

GARDENERS REPORT



HIMALAYAN GARDEN
& SCULPTURE PARK

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APRIL EDITION 2021 – ISSUE No. 2

GARDEN OPEN April 2nd – October 31st 2021

The **May Bank Holiday Weekend** provides the perfect opportunity to venture outdoors. With the gardens bursting into their May blooms, and over 45 acres to explore we have plenty of space and fresh air for all to enjoy.

During your visit indulge in one, or all of our food and drink offerings. Our new Garden Grill provides a delicious BBQ options, while the Tearoom has an exciting new hot and cold menu including vegan, vegetarian, and gluten free choices. The popular Horsebox provides refreshments, freshly prepared sandwiches, snacks, sweet treats, and Brymor Ice Cream. Whatever your preference, appetite small or large we have something to tempt you in a takeaway meets outdoor dining style.



BLOOMING MARVELLOUS - STEPHEN J. WARD – HEAD GARDENER

Back in the 90's Mr. Peter Roberts had a dream of turning the garden into a Rhododendron and Magnolia heaven. Since then much work has been undertaken to make this a reality. April has shown signs of what is to come in May - the best month to see these beautiful plants. A quote from our resident Rhododendron expert (Jago Wallace) is "that when they are all in bloom here, the experience is almost biblical". Please read on for more details about rhododendrons and magnolias and other interesting facts about the Himalayan Garden & Sculpture Park this month.



RHODODENDRONS



There comes a time when everything is just about perfect, and that time for us is in May when the sun shines and Rhododendrons and Magnolia are in flower. However, April has done us proud already with some early bloomers. There are over a thousand different varieties from various locations in the World and we have a vast and magnificent collection here in the garden. As for the Magnolias there are around 120 known species. Fossilized specimens have been found dating back 95 million years. That is well before the help of bees to pollinate, so beetles undertook that job for them. The best place to see the magnolias in all their glory around the Magnolia Lake – The one with the Chinese Pagoda and Magnolia sculpture in the water.

MAGNOLIAS





GARDENING TEAM



GARDENERS IN TRAINING - In an ever-increasing bid to improve standards, knowledge and the professionalism of our gardening team, each member of staff is put through our in-house training programme to perfect their skills with various horticultural tools - such as strimmer's and ride-on lawn mowers.

Over the last month Joel (Senior Gardener) has been putting Matt and Harry through their paces and instructing them on the safety and operational aspects of using such machinery. Both have taken to the task like ducks do to water and performed outstandingly – Well done guys, proud to have you on the team.

This sort of training is also something that we put any of our volunteers through who may be interested. Again, in a bid to improve standards as well as something that may help them find future employment in the industry.



IT'S A 'GARDENERS WORLD' – Joel the TV Star

In his previous employment at Brodsworth Hall, our Senior Gardener Joel made the big time by starring on Monty Don's popular BBC2 TV programme Gardeners World.

The episode that aired on 10th April this year related to the history of the maintenance of grass and lawns. Just one of the things that Joel is excellent at. Watch out for Joel on future Gardeners World programmes over the coming months as he and his work will be appearing on several episodes.

With having a star like Joel on our team now, our chances of getting Monty and his TV crew up at the Himalayan Gardens one day has greatly improved. Autographs available upon request.



Cock Pheasant

Graham Mort

He appeared in March, self-enchanted, rooting up hyacinths, staring into the greenhouse, through the kitchen window, a stray from woodlands where others roosted with that chucking sound he never uttered.

Until one day he was on the roof outside the casement where I'm writing now, head tilting blazing bronze and green, an exultation, an opulent alien, a prince in exile, exotic here in Yorkshire where hills are still striped with snow, a skin of cold on the pond each morning when I look for him.

He'll be back, bustling through the air, breakfasting in daffodils, staring through a pane of glass astonished by himself, auditing our household things: the food blender, the bread-crock, the kitchen sink's quotidian fable.

Or he'll follow my hand, pecking out words with the mechanical fixity of birds. A cock pheasant, a hapless migrant, hyper-real, dimorphic mateless, miraculously other and here.

I catch a glimpse of myself in his wide-eyed searching for another self, my iterations hatched from the pupil of his yellow eye: repeating, shrinking, and – just now – cold and still as ice and infinitely clear.

Graham Mort is emeritus professor of Creative Writing and Transcultural Literature at Lancaster University

The Pheasant – A painting in acrylic by Head Gardener Stephen, which was sold and exhibited in Hull & Beverley. Notice the glimpse in the bird's eye that Graham mentions in his poem.



Other than his main duties, Dave is a dab hand with the carpentry. Some of the seats and tables around the Garden have been crafted by himself. You will know which one of them is his handywork as he always puts a little pheasant moniker in a corner – see if you can find one on your next visit.



As you will see, at this time of year we have quite a few of these colourful game birds in and around the garden. Various varieties can be found all over the world. The word Pheasant first appeared in the English language around 1299 and has been with us ever since. However, it is believed that the Romans were responsible for their introduction to Britain - Nice one Caesar.



GROUNDS MAINTENANCE REPORT

Joel Dibb – Senior Gardener
Call Sign – Eagle Eye



MAKING THE FIRST CUT COUNT!!

The first cut on your lawn is the most important of the season. It is important to remember to only take off as little as possible. I call this 'topping' the grass.

Your lawnmower blades need to be extremely sharp to ensure a nice clean cut preventing damage or disease to the blades of the grass you are cutting.

If you have not had your lawnmower serviced and sharpened, it's not too late. If you are unsure of how to sharpen and set up your blades, then it is a good idea to take it to a reputable service engineer.

When is your lawn ready for its first cut:

- The ground needs to be firm and signs of new growth appearing.
- Choose a dry day but not too hot. You don't want to scorch your lawn.
- Don't mow if your lawn is still waterlogged or if there is a chance of a hard frost the next day.

Before you finish:

- Remember to clean your mower after use.
- Spray the blades with a protective wax to keep them rust free and sharp for the next time.

Check your lawn for moss, if moss is something that your lawn suffers from don't worry, this can be sorted with the right maintenance.

1. Mid-Late March apply spring fertiliser and moss killer during good weather.
2. Early April lightly rake out the dead moss.
3. Lightly overseed patchy areas and water in well.

"If you ever see me slumped over a lawnmower crying... Don't worry, I'm just going through a rough patch."



PLANT SALES & PROPAGATION

Jago Wallace – Gardener Supervisor
Call Sign – Mow Hawk

PLANT SALES - During April, the volunteer gardeners and myself have been busy potting up a nice selection of plants for sale that will be ready and available in May.



Rh. Peter Bee



Rh. Crane



Rh. Ginny Gee



As mentioned in last month's newsletter, due to the various affects and circumstances relating to Covid, we will be offering a modest but interesting selection of plants for sale this year. A few of them (Rh. Peter Bee, Rh. Ginny Gee and Rh. Crane) are already starting to bloom, with the rest showing healthy sings of flowering for next month.

During the month of May, in conjunction with the floral displays in the Garden, a selection of rhododendrons, azaleas will be on sale from the Buddha Garden.

If you are interested in buying them, then simply choose your plant and pay for it at the ticket office. At busy times though, you will be able to pay in the Buddha Garden and either a member of staff, or myself, will be on hand to assist you.



Volunteer Himalayan Garden Rangers

If you are interested in volunteering - no experience is required as full training will be given by our existing highly trained and experienced staff. If you have the ability, the right aptitude, and a willingness to help with various gardening tasks then we want you on the team.

Please contact the Head Gardener – Stephen Ward by email
infohimalayangarden@gmail.com



PINNACLE - of their volunteering careers. Over April the volunteers have been treated to a month of glorious sunshine. Lovely conditions for the type of work that was undertaken. The main task was to clear self setting vegetation and overgrown bamboo from around the Pinnacle water feature and pond. The difference is absolutely amazing, and has really highlighted the sculpture to its best potential. On top of that an array of woodland flowers were planted along the Larch Tree Walk near Nessi Lake, some of the lady volunteers (Bridget, Denise and Jane) helped Jago prepare seed plants for summer sales and flower bed displays, and more clearance work in the Fern Dell area was completed. All-in-all its been a cracking month and the volunteers have again left their mark on the Garden with their outstanding efforts.



APRIL - Plant of the Month

Rhododendron Taurus



You can see our Rhododendron Taurus plants in various locations around the Garden. However, the most notable area is across from the front of the Tearoom.

The flowers of this plant are large and a vibrant red - not unlike the frills on a flamenco dancers dress.

It is believed that the plant is named after the star sign of the month in which it flowers – late April to Late May.

Taurus will reach a height of 1.5m and spread 1.75m after 10-20 years. So, from the condition of our plants it is plain to see that they are in full maturity. And that's no bull.



Artwork of the Month



Anthony Sturgiss – Born in Harrogate and graduated from the University of Bradford with an Honours degree in Art & Design. Anthony has created many fascinating pieces of contemporary artwork using various mediums. At the Garden we have several pieces of his work that you will be able to see. In honour of his work, myself and the gardening team have created the Meconopsis Valley to prominently display his Meconopsis Grandis and Field Poppy sculptures. The sculptures have been elevated upon small cairns, and surrounding them and along the valley numerous blue, red, white, and yellow meconopsis plants have been placed to create a Himalayan wonder worthy of Anthony's work.



MECONOPSIS GRANDIS by Anthony Sturgiss



Moths & Butterflies



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Butterfly Conservation is a charity registered
in England and Wales (254937) and in Scotland (SC039268)

Stephen Ward – Head Gardener

Although we have had much sunshine over April, we have also had a few frosts. This does not seem to have deterred our fluttery friends in the Garden. One of the first to brave the temperatures was the Orange Tip. They tend to favour the areas from the Norse Hutt to Magnolia Lake. The environment there is perfect for them as it is known that the males tend to congregate at the edges of a forest and females among meadow. They will lay their eggs on plants in full sun avoiding those in shaded areas, so the location mentioned is simply perfect for them. Lady's Smock (A), Red Campion (B) and Cow Parsley (C) are just a few of the wild plants here that they take advantage of.

Peacocks (1), Small Tortoiseshell (2), Speckled Wood (3) and Brimstone (4) butterflies have also been spotted so far.

Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*

Family: Pieridae, subgroup Pierinae (The Whites)



A



B



C



1



2



3



4



Fairy Doors



The fairies arrived at the Himalayan Garden last year and we are thrilled that they have decided to remain with us to take up permanent residence in various trees.

Last year they made their own temporary doors, which were very nice. But this year they have given their homes a real spruce up by employing Joblings in West Tanfield to create some truly beautiful hand carved doors and windows. The fairies have also decorated their windows with garlands of flowers in celebration of the joys of spring and summer seasons to come.

We hope that all our members and visitors, especially the younger ones, enjoy discovering these lovely portals to an imaginary World on your next visit. To help you find them, each of the doors are indicated on our site maps - located around the Garden. Fairies are naturally shy little things, so each woodland door is quite well hidden. I hope that you get some truly fun experiences and memorable moments in your search for them.

Sophie Roberts





The Tearoom

Gardeners Platter & Butterfly Buns Tops the Bill

Order yours fast otherwise the gardeners will have eaten them all

Each month I will keep you updated with the amazing culinary & imaginative talents of duo Michael (Top Chef) and Jules (Tearoom Manager)



Award winning Gardeners Platter



Lavender Flap Jack & Butterfly Buns



This month Michael & Jules have been tempting gardeners and visitors alike with their legendary and award-winning Gardeners Platter. Just the job after a hefty walk around the Garden. Also, on the menu, and in celebration of our efforts to turn the Garden into a butterfly conservation site, they have also created a delicious Lavender Flapjack and tasty Butterfly Buns (with edible butterfly). Why not give them a try on your next visit? Take it from me, you will not be disappointed.

Steps & Paths

Safety Advice for Our Visitors



The terrain at the Himalayan garden is...well, Himalayan. That is, it is not flat.

The grounds staff have completed some back breaking work over the last year in establishing and improving the footpaths and steps.

So, our advice for your wellbeing and safety and to enhance your visitor experience of the site is:

- 1- Be prepared and wear the appropriate sturdy footwear and clothing according to the weather conditions.
- 2- Even though they are well constructed, be careful on the hill paths and steps.
- 3- Some of the hills are not for the faint hearted. If you are not very fit, you may struggle. So, give yourself plenty of time to get around.
- 4- Fuel up with some grub and a drink beforehand, so you have the energy to enjoy your adventure. Halfway Hutt Horsebox and Tearoom available.



"I'm sure one day Stephen will buy me a decent shovel to do this job".

PLANT REPORT

Matt Shepherd – Himalayan Gardener
Call Sign – Hawk Eye



English Bluebell

Hyacinthoides non-scripta

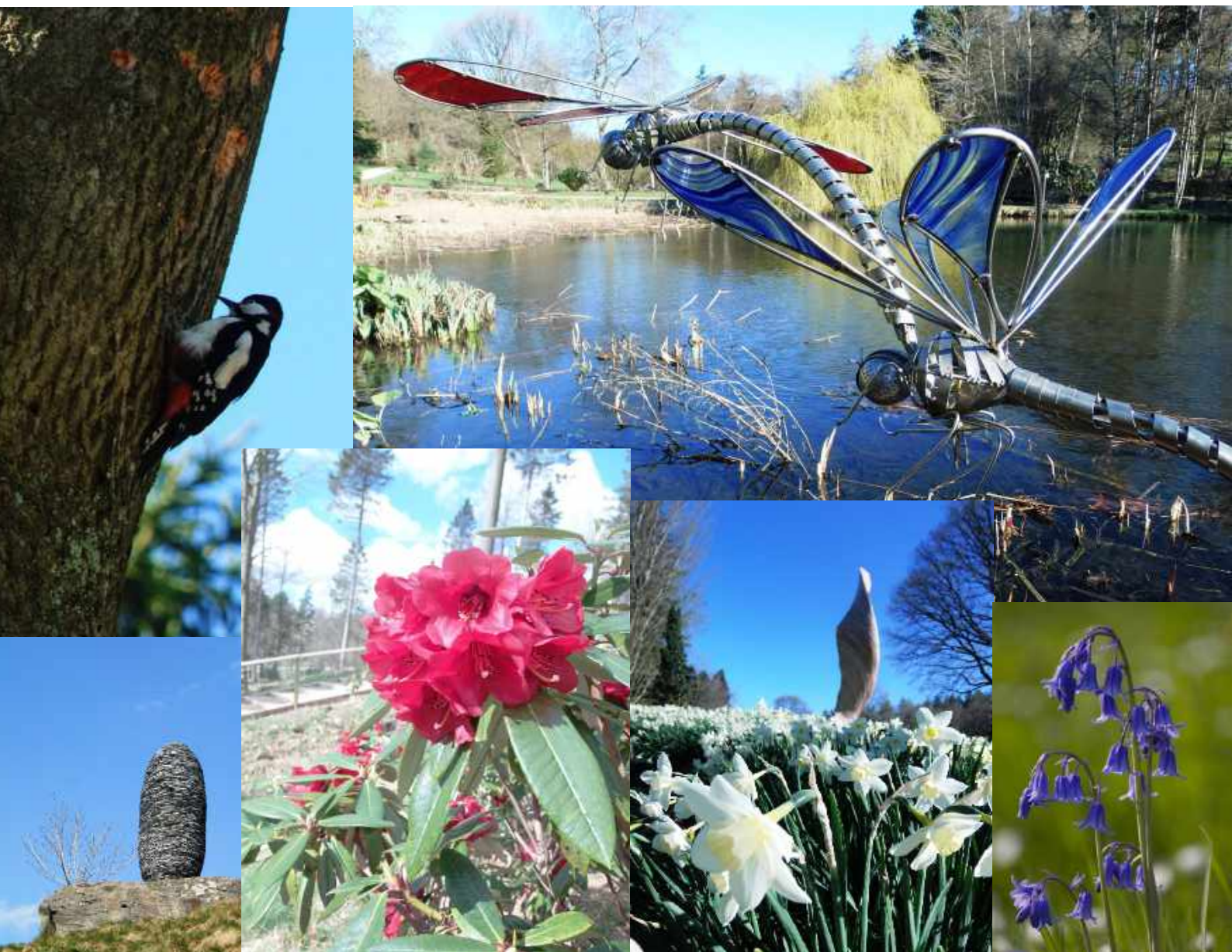
Our Bluebells are just starting to appear and can mainly be seen spread across a vast area of the far woods in the Garden, up and near to the new Meconopsis Valley.

They are bulbous perennials which flower in spring, carpeting woodland landscapes with an unforgettable sea of blue flowers.

Bluebells have many common names including; bell bottle, bluebottle, calver keys, common English bluebell, crake feet, crow bells, crow leek, cuckoo flower, dog leek, fairy flower, harebell, single gussies, spreading bluebell, squill and wood bells. We just call them AMAZING!

Interesting Fact – Over half the world's population of Bluebells grow in the UK. Maybe that is where we get the BLUE from in RED, WHITE & BLUE.

BLUEBELLS – Available to see in the Himalayan Garden over the month of May.



I do hope that you have enjoyed the April edition of the Himalayan Garden and Sculpture Parks Gardeners Report.

If you decide to visit us in the month of May, then look forward to a variety of special events, such as the magnificent Rhododendron, Azalea, Magnolia and Bluebell displays. There will be fairies and butterflies as well as the massive dragonflies upon the lakes. Woodpeckers are a pecking and baby ducklings are everywhere. Michael & Jules in the Tearoom will have the pot on and a butterfly bun ready for your visit, I am sure. All we need now is for it to rain in the evenings and sunshine all day with perfect blue skies.

I look forward to providing you with further accounts from the Garden over the summer months and hope to see you here on your next visit.

Until then my best wishes to you all.

Stephen J. Ward

Head Gardener

(Contact – infohimalayangarden@gmail.com)