



MALMESBURY and DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB

July/August NEWSLETTER 2025

www.malmesburygardenclub.org.uk

Chair and Secretary – Ellie Church



JOTTINGS FROM THE CHAIR

The field has been mown and bailed. Sadly, the yield was much less than in previous years. This is common from feedback locally. Thinking ahead, we are going to pay more for cereal grains this year.

I do have some good news though – Jim has managed to get a committee to keep the Garden Club going. Thank you, Jim.

I have enjoyed my time as the Chair, although the Garden Club was well established and did not need much 'chairing'. I do have many treasured memories of people, places and events.

Good luck Jim and the new Club which will unfold.

Ellie Church – Chairperson

Update on the future of the Club – some good news at last

In the last Newsletter you will have seen our plea for a new committee, so we are very pleased to report that some new members have come forward in the past couple of months who are more than keen to take our Club forward! They are Claire Matthews, Jamie Johnstone and Megan Rexworthy. The plan is for our new members, plus current members Tracey Hobbs and Jim Thomas, to form a new committee at the EGM in September, ideally with other members too, as we could do with more helping hands.

Claire and Tracey introduce themselves below:

Claire Matthews

Hello! A bit about myself: I've had the pleasure of working as a hair stylist for the past 27 years—a career I truly love. Helping people feel confident and at their best has always been a joy, and I'm grateful every day to do what I'm passionate about.

Outside the salon, I have a deep appreciation for the outdoors and creativity. Gardening is one of my favourite ways to relax and I'm loving designing my own garden since we moved in 2 years ago!

I'm proud to call the beautiful town of Malmesbury home. Its rich history and strong sense of community are just a few of the reasons I love it here. I'm glad I reached out to help the Club after my father, Keith Matthews, who judges the Club's shows and writes in the newsletters, told me the Club was in danger of folding. This truly upset me, so I hope I can help the Club thrive again!

I look forward to connecting with more members of the Club and being part of the great community spirit we all share, and helping to make the Garden Club great once again!

Looking forward to meeting you all!

Tracey Hobbs

I have no horticultural training but have been a passionate gardener for many years, a trait inherited from my mother. My last full-time job was as the site manager responsible for a technical materials manufacturing and R&D company in Swindon, part of a multinational German business. That job finished in 2020 so I took the opportunity to retire and look for less stressful things to do.

I currently work a few hours a week at Chelworth Plant Nurseries, near Cricklade, which is a fantastic antidote to my previous position. I am also a volunteer on the Charlton Village Hall committee and the current Bookings Secretary.

As empty nesters, my husband and I moved house in 2017 specifically to get a larger garden, having filled our previous one to the brim. We were lucky to find a property in Charlton on a 1/2 acre plot that had large mature gardens back and front but had suffered recent neglect so had a thriving population of nettles, brambles, elder, bindweed, ash & sycamore seedlings, voles and mice, with the odd deer thrown into the mix. 8 years on and I am gradually bringing most of the garden under control, in spite of numerous failures and last year's slugfest.

I joined the Garden Club soon after moving and love the talks and advice from the booked speakers, so I am committed to helping the Club carry on and hope to join the committee.

Jamie Johnstone and Megan Rexworthy are both Malmesbury born and bred. Jamie trained at Lackham College, used to work at Malmesbury Garden Centre and now works as a professional landscaper, including on TV shows you will have watched! As well as being a keen gardener, Megan has a special interest in social media – more of which below. Jamie and Megan's own intros will feature in the next newsletter.

Plans to take the Club forward

Membership Cards

We have had some membership cards printed, the key benefits of which are the discounts that can be obtained on production of the card:

- 10% at Malmesbury Garden Centre
- Cotswolds Sharpening Services 10% on garden tools
- E&S Shops High Street 5%-10% on certain items.



All these discounts are available now! We will distribute them at the September meeting at the latest but get in touch if you would like one sooner!

Social Media presence

Megan is busy building our own Facebook and Instagram pages which will be launched shortly. We also plan to launch a WhatsApp group for members and to revamp the website (the current one cannot be developed any further and is a little tired after all these years!)

Once we have a strong social media presence reaching out and recruiting new members, which is of course absolutely key, will be so much easier.

Other thoughts and ideas

We think we can make a lot more use of the Club's RHS affiliation – watch this space. And we are talking to Malmesbury Garden Centre with a view to making use of their facilities, just as the Club did in the past. And we think some trips and visits might be a good idea.

MEMBER SURVEY

But before we get too far into specific plans, we thought it would be useful to get your feedback and ideas – so please could you complete this very short survey via the link below (To open, click on the link below or copy and paste it into your browser).

It really will be incredibly useful.

[Malmesbury Gardening Club members' feedback](#)



Jim Thomas

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Some members have not yet paid their subscriptions for 2025. These remain fixed at £7 for individual members and £10 for joint members in the same household.

Details of how to pay and an application form are at the end of this Newsletter.

Thank you,

Sean O'Shea (Treasurer)



Tasks for July/August



- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dead-head roses • Prune shrubs that have finished flowering: spiraea, broom, japonica etc. • Continue to tie in tall-growing perennials as necessary • Prune hard back bearded iris and apply general fertilizer at 2 oz per sq yd • Prune winter flowering heathers to promote new growth for the coming winter • Feed tubs and hanging baskets at ten day intervals • Protect ripening fruit from birds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise mower height in dry weather • Complete planting of half-hardy annuals • Prune back one or two blackcurrant canes to promote new growth (pick crop first) • Tie in new growth of loganberry and blackberry • For yellowing of raspberry leaf, water in chelated iron, such as Sequestrene as directed • Complete brassica planting, protect against pigeons • Complete late plantings of leeks, peas, beetroot and spinach • Sow spring cabbage seed |
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MEETINGS – EVENTS – ACTIVITIES

<p>Saturday 24 May 2025 The Market Cross, Malmesbury Annual Plant Sale</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; color: red; transform: rotate(-10deg); opacity: 0.5;">CANCELLED</p>	<p>Saturday 26 July 2025 Charlton Village Hall Annual Show</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; color: red; transform: rotate(-10deg); opacity: 0.5;">CANCELLED</p>
<p>Monday 8 September 2025 7.30pm in the Charlton Village Hall Emergency General Meeting Followed by BEES IN GARDENING Richard Rickitt</p> <p>Following a career in movie special effects, Richard now spends most of his time writing, talking, and thinking about bees. As well as keeping about 30 hives of his own, he is beekeeper at Westonbirt Arboretum, where he teaches beekeeping courses.</p>	<p>Monday 13 October 2025 7.30pm in the Charlton Village Hall CLEMATIS Andy Jeanes</p> <p>Andy has a career of more than 30 years in the wholesale and retail sectors of the horticultural industry. He currently works with Raymond J. Evison Ltd and The Guernsey Clematis Nursery.</p>

EMERGENCY GENERAL MEETING, 8 SEPTEMBER 2025

If you have attended any of our recent meetings or read your Newsletters, you will be aware that the current Garden Club committee have expressed their desire to resign *en bloc* later this year.

The good news is that we now have a small group of volunteers to take the Club forward, so for now its future is secure. The September meeting will be an opportunity for a formal hand-over to the new committee and to thank the current committee members for their many years of service.

The formal meeting will be followed by a talk on **Bees in Gardening**, a fascinating and topical subject. So please do come along!

Memories of the Sale and the Show

As the Club moves into a new phase in its history, Derek has contributed some memories of its early days

I was sorry that no one came forward to run the Show this year and I do hope that a new committee will be formed and a Show will be on the Club's calendar again.



My picture is of the beautiful bowl the club presented to me for organizing shows. Around the rim is a panorama of Malmesbury; it is something I have always treasured.

I was talking to Ted Hall about the old Garden Club Sales – we were always concerned that the show would lose money due to poor weather, and we had a lot of expenses having our prize cards printed by Mr Riddick in the High Street, and so each year we held a Jumble Sale in St Mary's Hall. Ted Hall, now 96 and with a very

sharp memory, brought back a memory that made me laugh and at the same time was rather sad.

This was at a time when there were no Charity Shops in the town but there were lots of Jumble Sales and, as always, the Garden Club's Jumble Sale was the most popular. I'm afraid people were poor but not too proud to wear second-hand clothes. I joked with Ted about his wife, Pam, who would not allow the doors to be opened one second before the agreed time, in spite of the hammering on the hall doors by the customers. Ted told me that he was on the 'Shoe Table' – of course I remember the shoe table – but isn't it sad to think that we had a table piled high with second-hand shoes and ladies squabbling over shoes for the family.

One year a member brought along a few runner bean plants – we didn't think they would sell but they went quickly – this was the very first start of dropping the Jumble and selling cakes, jams and plants in the Birdcage Walk.

Sounds familiar

In 1850, fifty years after it was formed, The Horticultural Society of London hit a crisis – a falling membership, unable to continue. Happily, as in all good fairy stories, a handsome prince arrived. Queen Victoria's consort, Prince Albert, came to their aid. They were granted a Royal Charter and renamed the Royal Horticultural Society and the prince was made its president.

Sixteen years later, in March of 1866, six societies (Alton, Bury St Edmunds, Manchester, the Royal Society of Ireland, Southampton and Watford) affiliated themselves to the RHS. The minutes of the RHS show that a fortnight later Maidstone joined and two weeks afterwards Malmesbury became members.

Today, only Alton and Malmesbury remain affiliated societies – and the Alton Society still retains its original name, whereas our Club in 1956 became the Malmesbury & District Gardens & Allotments Society Garden which reflected the membership at that time. My poster shows

GREAT + WESTERN RAILWAY.
Malmesbury Flower Show.
On Thursday, August 12th, 1909
CHEAP RETURN TICKETS
(First, Second and Third Class) will be issued to
MALMESBURY
AS UNDER—

FROM.	AT p.m.	RETURN FARES.		
		1st Class	2nd Class	3rd Class
Swindon - - -	1.53	3/7	2/4	1/10
Wootton Bassett - -	2.4	2/6	1/7	1/3
Dauntsey - - -	2.22	1/5	1/0	9d.
Chippenham - - -	2.5	2/9	1/10	1/5
Calne - - -	1.15	3/3	2/6	2/0

Passengers return from Malmesbury by any Train the same day.
A SPECIAL LATE TRAIN will leave Malmesbury at 10.45 p.m.
Calling at Great Somerford, Dauntsey, Wootton Bassett & Swindon.
Children under Three years of age. Free: Three and under 12, Half-price.
NO LUGGAGE ALLOWED.
The Tickets are not transferable. Should a Cheap Ticket be used for any other Station than those named upon it, or by any other Train than those specified above, it will be rendered void, and therefore the Fare paid will be liable to forfeiture, and the full ordinary fare will become chargeable.
Pallington, August, 1909. JAMES C. INGLIS, General Manager.

the GWR excursion from Swindon to the Malmesbury Show.

Derek



FROM THE GARDEN by KEITH

Comments from the garden

With the weather being fairly dry this spring, my shrubs have not put on a lot of growth, they did however flower very well. Pruning of the early flowering shrubs will not be as hard, this should be done after flowering.

Day lilies

I covered lilies in the March/April Newsletter but not day lilies, *Hemerocallis* or ditch lilies. I found one of these plants in nearly every garden I worked in. Over the years many new varieties have been bred, and the colour range is amazing. They are perennials, increasing in number each year without becoming invasive. As



I said, the flowers come in many colours, each one lasting just one day, but produced in rapid succession from June to autumn. These plants are easy to look after. They hold themselves up so need no staking, and I have found they do not have pest or disease problems; even slugs seem to leave them alone.

Where to start: there are some really beautiful varieties. *H.* 'Mini Pearl' produces pretty, slightly ruffled, trumpet-shaped flowers in pale pink or pale orange or blush salmon pink: the choice is yours, this is a really beautiful variety, ht 60cm. *H.* 'Double Orange Zephyr' is a truly vibrant orange with veins in the petals, ht 45cm. *H.* 'Breath of Blue Air' is a gorgeous rich lavender purple, which is the closest they have got to a true blue. This variety has a small white edge to the petals and a luminous yellow-green throat; the tips of the petals are usually curled creating a very attractive shape: flowers June to July, ht 60cm. *H.* 'Calico Jack' is a stunning variety, its big flowers with a dark maroon eye and matching

picotee edge, contrasting well with the deep golden yellow base, flowering June-July ht 60cm. *H. 'Stella de Oro'* is one some of you will have heard of, a golden yellow variety with an orange throat, flowering June to September ht 50cm. *H. 'Gentle Shepherd'* is an ivory white variety with a pale yellow-green throat, ht 75cm. There are so many more I could mention. This is one plant you should have in your border or pot.

Herbaceous revival

Bear's breeches, *Acanthus mollis*, also known as sea dock, bear's foot plant, sea holly, gator plant or oyster plant, is a vigorous plant with large glossy leaves and tall flowering stems, with white dusky purple flower bracts. Viper's bugloss, *Echium vulgare*, also known as blueweed, is another plant I only found in a few gardens. *E. 'Pink Fountain'*, maximum ht 2m, is covered in bell-shaped blooms of a dusky pink; a magnet for bees and butterflies, this variety holds the R.H.S. Award of Garden Merit. Sneezeweed, *Helenium*, comes in many colours, flowering June to October. A good one for cut flowers, also for drier areas, average height, depending on variety, 1.2m. *Geum triflorum* 'Prairie Smoke', also known as grandfather's beard, is a clump-forming perennial flowering in early summer. The single cream to purple flowers emerge from



reddish-purple flushed buds, followed by feathery seed heads, ht 45cm.

One for next time False Spikenard.

Keith's choice plant

Nicandra physalodes, the shoo fly plant: this one is loved by birds and pollinators, is good for



cutting and self seeds each year. It is a hardy annual, flowering from July to November, ht 90cm. Sow seed directly into ground April to May.

Pests' paradise

Hemerocallis gall midge: buds of the day lily on occasions, depending on seasonal conditions, become swollen, fail to open and then fall off. Inside the galled bud, which has thickened with a crinkled appearance, are many white maggots; these are at the base of the petals. A fly deposits eggs in the developing flower in late spring or early summer. Control by picking off swollen buds; pesticides will be ineffective as the pest is buried inside the bud. This is one pest I have not had a problem with.

Plants to enjoy in July/August

Dahlias, Lavatera (mallow), *Lilium*, Lavender, *Hydrangea*, *Passiflora*, *Alstroemeria*, *Hibiscus*, *Hostas*, *Erigeron* (Mexican fleabane), *Fuchsias*.



FROM THE VEGETABLE PLOT by KEITH

Comments from the veg plot

I was weeding through the onion bed and stood up to give my back a rest. Looking out across the field I



saw a hare, the first I have seen for a long time. He or she moved very fast and was gone in the blink of an eye.

Strawberries

As I mentioned in the May/June Newsletter, I planted a new strawberry bed. They have cropped very well for the first year (variety 'Sweet Colossus'). There are two thoughts: one is, if you plant new runners in the spring, you should not let them fruit because the root system has not developed enough to give you a reasonable crop. This means cutting off the flower truss and allowing the plant to establish.

If you plant your new strawberry bed in the autumn, the plants will be well established and you can crop in the first year like I did.



My word! What a lot of new varieties there are now. Where to start! First, there are early summer varieties, mid-summer, late summer and perpetual varieties, also alpine strawberries.

Of the summer varieties 'Honeoye' is a heavy cropper with medium sized fruits, an old fashioned strawberry flavour, cropping June to early July, makes good strawberry jam. 'Rendevous' has medium/large glossy bright red fruit, wonderfully sweet and aromatic; this one also has good resistance to disease and is a heavy cropper in June and July. 'Malling Centenary', a fairly new variety with good taste and with high sugar levels, is a heavy cropper in early June/July.

Mid-summer varieties include 'Cambridge Favourite', a heavy cropper whatever the weather conditions, a medium size sweet and juicy variety with good flavour, resistant to mildew, cropping mid July. 'Elsanta' has been around for a very long time, fruits are large with very good flavour, cropping mid July.

Late summer gives us a large selection, of which here are just a few: 'Fenella', a heavy cropper with good disease resistance and sweet flavour;



'Malling Allure', orange red fruit, sweet and juicy; 'Symphony', medium large fruits, good in wet weather; 'Florence', large with good flavour and disease resistance; 'Malwina', very sweet with good disease resistance. All these varieties fruit in late July and August.

Perpetual varieties are just that, cropping from July to October, depending on variety. 'Malling Opal', large sweet and juicy with a heavy crop with good disease resistance; 'Flamenco', sweet

large fruits with good flavour. This one has a alpine flavour, 'Mara-des-bois', a medium size variety with good flavour and aroma, like the woodland strawberry of the wild alpine varieties.

Seasonal activities

Vegetables will now be cropping depending on variety. Your broad beans, if you grow them like mine, will have given a good crop over a number of weeks. Blackfly was the only problem: not too bad though, having pinched out the top of the plants when reaching a good height. Your runner beans will be reaching the top of your sticks, and if yours like mine, are blowing about in the wind. Run some loose string around the sticks to keep in place and watch out for blackfly on these plants.

Late August is when I lift my onions, drying them off, dusting them with sulphur to stop them rotting, then stringing them up in a dry place. Watch out for cabbage white butterflies: a few weeks is all it will take for your brassicas to be



covered in caterpillars. Spray potato tops (haulms) and tomatoes, also late sown peas, with fungicide to prevent blight and mildew. Continue sowing salad leaves, spring onions and radish for a continuous crop.

As all crops finish, chop up and place on the compost heap if you have one; chopping helps them to compost down quicker.

Keith's choice vegetable

Parcel (leaf celery): this is brilliant; I have no room for bunch celery like the variety 'Octavius' in the vegetable plot. This is a cut-and-come-again variety with a great celery taste, perfect for adding to salads. It can be grown in a large pot or in the vegetable plot.

No fruit nightmares

Strawberry leaf spot: reddish purple spots develop on the leaves with a grey centre. Raised spots or fungal bodies may develop on the spots. This can sometimes spread to the flower and leaf stems. This problem appears in



spring but more often in late season.

Clean up the affected leaves and debris in the surrounding area. A fungicide could be sprayed on the plants before flowers appear. This is one problem I have never had.

Produce to enjoy in July/August

Runner beans, beetroot, shallots, courgettes, celery, salad (various), cucumbers, spinach, carrots, globe artichokes, cauliflower, peas, cabbage, tomatoes, potatoes, dwarf french beans, green sprouting (calabrese) broccoli.



HELP! Your questions answered by resident expert, Keith

Please send your queries and problems to: info@malmesburygardenclub.org.uk

Q *Each year I lose a lot of lettuce plants; they just start to wilt and collapse what is the problem?*

A This could be what is called sclerotinia, a disease that can also affect peas, although the peas are still edible. If you have this problem, dig up the affected plants immediately and dispose of them, do not compost. The following season, plant in a different place. This problem could also be bottom rot, where the lettuces rot at the stem base; spray at seedling stage and again a few weeks later with a safer fungicide.

Q *My four-year-old peach tree has been amazing, but this year a lot of the leaves turned red and blistered. Can you help?*

A This is a fungal disease called peach leaf curl. I once looked after a peach house and this was one problem I encountered. This is easily dealt with, whether growing in a greenhouse or in the garden. Before the leaves appear spray the bare branches with a fungicide. If you leave it too late and the leaves appear, you will still get peach leaf curl.



Q *I have just started to grow vegetables. However, one day I have good germination on most seedlings, a few days later most of them have disappeared. What is going on?*

A This problem is one you get when the start of the growing season is dry. Flea beetle is the problem – tiny little black insects that jump away if you go to touch the seedlings. They are not a problem if there is a wet start to the season. Your seedlings will be peppered with holes, and if the problem is not dealt with, as you said, the seedlings disappear. Watering your seedlings early morning and late evening should help, alternatively use a safer insecticide done at the same time.

RECIPE

Moroccan lamb tagine

Packed with tender meat, aromatic spices, sweet apricots and honey, this Moroccan lamb tagine recipe is inspired by the classic flavours of North African cooking. Served with toasted couscous and a nutty coriander sprinkle, it makes a delicious family meal. This is traditionally cooked in a special tagine dish, but a large casserole will work just as well.

Serves 4, 10 mins to prepare and 1 hr 10 mins to cook, 624 calories / serving.



Ingredients

1 lamb stock cube, crumbled
75g dried apricots, halved
1 tbsp clear honey
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp turmeric
1 tbsp olive oil
400g lamb neck fillet, trimmed and cut into 3cm pieces
1 onion, finely chopped
1 red pepper, chopped into 1cm pieces

400g tin chickpeas (or other tinned beans in water)

For the almond and coriander topping:

25g flaked almonds
1 garlic clove, crushed
30g pack coriander, finely chopped

For the couscous

150g couscous
1 chicken stock cube
½ tsp smoked paprika

Method

1. Preheat the oven to gas 4, 180°C, fan 160°C. Put the stock cube, apricots, honey and ground spices in a jug and cover with 300ml boiling water. Stir to combine.
2. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a high heat. Add half the lamb pieces and brown on all sides for 4-5 mins, then transfer to a large casserole dish (or tagine). Repeat with the remaining lamb.
3. Keeping the pan on the heat, add the onion and cook for 8 mins until softened. Add the pepper and continue to fry for 2 mins. Transfer to the casserole dish with the lamb.
4. Pour the stock mixture and the whole tin of chickpeas (including the liquid) into the casserole. Put on the heat, stir and then cover the dish and bring to the boil. Transfer to the oven and cook for 50 mins.
5. Near the end of the cooking time, put a dry frying pan on a medium heat. Add the flaked almonds and toast for 2 mins until lightly golden, shaking the pan regularly. Tip into a small bowl and mix together with the crushed garlic and chopped coriander, set aside.
6. Put the pan back on the heat and add the raw couscous. Toast for 2 mins, stirring the grains until lightly browned. Meanwhile, mix the chicken stock cube with 300ml boiling water.
7. Remove the couscous from the heat and pour over the hot stock. Stir and cover, then leave for 5 mins. Fluff up the grains with a fork and stir through the smoked paprika.
8. Serve the tagine with the couscous and sprinkle over the almonds, garlic and coriander mix.

Tip: Toasting the couscous before soaking adds an extra nutty flavour and gives it a lovely golden brown colour.

<https://realfood.tesco.com/recipes/authentic-moroccan-lamb-tagine.html>

Ellie

And finally . . .

Some colourful new additions from Keith



Martagon lily



Tree peony



Moroccan broom



Dwarf lilac 'Palibin'



**Rhododendron 'Percy
Wiseman'**



Genista 'Lydia'

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2025

Subscriptions for 2025 are now due. They remain the same as previous years, that is: £7.00 for single membership and £10.00 for couples.

I would be grateful to receive your subscriptions as soon as possible. They may be paid:

- at the monthly meetings
- by post to me, Sean O'Shea, at Redlands, West End, Brinkworth, Chippenham, SN15 5DA
- by using the Club Post Box at E & S Hardware Store, High Street, Malmesbury
- by Bank transfer to Lloyds Bank PLC; sort code 30 91 99; account 02440789; put your name as the reference so I can track your payment.

PLEASE SECURE CASH/CHEQUE IN AN ENVELOPE WITH THIS FORM

Enclosed £7.00 single membership ☐ £10.00 double membership ☐

1. (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms): Membership No.

2. (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms): Membership No.

Tel. No.

Address:

.....

Email address.....

GDPR Declaration:

- I authorise Malmesbury & District Garden Club to hold records of my personal details as necessary for the efficient running of the club. These details include:
 - name and address
 - landline and mobile telephone numbers
 - email address (if disclosed)
 - application/renewal form
 - record of subscription payments
- I am happy for Malmesbury & District Garden Club to communicate with me by email, by post and by telephone.
- I am aware that I can request a copy of the details of my record and that I can ask for any inaccuracies to be amended or for records to be deleted. I am also aware that I can refer complaints to the Information Commissioner if I am not satisfied with the way my complaint has been dealt with.

For further details contact Mr. Sean O'Shea at the address above.

Signed: (1) (2)

Thank you

Sean O'Shea (Treasurer)