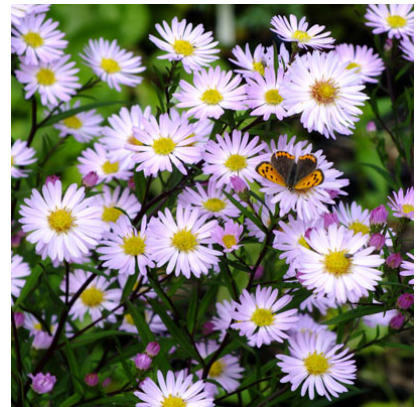


Newsletter - October 2026

Letter from the Chair

Hello everyone

Well, after a long hot summer, we have green in our gardens again, and it's a very welcome sight. The grass seems to be making up for lost time, requiring frequent mowings at present, even well into October. I'm writing this looking out at a lovely array of autumn daisies, and the last of the fabulous summer roses.



I hope that those of you who attended our special event featuring Tamsin Westhorpe enjoyed it as much as I did. Tamsin told us that it generated quite a few extra visitors from the Grosmont area to Stockton Bury Gardens. I've now got a hori hori and a herbaceous sickle on my Christmas present list (look them up if you weren't there!) The format of an occasional Friday evening meeting with a prominent speaker, accompanied by wine and snacks, appears to be popular - so we will carry on doing that in future.

Looking forward to the rest of this year, we will be holding our AGM on Tuesday 3rd November. At the meeting we will be seeking your views on whether we should continue our Grand Day Out trips. On the last two occasions, we've had really lovely visits but numbers have been low; it costs a lot to hire a half empty coach, meaning that we make a loss, so maybe we would be better spending club funds on other things. Have a think, and let us know your thoughts at the meeting.

We are currently short of folks to help with the tea rota, and it's always falling on the same people, which is a bit unfair. So if you could volunteer your support to go on the rota for next year whilst you are at the AGM, that would be much appreciated.

We also have our annual Christmas meal to look forward to. The menu is set out below. Places are already in demand this year, and space is limited, so if you want to come, please don't delay in booking your place.

Alison

Our Programme for 2026



GROSMONT & DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

PROGRAMME 2025/2026

Speaker meetings are held on
first Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm

2025

2nd December Christmas Social
Temple Bar Inn at Ewyas Harold

2026

3rd February Debbie Devauden
*A History of Botanical Illustration
from Cave Drawings to the Present*

3rd March Sarah Price
*Reframing the Wild Garden:
New Perspectives on Garden Making*

7th April Kevin Alviti
Diary of a Fruit Grower

May **Evening Visit - Venue TBC**
Details in newsletter

Saturday **Plant Sale - 10am to 12 noon**
6th June *Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall. HR2 0EL*

June **Day Trip - Venue TBC**
Details in newsletter

July **Summer Social - Venue TBC**
Details in newsletter

Friday Tamsin Westhorpe
4th September *Prepare for the Perfect Spring*

6th October Duncan Coombs
*Winter Colour and Interest
in the Garden*

3rd November AGM and Fran Phillips
of La-Di Dardy Flowers
Demonstration of a Winter Wreath

1st December Christmas Social
Details in newsletter

Our Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be the AGM. We will be renewing memberships, and, hopefully, welcoming some new members. If you know anyone who would like to join, then please bring them along.



After the annual reports from the Chair and Treasurer (which we will try to keep as brief as possible) and the election of the Committee for the coming year, we will be hearing from our speaker - Fran Phillips of La-Di Dardy Flowers - who will be showing us how to make a winter wreath.

Fran has been growing fragrant, seasonal flowers in her cutting garden, on The Dardy, for many years. Flowers are grown for bouquets, weddings, events, sympathy tributes, DIY buckets, wreaths, workshops and all sorts of other occasions.

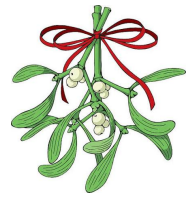
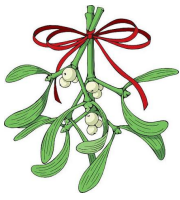
She enjoys sharing her knowledge and passion for growing and arranging with local groups such as the WI, gardening clubs and flower arranging societies.

She focuses on growing seasonal, fragrant blooms and ensures that they are freshly picked for every occasion, big and small. Flowers are grown on organic/regenerative principles, without any chemicals and using her own compost. They are then arranged in a style that celebrates their natural beauty. All of her methods are sustainable /reusable and she avoids using single use plastics and floral foam.

Her cutting garden is situated on the Dardy, next to the Mon-Brec Canal, and looks out over the Usk River, Crickhowell and the surrounding Black Mountains.



Gardening Club Christmas Meal



Yes - it's that time of year again!

The Christmas meal will be held at the Temple Bar is Ewyas Harold on Tuesday 1st December at 6.30 pm, with a view to sitting down to eat at 7.00. We will entertained after dinner with table card magic from Grosmont's own Jonny Small!

The menu is set out below on the next page.

If you would like to come, please let us know as soon as possible and let us have your menu choices. Places are in demand already - so don't delay.

Please notify Barbara with your menu choices at:

barbararees549@btinternet.com

And make payment by bank transfer to:

Grosmont & District Gardening Club
30-99-50
34619268

Or you can bring cash to the next meeting on 3rd November.



Christmas at The Temple

Starters

Roasted butternut squash, chestnut & thyme soup (v) (ve) (gf op) **

Crusty mini roll, salted butter

Game terrine (gf op) ****

Plum chutney, toasted ciabatta

Potted smoked mackerel & horseradish paté (gf op) *

Dill, toasted ciabatta

Crispy fried breaded goat's cheese (v) **

Red wine poached figs, green beans, walnut frisée salad

Mains

Traditional roast turkey (gf op) **

Yorkshire pudding, pigs in blankets, chestnut, sage & onion stuffing, roasties, braised red cabbage, honey roasted parsnip & carrot, turkey gravy

Roast sirloin of beef (gf op)

Yorkshire pudding, pigs in blankets, roasties, braised red cabbage, honey roasted parsnip & carrot, gravy

Roasted beetroot wellington (ve)

Roasties, braised red cabbage, roasted parsnip & carrot, vegan gravy

Christmas roasts served with sides of pancetta sprouts (v, ve options) & cauliflower cheese

The Temple Burger (gf op)

Double 4oz Herefordshire beef patties, Emmental, smoked streaky bacon, burger sauce, focaccia bun, baby gem, beef tomato, gherkin, skin on fries, crispy onion green salad

Oven baked hake fillet (gf) * ***

Herb crust, crushed new potatoes, seafood cream sauce, greens

Desserts

Mulled wine poached pear (gf) *

Mulled wine syrup, almond crème Anglaise

Traditional Christmas pudding

Served warm, redcurrants, brandy sauce

Classic treacle tart

Served warm, custard

Sherry trifle **

Black cherry jam, sherry sponge fingers, custard, Chantilly cream, almonds, pistachio crumb

A vegan dessert is also available -please ask our team

To finish

Tea, coffee & mince pies

2 course £36

3 course £42

*may contain bones **contains nuts ***contains shellfish ****may contain shot

Please let your server know if you have any allergies or intolerances

Christmas Hampers

As everyone will know, we raffle our gorgeous Christmas hampers every year at our Christmas meal - this is a really important source of income to our club, and we rely on the generosity of our members to make the hampers a really special Christmas treat for those receiving them.

So please bring whatever items you can contribute to the AGM on 3rd November.

If you can't make the meeting then you can drop off items with any member of the Committee, just let us know.

Thank you!!



Auntie Rosemary and Uncle Basil's



Problem Corner

Your Garden Conundrums: Rosemary and Basil to the Rescue !

Rosemary and Basil between them have decades of gardening experience and we are delighted they have agreed to help our Gardening Club by looking at our readers' gardening queries



As it's the season for planting spring bulbs, I'm wondering what I can plant in a wild garden setting. I'm looking for things that will spread and naturalise to give an informal feel.



Your ideas are very much on trend at the moment, with the fashion for more relaxed and informal planting; and the type of plants that you describe are likely to be more resilient in hot summers, especially in semi shade under trees. Look for smaller varieties of bulbs, as the bigger, showy types are really bred for borders and pots.

Let's start with the daffodil family - you can't go wrong with miniature narcissus, try February Gold for early flowering, the every popular and reliable Tête à Tête, or Snow Baby for a white variety. Or, for something a little different, try Narcissus Bulbocodium - which has very pretty frilled, petticoat like flowers.

It's always nice to have snowdrops as the first heralds of spring, and the choice of varieties is considerable. Why not mix in some double snowdrops (Galanthus

Nivalis Flore Pleno) or the greater snowdrop (Galanthus Elwesii) which is taller with broader leaves, and naturalises very well. The Russian Snowdrop (puschkinia) is also very pretty, with delicate blue stripes inside the white flower heads. To continue the white theme, you could mix in some wood anemones, which will spread very vigorously when happy. There are some gorgeous double forms - such as Vestal - that are well worth trying. I always think that white muscari (grape hyacinths) are particularly pretty, and so easy to grow. You could also consider Star of Bethlehem (ornithogalum), which has attractive little star shaped flowers, as the name suggests.

If you have the space, nothing beats the English bluebell (not the Spanish variety or it will totally take over) - the heady scent on an April morning is so evocative. And you could try camassias if there is room for something tall.

Finally, don't assume that the only tulips are the short lived garden varieties. Many of the species tulips will naturalise in the right spot. Try Tulipa Sprengeri, Turkestanica or the Lady Tulip - Tulipa Clusiana.



When is the best time of Autumn to cut back / prune my apple & cherry trees? What is the minimum length of branch I should leave? They are 5 year old trees and still of quite small girth. I want to prune hard if I can to develop stronger branches.



Your apple tree is best pruned during the winter months. Begin by removing any dead, diseased or misplaced branches entirely. Does your apple only produce fruit at its tips? If so then it is probably a tip bearer and so you will only need to shorten the main branches by a quarter of the previous season's growth. The laterals can be left unpruned.

If your apple produces fruit from spurs further down the branch then you can shorten the main branches by a quarter of the previous season's growth. The laterals can be cut back to 5 buds from where they join the main branches.

Regarding your Cherry tree, you should avoid winter pruning as this leaves cherry trees prone to silver leaf disease. Established cherry trees with a decent framework should require only occasional pruning to remove damaged, badly placed or diseased wood, and to shorten strong growing laterals by half.

If you would like a master class on pruning fruit trees, Kathryn Owen, the gardener at Blackbrook Estate, will be talking to the Gardening Club on that very subject at the meeting on 2nd February.

Garden Jobs for late autumn



Bring citrus trees indoors to a cool, frost free spot



Start garlic off and cover with fleece to keep off birds



Remove unripe fruits from fig trees, but leave pea sized ones for next season



Collect seed from your favourite flowers and store in airtight containers in a cool, dry place - or sow in seed trays in an unheated greenhouse for earlier plants next year



Make leaf mould. Collect fallen leaves inside a chicken wire frame, or wet the leaves and pack into old compost bags pierced with holes.



Improve soil by mulching with a thick layer of compost or manure



Sow broad beans 5 cm deep and 20 cm apart. Choose a hardy variety such as Aquadulce Claudia



Cut asparagus stems down to the ground and weed out female plants with berries



Clean out and repair nesting boxes, and install new ones ready for next season



Take hardwood cuttings, insert into a trench or deep pot and leave until rooted.

Committee Members



Sarah Bell

Paula Crawford

Chrissy Collingwood

Barbara Rees

Gilli Urch

Christine Williams

Charlotte Wilson

Alison Ward (Chair)

If you have any questions or ideas, if for any reason you no longer want to receive our monthly newsletter, or if there's anything you'd like included in future editions, then please email Alison Ward at:

alison.marlborough@btinternet.com

or phone Alison on 07542 800815