

LOG

August 2013

Welcome to the LOG Newsletter for August 2013.

AGM

This will be held at our first meeting on Friday 13th September, 7.30pm, at Knighton Parish Centre, Brindsmead Road, followed by a short talk.

The programme for 2013/14 is not yet complete. If you have any ideas for speakers then please let us know.

Summer Programme - a walk from Houghton-on-the-Hill by Carol Homa

One sunny Friday this Summer we were taken on a grand walk by Arthur and Val. Leaving Houghton to the accompaniment of screams from the resident peacock we crossed the billiard table lawn of the cricket pitch - conversation ebbed and flowed "what will the Royal baby be?, when will it arrive?" We crossed the road into a rough track when a squawk was heard and there in the top dead branches a greater spotted woodpecker was drawing attention to his striking red black and white plumage. The path dropped down to traverse a stream and the first whitethroat was heard as we admired the knapweed, yellow vetch, and fine thistles- and rather too close nettles for my shorts clad legs. We made a gradual ascent through rippling grasses highlighted in the evening sun and enjoyed the masses of woodbrown butterflies flitting along the hedge. The next path was clearly demarked through the barley field and it was interesting to note how the plants had been bred to produce more but shorter stems per plant presumably to prevent wind damage, but dispiriting to notice the absence of any other colour bar a patch of pink bistort on the footpath. Crossing the road we descended gently towards a wood which was a concert hall of bird song- 2 thrushes, blue tits, a crow, wood pigeons and we saw what seemed to be yet more pigeons flying and then one of them was a green woodpecker.

Heading back up the field edge as the sun set we found all the butterflies had settled for the night, wings closed looking like dry leaves in amongst the hedge.

And then we were in Houghton and the peacock screeched our return.

WINTER PROGRAMME

Friday September 13th

AGM and...how to make a willow garland
by Alison Coates.

Friday October 11th

Annual Wholefood Supper

Friday November 8th

“The Changing Climate of Bee-keeping”
A talk by Jane Tregoning of
The Leicestershire and Rutland Bee-keeping Assoc.

Friday December 13th

Jamon Luckose of Kerala Ayurveda Clinic

2014 Dates

Friday January 10th

“75 years at Rectory farm”
Phil Johnson from Great Easton
Phil grows wild bird seed and will bring supplies for sale

Friday February 14th

Virtuous Bread
A discussion on all things relating to bread making

Friday March 14th

“Love Your Bugs”
A talk by Sally Cunningham from Garden Organic

Friday April 11th

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GARDEN ORGANIC AGM, 11TH MAY 2013

Three LOG members Bob, Arthur and Val attended the AGM of Garden Organic on 11th May 2013.

Report by Arthur Needham.

During the formal business of the AGM we learned that Irene Wilkinson (Chair of Council) and Alan Booth Hon Treasurer were retiring and also that Myles Bremner, Chief Executive is leaving Garden Organic later in the year. Along with the news that Webbs have also given notice that they are to leave Ryton in spring 2014 this news was a little disconcerting although it is probably coincidental that they are all leaving at once. Although all three are leaving their formal positions they are all remaining in touch and are still committed to the Garden Organic message.

The rest of the AGM proceeded without problems and although the organisation is changing it is holding its own in an increasingly competitive world.

After a break for coffee, Tim Lang Garden Organic President introduced the conference themes which were

- a) Fighting Biodiversity and
- b) Safer Gardens.

Our gardens should be havens for wildlife and people and despite many improvements in gardening products we find that there is still a need to promote organic gardening. Together with the decline in wild bee populations and problems for cultivated bee colonies a new threat has emerged with the ingredient Clopyralid which is the active ingredient in many widely used weedkillers including products like "Feed and Weed" mixtures for the "perfect lawn".

To develop these themes we had a talk by Paul de Zylva from Friends of the Earth who enlarged on the "National Bee Campaign" which is a joint effort by many well known organisations including Friends of the Earth, Garden Organic, RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts and The National Trust.

This was followed with a talk by John Walker on Toxic Compost and the dangers of Clopyralid and persistent weedkillers. The main danger with these is their persistency in that they are not destroyed during composting, even in scientifically controlled council schemes and therefore end up in many peat free composts sold by Councils and others. Some Councils suggest that grass from treated lawns is disposed of in the “Black bin”, so they end up in landfill creating what John Walker described as a “Ticking timebomb”

There then followed a panel discussion on these themes.

After a break for the usual delicious lunch, various activities were arranged for the afternoon. They included Garden Tours, a look behind the scenes at the Heritage Seed Library, a compost clinic, a talk on growing exotic crops and a talk about the Five Acre Community Farm.

Val and I opted for a Garden tour and a talk and visit to the Five Acre Community Farm which is based at Ryton and connects the local community with the food they eat and each other.

Tea and scones in the café together with a browse round the shop concluded a thought provoking but overall enjoyable day.

Group Web Site

We have now produced a simple web site at:

www.leicsorganicgroup.org.uk

This will contain latest information about the programme and our newsletters. Please take a look and if you have any suggestions then contact us below or email info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk

Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/leicsorganicgroup

The next Newsletter will be produced in December 2013. Articles can be sent to info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk

**Leicestershire Organic Group is a joint local group of
The Soil Association and Henry Doubleday Research Association
(Garden Organic)**

For further details contact group secretary, Bob Haskins, 01509 842449, or publicity officer, Leon Marvell, 0116 269 4978.