



Happy New Year to all members!

COMING UP

WINTER MEETING AT CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN – SATURDAY 13 JANUARY

Our guest of honour this winter is the botanist Andy Byfield, who's loved wild plants since his teens. He will be giving insights on the bulbs of Turkey, where he has worked over many years. There are few places left for the lunch but plenty of room for the meetings and talks. See the EVENTS page on the website. Outline:

- Admission from 10am and opportunity for a brief look at part of the garden
- Welcome teas and coffees from 10.30am
- Management committee brief reports and open discussion
- Illustrated comments on MPG's November visit to the southern Peloponnese by Becky Cross
- Turkish Delights – guest speaker Andy Byfield will take a look at bulbs during the Ottoman period, including a whistle-stop tour of Turkey's main wild bulb landscapes
- Lunch
- Turkish Delights – a second, shorter lecture focusing on the wild bulb propagation project run by Fauna and Flora International and WWF-Turkey
- Questions
- Finally, tea will be available in the restaurant. Expected end time 3pm.

When members first arrive, there will be a Management Committee in progress. As in previous years, we would like some members who have attended at least once before to be in the reception area of the Chelsea Physic Garden to hand out name badges and show people where to go. If you would be willing to arrive at 9.45am in order to show members where to go, etc, please let me know (hma@clara.net).

TENERIFE – GUIDED BY ORON PERI – SUNDAY 25 FEBRUARY TO SUNDAY 4 MARCH – FULLY BOOKED

The one-week trip to Tenerife is fully booked. It is possible that one or two more places may become available, especially for members wishing to share a room. See the website EVENTS page.

HIGHGROVE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE – THURSDAY 15 MARCH

We have booked a Spring Walk on Thursday 15 March at Highgrove Gardens for an uplifting celebration of spring. There is an opportunity to have lunch in the Highgrove Orchard Restaurant followed by a 75-minute tour of various parts of the garden. There will be time to meet the Head Gardener before the tour starts. More details including how to book can be found on the website's EVENTS page.

FOR HELLENOPHILES... A SPRING REUNION

There will be an exhibition at the British Museum from March to the end of June: *Ghika, Craxton, Leigh Fermor – Charmed Lives in Greece*. Denise Pawlett is planning an informal lunch near the museum in London so that members can meet before or after going to the exhibition. If a date can be found that suits members who were on the MPG visit to the Peloponnese in November (which included a visit to the garden of Patrick Leigh-Fermor near Kardamyli) this will be an opportunity for a reunion and to discuss future MPG visits to the Peloponnese with other members. The exhibition focusses on the Greek painter



Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika; the writer, soldier and traveller Patrick Leigh-Fermor; the painter John Craxton; and the areas of Greece where they lived and worked.

GARDENS OF SPAIN – BASED IN ELCHE AND DENIA – SUNDAY 15 TO SUNDAY 22 APRIL

This tour includes private Spanish-owned gardens; the 50,000 square metre Albarda Garden which promotes the use of indigenous plants; and a garden created by an inspiring plant-loving British couple. Participants will be based in Elche, whose grove of date palms is a World Heritage Site, and the seaside port of Denia. See EVENTS page of the website. A few places are still available.

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY SUMMER TOUR – SUNDAY 24 TO THURSDAY 28 JUNE

In this remote area of south-west Scotland, the mild climate and beautiful scenery provide for remarkable gardens and plant collections. The tour will take in nine gardens, including Logan Botanic and the Garden of Cosmic Speculation. A few places are left. See <http://www.medpag.org/dumfries--galloway-tour.html>

GARDENS OF CENTRAL ITALY – OCTOBER

Information about this event will be in the March newsletter.

DRAKENSBERG – FEBRUARY 2019

A very special – if not Mediterranean – 10-day tour of the Drakensberg and Lesotho is planned for 2019, starting on Thursday 7 February. The cost of the tour, excluding flights to get to the starting point, is R29,500 (about £1,700), based on double occupancy and a group of 12 to 14 people. Contact John Fielding for more information. john@jfimages.co.uk

RECENT EVENTS

AUTUMN BULBS IN THE SOUTHERN PELOPONNESE

The illustrated report of this trip has been slightly delayed for technical reasons. It will be up on the website within 10 days. Our group of 26 participants were looked after by our botanical guide John Fielding. Melvyn Jope had recommended some interesting places to stop and, during our three days in the Mani region, the group benefitted from the knowledge of local members: Katerina Georgi who showed us her stunningly positioned and beautifully designed garden and the very old church of Aghia Sofia in her village, and Ben and Julia Martin who made possible visits to a folklore museum and an olive-oil press which was exciting to visit as this was the height of the olive harvest so the place was a hive of activity. Four other MPG members who live in the area joined us for a day while we were staying in Kardamyli. Plants in flower included Crocus, Galanthus, Cyclamen, Narcissus, Colchicum, Sternbergia and Anemone.

OTHER NEWS

KEW LECTURE – MONDAY 12 FEBRUARY

Garden designer Olivier Filippi will give a fund-raising lecture entitled “Dry is beautiful” on Monday 12 February in the Lady Lisa Sainsbury Lecture Theatre, Jodrell Laboratory, at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Entry is via the Jodrell Gate on Kew Road. Attendees must arrive by 17.45 and the programme will start at 18.00. Tickets will be sold on the evening. Olivier Filippi specialises in plants of the Mediterranean and runs a nursery near Mèze, between Montpellier and Béziers in the Languedoc region of the south of France.

PLANT FAIR IN THE PORTUGUESE ALGARVE – SATURDAY 3 MARCH

This event will be at Quinta da Figuerinha, Silves. Email mgapfairs@gmail.com for more information.



SOUTH OF FRANCE: DRAWING PLANTS – WEDNESDAY 4 and THURSDAY 5 APRIL

Katharine Fedden will give a two-day drawing class at her home in Fressac, Gard, 40km from Nimes. Katharine will help members look carefully at a plant and capture the essential elements. Class size: maximum 12. Overnight accommodation B&B can be arranged. Contact katarine.fedden@wanadoo.fr

ITALY: VILLA GARDENS OF THE VENETO – MAY

A four-day tour of the Veneto including the Brenta riviera, Padua, with the oldest botanical garden in Italy, and Verona with other important villas. For information contact angela.durnford@gmail.com

LOOKING 18 MONTHS AHEAD

The management committee is provisionally planning for our 2019 summer garden tour and AGM to be held in Dorset.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual subscriptions (£10) are now due for 2018. Many thanks to members who have already paid and to those who have set up standing orders. A standing order mandate can be downloaded from the website's CONTACT page. You can also request an invoice and pay by PayPal. To check your membership status or ask for a PayPal invoice please email – hma@clara.net.

Best wishes to all members

Heather