

FEERING & KELVEDON GARDEN CLUB

DECEMBER 2023

WELCOME TO THE CHAIRMAN'S CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER



**Wishing all our members a Merry
Christmas and a very
Happy and Prosperous New Year**

Last month we welcomed back our last speaker of the year, Szuzsa Serer who gave a fascinating talk all about orchids. She has a very special way with an audience and encourages much participation and often turned to the members asking questions and in turn questions were asked of her as well. Also, to make it even more inclusive many of her orchids which she had brought along with her were passed around to the audience. These varied from the tiniest orchid growing on a small piece of wood to rather larger varieties. This was her swansong talk to any Garden Club or Horticultural Society as from next year she will be concentrating on her own business and only giving talks to Orchid Societies which is rather our loss.

So, with this year's calendar of speakers finished we can look forward to another varied programme in 2024!

These include a talk on dahlias, mole/rabbit catching, Monet's Giverny and more and with two outings planned, the first to Helmingham Hall in Suffolk and then nearer home to Ulting Wick there is much to look forward to.



Now let's turn to jobs to do in the garden and allotment this month –

1. Plant shrubs for winter scent such as mahonia and witch hazel.
2. Apply a generous amount of mulching around borderline hardy plants.
3. Continue planting up containers with winter bedding and evergreens.
4. Nearer Christmas bring evergreen foliage and berries indoors for festive decorations.
5. Give apple and pear trees an annual prune to improve fruiting.
6. Harvest Brussels sprouts, leeks and parsnips.
7. Do try to keep birdbaths free of ice and make sure to top up with water for our winter feathered friends of the garden.



POET'S CORNER

**Ian Standingford's poem of the month
A further extract from John Betjeman's
"Christmas"**

*The bells of waiting Advent ring,
The Tortoise stove is lit again
And lamp-oil light across the night
Has caught the streaks of winter rain
In many a stain-glass window sheen
From Crimson Lake to Hookers Green.*

*The holly in the windy hedge
And round the Manor House the yew
Will soon be stripped to deck the ledge,
The altar, font and arch and pew,
So that the villagers can say
"The Church looks nice" on Christmas Day.*

A Christmas themed DID YOU KNOW?

That St. Nick was being depicted wearing a scarlet coat in many books and illustrations long before Coca-Cola had been invented and it was not, contrary to belief, the creation of a clever Coca-Cola advertising campaign. However, from the 1930's Coca-Cola did help the image of Santa as a jolly old man!

Long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained evergreen throughout the year had a special meaning to people. This especially so in many countries – in the dark of winter – who believed that evergreens would keep away witches, ghosts, evil spirits and illness. Germany is now credited with introducing the Christmas Tree tradition as we know it in the 16th century when devout Christians brought Christmas trees into their homes. This was made fashionable in the 19th century in the UK after Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and their children were featured in *The Illustrated London News* standing around the main Christmas tree in Windsor castle.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

at St. Mary's, Kelvedon

2nd and 3rd December 2023

We are once again participating in this rather lovely festival so do come along to enjoy the atmosphere, wonder at all the decorated trees and also to support the Church. Light refreshments will be available. There will also be a short service on Sunday at 5pm to close the Festival.

OUR CHRISTMAS SOCIAL TUESDAY 5th DECEMBER

ends our year on a high note with much frivolity and Christmas spirit. However, **please don't forget to bring along your own cutlery, crockery and glasses!** Also, those who are making food it would be helpful to bring along serving equipment as well. Please remember though to take everything home afterwards!! There will be a raffle as normal and those attending are asked to wrap up a prize gift for this and bring it along on them on the night please.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH MINCEMEAT & ORANGE FLAPJACKS MAKES 24 bars

INGREDIENTS

8oz mincemeat preferably homemade
6oz butter
10oz golden syrup
Grated zest of 1 large orange
15oz porridge oats

METHOD

Pre-heat the oven to 180c Gas Mark4

Grease a Swiss-roll tin 23cm x 33cm/9" x 13" with butter

Warm the mincemeat, butter and golden syrup together until melted over a low heat stirring often. Once melted then stir in the orange zest. Then tip in oats and combine well

Pour the mixture into the prepared buttered Swiss roll tin and press down with the back of a spoon. Bake in the centre of the oven for about 25 minutes or until golden brown.

Set the tin on a wire rack and cut into squares while still hot. Allow to cool in the tin until completely cold. Remove and place in an airtight tin. **ENJOY!**

BIRTHDAY greetings to all those members with a birthday or anniversary this month.

The next newsletter in January will contain news about the upcoming **AGM** on Tuesday **February 6th** and arrangements for that but until then it just now remains to thank you all for the amazing support this year and to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!

