



# NEWSLETTER

## December 2015 - January 2016

Affiliated to



[www.algs.org.uk](http://www.algs.org.uk)

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

**Happy Christmas to you all and a good  
gardening year for 2016 from your committee**

### **AL TRANSITION EVENT** **DECEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>**

**In the Henderson Hall**  
**We will have on sale local honey, jams,  
chutneys and maybe plants**

### **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENING** **DECEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>**

**In the Manor House**  
**Start at 8pm**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** **JANUARY 21<sup>ST</sup>**

**In the Manor House**  
**STARTS EARLY AT 7.30PM**

# CHRISTMAS

## “BARBEQUE” BREAKFAST

AT THE DEPOT

**SATURDAY DECEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup> 9 to 10am**

**Come and enjoy mulled wine, hot mince pies and coffee/tea and a very sociable morning organised by Chris, Jo and Kate and other helpers**

### TRAVEL CLUB

#### **SCOTLAND**

For 2016 Adrienne is taking us to Scotland on the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 15<sup>TH</sup> 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](http://www.hilliergardens.org.uk).

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

### GIVE A ROSE FOR CHRISTMAS

I have come across this firm who sells unnamed roses called [Rosenames.co.uk](http://Rosenames.co.uk) telephone 01923 681500. Apparently you order a rose by colour (red, yellow, apricot, pink, white) and they ask you to name your rose and will give you a certificate with the name on it to go with the rose. You can also go mad and include a bottle of champagne if you want. These roses are boxed up and sent to your chosen lucky recipient. I thought this would be ideal for a Christmas present, anniversary, memorial gift or birthday present.

### SEED CATALOGUES 2016

Thank you to all of you who have ordered seeds through the Society. All the seeds have been received and if there are any missing please let me know not Mr Fothergill's Seeds. The seed potatoes will be in very soon so please watch for an email from me if you have ordered any.

## REPORT ON OUR BEES

### Apiary Report

The end of another beekeeping year for our ALGS colonies has come. Chris and I have done the final disease inspections and have fed our 4 apiary colonies, hoping that they will just need the occasional top up through the coming months. If you have been kind and thoughtful enough to have winter flowering plants in your garden, you may well spot the odd foraging honeybee at the warmest part of the day searching out fresh supplies for the hive. Unlike all other bees, honeybees don't hibernate; they keep together in a tight cluster, with some specialist 'heater' bees vibrating the top of their wing joints to generate heat to keep the colony at a constant 35 degrees throughout the winter months. They have to venture out for cleansing flights and to forage, especially when supplies get low. We have hefted the hives to see if we can feel confident that they all have enough stores to begin the winter but have to admit that we are pretty sure that one of the four colonies in the apiary may not survive until Spring. Even if they have all had time to stock up on honey and pollen to get them through winter, we don't know if the queens are strong enough, or even if one or two of them have had the opportunity to mate successfully – all this will become clear in Spring when we will find out if the queens have survived, have started egg laying, have been superseded or even swarmed! Opening a hive is always a bit unnerving as you can never guarantee what you are going to find. The other weekend, Chris just lifted the lid of one of the hives and a bee suddenly shot out and stung me on the leg! That had never happened before – you usually get some indication that a colony is agitated or you inadvertently do something to annoy them.

We have put on insulation to help the bees maintain the internal temperature and mouse guards to stop the little rodents from trying to overwinter inside the hive, next we have to put on woodpecker deterrents (chicken wire cages). All we then have to do is start to prepare for Spring, making up fresh frames, cleaning old ones, extracting old wax and putting away the spare hive components until required next year.

2015 was generally a pretty poor year according to most beekeepers. While some had a reasonable crop, most of us had disappointing yields, owing both to the long damp spring and the difficulty the 2014 queens had in mating successfully. There seemed to be a greater number of swarms, which left weaker colonies to keep the hive going. We have sold almost all of the ALGS honey and now we have to jar and label our own. Unfortunately we were a bit slow processing our own honey and it has gone solid in the tubs! We are going to have to warm it very slowly and gently to bring it back to liquid form, we may have to borrow a 'warming cabinet' from another beekeeper - usually this consists of an old fridge converted with a bit of cable and a light bulb operated with a thermostat - high tech stuff being a beekeeper! If you can try to only buy local or at least English honey, this would help enormously in keeping our British honeybees safe from imported pests and diseases. Don't throw away honey jars or even honey sandwiches without either washing out the jars or wrapping them up securely as honeybees will find discarded honey and will forage it as an easy food source – but it may well contain disease-laden spores or bacteria which could swiftly wipe out colonies of otherwise healthy honeybees.

If you want to know more about our exploits or would like to find out about starting beekeeping, do contact Chris or Kate. Here's to a land flowing with British milk and local honey in 2016.

**OUR 4oz HEXAGONAL and 8oz ROUND HONEY JARS** Please don't forget to return your empty honey jars if you have purchased honey from us as we can re-use these however because we are required to use new lids which we have to buy in bulk we cannot use other types/sizes. This year's honey will be available in 8oz jars at £3.75 as well as 4oz jars at £2 and these can be purchased at the Depot and social evenings. It would help if you can remove the label – many hands make light work as the saying goes ☺



## **OUR NOVEMBER QUIZ NIGHT**

We had a wonderful evening in Manor House with 10 tables being occupied and we thank all those who took part to help us make £154 for the Society funds. The winners were "Cream of the Crop" who won a bottle of wine each, 2<sup>nd</sup> were the "Asters" who had some lovely chocolates and in last position "The B Team" who won the smarties not spoons this time. Unfortunately the price of the food goes up every year so we will be looking into putting up the ticket prices for next time. We are so sorry!

The next quiz will take place on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016 so please put that date in your diaries.

## **THINGS TO DO IN THE GARDEN**

1. For early flowers next year sow your sweet peas under cover in a cold greenhouse or cold frame.
2. Plant new trees, hardy shrubs and perennials.
3. Bubble plastic your greenhouse to protect against the winter cold.
4. Keep the greenhouse windows and/or door ajar in the day for ventilation especially if the weather is very warm.
5. Do not cut your autumn fruiting raspberries down yet as there may be fruit on them up to Christmas depending on the weather. Cut them in February and mulch them well to retain moisture in the summer months.
6. Dig up your dahlia tubers, take off lots of the soil, label them, turn them upside down in a dry frost free place to dry off for a week, sprinkle with sulphur powder and put into boxes of multi-purpose compost or sawdust and keep in a cool place where Jack Frost cannot reach them.
7. Sow broad bean seeds ready for early harvesting in the spring.
8. Shred fallen leaves with a mower and add them to the compost heap for quickest decomposition.
9. Make or purchase insect houses by cutting your old canes to 10ins and tying them together in a big bunch and place them somewhere in a secluded spot for the lacewings and ladybirds to rest in over winter.
10. Leave some fallen leaves to accumulate in a sheltered place in your garden for the wildlife to sleep under in the winter for frog toads and hedgehogs.

## **EMAIL ADDRESSES**

Chris sends out your newsletters to you and is coming across several email addresses which bounce back, so please let us know any changes on [contactus@algs.org.uk](mailto:contactus@algs.org.uk) as we cannot send you up to date news Bulletins or Newsletters if we have the wrong email address.

## **FUND RAISING**

We hold various fund raising events during the year. Our Carnival stall is very important since we raise more here than any other event, we hold raffles at the social evenings and sell plants, jams and honey at the Abbots in Transition events in April and December. This is a most important part of our Society which gives benefits to all members in some form. Please support where you can. This money pays for the 2 shows and our speakers and hall costs for our social evenings. Profits from our Depot also help to keep the Society in good stead.



## **MEMBERSHIPS**

**The renewals are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> December each year**

**It would be much easier for you and the Treasurer if you paid by standing order to pay automatically through you bank in December, January or February**

- **Our account is with Lloyds Bank, please contact Myles or Jane if you wish to pay by standing order.**
- **Your membership cards will be sent out to you once money received in our bank account**

## **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.

## **WEB SITE – [www.algs.org.uk](http://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](mailto:contactus@algs.org.uk)

## **WHAT IS PEAT?**

This is made up of incomplete decomposed plant remains and is formed when natural process of decay is stopped be waterlogging and oxygen excluded. The plant remains become compacted over hundreds/thousands of years to form peat. It is the major constituent in most horticultural growing media as it is well suited to a wide range of plant species and growing regimes.

It is important to reduce the consumption of peat as peat bogs are the UK's most threatened wildlife habitat supporting some plant, bird and insect species unique to that environment. Peatland also contain 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the world's carbon, exceeding that of the world's forests. When the top layer is removed the layer that is exposed releases carbon dioxide which can exacerbate global warming and climate change. It also plays a part in soaking up water like a sponge to help prevent flooding.

Our Society are trying to do our bit by offering you compost that has little or no peat in it so please look out for this in the Depot. Unfortunately as usual something that is good is also more expensive!

Instead of using the peat as a soil improver or mulch try using your own homemade compost, or buy the soil improver you can purchase at the Waterdell site or mulch with bark chippings. You can purchase peat which has been dug up from named traceable bogs but it may be worth your while to have a try with the peat free composts to see if they suit your garden.

## **CARRIER BAGS**

We now have to pay for our plastic bags if you do not use your own bag. Remember that it is hoped that Abbots Langley will be a village free of plastic carrier bags so try to use your own bags if possible. If you have any plastic carrier bags which you do not want for your own rubbish please hand them into the Depot. This saves us money otherwise we would have to buy them.



## **PERLITE AND VERMICULTE WARNING**

Please may I remind you that when using these two products it is advisable not breathe in the dust from them. When mixing up with soil dust can be formed and this can make you cough for several days after. You should use a mask or scarf across your nose and mouth and definitely use outside not inside a building. It is recommended that you wet these BEFORE mixing with the soil.

## **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  
**(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	£10.00		

### **New stock -**

Give your birds a treat this Christmas and purchase a new bird feeder, plastic and more expensive metal ones. We have a selection of different feeders and these would make a lovely present plus include the food as well.

We have lots of other items in stock, may be purchase some of them for a friend or relative who likes gardening for a Christmas present? Give a fellow member friend a society subscription?

Don't forget to stock up on Sulphur powder to put on your dahlia tubers and corms when you dig them up, also bubble plastic (in 2 different bubble sizes) and fleece for your greenhouse and tender plants. Autumn and winter grass feed is necessary to put on your lawns this time of the year.

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](mailto:contactus@algs.org.uk).

## **DEPOT DUTY ROTA**

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

**PLEASE PUT THESE DATES DOWN NOW ON YOUR CALENDAR AND/OR DIARY,  
PLEASE DON'T FORGET!**

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

**Pat will send out only the February and March duties in the near future, thereafter the Depot Duty Rota will be taken over within the new committee. If anyone wants to join the depot rota or be removed please to let Pat or Jane know as soon as possible.**



December

- 5 Pat Colwell, Joyce Davies
- 12 Chris Bromwich, Pauline Bryant
- 19 David Sutherland, Alan Alexander
- 26 Boxing Day Depot closed!!

**Winter CHRISTMAS BBQ**

January

- 2 Sue North, Barbara Foster
- 9 Jo Bromwich, Hilary Samson-Barry
- 16 Sue North, Christine Blackett
- 23 Adrienne Barnes, Steve Crane
- 30 John Merry, Elizabeth Walsh

Please look through them and if they are NOT OK please swap NOW to make life easier for Pat and email ([pandkc@ntlworld.com](mailto:pandkc@ntlworld.com)) and myself ([leon.lay@ntlworld.com](mailto:leon.lay@ntlworld.com)) or telephone Pat (443721) with your swap.

**I appreciate you could be ill at the last minute on the Saturday morning so please phone me on 01923 447281 or your committee member before 8.30am so that we know 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.**

**THANKS FROM JOE OUR TRADING SECRETARY**

On a wet Saturday, November 14, a small team took on the task of "autumn cleaning" the Depot. Armed with a "Henry" vacuum cleaner, (kindly on loan from the Chairman), brushes and cleaning materials the mornings work resulted in the removal of most of the spiders nests, dust and grime from the shelves, ceilings and floors.

Thanks also to the council depot next door for allowing us to use their skip to get rid of waste packing and unwanted items. The Committee are now working on a introducing an on-going cleaning weekly regime. Chris also gave an impromptu lecture on spiders to anyone who appeared slightly interested.

A big thank you to the people who turned up and did a great job, your help was appreciated!

**COMMITTEE VACANCIES AT AGM**

We would be pleased to hear from anyone who would be interested in coming on the committee. We urgently need someone to take over the ASSISTANT TRADING SECRETARY's position to help Joe Johnston. Ideally that person would be retired but not necessary. **Could this be you?**

**CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**

We hope that lots of you will come along to support our Christmas event. There will be hot mince pies, cheese and biscuits and other nibbles. The usual competition for the best Christmassy dressed gent and lady will also take please to add to the fun. I am sure Dave will be serving tea or coffee for those who want a hot drink. See you on 17<sup>th</sup> December.

We have been again asked to hold the Parish Council's Allotment prize giving so we shall see some new faces amongst us, so please make them welcome and maybe they too will become member's.

## LETTER BOXES

Yes I know this sounds a very strange heading but have you tried putting literature through your own letter box recently? When you do you will understand why postmen and other deliverers like our committee delivering your newsletters by hand have trouble getting the papers through the opening. I have to wear gardening gloves now to deliver things as letter boxes have drawn blood on my hands and fingers before now!

## SPRING SHOW 2016

Our President Bella has been round the local JMI schools to deliver their School Daffodil Challenge where we asked them to plant 5 bulbs in a pot and to bring them to our Spring Show on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March.

We are so delighted that lots of our own children/grandchildren are entering the Daffodil Growing Challenge again where we have asked the children to plant 3 bulbs in a pot for them to grow to bring back to the Spring Show.

We are very pleased that **Burston Nurseries** are again sponsoring these challenges for our local children. I hope you use Burston's as there are lots of Christmas decorations and presents for everyone to get tempted to purchase, also there is a lovely café!

## MANURE

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.

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? 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.

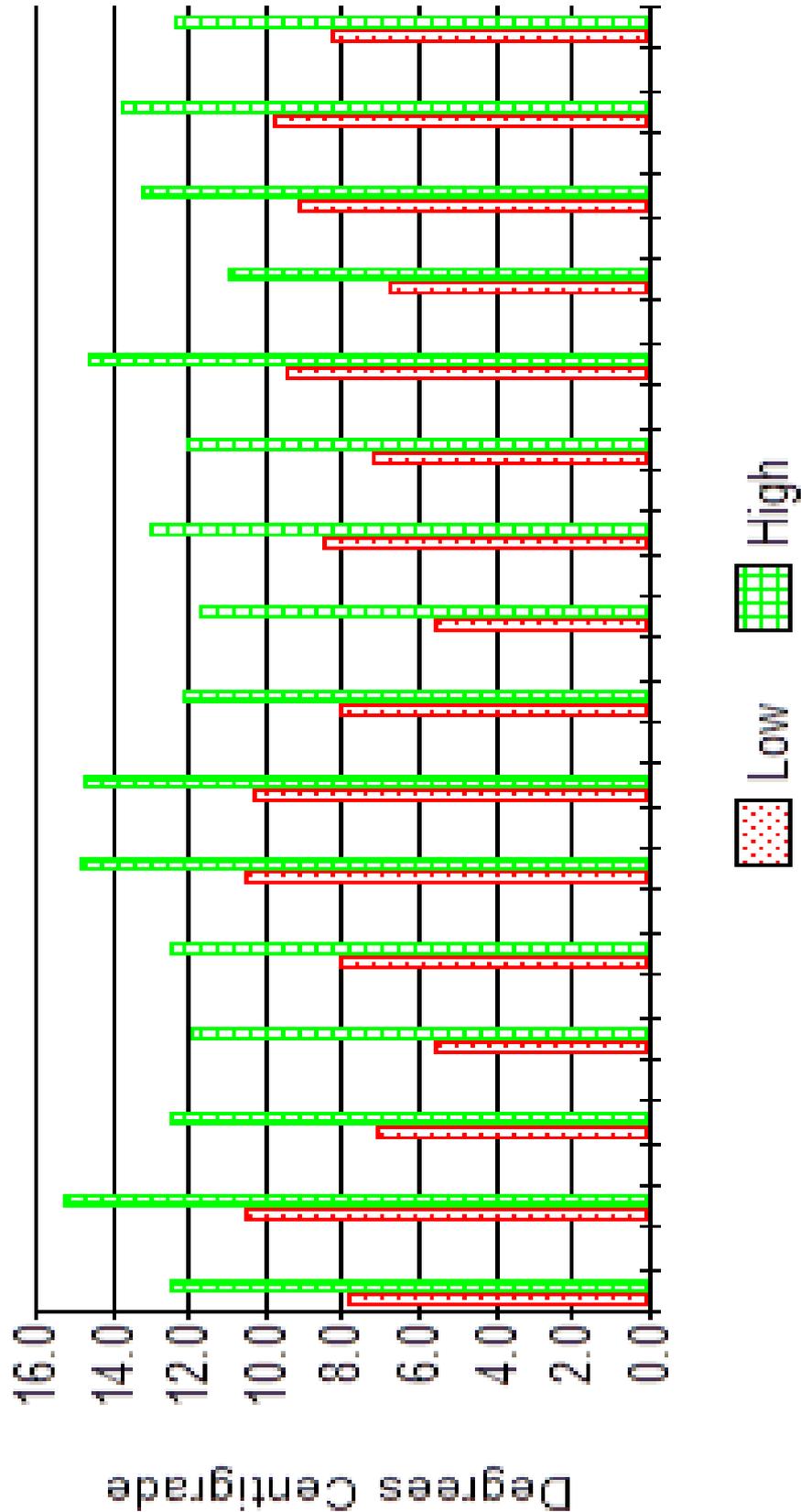
d. There are various riding stables around here and stabling for horses. So when you are driving around in the Sarratt and Chipperfield area keep an eye for them. They are usually very pleased to see you to take the manure away.

If you know of any other supplies and would like to share this knowledge please let me know.



## TEMPERATURES

**16 Years compared 1999 - 2015**  
Average October temperatures



An average month! However, our feelings regarding the sort of month it has been are also influenced by the amount of rain received and whether it has been sunny or if it has been predominantly cloudy. At night time the clouds will help hold up the temperature.



## **PROGRAMME FOR SOCIAL EVENINGS AND OTHER EVENTS IN 2015/16**

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 please contact Jo Bromwich on 01923 443758

#### **2015**

- December 17<sup>th</sup> Christmas social – mince pies, other food, a quiz and a fun evening.
- December 19<sup>th</sup> CHRISTMAS BBQ BREAKFAST AT DEPOT with more mince pies and mulled wine

#### **2016**

- January 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING **7.30pm start**  
With Gordon Gentry as our speaker for the evening
- February 18<sup>th</sup> Wildlife Trust - Where the wild things are
- March 17<sup>th</sup> Jacqueline Avoilet - (subject tbc)
- March 26<sup>th</sup> Spring Show at Henderson Hall
- April 21<sup>st</sup> Gerrard Craddock - Gardening for Mind, Body and Soul
- May 21<sup>st</sup> Darren Lerigo – “What Do I Do With This Space?”
- June 11<sup>th</sup> Carnival on the Manor House Grounds
- June ALFA meeting - Dr Annie Gray, food historian
- September 10<sup>th</sup> Autumn Show at Abbots Langley Community Centre
- September 15<sup>th</sup> Jane Perrone - (subject tbc)
- October 20<sup>th</sup> Jackie Nutkins - (subject tbc)

PLEASE CUT OUT THE PROGRAMME AND PUT SOMEWHERE FOR EASY REFERENCE

**GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME – Guest entrance £2.00**

**YOU ARE HEREBY INVITED TO ATTEND THE 75th**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ABBOTS**  
**LANGLEY GARDENING SOCIETY ON**  
**THURSDAY 21st JANUARY 2016**

IN THE MANOR HOUSE, GALLOWS HILL LANE  
ABBOTS LANGLEY

**7.30pm START**

(please remember this is not our usual 8pm start)

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome by The President, Hon. Lady Bella Stuart-Smith
2. To receive apologies for absence
3. To adopt the Minutes of the 74th AGM
4. To adopt the Secretary's Report
5. To adopt the Treasurer's Report and 2015 Accounts
6. NEW RULE for 2017 – It is proposed by the committee that as the membership subscription has been £5 for many years that it be increased to £7 per person with a reduction of £1 if paid before 31<sup>st</sup> March in each year.
7. To adopt the Trading Secretary's Report
8. To adopt the Travel Club Secretary's Report
9. To adopt the Apiary Secretary's Report
10. To elect Officers for 2016
11. To elect committee members for 2016
12. To elect an Auditor for 2016
13. To hear of plans for 2016 outings
14. Questions and suggestions from the membership. We look forward to hearing from you with your comments which will help the Society

8.30 – 2016 subscription renewals of £5 will be taken. Please try to bring the correct change and note that the postage levy is £3 if you have your newsletters posted to you. THANK YOU

9pm – Speaker to be confirmed.

**If you cannot attend the earlier AGM meeting please try to support our speaker at 9pm**



**YOUR EXISTING 2015 COMMITTEE –**

<b>Officers-</b>	President	Hon. Lady Arabella Stuart-Smith (retiring at 2019 AGM)
	Chairman	Chris Bromwich
	Secretary	Jane Lay
	Treasurer	Myles Darbyshire
	Trading Secretary	Joe Johnston

**Committee –**

Ass. Trading Sec	Jeremy Foster (retiring)
Talks Organiser/ Quiz Box Office	Jo Bromwich
Depot Rota	Pat Colwell (retiring)
Tours/outings	Adrienne Barnes
Apery Manager	Kate Macnish
Carnival organiser/ Show computer	Sue North
Quiz compiler/	Yvonne Merry
Website	John Merry
Show Schedules/ Raffles	David Sutherland
Publicity	Pam Cotton

**Auditor -** Norman Meldrum

Do you have any time/effort to support the committee?

If you wish to stand on the committee please contact  
Secretary Jane Lay on 01923 447281 or  
[leon.lay@ntlworld.com](mailto:leon.lay@ntlworld.com)  
before the AGM