



# HOVE GARDENING CLUB

Issue 62

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2025



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Fifty Club members enjoyed mulled wine, soft drinks, mince pies and cheese straws prior to the start of the AGM, after which they were warmly welcomed by Wendy McCarthy and the rest of the Committee. Approval of the 2024 Minutes was followed by presentation and adoption of Accounts, election of the 2026 Committee, Accounts Examiner, President and Vice President. All of the current Committee were re-elected as well as one new Committee member, Jean Hewland. David King was re-elected as Accounts Examiner. Chris Thornton-Clough agreed to continue as Club President and Marion King was newly elected Vice President, replacing Ken Norman. Wendy thanked Ken for his service and support of the Club over many years. Trophies, monetary prizes and Certificates of Merit were awarded to points winners in the monthly competitions and the overall points champion Jean Hewland is pictured holding her well-earned trophies. Other trophies were won by John Lyall, Graham Dwyer and Leila Philips.

A full list of award winners and more AGM photos can be found at <https://hovegardeningclub.co.uk>

## BOOK NOW FOR THE JANUARY PARTY

Monday 19 January 7:45pm at St Leonard's Hall

This year we are having a Fish and Chip supper supplied by Bankers. Halloumi Burger (vegetarian option) will also be available, so please advise us at time of booking if you would prefer this. There will be the usual fiendish quizzes as well as photographic and decorated potato competitions with prizes!

The cost is £20 and includes dessert, wine and soft drinks.

Limited to 60 Members (sorry no guests) so please book early to avoid disappointment. Payment should be made by bank transfer.

Bank details: Sort code 77-29-18

Account no: 40812360

Ref: your name(s) + party

Don't forget to bring a plate, bowl and cutlery  
Book seats by email to [hgcenquiries@gmail.com](mailto:hgcenquiries@gmail.com)

## JANUARY PARTY PHOTO COMPETITION



- A) Beach Plants
- B) Carpet of Flowers

One entry per subject. Maximum size A5.  
Please write your name on the back.

## MARILYN'S QUIZ

- 1) In which modern day country was St Nicholas born?
  - 2) From what country did Poinsettias originate?
  - 3) What fruit is used to make a Christingle?
- Answers on Page 4

## BEST WISHES FOR A PEACEFUL AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR

Season's Greetings from President Chris Thornton-Clough,  
Vice President Marion King and all the Committee  
We look forward to seeing you all in 2026

Newsletter Editor:  
Marilyn High

Sub-editor:  
Pat Winter

Fictitious garden expert Arthur Fallowfield, played by Kenneth Williams on the radio series "Beyond Our Ken" first coined the phrase "The answer lies in the soil". Dr Steve Millam, our September speaker wholeheartedly had the same opinion in his talk "New Thinking for Growing Fruit and Vegetables". As gardeners we are constantly striving to improve the quality of soil in our gardens and allotments in order to increase productivity and health of crops, plants and trees. Soil that is subject to treatment with pesticides and herbicides lacks sufficient nutrients and living organisms to help create fertility. Steve explained that chemical fertilisers feed the plant, whereas organic matter feeds the soil and encourages biodiversity. His mantra "Keep Mulching!" describes the regular application of a generous layer of organic matter such as leaf mould, well-rotted horse manure and garden compost to the surface of soil, ideally between late February and April. Heavy clay similar to Editor Marilyn's will also benefit from mulching in late October or November in order to break up the clay. The well-rotted manure we use is teeming with the red wriggler worms (*Eisenia fetida*), nature's most efficient composters that have transformed our virgin field from totally undiggable into a healthy, friable soil structure.



Steve suggested rethinking the types of crops we grow to allow for climate change. His ideas include sweet potatoes, cucamelons, green tea, quinoa, edamame beans, chickpeas, Chilean guavas and oca (New Zealand yams). He suggested the best crops having low impact on gardeners' time are garlic, kale, French beans and courgettes.

*Left to right: Editor mulching, red wriggler worms*



*Edamame beans*



*Oca*



*Chilean guava*



*Cucamelon*

Some of Steve's fascinating facts:

- Up to the end of the Middle Ages (1490) the most popular green vegetable grown in Europe was kale
- Nettles attract butterflies, are edible and make excellent fertiliser
- In the USA, cranberry fields are flooded when the fruit is ripe. Cranberries float to the surface and can be easily harvested (pictured right).
- Broad bean pods are tasty when fried



## JANUARY PARTY NEW COMPETITION: "SPUD FACE"

This is a brand new Party competition, replacing the Table Decoration category in previous years. Who doesn't have a potato in their store cupboard? Now's your chance to use your imagination to decorate one potato (of any size) using any materials, natural or man-made.

Prizes will be awarded to the two tatties receiving most votes from partygoers. Have fun!





In 1983 Charlie Burrell took over the 3,500 acre Knepp Estate in Dial Post from his grandparents.



*Purple Emperor butterfly*  
283 were seen at Knepp  
in one day.  
They swarm around trees

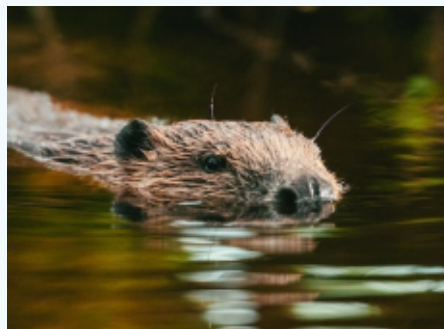
Knepp Home Farm's soil is heavy clay, described by our October Speaker Matt Phelps as being like concrete in summer and soup in winter, making arable farming challenging to the point of non-profitability. For seventeen years Charlie tried to keep his grandparents' farm operational but eventually in 2000 a decision was made to sell the dairy herds and farm machinery. Arable land was put out to contract in order to clear the Estate's mountainous debts and Charlie began to consider Knepp's future. Fortunately Knepp received Countryside Stewardship funding to restore the Repton park in the middle of the Estate. These 350 acres had been used to grow wheat since the Second World War when Canadian troops were billeted at Knepp. Charlie had read a handbook of rewilding, *Grazing Ecology and Forest History* by Frans Vera that sparked the vision for rewilding Knepp in Charlie's mind. He submitted a Letter of Intent to Natural England, setting out his plans for *A Biodiverse Wilderness in the Low Weald of Sussex*. After several years of persistence (partly due to opposition from neighbouring landowners) in 2010 Charlie received the Higher Level Stewardship funding that enabled his plans to become a reality.

Matt Phelps told the story of Knepp from its origins as a working farm to the present rewilding, describing all the wildlife that now reside there, several of which have been saved from the brink of extinction in the UK. Forming part of Knepp Castle grounds, the Walled Garden has been rewilded and includes some plants that we gardeners might regard as weeds: Hairy Bittercress, Sowthistle and Rosebay Willowherb. You can book a tour of the Walled Garden online, at a cost of £25 for an unguided tour (a map is provided) and you can use a Gardeners' World 2-for-1 voucher (only once per voucher per year) that would make your visit more affordable. Guided tours are also available to book at [www.knepp.co.uk](http://www.knepp.co.uk) where you can find more information about the project.

Left: White storks have not bred in UK for 600 years but are now breeding at Knepp. 45 chicks were born this year



*Nightingale*  
62 singing males spotted this year



*Beaver*  
Introduced to Knepp in 2020



*Turtle dove*  
15-20 territories established



Above: *White Churchill butterfly*  
Extinct in the UK for 100 years.  
Charlie hopes to reintroduce them to Knepp.

Right: Knepp Castle walled garden has been rewilded to a design by Tom Stuart-Smith and Jekka McVicar







Marion receiving her award for Home Baking



Left to right:  
Sheila with her award for Vegetables

Frances and Chris with awards for  
Floral Exhibits

Wendy calling the AGM to order



### CLUB MEETINGS FOR WINTER 2026

19 January  
**January Party**

16 February  
Birmingham to Brighton  
**Claire Potter**

### QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) Turkey
- 2) Mexico
- 3) An orange (pictured)



*The Orange represents the world, the red ribbon Jesus' blood, the sweets God's gifts in creation and the candle is Christ's light over the world.*

### HOVE GARDENING CLUB

PRESIDENT: Chris Thornton-Clough  
VICE PRESIDENT: Marion King

#### COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRS: Stephanie Kenton, Wendy McCarthy  
SECRETARY: Caroline Blaker  
DEPUTY SECRETARY: Britt-Marie Karlsson  
TREASURER: Jacky Holt  
DEPUTY TREASURER: Stephanie Kenton  
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Jenny Taylor  
OUTINGS: Wendy McCarthy, Sandra Payne, Jean Hewland  
SPEAKER COORDINATORS:  
Maria Gardiner, Britt-Marie Karlsson, Jean Hewland  
SWAP & BUY TABLE: Maria Gardiner, Lucy Watkins  
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Marilyn High  
REFRESHMENTS: Sandra Payne, Rita George  
RAFFLE: Leila Philips  
COMPETITIONS: Marilyn High, Pam Cork  
WELFARE: Sandra Payne  
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP ORGANISERS:  
Jacky Holt, Jenny Taylor, Sandra Payne

WEBSITE EDITOR: Graham Dwyer  
WEBSITE: <https://hovegardeningclub.co.uk>