

Amersham Gardening Association

www.amersham-gardening.org.uk

February 2026 Newsletter

From the treasurer

The accounts on pages 10-11 show an **apparent** loss of £5640 for last year. This is correct but misleading. In previous years, cheques for the deposit for the holiday were banked at the beginning of the year in which Motts asked for payment. In 2024 most people paid the deposit by bank transfer, before the end of December, but Motts did not ask for payment until later in 2025. This means that at the end of 2024 the current account held a healthy £7866 (most of which was earmarked for payment to Motts). By contrast, while most people had paid the deposit by the end of 2025, Motts also asked for payment before the end of 2025. So, at the end of 2025 the current account stood at £2012, £5640 less than at the start of the year.

Allowing for this, the overall financial position of the Association is healthy. It is worth noting that subscriptions alone do not cover the costs of running our activities. Raffles, plant sales at meetings and especially the annual plant sale at St Michael's Church all make a significant contribution.

After some 14 years, I wish to stand down as treasurer, and we are soliciting expressions of interest in taking over this not unduly onerous task.

David Bender

Annual General Meeting

The 2026 Annual General Meeting will be held on March 26th, at 7:45pm, before the talk by Sandy Primrose on *The art of low maintenance*. The reports from honorary officers and accounts are on pages 8-11. Nominations

for members of the committee should be sent to the secretary (secretary@amersham-gardening.org.uk), but offers to join the committee will also be accepted at the meeting.

Chairs

We are grateful to those members who arrive early to help put out chairs and tables for our Thursday evening meetings. We are also grateful to those who help put them away again afterward the meeting has ended. However, please make sure that chairs are stacked in groups of five, and please keep the grey and green chairs separate – the grey chairs belong in the Drake Hall, while the green chairs belong in the Lounge (if the Lounge is still occupied, the stacks of green chairs should be left in the corridor)

Importantly, please leave the stacks of chairs in the middle of the room unless you are using one of the

trolleys to move them. **Please do not drag chairs across the floor**; this will both damage the floor and risk dislodging the rubber feet that protect the floor from the metal ends of the chair legs (and cause them to wobble!). Using a trolley, move the stacks of chairs to the back wall of the Drake Hall and leave them facing the wall, so they can be moved out by trolley, and are not a risk of toppling forwards onto people. For chairs going into the Lounge, they should be placed alongside other stacks, against the wall, again facing in towards the wall.

Outings to book now

With this newsletter are booking forms for outings to: Kathy Brown's garden and the Swiss Garden on April 29th, and Morton Hall on May 20th. See page 4 for details



Plant sale Saturday May 2nd

We will be holding our annual plant sale in the forecourt of St Michael's Church on Saturday May 2nd, opening to the public at 09:00. We will need volunteers to help set up from 08:00, to run the stalls from 09:00 to 12:00, then help with clearing up at 12:00. Susan Jeffery will have lists for people to sign up for various times at forthcoming meetings.

We buy in some plants from a wholesaler, but about half the plants we sell are grown and donated by members.

Zoltan the sharpener

Zoltan comes from Hungary but has lived in Cornwall for many years. He is a mobile knife and tool sharpener. He trained professionally in 2012 and now has an international reputation. Usually he only tours the agricultural shows in the West Country but Chalfont St Peter Gardening Club occasionally persuade him to come and visit.

Anyone is welcome to bring their tools to be sharpened on Friday, Saturday and Sunday 29th to 31st May at The

Prices

mower blades £8-£16
axe (splitting) £10
secateurs £6

axe (hatchet) £7
spades £10
chisels £7

loppers £7

chainsaw £8

plane blades £8

hoes £8

bill hooks £10

hedge trimmers £16-£45

garden shears £7

Household (knives include serrated)

knives under 5" £3

pocket knives £4

grooming scissors £15

upholstery scissors £10

knives 5-10" £6

household scissors £4

dressmaking scissors £7

scandi edge £6

knives over 10" £8

hairdressing scissors £20

pinking scissors £8

meat cleaver £8

Post script;

We are trying to find someone who could offer a sharpening service at the Repair Shop Café Events.

If anyone knows of somebody please get in touch. In the meantime, the only place I know that sharpens tools is the shoe repair shop in Chesham Broadway

Susan Jeffery

Plantwatch: Pitcher plant's sweet nectar is laced with toxic nerve agent

A carnivorous pitcher plant *Nepenthes khasiana* oozes an enticing sweet nectar on the rim of its pitchers that tempts its prey (mainly ants) into a deadly trap. It has [recently been found](#) to use a chemical nerve agent to drug its prey and lead them to a deadly end, being consumed in digestive juices at the bottom of the pitcher traps.

The nectar is laced with a toxic nerve agent called isoshinanolone, which strikes at the ant's nervous system, leaving it with sluggish movements, weakened muscles, and causing it to groom itself excessively. Eventually the prey falls upside down in spasms, with the nerve agent sometimes killing it outright. Apart from isoshinanolone, the nectar also contains three types of

sugars that can all absorb water and make the rim of the pitcher especially slippery, so the prey is more likely to slide down into the pitchers.

So the sweet, toxic nectar is both bait and trap for the many ants and other prey that end up being consumed, giving the plant much needed nourishment in the poor soil in which it grows.



Anya Lautenbach was our speaker in January.
There is a review of her book about "Gardening in pots on a budget" [here](#).

Susan Jeffery writes:

Someone was asking about flaking terracotta pots. There are several products available to protect your pots from the wet. Terracotta plant pot sealer by Caplin Tec and the same thing in a spray version, Thompson's Water Seal, and any of the brick creams. The brick cream is weird stuff, like a very oily Nivea, it is a bit expensive but goes a long way, you can get a version from Screwfix, Toolstation or Wickes.

As from the 31st March 2026 you can put your non-black plastic plant pots into your household waste recycling bins.

It would be nice if we could somehow sell at our monthly meetings without using plastic pots. However I have spoken to POSipots and he has gone out of business and woolpots cost 49p each. Anybody got any ideas?

Dates for your diary

On Tuesday 30th June a visit has been arranged for us to visit [Red Kites](#), a beautiful garden in the Chilterns. This Chiltern hillside garden of 1½ acres is planted for year-round interest and has superb views. Lovingly and beautifully maintained, there are several different areas to relax in, each with their own

character. Wildflower orchard, mixed borders, pond, vegetables, woodland area and a lovely hidden garden. Many climbers used in the garden change significantly through the seasons. This garden is well worth a visit!

This will be a self-drive visit as it is at Bledlow Ridge, near Princes Risborough.
The booking form will be in the next newsletter but put the date in your diaries now.

Friday 6th March, film 'Six Inches of soil' screening at St Anne's Hall, Wendover

Climate Action Wendover is pleased to screen the documentary film 'Six Inches of Soil' at St. Anne's Hall in Wendover from 7:30pm on Friday 6th March. This is the inspiring story of British farmers transforming the way they produce food - to heal the soil, benefit our health and provide for local communities. The documentary produced by Colin Ramsay has been seen worldwide including at COP 28.

After the screening a panel of experts with in-depth local farming knowledge will answer questions about issues raised in the film and how they apply to local food production and regenerative farming in general.

Refreshments available. Free to attend. [Register here](#).

Saturday 14th March, Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust

Discovering the histories and ideas behind the landscapes we cherish 'A Quick Introduction to the

plants and people that influenced garden history' A talk by Gardeners' World Presenter Advolly Richmond.

Book tickets at <http://ticketsource.co.uk/buckinghamshire-gardens-trust>
Members £10.00 and non-members £12.50.

Venue: Aylesbury Methodist Church and Centre, Buckingham Street, Aylesbury HP20 2NQ - see map on website.

February 7th to March 8th, the Orchid Festival at Kew

The Orchid Festival this year is at Kew and celebrates Chinese orchids and 30 years of festivals. It's possible to go by underground. Curious ticketing; it says the ticket for the orchids is included in the general admission to Kew but you must book a timed ticket for

the orchids. The ticket price is £27 which seems lot for Kew. Susan Jeffery says she can remember we used to pay 3d (an old thrupenny bit!). (Ed notes he has a book that describes the history of Kew Gardens called "In for a penny – again old money)

April 11th and 12th a garden festival in Newbury

This is more modestly priced at £17.
Although obviously smaller, it could be a replacement for the Hampton Court show which has now moved a

long way away to Badminton, and the dates are good for getting plants in early Spring.

Outings to book now

If you pay for outings by bank transfer, you must email or write to the organiser to reserve your place.

You cannot rely on the treasurer sending bank statements to the organiser to reserve a place.

Wednesday April 29th Kathy Brown's Garden and the Swiss Garden,

This is a return visit to [Kathy Brown's Garden](#) after some 10 years. It will be interesting to see how it has developed.

Kathy Writes:

"The garden is 4.5 acres with many different areas to enjoy. This should be a glorious time with bulbs and blossom, early roses, tree peonies and clematis in flower; the herbaceous borders, art gardens, containers, cottage garden and wildflower meadow should also have lots of colour, interest and wildlife. It will be a pleasure to share it with you all

If sunny and calm there is plenty of seating outside. Should we need to shelter we can squeeze up to 40 people sitting snugly in our conservatory/dining room.

For refreshment (charge of £7.00) I offer tea, coffee or our own apple juice and my home-made cakes which might include my pear and lemon, blueberry, ginger and honey, rose petal, elderflower and raspberry and any other depending on the season. For gluten free and vegan please let me know in advance."

The Swiss Garden

This garden was designed in the 1820 Regency fashion for creating landscapes in a picturesque alpine style. It is estimated that a gentle stroll round will take 1½ to 2 hours. Along the way there are 13 heritage listed structures to visit. Some short sections of path are not good if you are on wheels or have limited mobility but

there are ways around so you don't miss out. There is a rockery featuring alpine plants which is lovely in the spring (fingers crossed) and a grotto and fernery plus a quarry garden. If the weather is kind there is also a sculpture trail.

1st pick up 9.00am Amersham Rugby Club, Ash Grove, Weedon Lane HP6 5QU parking costs £4.00 cash only please. Pay Brian Moulton on the coach.

2nd pick up 9.10am at the bus stop outside Amersham Lifestyle Centre HP6 5AH

Wednesday May 20th Visit to Morton Hall, Worcestershire

[Morton Hall Gardens](#) are perched on an escarpment with views of the surrounding countryside. Surrounding the house are distinct, yet linked, garden rooms. There is also a fritillary meadow, a Japanese stroll garden, a woodland rockery and a kitchen garden. We also hope to see some of the 6000 tulips when we visit. Anne Olivieri and her husband Rene always say they bought a meadow that came with a house as they were bowled over by the sight of the thousands of fritillarias even before they saw the Georgian property. Sixteen years ago the 3 acre meadow was the only notable feature. There were remains of a Victorian garden and lots of

greenery engulfed the whole place which was very claustrophobic. Help from the designer Charles Chesshire was called in in 2008 and he set about a 3 year project creating a garden that would be a journey around the house.

We will be taken from Amersham to Hillers Farm Shop where we will stop for lunch before going on to Morton Hall. They have a farm shop, fish and meat shop, gift and garden shop. Also a display garden. You might want to bring a cool bag if you think you may purchase fresh produce.

Itinerary

Coach departs Amersham Rugby Club	09.15 (parking charge £4 cash only)
Coach departs Community Centre	09.30
Hillers Farm Shop for coffee/lunch (own expense)	11.30 approx.
Coach departs for Morton Hall	13.40
Tea & cake (included)	15.45
Departure	16.15 approx.
Return to Amersham	18.00

Darren Liego, who spoke to our meeting in September 2021 about "What can I do with this space?", has written a book on modern topiary; you can read free of charge at <https://modernmint.co.uk/book/>

In praise of planting close together

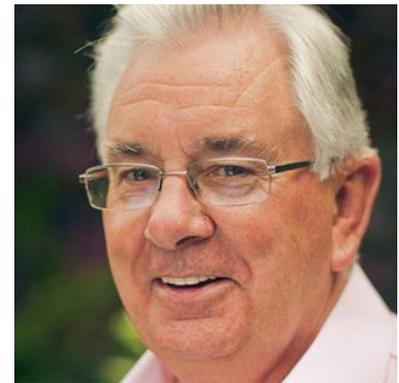
Most of us abhor bare soil, and therefore put our plants close together – indeed, in some cases perhaps too close together when we are putting out small seedlings and rooted cuttings. An article in [The Guardian](#) on January 21st gives a reason for the plants' benefit of close planting. *Arabidopsis thaliana*, the thale or mouse-eared cress, is a winter growing annual, and a common plant for botanists to work with (it was the first plant whose genome was sequenced). It is susceptible to over-bright light, as one might expect for a winter-

growing plant. In this study plants were either grown close together, so that their leaves were touching, or grown in isolation, then exposed to over-bright light. The plants grown separately suffered severe damage, while those grown close together did not. The plants grown close together communicated with each other by releasing hydrogen peroxide, which acted as a signal to switch on some 2000 genes associated with protection against various stresses; no such genes were switched on in the plants grown separately.

Forthcoming meetings in the Drake Hall

March 26th AGM at 7:45, followed by Sandy Primrose: The art of low maintenance

Sandy Primrose is a biologist by training and has degrees from Strathclyde University in Scotland and the University of California. He has had a varied career having worked as an academic and then in the pharmaceutical, diagnostic, life science and specialty chemistry industries. After 20 years in industry, he began working as a biotechnology consultant to early stage companies, academia, and to various UK governmental organizations. In this latter role his jobs included managing major projects on the safety of genetically modified foods and the detection of food fraud. Sandy has written a number of books including 'Plants, Poisons and Personalities', 'The Modern Plant Hunters' and 'Plants, Murder and Medical Mysteries'.



Sandy's passion is gardening and the half-acre garden of his house between London and Oxford is filled with unusual trees and shrubs. Over the years he has shown many groups round his garden and when he does so he tells them the stories behind the plants that he grows. These stories, and his experiences in industry, form the basis of his entertaining cruise lectures that cover topics in gardening, uses of plants, plant history and plant conservation.

April 23rd Ingrid Millington (Hillview Hardy Plants): Colour in your garden – bulbs throughout the year

The [Hillview Hardy Plants](#) team consists of: Ingrid, John and Sarah Millington at their nursery near Bridgnorth. In 2022 they won their first RHS Gold Medal at Malvern Spring Fair and in 2023 they were the Master Growers at the show.

The talk covers corms, tubers and rhizomes. Starting with the striking marbled foliage of *Arum italicum marmoratum* which appears in autumn and lasts throughout winter before the yellow spathes appear in spring, Ingrid moves on to snowdrops and *Crocus chrysantha* a cheap and easy crocus to establish. Less familiar spring bulbs included Iphion, whose scented flowers appear in early spring, tulip "Little Princess", a species variety which will form a colony and does not require lifting in autumn. *Scilla bithynica* is effective en masse and *Corydalis solida* self-seeds and is good for pollinators.



Maianthemum, with its fluffy white flowers and delicious lily of the valley scent, appears in May and unlike Solomon's seal, which it resembles, is not prone to sawfly infestation. Camassia, an American bulb which likes damp soil, appears in May and June; the National Collection is held at Attingham Park near Shrewsbury.

Summer flowering blooms included the exotic canna which requires winter protection and needs to be kept moist, dierama – angels' fishing rods, dahlias and lilies.

Less familiar is *Albuca maxima*, a South African bulb with three outer and three inner petals, which requires sharp drainage and Zephyranthes which is now completely hardy in the UK.

Cyclamen hederifolium flowers in autumn into November as do Hesperantha and Nerine, all three are completely hardy. Gladiolus and crocosmia provide reliable summer and autumn colour and Crocosmia do well in pots.

May 28th Helen Picton: [Old Court Nurseries](#) and the Picton Garden

“We are a small family run plant nursery and garden nestled on the lower slopes of the Malvern Hills in Herefordshire. Old Court Nurseries have been specialist breeders and growers of Michaelmas daisies since 1906. Today we hold not only the Plant Heritage National Plant Collection of Michaelmas daisies with more than 430 varieties but also of polypodiums and *Bistorta amplexicaulis*. All three collections are displayed in the 1.5 acre Picton Garden along with large displays of galanthus, heritage narcissus, tender succulents and more.



“Many of the plants seen in the garden can be purchased from the nursery. We are proud to propagate almost everything ourselves and all our plants are grown using the peat free Melcourt Sylvamix growing media.”

The [Picton Garden](#) was originally laid out by Paul & Meriel Picton in the early 1980s on part of the Old Court Nurseries site. To start with the garden was there to house the National Plant Collection of Michaelmas daisies but over the years has expanded and is now 1½ acres full of plants for all seasons of the year, beautifully

curated by Ross and Helen Barbour. There is much emphasis placed on creating a beautiful but relatable space with a huge variety of plants while still maintaining a healthy ecosystem. The garden is an insecticide- and molluscicide-free area.

June 25th Timothy Walker: What have plants ever done for us?

A welcome return visit from Timothy Walker. This talk looks at our dependence on plants for everything from food to film, and from painkillers to paint. It also examines the ways in which our exploitation of plants could keep up with demand from an increasing global population and what we as individuals can do to help future generations.

Timothy [writes](#): “I was born and brought up in South Buckinghamshire. I read Botany at University College Oxford. After graduation, I worked for two years as a trainee at the University of Oxford Botanic Garden. I then took a National Certificate in Horticulture at Askham Bryan College York. This was followed by a one year traineeship at the Savill Garden Windsor, and 15 months as a diploma student at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. In 1995 I was awarded a Master of Horticulture by the Royal Horticultural Society of London.

From January 1986 to July 2014, I worked at the University of Oxford Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum, firstly as General Foreman, then as *Horti Praefectus* (from 1988) and finally as Director (from 2002).”



The plant that shoots toxic liquid – and the insects trying to beat it

Insects get a nasty surprise if they try biting into the leaves of [bursera](#) shrubs and trees: they use a sort of squirt gun to shoot a high-pressure stream of liquid resin at the attacking insect. This liquid is thoroughly repellent and poisonous, but for good measure the resins in the liquid can turn solid when exposed to air and seal a small insect in a tomb.

The squirt gun stores its chemicals in a network of canals in the leaf. When an insect bites a leaf canal, the liquid squirts out as far as 1½ metres, drenching a small

insect in deadly secretions. Larger insects that survive the attack suffer reduced growth and life expectancy.

[This is an arms race between plant and insect](#) that has been going on for millions of years, and in that time some species of beetle have figured out how to puncture the plant gun, by carefully nibbling a series of small notches in the leaf. Some beetles will spend up to an hour disarming the leaf before eating it, but even so the insects later suffer slow growth and an early death.

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 27th March 2025 in the Drake Hall, Amersham Community Centre in the Chilterns Lifestyle Centre.

Present: A total of 104 members signed the attendance book.

1. Welcome:

The Chairman, Colin Ross offered a warm welcome to members and thanked them for attending. He mentioned that the raffle would be drawn after the talk during refreshments. Volunteers to help with refreshments at future meetings would be welcome. He invited Liz Moulton to speak about outings with vacant

places. More visits will be detailed in the May Newsletter. The plant sale will be on 4th May and he hoped for good support. Finally he stated that he was pleased to see so many at the AGM as he felt it was important for members to know how the Association was run.

2. Apologies for absence: These had been received from Nigel Moore and Sue Jepson

3. Minutes of the previous AGM on 28th March 2024 had been published in the February Newsletter. Acceptance was proposed by Sue Edwards and seconded by Julie Burton and carried nem con.

4. Matters arising: Nothing was raised.

5. Officers' reports:

These had been published in the February Newsletter. The Chairman thanked the Officers and Committee for their hard work.

6. Treasurer's report.

This had been published in the Newsletter. Nothing was raised on the report. Acceptance was proposed by Tim Hillier and seconded by Ray Edwards and carried nem con.

7. President's comments:

The President paid tribute to Colin and the committee for the success of the Association, which he felt was flourishing. New members for the Committee would always be welcome.

8. Election of Officers:

Officers who had declared themselves willing to stand for election were

Hon Chairman	Colin Ross
Hon Secretary	Jean Bowling
Hon Treasurer	David Bender
Hon Membership Secretary:	Annie Jardine
Hon Social Secretary (visits)	Liz Moulton
Hon Social Secretary (talks)	Sue Edwards and Julie Burton
Hon Archivist	Carol Barratt

The vote was carried with no objections or abstentions.

9. Election of Committee members:

Frances Billington, Carol Daw, Irene Glyn-Jones, Clive Symes, Jill Harris.
The vote was carried nem con.

The President then spoke about the retiring committee member, Anne Webb, who had served the Association for many years and presented her with a token of our appreciation.

10: Election of independent examiner for the accounts:

Mark Taylor was thanked by the Chairman for taking over the examination of the accounts. He also paid tribute to Sue Humble who had examined the accounts for several years.

11. AOB: Nothing was raised

After the AGM we had a talk by Carolyn Foster who has a beautiful, well established garden which has been developed over 40 years. It is now a much loved plantaholic's cottage-style wildlife friendly garden, providing year round colour and interest. Mixed borders overflow with perennials and shrubs.

Carolyn started her talk discussing the history of the garden. Early gardens were based on the paintings of gardens in other countries, fairly simple designs, and plants. In the Victorian era, glass houses were developed, which meant exotic plants could be grown in this country. Next William Robinson wrote a book about giving gardens back to nature, plants in a wild setting.

Gertrude Jekyll followed Robinson's principles and herbaceous borders became very popular. In the Arts and Crafts era, garden rooms were introduced. Island beds were designed to be walked around. Beth Chatto advised that plants should be planted in the appropriate place as found in nature, either dry or damp. The latest movement is horticultural ecology, layered natural planting which is good for biodiversity. Carolyn illustrated all these ideas with many examples of gardens.

Colin thanked Carolyn for her very interesting talk and beautiful photos.

Agenda for the Annual General Meeting to be held on March 26th 2026

- 1) Welcome (Colin Ross, Chairman)
- 2) Apologies for absence
- 3) Minutes of the 2025 AGM (above)
- 4) Matters arising from the minutes of the 2025 AGM
- 5) Officers' reports:
 - a. Talks Secretaries (Julie Burton and Sue Edwards)
 - b. Membership Secretary (Annie Jardine)
 - c. Visits Secretary (Liz Moulton)
 - d. Chairman (Colin Ross)
- 6) President's comments (Tim Hillier)
- 7) Election of officers:

Hon Chairman	Colin Ross
Hon Secretary	Jean Bowling
Hon Treasurer	David Bender (wishes to stand down)
Hon Membership Secretary	Annie Jardine
Hon Social Secretary (visits)	Liz Moulton
Hon Social Secretary (talks)	Sue Lynch and Ann Turley
Hon Archivist	Carol Barratt
- 8) Election of committee members (the following are willing to stand for re-election):
Frances Billington, Julie Burton, Joan Clark,
Carol Daw, Sue Edwards, Irene Glyn-Jones, Jill Harris
- 9) Election of honorary examiner for the accounts
Mr Mark Taylor is willing to act for another year.
- 10) Any other business

Officers' reports

Talks secretaries (Julie Burton and Sue Edwards)

January: Michael Harrison, one of our members, talked about and showed many photos of how he created a wonderful garden from scratch, including a wildlife hedge and garden pond amongst many beautiful shrubs and flowers. He proved what can be achieved by hard work and a vision.

February: Graham Austen owns Home Farm Plants along with his wife. It is a traditional family-run nursery growing and specialising in Elatum delphiniums. His talk was most informative particularly for those members who do not grow delphiniums. He also brought along samples for members to purchase.

March: Carolyn Foster - The evolution of the perennial border. Carolyn is a horticulturist and hands on gardener and her beautiful, well established garden has been developed over 40 years and is a much loved plantaholic's cottage style, wildlife friendly garden providing year round colour and interest. A very interesting and enjoyable talk.

April: Timothy Walker - The healing power of plants. Our speaker gave us another fascinating and informative lecture on the amazing power of plants as used in the medical world from helping to cure everyday ailments to their extensive use in discovering remedies for cancer, heart and many other hundreds of diseases. Again a wonderful talk by a knowledgeable, amusing and enthusiastic speaker.

May: Gillian Taylor - For the love of roses. Gillian is an enthusiastic gardener and plantswoman with a passion for roses. She became a lover of roses from having only two a few years ago to now growing around 250 varieties in her collection. She discussed the diverse types of roses and brought with her many samples for us to see and smell.

June: Robert Harvey - Creating a downland garden from a field. Our speaker gave us a fascinating insight into the development of his Wiltshire garden from a bare field to acceptance in the National Garden Scheme. He showed slides of the transformation during the creation

Membership Secretary (Annie Jardine)

Subscriptions for the year 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025 remained unchanged at £10 single and £17 per couple at the same address. Please remember that renewal subscriptions fell due on January 1st 2026.

Visits Secretary (Liz Moulton)

Our first outing of the year was to Hollydyke House in Little Missenden, on a bleak cold day to view snowdrops. The garden was large and interesting with a stream running through but sadly few snowdrops to be seen. However the owners were very generous, welcoming us with a cup of coffee and finally warming us up with homemade soup and fruit crumble. Thanks to Irene Glyn-Jones for organising this.

In April, Frances organised a coach outing to Wisley. We all enjoyed going back there after the upheaval of the M25/A3 roadworks and were interested to see the new developments. We were lucky to have a fine day so that we could enjoy the beautiful gardens.

We had a self-drive trip to Reveley Lodge in May organised by Therese Havard. This was a beautiful public garden and house in Hertfordshire. We had a guided talk and walk given by the head gardener, Lesley. A lot of volunteers work in the gardens and produce some excellent vegetables.

of his garden and believes garden design is a blend of art with nature.

July: Chris Day - Gardening in retirement. Our speaker is a professional horticulturist who is keen to share his passion for gardening. He has worked in commercial horticulture, garden centre retailing and has edited consumer gardening magazines. A good communicator who gave tips and advice for making gardening in retirement a pleasure, not a chore.

September: Anthony Powell took us to Kashmir of 50 years ago when he went on a plant hunting expedition to the remote parts of Kashmir. His talk was more about his experiences on the expedition and not so much about gardens!

October: We had a different evening when Colin Edwards did a Q and A session. Members had to submit gardening question which Colin answered with humour and knowledge. It was an entertaining evening.

November: Carolyn Ormisher of Missenden Seeds grows dahlias from seeds, tubers and live plants. All of the seeds and tubers are grown by her (helped by her spaniel) and her variety and number of different dahlias was quite amazing. She gave us a very interesting talk with seeds and tubers to purchase afterwards, which many members did!

At the 31st December we had a total of 204 members with 15 of those being new members who joined throughout the year.

Isabel organised another canal trip in July starting at Apsley. This was supposed to be going in the opposite direction to last year. Unfortunately the water table was too low for this and the boat had to go the same way. However a good time was had by all.

Althea, Joan and Susan Russell arranged a trip to Stockcross Garden near Reading in August. This was a garden that had been previously featured on Gardeners' World. The trip went well but the garden centre where the trip ended was disappointing.

In September, Liz took a coach to Kelmarsh Hall and Garden in Northamptonshire. Due to the very hot summer, disappointingly, the garden was dry with very few flowers but the house was exceptional.

Thanks to all the organisers. In particular a big thank you to Joan Clark and Althea Godfrey who have bowed out after many years of organising wonderful outings for the association.

Please support the outings for 2026.

Chairman (Colin Ross)

It is great to report (yet again) that the Amersham Gardening Association had another very successful year. The monthly talks continue to be very well attended and in fact we are currently running close to the hall's capacity. Our thanks go to Sue Edwards and Julie Burton for acting as our Talks Secretaries for a number of years and finding varied and interesting speakers over that period. Sue and Julie have finally decided to step down from the role and we have been very fortunate in finding two replacements to take on the role. I am therefore very pleased to welcome Ann Turley and Sue Lynch to join the Committee as our Talks Secretaries.

The number of new members who joined during the last year continues to grow and following the new members' meeting in April 2025, which was well supported, we hope to hold another new members' meeting this year, immediately before the May meeting – members who joined since last April should receive an invitation in the next month.

Our trips, including the many day trips and the holiday to South Wales were well supported. These trips allow members to visit gardens, both local and further afield, while also getting to know our fellow members better. Thanks to Liz Moulton and the visits team who always seem to find stunning gardens to visit.

Following the changed format of the Christmas social (now known as the Christmas party) the food and drink have been provided by the Association for a nominal

charge of £1.00, and this has been very popular with our members. Thanks to Jill Harris who organised the evening and to all the committee members and other members who helped in any way. As in previous years we enjoyed a slide show of the South Wales holiday, which was prepared by Keith Hoffmeister. Attendance at this year's event was higher than in previous years and as the new format continues to be well received, it will be followed again next year.

This year's plant sale was very successful and raised a significant amount of money for the Association's funds. In addition to the financial benefits, the plant sale also raises awareness of the Association among non-members and has helped to increase membership over the years. There is a lot of work involved in preparing for this sale, so if you think you could help in any way, please let any committee member know. A special thank you goes to Susan Jeffery for co-ordinating everything.

The success of the Association is dependent on the hard work of the committee and, on your behalf, I would like to thank the members of the Committee for their efforts. I would also like all of you to think of how you could become involved, perhaps by joining the committee or one of the sub-groups. It goes without saying that we need new blood in the Committee to ensure that it reflects our ever changing membership so if you think you could help in any way please let one of the Committee members know.

Amersham Gardening Association Balance sheet as at 31st December 2025

	2025	2024
Current assets		
Cash in hand	£ -	£ -
Cash at bank (current account)	£ 2,012.26	£ 7,866.93
Cash at bank (savings account)	£ 13,708.08	£ 13,494.31
Total	£ 15,720.34	£ 21,361.24
Balance brought forward	£ 21,361.24	£ 19,331.28
surplus for the year	-£ 5,640.90	£ 1,796.81
Suspence		£ 233.15
Balance carried forward	£ 15,720.34	£ 21,361.24

Notes to the Accounts

1. Included in the Income for the year is a total of £5,060 (2014: £4,741) received from members for excursions and holidays taking place in 2026 and in Expenditure £5,478 (2024: £147) of prepayments in respect of these events.

Amersham Gardening Association
 Receipts and payments account
 for the year ending 31st December 2025

	2025			2024		
	receipts	payments	balance	receipts	payments	balance
Subscriptions	£1,933.64		£1,933.64	£1,992.40		£1,992.40
Deposit account interest	£213.77		£213.77	£202.50		£202.50
Visitors and miscellaneous	£51.00		£51.00	£101.00		£101.00
Plant sales at meetings	£123.93		£123.93	£80.00		£80.00
Social activities (incl tea)	£97.40	-£1,206.76	-£1,109.36		-£972.99	-£972.99
Activities						
Outings	£30,617.65	-£35,160.86	-£4,543.21	£41,604.20	-£38,746.50	£2,857.70
Raffle and Xmas tombola/raffle	£958.60	-£339.50	£619.10	£829.80	-£349.00	£480.80
Plant sales outside	£1,226.86	-£255.72	£971.14	£1,626.73	-£416.59	£1,210.14
Other expenditure						
Speaker fees		-£1,606.60	-£1,606.60		-£1,940.00	-£1,940.00
Room hire ACC		-£910.70	-£910.70		-£879.95	-£879.95
Venue hire (other)		-£40.00	-£40.00		-£50.00	-£50.00
Gratuities and gifts		-£760.32	-£760.32		-£485.00	-£485.00
Newsletter and postage		-£170.98	-£170.98		-£205.16	-£205.16
Administration and publicity		-£338.11	-£338.11		-£570.49	-£570.49
miscellaneous		-£74.20	-£74.20		-£24.14	-£24.14
shows						
total	£35,222.85	-£40,863.75	-£5,640.90	£46,436.63	-£44,639.82	£1,796.81

Oh dear, it's happened! I am turning into the Grinch.

Last December I went up to Kew to see the Christmas lights. So many people there all with their mobile phones and selfie sticks. Seemingly to me all rushing around and not really taking in the lights.

The organisers had put solitary lights across the paths but with a rotating cut-out below so the pattern on the path morphed from one flower to another. Totally unseen as the mothers route marched over them to the next static display they could see. "Oh that's pretty. Stand there, smile" snap - and on to the next. As for the set pieces I could have wept for the techies who had spent forever getting the lights to co-ordinate with the music. Had the public stopped to read the leaflet they would have found there were 15 or 20 minute sequences, but no, rush up, exclaim, take a selfie then

move on, 50 secs at the most. You could say it was their loss and my gain that they did not see, hear and appreciate the beauty that had been crafted for them.

However the crunch came last week watching *Monty's German Gardens*. I went to the Keukenhoff gardens many years ago and had promised myself a return visit. But having seen the crowds and their cameras / phones jostling to get a selfie with some pretty flowers in the background (they probably didn't even know they were tulips) I have been totally put off. And I ask myself "Would this have happened if we had not got mobiles? Yes they can be helpful. They are not bad at identifying plants and I find text a lot easier than a phone now my hearting is going, but are they killing our appreciation of the beauty around us?"

What is this life so full of care,
 We have no time to stand and stare
 No time to stand beneath the boughs
 and stare as long as sheep or cows
 etc etc WH Davies

A poor life this if, full of care
 All we have time for is a selfie

Susan Jeffery

Some requests for help

We always need people to meet and greet members and visitors at our meetings.

If you can help, please contact Felicity Vickery Tel: 01494 726284, email felicityvickery@yahoo.co.uk

We need people to help with the tea and coffee at our meetings. There is a rota so you are not expected to help at every meeting. If you can help, please contact Liz Moulton Tel: 01494 784913, email libbym6740@gmail.com

As ever, it will be much appreciated if some members could arrive about 7 pm to help put out chairs and tables; they do not put themselves out! Carol Barratt has a rota, so again you do not have to do it every month.

Please remember the raffle at each meeting. The profit on the raffles makes a very useful contribution to our expenses; subscriptions alone do not cover the cost of meetings and speakers.

Publicity. If you know where you could put a publicity poster please contact david.bender@btinternet.com

At present we have posters in the following places:

White Hill Centre, Chesham; Blue Diamond (formerly Van Hage) garden centre; Little Chalfont Library; Amersham Library; Chesham Library; Coleshill Village Hall, Tesco Amersham, Amersham Old Town

Committee and Contact Details

President	Tim Hillier	president@amersham-gardening.org.uk
Vice-President	Susan Jeffery	
Chairman	Colin Ross	chairman@amersham-gardening.org.uk
Secretary	Jean Bowling	secretary@amersham-gardening.org.uk
Treasurer	David Bender	treasurer@amersham-gardening.org.uk
Visits Secretary	Liz Moulton	
Membership Sec	Annie Jardine	membership@amersham-gardening.org.uk
Talks Secretaries	Sue Lynch and Ann Turley	speakersec@amersham-gardening.org.uk
Archivist	Carol Barratt	
Web Coordinator	David Bender	webmaster@amersham-gardening.org.uk
Committee Members	Frances Billington; Joan Clark; Carol Daw; Jill Harris; Irene Glyn-Jones;	
Newsletter Editor	David Bender	newsletter@amersham-gardening.org.uk

Past newsletters

There is an archive of past newsletters from May 2014 to the current issue on our website at

<http://www.amersham-gardening.org.uk/newsletter.html>

Photos from outings

You can see links to lots of photos from our outings at <http://www.amersham-gardening.org.uk/outings.html>

Click the button on the top right of the screen for a slide show; you can scroll through the pictures using the > and < arrows on the right and left of the screen

Half price entry to RHS gardens

We are affiliated to the RHS, and one of the benefits is a card allowing two AGA members at a time to visit one of the RHS gardens at half price. If you want to borrow the card, please contact Jean Bowling (secretary@amersham-gardening.org.uk)

We are not psychic

If you change your email address (or indeed your postal address) please email membership@amersham-gardening.org.uk and / or newsletter@amersham-gardening.org.uk, so that we can keep the records up to date and make sure you receive the newsletter and booking forms for outings.

[Click here](#) for a list of all the NGS gardens in Buckinghamshire