

Brief History of Mickleton Gardening Club

BEGINNINGS From its formation in 1980, when two local gardening enthusiasts called a meeting to gauge the level of support for a gardening club, Mickleton Gardening Club has catered for a wide variety of expertise and interest. Club members have shared their gardening experiences, triumphs and disasters. The weather has been a recurring theme over the years with droughts, floods and strong winds happening all too often. The phrase "In spite of the weather" has been heard at almost every show!

TALKS In the last 27 years a huge variety of topics have been covered by invited speakers. There have been slide shows, practical demonstrations and plant displays (sometimes covering a large proportion of the hall), all adding to the entertainment and knowledge of club members.

Some well known speakers have visited the club over the years, notably, Stefan Buczacki. In 1997 Stefan Buczacki was in the chair when Classic FM Gardening Forum was recorded at Mickleton and in 2003 there was 'An evening with Stefan Buczacki' which raised money towards the village hall refurbishment.

The monthly meetings now include a raffle, plant stall and refreshments.

SHOWS – the first show was held in September 1981 with over 400 entries. In recent years there has been a Spring Show and an Annual Flower, Produce and Handicraft Show. The Spring Show has been a welcome display of bright daffodils, tulips and other spring flowers marking the end of winter gloom. The Annual Show has been a chance to show the results of the year's work in the garden with fabulous displays of flowers and vegetables, beautiful floral arrangements and handicrafts, scrumptuous cakes and a well-laden produce table. The 2006 show had over 400 entries and 160 visitors attended. Through the years some names have appeared regularly in the cup-winner's presentation. These dedicated gardeners have formed part of the club's history which is contained in the many photographs and reports collected each year.

OUTINGS – Visits to various gardens and shows have been a regular feature of the club's activities. Malvern Show, Chelsea Flower Show, Hidcote, RHS Wisley, Abbey Gardens Malmesbury, Hodnet Hall Gardens and the Welsh Garden Festival are just a few of the outings enjoyed by club members.

In 1998 some members of the club were privileged to visit Prince Charles' garden at Highgrove. The club has tried to gain permission for a future visit but has not yet been successful in this quest.

SOCIAL – Friendly social events have always been part of the club's activities. There have been treasure hunts, garden parties, cheese and wine evenings. The annual suppers have included a French theme, a Scottish theme, a Victorian evening and a Harvest Supper with food and entertainment to match the theme.

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In 2001 the club celebrated its 21st Birthday with a gala evening. In 2005 there was the 25th Anniversary Celebration with buffet, anniversary cake, champagne, entertainment and display of the club's history.

The club has also participated regularly in other village events with stalls at the Church Fete and Village Bazaar.

GARDEN WALKABOUTS –Mickleton gardeners have enjoyed showing their gardens to other club members on several occasions. The last 'walkabout' was in June 2006 with some lovely gardens open for viewing.

QUIZZES and QUESTION TIMES –From time to time the club has held informal quizzes and question times and has participated in the annual Inter Club Gardening Quiz with other local villages. In 2006 Mickleton hosted the Inter Club Quiz with Glyn Jones (head gardener at Hidcote) as quiz master. Unfortunately the hosts did not win the quiz on this occasion.

HOLIDAYS –The first club holiday was in May 1982 when 16 club members visited Holland. Holidays have always been arranged with gardening in mind and destinations have been to places with lots of good gardens to visit. These have included Devon, Cornwall, Northumbria, Cheshire and France (where Claude Monet's garden was visited).

MOTTOS –Each year the club has had a different motto suggested by a club member. The first club motto was: "The glory of the garden lies in more than meets the eye" by Rudyard Kipling.

Another year the motto was: "Treat the earth well; it was not given to us by our parents, but loaned to us by our children" a Kenyan saying.

In 2007 the motto is: "Gardening is a way of showing that you believe in tomorrow" origin unknown.