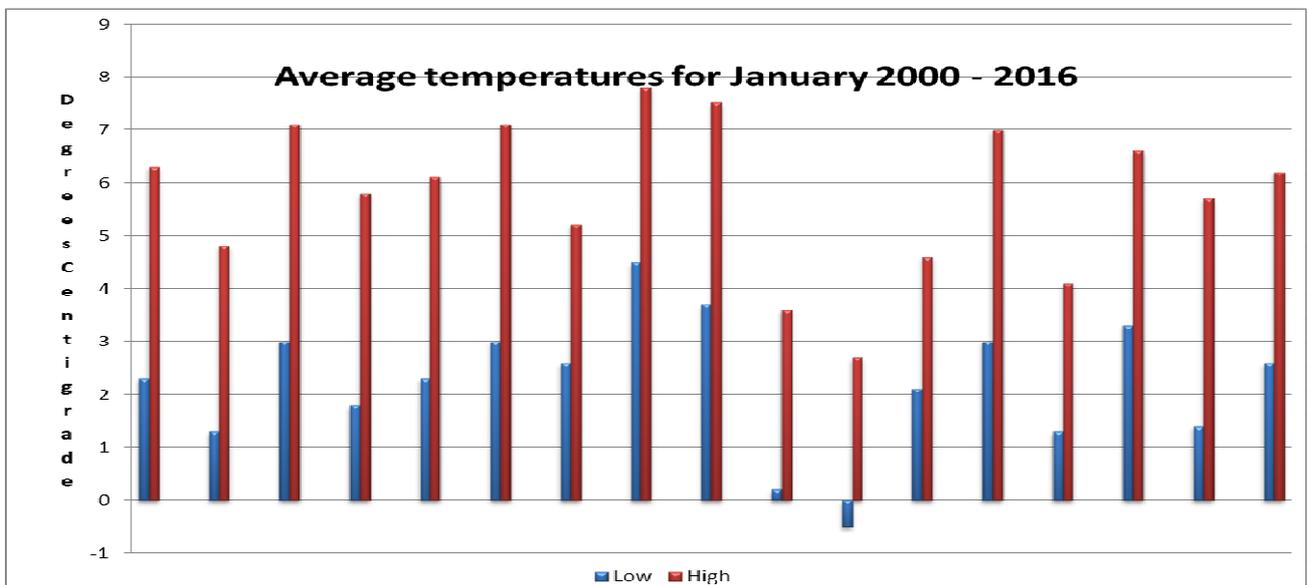
Grateful thanks to John Sutton for religiously taking these temperatures for us since 2000

17 Years compared 1999 - 2015

Average December temperatures



You knew that it was the warmest on record – look the average night time reading this year is higher than the day reading for any of the others!



Despite the impression that this was a very exceptionally mild January, the chart shows that seven years had warmer days and/or nights.



PROGRAMME FOR SOCIAL EVENINGS AND OTHER EVENTS IN 2016

Held in the Manor House, Gallows Hill Lane, Abbots Langley (opposite Popes Road)
Meetings start at 8pm unless stated otherwise

Doors open at 7.40pm

If you have any ideas for future talks p

please contact Jo Bromwich on 01923 443758

February 19th	“Where the Wild Things Grow” by the Herts and Middx Wildlife Trust. This will show an overview of the work they carry out across the county, they also explain their Living landscape approach to conservation and the importance of linking every patch of good habitat to provide a network of places for wildlife to live.
March 17th	Jacqueline Avoilet - (subject tbc)
March 26th	Spring Show at Henderson Hall
April 11th	BARBEQUE BREAKFAST AT THE DEPOT
April 21st	Gerrard Craddock - Gardening for Mind, Body and Soul
May 21st	Darren Lerigo – “What Do I Do With This Space?”
June 11th	Carnival on the Manor House Grounds
June 16th	ALFA meeting - Dr Annie Gray, food historian
September 10th	Autumn Show at Abbots Langley Community Centre
September 15th	Jane Perrone - (subject tbc)
October 20th	Jackie Nutkins - (subject tbc)

PLEASE CUT OUT THE PROGRAMME AND PUT SOMEWHERE FOR EASY REFERENCE

GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME – Guest entrance £2.00