

SHROPSHIRE ORGANIC GARDENERS



Spring 2025, Newsletter 51



2025 Potato Day in full swing!

For gardeners, allotment holders, window box owners, who wish to grow without chemicals and meet with others.

SHROPSHIRE ORGANIC GARDENERS

We are a group of growers of fruit, vegetables and flowers with gardens, allotments or smallholdings in various places in Shropshire.

Winter meetings on the first Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.
Summer meetings from May to October are usually at weekends, and consist of visits to members' gardens, outings, practical workshops, demonstrations etc.

See the programme on the back pages.

We are regularly involved in putting on displays at green days/climate events/local and sustainable food events.

Subscription rates: £12 per person per year
Visitors: £4

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MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIRWOMAN

Spring 2025



Hello everyone, and welcome to our Spring 2025 newsletter. It feels like a long winter but having just now finalised our upcoming Spring/Summer Visits Programme, I feel the promise of summer in the air. Head to the back pages for the full detail. We've just August to confirm the date for, but the venue is agreed.

But first a quick look back on the winter programme which started in November with the celebratory 50th Edition of our Newsletter and cake for Marian. I had some really lovely feedback from members and a few non-members who received a copy of our first ever colour edition newsletter. It was a great read and Mary Rickard's artwork set it off nicely. This was followed by a hugely entertaining and informative practical presentation from Alison Wakeman, award-winning Shropshire beekeeper. See the write up further in, but again good feedback from those at the meeting so we'll book Alison back in for the next stage of her bee talk in 2026.

The December Bring and Share and Big Seed and Garden Paraphernalia Swap could have been a casual affair without the previous year's Logo competition, but Louise Lomax gamely offered to devise a nice knotty quiz for us, and the 'claws' were out! Soggies are a very competitive bunch but a lot of friendly banter took place.

January's annual Zoom Meeting, 'A Seedy History and Seed Saving' talk, was presented by our own Sue Stickland. Sue's knowledge is amazing and it was I think shocking to many members to hear just how few seed producers there are worldwide. All the more reason for us to support those in the UK producing organic seed. Check out the new page on our website that Angela has developed, giving links to the good seed companies that we should try and support, that is if we aren't saving our own. The talk generated some excellent questions for Sue and attendance was in the high 30s which is great for a zoom meeting.

February and of course Potato Day; and what a day it was again. I know Ian and Peter have written pieces on it so do enjoy reading them. From my point of view I wondered how we could top the 20th

Anniversary celebration last year, but we did, in a slightly different way.

First, David England took over running the car park for us and with all the usual chaps, plus some more volunteers, put in place a strict one-way system and herringbone parking. It worked extremely well and we had some fantastic compliments from our visitors. We still had a problem of too many cars for the car park, and a lot of cars queuing on the main road which is a bit of an issue, but we'll look in to that in the coming months.

We had new stalls along with old favourites, including Sue and David with the Wales Seed Hub stand and the Shropshire Biochar project. We had our table of second-hand gardening books and magazines and, unbelievably, beat last year's £72 donations with £79.10 this year. In fact, all the stands selling items did very well this year.

We also had a record 27 new members join SOGs on the day, bringing our membership up to an all-time high of 151.

Finally, at the March Meeting, Heather Ireland, our Treasurer, gave us the results of Potato Day. A total Revenue of £4058.41 - £1855.56 expenses gave us an amazing profit of £2202.85, our best year ever. In fact, that has just gone up to £2234.65 with some extra potato sales money in from Maggie and Peter.

I'd like to thank every member who again volunteered in getting Potato Day on the road. It simply wouldn't happen without you and I hope you all enjoyed yourselves.

February's meeting saw the return of Sam and Kate Davies from Shepherd's Barn to give a final talk for us on 'Cutting down on the work and enjoying your garden' (See Maralyn's write-up and the Top Tips Column). We'll be making a final return visit to their smallholding in July, so if you missed the first visit, make sure you get on this one.

At the end of February, we also had our third delivery of bulk peat-free compost, this time changing to RocketGro, partly for ease of delivery. Rocket Gro is a product made in Somerset and has good reviews. My thanks to Angela Cattermole who took charge of the orders and had the delivery made to her house this time. It all went very smoothly and so far I'm very happy with the quality of the seed compost.

The March meeting talk was given by Dr Cath Price from Shropshire Wildlife Trust about 'Foraging – the weeds in your garden'. Theresa Nolan's write up is a great read and Cath herself was excellent, an animated and knowledgeable speaker. And Maralyn then picks up the theme in her article, 'Can you Eat 30 Plants a Week?'

Now of course we head into our summer visits programme, via the all-important April AGM meeting.

Because of our exceptional profits this year we have been able to buy some shares in Babbinswood Organic Farm and make further donations to five food growing groups around the county: Dawley Community Garden, Dorrington Community Garden, Flourish and Nourish from Cleobury Mortimer, Shawbury Fields Garden and Pontesbury Community Garden. They are all coming to the AGM to give short presentations about their new projects. So please do come along and hear how SOGs money is being used for the all-important food growing. The formal AGM business is but a minor item of the evening.

Rachel Strivens



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Our Spring Newsletter seems to have come round very quickly and what a lot there is to include, thank you so much for all your contributions. It's particularly lovely that more items are coming into my in-box 'spontaneously' and that we've even had a volunteer to write-up a winter talk (many thanks Theresa). This was most welcome and saved Rachel and I from doing the rounds of likely candidates! Now that our exciting Spring and Summer Programme is out, do feel free to volunteer to write up one of the visits, just drop me an email: carolinewright932@gmail.com

After a bumper Top Tips Column in our Autumn Newsletter, we're continuing this as a regular feature, so don't forget to send items in as we go through this year's growing season. I think many of us will be

drawing on the Shepherd's Barn wisdom about to how to cut down on work and enjoy our gardens more. I'm particularly looking forward to our visit there in July as I haven't been before and it will be the last chance. I'm also looking forward to our AGM as I wasn't able to be there last year. Hearing from the food growing groups that SOGs are helping is quite inspirational and the icing on the cake following another fantastic (if sometimes quite exhausting) Potato Day.

Once again, I have a poem for you, celebrating Spring with all its light, hope, promise and beauty. I'm sure there must be poets and poetry-lovers among us so if you have something for our Autumn edition I'd love you to send it in. In the meantime, Happy Growing.

Caroline Wright

The Spring Begins

For winter's rain and ruin are over,
And all the season's snow and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;

And time remembered is time
forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers
begotten;
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom
The Spring begins.

- A. C. Swinburne

From Atalanta in Calydon, 1865



TALK: THE AWARENESS OF BEES AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Alison Wakeman
6th November 2024

Written up by Maggie Anderson

For our first indoor meeting of the season, we welcomed Alison Wakeman to talk to us about bees. What an excellent evening it turned out to be! Alison came to the front of the audience wearing a bee suit, a jacket complete with zipped-on head covering. She



explained that this is what she wears at this time of the year, to heft the hives to see if they have enough stored honey to feed the bees through the Winter. In the Summer she wears a complete all in one suit. She told us she has been keeping bees for 16 years, after nearly buying a house complete with bee hives. She now has 20 hives in her garden at Telford.

Alison found that children knew very little about bees and were scared of them so she volunteered to go into her local school and teach the children all about bees. She was so successful that she branched out to other schools and in 2018 she was recognised as the best educational business in Shropshire. In 2017 she met the then Duchess of Cornwall, Camilla, and was able to say 'Duchess, meet the Queen', and show her the queen of the hive!

Apparently, bees were around when dinosaurs were here and they evolved from wasps. Three quarters of the world's crops rely on bees for pollination, which is worth £650,000,000. There are 250 different kinds of bees of which 225 are solitary bees. If you see little pieces cut out of the edges of leaves this is evidence of the leaf cutter bee, which uses the pieces to make its nest. The mason bee lays its eggs in the tubes of hollow stems, sealing each egg in with food for when it

hatches. There are 24 different types of bumble bee and the honeybee's proper name is *apis mellifera*, mellifera meaning honey.

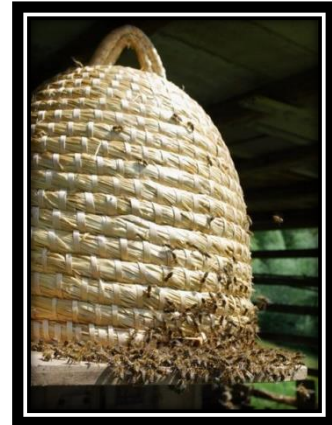
She then showed us a large model honeybee called Abeegail



Stingbottom (!) and discussed the various jobs that honeybees have to do. These include foraging for nectar, which is 80% water and has to be reduced to 20% water as honey, temperature control within the hive, caring for the brood, guarding the hive entrance, cleaning the hive and building and maintaining the

hive. Surprisingly, honeybees have five eyes: two large compound eyes on the sides of their head and three smaller simple eyes on top, which help them navigate and detect light intensity.

Alison showed us a traditional skep for honeybees, which was made of woven straw. The problem with this kind of bee keeping is that the honeycomb has to be destroyed when you need to remove the honey, yet it has taken a lot of energy from the bees to make the honeycomb. So, this is why the shift to the box hive took place. She then constructed a modern box hive for us. The



base is mesh so that when the bees clean themselves the varroa mites drop out of the hive (parasitic mites that attack and feed on honeybees). The entrance fits on top of this – wide for the Summer and the width of one bee only for the Winter. Then the brood chamber, where the queen bee lays her eggs and they hatch out.

The next bit is the queen excluder, to stop the queen bee going up to the next level, then the super where the honey is stored. On top of that is the crown board and finally the roof.

Alison uses a smoker when she opens her hives to inspect them or to extract honey, which masks the alarm pheromones that bees produce

and prompts them to load up with honey for survival. This makes them less likely to sting and so the whole process is calmer for them and safer for the beekeeper.

In June there is one queen bee, 500 drones (male bees whose sole job is to fertilize the queen bee, usually from another hive to ensure genetic diversity) and 50,000 to 60,000 female workers. Out of ten drones that leave to congregate and await the emergence of a virgin queen, only three or four return to be fed. June is swarm time. The queen leaves with half the workers to set up a new colony. A queen will live for 3 to 4 years but a worker only 6 weeks. By August the drones will have done their job of fertilising the queen and they will be dying off, denied entry to the hive and stung to death if they try. The queen lays 20,000 eggs a day, which remain for 3 days as eggs then hatch into larvae and stay like that for 8 days, fed on royal jelly, honey and pollen. Thereafter the cell the larva is in is capped with wax by worker bees and inside the larva spins a silk cocoon and then pupates after 12 days and emerges as an adult bee. Eggs and larvae are looked after by housekeeper bees, caretaker bees and nurse bees, which produce royal jelly.

There are also scout bees, which seek out sources of nectar and tell the other bees where the nectar is by doing a waggle dance, a figure-of-eight dance which indicates both the direction and the distance to the nectar. Then there are the undertaker bees which take the dead bees out of the hive.



Stressing the importance of bees to our ecosystem, Alison suggested planting lots of Spring flowering bulbs which are rich in pollen. Bee hotels are also good for solitary bees like the mason bee. We must also be on the alert for Asian hornets, which are like our native hornets but not the bright yellow, more brown and not so stripey with yellow legs. They are an invasive, non-native species that predate honeybees very efficiently, capturing workers as they go in and out of the hive, chopping them up and feeding them to their young. Sightings should be reported so that nests can be identified and destroyed.

It was a very entertaining talk and full of interesting facts and figures and Alison told us some anecdotes of her experiences in the classroom which were most amusing.

IN THE NEWS

Hoverfly Heroes

Waitrose Weekend paper, 13 March 2025

72% The percentage of crops globally that hoverflies pollinate or protect by eating sap-sucking aphids. They are the second most significant pollinators after bees, but hoverfly species are 44% less widespread than in 1980 and are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List. The RHS and The Wildlife Trusts want people to help by creating pools of shallow water, leaving dead wood out and planting open, accessible flowers.
<https://www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk/>

RHS Launches Peat-Free Advice Service for ALL GARDENERS *Extract from The Garden, RHS Magazine February 2025*

As all SOGs members are aware, going peat-free hasn't always been an easy ride, especially when it comes to seed sowing/germination. Quality of peat-free composts has improved (obviously making your own is best), but using it is still slightly different from what everyone was used to with peat-based composts.

The RHS has launched a free service to help answer questions from all gardeners who want tips for success with peat-free growing. The queries will be tackled via email by Nikki Barker, RHS Peat Free Transition Technical Co-ordinator: peatfree@rhs.org.uk

This is the first time an RHS Advice service has been made available to all gardeners and it follows RHS trials of peat-free and peat-reduced growing media showing that peat-free blends may in fact hold water better than the peat-based equivalents.

Peat-free growing media differ from peat-based mixes in physical, chemical and biological properties, including water demand and moisture retention. Home gardeners need to be aware of these differences. Always check before you water plants in peat-free compost, either by pushing your finger in to feel for moisture, or by lifting the pot to check weight. It can look dry on top but hold plenty of water lower down the pot.

CHRISTMAS BRING AND SHARE

4th December 2024

Written up by Rachel Strivens

The much-anticipated Christmas Bring and Share finished off 2024 with a flourish. The festive decorations set the tone of the evening, thanks as always to Susan and David, and along with a feast of wonderful food contributed by everyone, we got off to a relaxed evening with lots of chat and catching up with old friends. It also gave our many new members a chance to get to know other members.



Plenty of garden paraphernalia and seeds for swapping appeared then quickly disappeared as they got snapped up. It's always great to see some up-cycling taking place and of course the chance to try someone else's seeds.



The main event, aside of course from the food, was an excellent and knotty garden/Christmas quiz created by Louise Lomax for us. There was no prize but the fun of taking part, and watching just how competitive Soggies really are. Plenty of head scratching too. So thank you very much Louise for pulling it together. Perhaps

another one next year!! I've already come across one or two questions you can use.

A final thank you to all the kitchen elves who chipped in at the end to get everything washed up and put away.

ZOOM TALK: SEEDY HISTORY AND SEED SAVING

Sue Stickland, SOGs Member

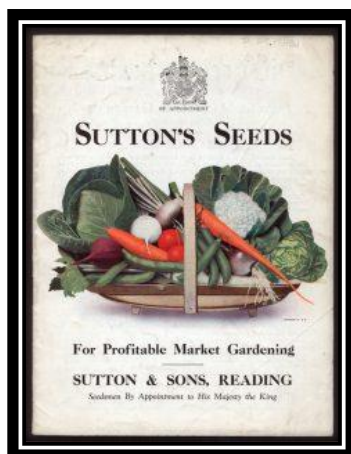
8th January 2025

Written up by Siobhan Reedy

Sue started her talk by explaining that through her work at Garden Organic and the Seed Library she had the opportunity to delve in to their records and information on seeds. She said that few people stop to think where the seeds they buy have come from and most are astounded to learn that hardly any seeds originate from the UK. The majority come from China.

The first records we have of seeds come from medieval times. Farmers and smallholders in this period were seed savers. In the 16th century Thomas Tusser produced printed information on seeds. The first seed catalogues appear in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the first market gardens were set up around London. Dutch catalogues emerged at this time too. The first catalogues were produced for wealthy clients. We start to get local strains seeds being sold in the 17th century.

It wasn't until the Victorian era that many small local seed companies emerged. They produced their own seed catalogues. Market gardeners and head gardeners bred their own plant varieties and seeds of some of these varieties are still available today.

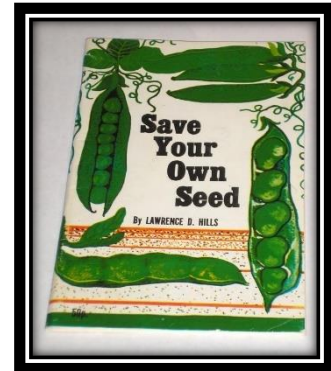


Sutton's sold 18 different varieties of turnip but the sale of seeds was unregulated, so there was no quality control. Seeds could be adulterated with the addition of things like grit and dead seeds. It wasn't until after WW1 that seed quality began to be regulated. Plant breeding became more scientific and between the wars many new plant varieties were introduced. More seeds also started to be produced abroad and imported but WW2 put an end to that.

After WW2, the development of industrial agriculture, with reliance on chemicals, mono-cultures and the growth of supermarkets, resulted in

great changes in seed production. Plant breeders concentrated on developing seeds which produced plants with long shelf lives, uniformity, etc. They created F1 hybrids but these were not what gardeners wanted. Small local seed producers went out of business or were taken over by larger companies, resulting in the loss of seed varieties.

During the 1960s and '70s the production and sale of seeds became regulated. There was the Plant Varieties & Seeds Act 1964, the creation of a national list of seed producers and the creation of plant breeders' rights. This all resulted in the loss of many traditional seed varieties and was the reason why Lawrence Hills started his seed saving project and created the Heritage Seed Bank.



Today over 60% of the world's seed production is controlled by just 4 companies. They are all chemical companies. Even well known British companies such as Thompson & Morgan don't grow their own seed, they buy all their seeds on the open, global market.

So what can we do?

Sue's suggestions are:

1. Support changes in UK seed production legislation.
2. Support seed libraries and small local seed companies. More of these are appearing, e.g. Real Seeds and Seeds of Scotland. NB Angela has created a page on our website with the details of small seed producers.
3. Save your own seed.

Brexit is making it very difficult to import seeds from Europe (what a surprise!). There are a lot more small seed companies in north America because they don't have the legislation that Europe has.

Seed Saving

Advantages of saving your own seed are that over time you will get seeds which will become more suited to your own growing conditions. They will also be better quality and will germinate more quickly.

A lot of vegetables if left to flower are very attractive to insects. Sue ran a short quiz showing us pictures of vegetables which had gone to

seed and we had to guess what the parent vegetables were. She showed us carrots, lettuce, leeks, beetroot, onions, beans and others. Some were very beautiful and ornamental.

If you are going to save your own seeds you need to plan in advance. One reason for this is to avoid cross pollination, which if this happens means the resulting plants won't come true to type. Some plants don't cross pollinate and these are called self-pollinators. Peas and most varieties of tomatoes are in this category. Plants which do cross-pollinate, also called out-breeders, will cross pollinate with varieties of the same species. Plants in this category include squash, brassicas, beetroot and runner beans.

It's also important to plan in advance because plants grown for seed may take longer to mature, i.e. longer than if just grown for their veg. And some plants need to be left to dry out before you can harvest the seed. Some plants which are left to go to seed will also get a lot larger, so will need more growing space, e.g. radishes and brassicas.

How many plants do you need to grow? You need to grow a lot of those which are cross-pollinators but only need to grow a few of self-pollinating plants.

The easiest seeds to save are: peas, french beans, tomatoes (other than 'currant' toms and F1 hybrids), baby leaf salads, e.g. rocket, cress and coriander, simple hardy annual and biennial flowers. If saving seed for the first time, start with these or other self-pollinators as they won't cross pollinate.



Sue recommends watching a film called *Seed - The Untold Story* (see link below). It follows the story of a small seed producer in India.

An ideal storage method when saving seeds is to put them in a dry container with a silica gel sachet and place it in the fridge. Storage conditions are key to the length of time seeds will survive. If stored correctly brassica seed can last/is viable for 10 years.

Film: <https://www.seedthemovie.com/>

POTATO DAY 2025: OUR 21st

By Ian Thom

As we were all too aware, 2024 was a difficult year for growing crops, and this was reflected in the number of varieties we had available at Potato Day 2025. We had 38 varieties, of which 16 were organic, and this included all the First Early and Second Early varieties available to us this year. In contrast, we had a total of 46 varieties last year, and we were missing such favourites as Pink Fir Apple, Ratte, Purple Rain, Carolus and Yukon Gold.

Our quickest sellers this year were Pentland Javelin, Swift, Orla, King Edward, Sarpo Mira and Setanta, all of which had gone by 11.00. The overall best sellers appear to have been Casablanca (FE), Charlotte (SE), and Desiree (M). Somewhat surprisingly, we actually had a few Charlotte left out of the 4 bags we bought, which doesn't usually happen. These and a few others were taken by Matthew for re-selling, and we get a refund on those. The very few others that were left went to good local causes as usual. Thanks to Carola for keeping tabs on the numbers.

Even with a lower number of varieties, we still spent more on potatoes than before (£1,208) but sold more as well (£2,700+). Cash takings increased from £1,500 last year to £1,900 this year (card payments down from £900 to £730). The kitchen and café both performed well again, making over £800, and we had an amazing £324 in new member subscriptions on the day. Taking all expenses and income into account, we made a very healthy surplus of £2,200.

Our usual array of stalls did good business as well, including a couple of newcomers – Welsh Seed Bank and the Biochar Project – and I gather that Tools for Self-Reliance had their best ever return. We hope they and the others can come back again.

Thanks to our great team of volunteers, especially on the Saturday. Everything went pretty well, even allowing for the usual bottlenecks with the parking, which David England and the parking team dealt with by a few tweaks to the arrangements. We had 500 people turn up, mostly between 9.30 and 11.30. I have already booked the date for next year (Saturday 7 February 2026). It's been suggested that we keep the venue a secret in order to reduce the crowds. I'll let you know.

FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON POTATO DAY

What is there to say that has not already been said many times over for the last 21 years? I know! 21 years! Where did the time go? Mainly it went into gardening, eating potatoes and planning next year's Potato Day...

For the last 21 years we have been trying to find a superlative to describe the SOGs Potato Day experience. We have toyed with words like, special and excellent and super and atmosphere and craic, but none of them quite had the nuance that we were looking for.

Then, when it was least expected, we were gifted the perfect expression that has been there all along hiding in plain view. Callum, who has been bringing herbs to sell at Potato Day for more years than we can remember, in casual conversation, whilst waiting for a bacon roll (slight pause for reflection about the marvellous cafe and cakes.....) uttered the magic word.

'What is that word?', I can hear you shout. The word is PERSONALITY. Callum said that he attends many events, selling his (excellent) herbs, but SOGs potato day is his favourite because it has personality! So now it is official, SOGs Potato Day has taken on a life of its own that is greater than any one of us but it is dependent on all of us. It is the sum total of all of the cheerful volunteering of SOGs members. Thank you to all of you who contributed in any way at all. If we were to list all of the names it would just be the membership list because everyone volunteers in one way or another. This is what has made SOGs so special for the last 35 years (there is a party this year), the cheerful volunteers!

Photo credit: *Shropshire Star*, Feb 9 2025



Which leads to the inevitable conclusion that it is not only Potato Day that has personality but SOGs also has a personality...There is a saying about volunteers...it escapes me for the moment...can anyone remember it...?!

Peter Anderson

Rachel asked us for some thoughts/observations on Potato Day. Mine was comparing us all to a colony of leaf cutter ants in a column, carrying their food back to the nest and then returning for more food.

Although organised, there never seemed to be anyone giving orders, it just seemed to happen, including often two ants/people co-operating to shift heavy loads. Must be some kind of pheromone being released in the hall...

Mike Richardson

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RECIPE CORNER

It's lovely to have a couple of recipes for this edition, do keep them coming – Editor.

Rhubarb Drinks

Late spring is the time when your rhubarb is romping away nicely in your garden or allotment. If you've had your fill of rhubarb crumble, cake or chutney, now's the time to make the most delicious rhubarb drinks you've ever drunk.

Rhubarb gin

1 kg rhubarb
400g sugar
800ml gin

Wash the rhubarb and then cut into 3cm lengths. Put into a large jar, such as a Kilner jar. Add the sugar and give the jar a good shake. Leave to dissolve for 24 hours. Add the gin. Allow to infuse for 4 weeks, shaking every now and then. Strain and bottle.



Notes: I normally use the cheapest gin I can find because all the flavour is in the rhubarb really. I usually compost the rhubarb after straining, let me know if you find a better use for it. If you have a good supply of rhubarb, I seriously recommend making another batch 2 weeks later. Drink neat over ice or create some wonderful cocktails!

Rhubarb cordial

300g sugar
300ml water
zest and juice of an orange and a lemon
450g rhubarb

Use a large pan for this. Heat the sugar and water gently until the sugar has dissolved. Chop the rhubarb into 3cm chunks and add to the pan. Then add the orange and lemon juice and zest. Cook for about 15 minutes until the rhubarb is soft and mushy. Cool slightly and then sieve the mixture into a large bowl. Decant into a sterilised bottle. The cordial needs to be stored in the fridge and will keep for a few days. Alternatively, freeze in ice cube trays for the future. Dilute to taste. I love it with fizzy water and ice.

Notes: Do not discard the sieved rhubarb. It is very sweet and makes a delicious pudding with ice cream.



These recipes can be found on my food blog – attemptingdeliciousness.com - which I started a few years ago for my children when they were flying the nest. I have never publicised it and yet it has received over 5000 views from all over the world. Also, it is not a money-making exercise, so there are no annoying pop-ups or ads!

Suzanne Webb-Thomas

Food blog: <https://attemptingdeliciousness.blogspot.com/>

Pear and Ginger Cake

Serves 8

You will need a 200mm (20cm) square cake tin with a loose base (mine is actually slightly larger), or a similar 250mm (25cm) round tin. Prepare the tin by lining with greaseproof paper or baking parchment then, if you aren't on a diet, buttering this generously (I don't do this but it holds the demerara sugar in place).

Ingredients

2 tbsp Demerara sugar (or a bit more)

3-4 pears peeled, halved then quartered and gently remove the core. (If pears are small use 4-5 as they shrink when cooked)

180g unsalted butter (can use salted if that's all you have)

180g soft brown sugar

90g golden syrup

90g black treacle

2 level tsp ground ginger

3 large eggs, beaten

270g ground almonds

90g plain flour

¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda (or baking powder)

I also use an extra tsp of ginger because I like it, and for Potato Day I added some chopped up stem ginger and a bit of the syrup which made it nice and chewy.

Ground almonds usually come in bags of 250g so just add an extra 20g flour as a substitute, or of course grind your own whole almonds to the correct weight. Again, for the Potato Day one, I ground whole blanched almonds because I like the nubby texture. Pre-ground almonds can be a bit smooth.

Method

1. Heat the oven to 170C/gas 3½ .
2. Sprinkle the Demerara sugar evenly over the base of the lined cake tin, then place the prepared pears core surface facing down in the tin in interleaving lines or in circles if using a round tin. Set to one side.
3. Put the butter, sugar and both the syrups in a pan together with 2 tbsp of water and bring the mixture to the boil. Boil over a

medium heat for 3 minutes then remove the pan and set it aside to cool for 10-15 minutes.

4. Mix in the ground ginger, then the beaten eggs, and stir well. Stir in the ground almonds then sift in the flour together with the bicarb of soda.
5. Mix everything together really well then immediately spoon the mixture gently over the pears without disturbing their arrangement if possible.
6. Bake for 50-70 minutes, until the cake feels firm when pressed. Turn down the heat to 160C/gas 3 if the surface or edges begin to look too dark.
7. Allow to cool in the tin then turn out on to a board or flat plate.

ENJOY! Rachel Strivens

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MISCELLANY: FULL MOON NAMES
From Jan Gibb

This isn't really useful, but I like the names given to the Full Moons...

January..... Old or Wolf Moon
February..... Snow Moon
March..... Sap Moon
April..... Pink Moon
May..... Flower Moon
June..... Strawberry Moon
July..... Thunder Moon
August..... Grain Moon
September..... Harvest Moon
October..... Hunter's Moon
November..... Frost Moon
December..... Cold Moon



TALK: CUTTING DOWN ON THE WORK
Sam & Kate Davies, Shepherd's Barn Final Update
5th February 2025

Written up By Maralyn Hepworth

Sam, backed by Kate, selling their home-grown honey backstage, answered their most asked question from visitors to Shepherd's Barn, 'How do you do it all?'. With many different growing areas, goats and chickens, they are self-sufficient in most food. Here are some of their labour-saving tips.

Primary considerations relate to our attitudes to our outside spaces. When is a weed not a weed? A weed is a 'plant in the wrong place' as it may steal nutrients or light, but in the right place can be essential for wildlife and can be edible, eg: nettles are the food source for various caterpillars and nettle soup is very nutritious.



Plants can be **high or low maintenance**. Shrubs are easier to manage than perennials. Veg bed systems take less work. The adage 'putting the garden to bed' in the Autumn is now outdated and seed heads are left for insect hibernation and food – though 'flopsters', covering other plants or paths, are removed. Tidy up in late February, early March. Hard landscaping with gravel and membrane reduces work.

In the veg garden, **have raised beds with membrane** on paths between. This is easier to weed, crop density is greater, and the soil doesn't become compacted. Also consider No Dig. Check out Charles Dowding, who has been the guru of No Dig for years.

Sam is a big fan of **mulch** to suppress weeds, keep moisture in and prevent leaking of nutrients, thus improving soil texture. It also looks good! Ramial wood chip is made from the smaller diameter branches of prunings, nutritionally the richest parts; it breaks down more quickly and is a great soil improver. Grass clippings can be used not more than 2" – though be careful if the grass has seeded. Spent hops are

great if you live near a Brewery, and wool is good on taller crops such as brassicas and sweetcorn. Drop hedge clippings onto a tarpaulin so that you don't have to rake them up or run the mower over them to collect. These can be used round trees. And last, but not least, use compost or manure to mulch.

Sam covers all vacant ground with semi-porous membrane to save weeding, and plants squashes and suchlike through it. The plastic implication was discussed. As the edges were sealed by sewing or burning, this didn't fray and was utilized well. Various green manures also hold back weeds with alfalfa (for the goats to eat!) phacelia, mustard and winter purslane (edible!). If left to flower, the bees are happy.



Mowing lawns – if this is a chore, don't have one! Do you want a lawn or a green space? Camomile is a good alternative, as is moss. Moss stays green in a drought and is bouncy to walk on. Make any grass paths the width of your mower and use edging bricks, tiles etc to save work. This then only needs to be strimmed once a year.

And finally, **make your own cider** so that you can sip it in one hand whilst hoeing with the other! We look forward to visiting Shepherd's Barn this summer.

No Dig: www.charlesdowding.co.uk

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GQT Words of Wisdom (thanks Maralyn!)

'There are no mistakes in gardening - only experiments'
(James Wong)

GCQ panel asked what they looked for in an NGS garden:

- 2 panellists said the individual's impact on the garden
- 1 said an unusual plant
- Mathew Biggs said: 'Good Cakes' (and wouldn't we all agree!).

FROM THE ARCHIVES

By Ian Thom

When I was first given the SOGs 'archives' to look after, they consisted of two or three files of papers, largely sporadic notes of meetings since 1990 and ideas for talks and visits, some of which have appeared in previous articles. Since then, the archives have expanded to include a few other things, including a full set of newsletters.

Recently, I was informed by Peter that he had found 'one or two' things that could be added to the archives. Having now had a chance to look at all the boxes and files he gave me, I thought I would share with you the contents of the official SOGs Archives. As you can see from the photograph, there's quite a lot of it.

In addition to the collection of newsletters (numbers 1-50, starting in 2000), there are the minutes of the first 'Organic Gardening Group' meeting (1990), and many, many pieces of paper relating to all events since. There are



newspaper cuttings of SOGs activities going back to the 1990s, awards from the Shropshire Horticultural Society (for Flower Show gardens), photographs of visits to gardens, material for exhibitions, details of Potato Days since 2005, some early membership lists, and 101 other things I've yet to really examine.

As I go through it all in due course, there should be plenty to write about in future, such as the show gardens or Gardeners Question Time. However, as this year is the 35th anniversary of SOGS, some of the material, especially the photographs, will be handy for the celebratory event in June which Rachel and Angela are organising.

In the meantime, I shall resume my search for a shipping container to store all this stuff.

TALK: FORAGING WEEDS
Cath Price, Shropshire Wildlife Trust
5th March 2025

Written up By Theresa Nolan

Cath Price gave an inspirational and information-packed talk about the bounty and benefits of foraging plants defined, somewhat dismissively, as weeds. She looked mostly at those found in our gardens, with some wilder weeds also included.

So why forage weeds?

- It's a great way of encouraging engagement with the outdoors - for children especially perhaps
- It fills the fallow gap when few other crops are growing
- Allowing weeds to remain keeps ground cover and retains the soil's nutrients
- Weeds offer a vast storehouse of fresh, readily available flavours and nutrients



Cath encouraged members to explore the tastes as we encounter many edible weeds – try it! (subject of course to confidence in identifying what you're eating!). You may be surprised. I was staggered by their extraordinary nutritional value – often significantly greater in minerals, vitamins and protein than their commonly cultivated counterparts. Cath's handout (available as PDF) provides some striking comparisons.

General principles:

- Experiment with preparation; because these plants contain less water than traditionally cultivated vegetables (hence the higher

nutritional value), they have textures and flavours that can take some getting used to.

- Roots often provide even greater nutritional benefit.
- BE CAREFUL - ensure you know what you're picking; plants commonly have a similar looking but inedible 'twin'. e.g. Hogweed (cow parsley) which has many culinary uses, and Giant Hogweed (all of which contains highly toxic sap).
- Don't choose insect-damaged parts; plants generate protective chemicals that produce a bitter taste.
- Use young leaves
- Leave some for the wildlife, butterflies in particular are often entirely reliant on some very specific plants.
- Undoubtedly common sense - but avoid picking in places that may carry undesirable additions, including those that may have been sprayed by chemicals, seen dog visitors (!), are close to traffic, etc.

Some surprises - Bramble stems, picked young, are tasty fried in olive oil and seasoned with salt and pepper. Dock-seeds can be toasted and ground to make a gluten-free flour (buckwheat is a relation), probably best mixed with bought or a lighter home-produced flour.

Some specimens suggested for salads: Chickweed, tastes like pea shoots. Cut don't pull, to allow plants to produce new growth, also easier to clean than uprooted whole plants.

Hairy bittercress. Curiously neither hairy nor bitter! Use anywhere you'd use cress. Unlike many plants, generally best to use before flowering, this is perfectly good to use even when it's flowered.



Dandelion. Leaves are good in soups and salads, however as they're rather bitter use in small amounts. Blanching while it grows will reduce bitterness. Use just the buds to make fake capers. The flowers can be used to flavour gin and produce a delightful pink colour. Do NOT eat the stems (or indeed stems of anything with milky sap).

Common sorrel – usually found in fields, eaten raw, has a citrus flavour. Added to soups it adds an acidic tone.

Comfrey. Leaves are best coated in a light, tempura-style, batter - this at least removes the furry texture!

Goose grass stems didn't sound terribly attractive - described as stringy, and need boiling well and liquidising to make a soup. Seeds, however, dried and roasted, mixed with dandelion make a tea with anti-inflammatory properties.

Jack by the hedge. Garlicky flavour, young leaves are good in salads, an ingredient for pesto or mixed with cream cheese.



Wild garlic (ramsons). Can usually be smelled before they're seen, especially as they generally grow in large swathes. All parts are edible. The bulbs have incredibly powerful flavour, and flower buds, pickled, make a tasty treat. Careful not to include (or mix up with) lily of the valley though, as all parts of this is poisonous. If it doesn't smell of garlic, don't eat it!

Fat Hen (white goosefoot/lamb's quarters) and Good King Henry (same family). Leaves and seeds are incredibly nutritious - very high potassium, vitamin C, iron. Use leaves of both like spinach. Try frying Good King Henry flower spikes in butter.

Nettle. Select really young, tender new leaves (pick the tips out), and always use shoots with no sign of flowers. Seeds make a nutty addition to baking.

Cath's presentation included more examples which limitations of space here preclude, but they are on her handout emailed to SOGs members on 17 March 2025. She also recommends the following titles:

- Richard Mabey (1972) *Food for Free*
- Gail Duff (1982) *The Countryside Cookbook*
- John Lewis-Stempel (2010) *The Wild Life: A Year of Living on Wild Food*

And I'd additionally suggest:

- Adele Nozedar (2012) *The Hedgerow Handbook*

CAN YOU EAT 30 PLANTS A WEEK?

By Maralyn Hepworth

Last year there was a plethora of media coverage on the importance of eating plants for gut health. This specified eating 30 plants a week. Whilst this is not a new concept, the specific numbers is a recent idea, which has come from Professor of Genetics, Dr. Tim Spector. Could I do this? Last Spring I began to count the plants I consumed.

You can only count them once - counting lots of cups of tea (a plant!) is cheating! Coffee, pepper, herbs and spices can be included so this, especially the herbs in the garden, was a start. Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme (sing along!), plus chives, mint, 3 types of sorrell (can I count each type?). Add to this the veggies in the raised beds or from the supermarket and it all adds up.

In spring my garden has good foraging opportunities. Dandelion, young hawthorn leaves we called 'eggs and bacon' as children, wild strawberry leaves, meadowsweet. Young nettle leaves are put in soup or steamed like spinach. I had scrumped, with permission, some wild garlic a few years ago and this is lovely in salads, with a sprinkle of flowers to give it the 5 Star look. Spices came from the herb shelf and garlic and ginger from the fridge. Reminder: perhaps I could grow more of these next year? Coriander? Turmeric?

Within 3 days, I had eaten my 30 plants a week. With salads and soups including so many plants in one meal, I am well on my way. This was easy. However, I started counting again in the Autumn. Too cold and rainy to go out, and both foraged and home-grown food not so plentiful. Would pickles count? If so, I could include pickled onions, gherkins and kimchi. Fermented foods have a known beneficial effect on the gut and my son makes a mean kimchi.

This is, of course, unproven 'science' but eating a variety of plants, especially those grown at home with no chemicals, picked and eaten within an hour, makes lots of sense. And it is certainly much tastier than shop-bought plants. Why not give it a go this Spring? And share your 'weeds' with other SOGGies so they have good gut health too!

See also: Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall (2024) *How to Eat 30 Plants a Week*

A WORMY DAY OUT AT FORDHALL FARM

14th March 2025

By Rachel Strivens

An email arrived in my inbox from Charlotte Hollins at Fordhall Farm inviting SOGgies to 'Get Wormy with Experts' and learn more about these vital soil workers. Who could resist the chance to dig and hand sort soil, learn to ID worm groups and their importance, learn how to attract worms to your soil and ask the experts questions?!

Worm expert and author Dr Kevin Butt and Austrian worm researcher Pia Euteneuer were conducting research at Fordhall Organic Farm and offered to run a public workshop. I was joined by SOGs member Emma Pickering for the 2 hour event.

Unfortunately, Pia couldn't in fact join us on the day due to a family bereavement, but to say Kevin is an enthusiast was an understatement.

A Reader in Ecology at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston, Dr Kevin Butt has undertaken research in soil ecology, and specifically earthworms, for nearly 40 years. Kevin is a real worm enthusiast, believing in worms as ecosystem service providers - an essential component of functioning soils, vital to us all. Kevin has also published a book entitled simply *Worm* :
<https://www.earthwormsoc.org.uk/worm-book>

Kevin had been at the farm already for a few days, digging test holes in other fields around the farm, so the field we are in, in the photo overleaf was very different. Fairly close to the buildings but sloping down to the river, it had a good cover of grass and has never had any chemicals used on it. It was also lighter and sandier.

There are 30 different species of earthworm in the UK, 12 of which are quite common, others not so, and there are basically 3 types of earthworms:

1. **Litter-dwelling** – live and feed above the soil in organic matter, eg. leaves – Tiger worm/Brandling and Red worm.

2. **Shallow working** – live close to the soil surface (top 30cm) in temporary burrow. They eat soil – Grey worm and Green worm
3. **Deep burrowing** – may go down 1m or more and have more permanent burrow. They pull organic matter down into their burrows – Lob/dew worm and Black-headed/long worm.

It is the long worms that create worm casts or poo, commonly seen on the surface. Another sign of earthworm activity on the soil surface are 'Middens', showing the burrow entrance of the lob worms. These are characterised by bits of grass and dead stems sticking up out of the soil as they pull them down.



Whilst earthworms are hermaphrodites, they do in fact mate and change sex as required. They assimilate oxygen from both air and the water content of the soil and are quite happy being in water for a time, although a long term flooded field does them no good at all!

The other question everyone had was do they survive being cut in half by a spade when digging etc. If a small amount of the tail end is removed they can grow some of that back. If the cut is made about half way along the body, the head end can usually survive but if the break is any further towards the head, mostly not.

Our first step was to split into groups and dig foot square holes, down about a foot, or just a bit deeper. The soil from the hole was turned on to a plastic sheet, and then hand sorted to collect all the worms present, which turned out to be well over 150 for most groups. These were put in a container with fresh water. In the meantime, the hole was soaked with water mixed with mustard. This effectively irritates worms further down, causing them to rise to the surface. It doesn't affect them long term and these were put in a separate container of fresh water to recover and be added to the count.

The overall count was very high and Kevin was really pleased because the counts had been less in the other fields. This could partly have been due to the weather. Earlier that week was much colder with frosts, whereas our day was much warmer, although I'm not so sure our hands agreed with that having spent a good half hour or so

pulling turf apart and working loose clumps of soil to get the worms out!

The high population of earthworms is a good sign for Charlotte as it fully backs up the case for organic farming. The constant addition of compost and mulches encourages more of the litter dwelling worms and good structure below encourages the shallow and deep burrowing worms.

Once Charlotte receives all the data from Kevin's research on the farm she will forward them to me for distribution.

In summary:

- Earthworms are ecosystem engineers,
- Earthworms provide ecosystem services,
- Earthworms are vital for long term soil quality and soil health.

They are equally as important as the pollinators and should be nurtured in the garden.



Dr Kevin Butt, far left, with Wormy Day Group

THE TOP TIPS COLUMN

From SOGs Member Sue Bosson - Making Comfrey 'Tea' the dry non-smelly way!

Comfrey fertiliser is one of the best liquid feeds to give your plants and if you have the plants in your garden, then it's completely free. Most people don't like nettle and comfrey fertilisers because once stewed in water, both smell revolting! Because of this I was very chuffed to come across the method I now use, but I can't remember where from.

- Take two buckets which should ideally fit inside each other. Black builders' buckets are ideal especially as they have a pouring spout. With a large drill bit of half an inch or so diameter, make several holes in the bottom of one of the buckets. This will be the bucket that you will put your comfrey leaves in and will sit inside the other bucket.



- There needs to be a small gap between the bottoms of the buckets and I used a few old golf balls to do the job. They are easily washed when they get too dirty and the washing water can be put on the garden too.



- Once you have filled the top bucket with leaves, they need to be compressed. Place over the leaves a circular lid from a plastic container, small enough to go a long way down the bucket when some bricks or something equally heavy are placed on top. If necessary, cut off the rim. **DO NOT ADD WATER.**



- Leave the comfrey press somewhere dry that won't allow the rain in. A shed, garage, greenhouse or log store is ideal.
- Occasionally, lift the top bucket and you will see the comfrey juice has begun to seep into the bottom bucket. When all the leaves have more or less disintegrated, add them to your compost heap and start again with fresh leaves. When there is enough liquid in the bottom bucket, pour off in to a suitable container.

To use, dilute with water. I don't know the exact proportions but if you treat it as you would tomato feed, you won't go far wrong.



From Sam Davies of Shepherd's Barn

Sam and Kate returned to give us one final talk in February 'Cutting down on the work ... and spending more time enjoying your garden and/or growing more fruit & veg'. We shall be visiting them in July, also for the final time, but in meanwhile I've pulled out the choice top tips from Sam's talk. *Rachel*

<p>'Why this is important to us'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A smallholding is not low maintenance so the ornamental garden has to be • 'We are getting older', so we cut down on maintenance in the ornamental garden to concentrate on the veg 	<p>Outdated Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't put the garden to bed in the autumn. Much easier to tidy in the spring. It provides winter homes for insects too • Don't Double Dig – very old fashioned these days
<p>Weeds – the gardener's nemesis?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife friendly plant in the wrong place or nutrient/light thief? • Can be harvested for food for us or our plants eg. nettles <p>High vs low maintenance design and methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shrubs easier than perennials • Beware of roses - very hungry plants which generally take a lot of looking after • Bed system in the veg garden • Fruit needs less input than veg • Native plants generally support wildlife better than cultivated ones • Hard landscaping can cut down the amount of ground requiring weeding but do 	<p>Mulch – the answer to everything</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppresses weeds • Keeps the moisture in • Prevents leaching of nutrients • Stable temperature in soil • Improves soil texture • Pest and disease prevention <p>Ramial Wood Chippings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh un-composted wood chip from small diameter younger branches of trees - use on veg and ornamental beds (ie. what you might shred yourself from prunings) <p>Grass Clippings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No deeper than 2 inches • Try not to collect the seed <p>Other mulches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spent hops • Sheep's wool

<p>make sure it can soak up rainwater</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedge clippings - shredded or mown up and great around trees and over cardboard • Compost and well rotted manure - improves soil structure too
<p>Raised Beds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't have to be raised but divide the plot in some way • Don't have to weed the paths • Crop density greater • Makes weeding easier • Makes planning for crop rotation easier • Good companion to no-dig method 	<p>General Tips</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover vacant ground with membrane • Grow veg through membrane to reduce weeds • Grow green manures for ground cover and fertility building <p>Hedges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut them less, cut onto a tarpaulin or mow up the clippings <p>Mowing Lawns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DON'T DO IT! • Mow less often/higher sward • Have a mini meadow within the lawn • Alternatives - Camomile/Thyme • Grass paths? - plan to the width of your mower • Edges you can mow up to - bricks, wood, metal and if you have a conventional edge, make it deep
<p>The Best Tips of all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it doesn't need doing – don't do it! • Don't work hard – work smart • Weeds like bare soil <p>• Don't forget to enjoy your garden!</p>	

From Jan Gibb, SOGs Member

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This anti-slug treatment might be worth a try if we have a Spring like last year!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crush a whole bulb of Garlic• Add it to 1.5 pints of water• Boil for 10 minutes• Cool• Add 2 tablespoons to 1 gallon of water• Water slug infected areas
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**Update from Madeley Orchard
Louise Lomax**

It's not all about gardening. A big thank you to SOGgies for coming to the rescue after the break in we suffered last year. We lost many of our small tools which was devastating for volunteers, who rely on them - many of them don't have gardens, so we were a bit stuck for some jobs. We've now just about replaced everything that we need via Tools for Self-Reliance, and donations from the local community and fellow SOGs members.

One of the positive consequences of the break in and subsequent publicity is that we have recruited more volunteers, and the Orchard was looking remarkably well tended at the end of January.

Then another bombshell hit, when the United Charities Trust, responsible for the land, informed us that the Orchard would need to be closed for 6-8 weeks for them to get the Trust administration into some sort of order. The Trust had been neglected for many years, but there are now new members who want things to be done properly.

This of course has come at the worst possible time, so hopefully we will be able to catch up when leases and insurances are all sorted out. In the meantime, the volunteers are going for walks, and meeting at the church on Tuesday, as we are trying to keep the group together and positive. Fingers crossed that everything can be sorted out soon.

SOGS SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAMME 2025



Out of courtesy to our hosts for each visit, Rachel will email the full membership a month before each visit to see whether you will be attending so numbers can be confirmed and refreshments organised. As with all visits, we like to car-share as much as possible and full address details are sent out beforehand. strivens58@btinternet.com or 01743 891607

May 25th (Sun) - 2.00pm - Moat Hall, Annscroft, Shrewsbury SY5 8AZ.

A very established 1-acre garden around an old farmhouse within a dry moat. Includes a well organised and extensive kitchen garden, fruit garden and orchard for self-sufficiency. Colourful herbaceous borders, stumpery, raised cut flower borders, 2/3rd acre pond and many interesting stone items around the grounds. Access is good throughout.

This is an NGS listed garden so a contribution of £6 will be required and this will include tea, coffee and cakes.

June 29th (Sun) - 2.00pm onwards - Celebrating 35 years of Shropshire Organic Gardeners at Members' garden, Angela and Francis Cattermole, Ford Heath.

This will be a celebratory garden party, so if you are in touch with any past members of SOGs, please let Rachel know so an invitation can go out to them too. It will be a Bring and Share event and we hope to have a pizza oven going along with some BBQ's – cakes, savouries, drinks (alcohol too if you wish). Bring chairs, blankets but most importantly, yourselves. Angela and I would appreciate any offers of help in the morning to get things set up. More details out in early June. Oh, and if anyone has a decent gazebo or two we could borrow, please let Rachel know as well.

July 20th (Sun) - 2.00pm - Shepherd's Barn Smallholding, the Corvedale.

Following their talk in February, Sam and Kate are opening their 2 acre smallholding to SOGs members for one last time this month, so don't miss out on this visit. It is a beautiful site with plenty to see, especially the very large veg growing area and lots of tips from Sam. There is a charge of £5 per paid up SOGs member to cover their time, and lots of tea and cake (£2.50 will be covered by funds). If you wish to bring a non-member visitor the cost will be £7.50 per person.

August [date to be confirmed] - 2.00pm - Woodside Allotments near Telford. Details to follow

September 21st (Sun) 2.00pm - Wade Muggleton, Station Road Permaculture Garden, Stottesdon.

A former lecturer and countryside officer, Wade Muggleton is an author and Permaculturalist (of some 30 yrs), living in a semi with an 80' x 40' rectangle garden behind it. 21 years ago when he and his family moved in, it was lawn from top to bottom on heavy Shropshire clay. Now they grow c20 types of veg and have 15-20 fruit trees, all grown on Permaculture principles in this amazing normal-size garden. You won't see bare soil anywhere but you will see potatoes growing in straw. Full details nearer the time.

October 18th – 10.30am (NOTE MORNING VISIT) - Weston Rhyn, Oswestry SY10 7LX - Tom Adams' (aka Tom the Appleman).

Five years on we revisit Tom's Organic Fruit Tree Nursery where he specialises in hard to find heritage apple varieties from the English/Welsh borderlands, along with Pears, Plums and Damson, Cherry, Quince and Medlar. All trees are grown using Organic, Agroforestry and Permaculture principles. We first visited Tom not long after he had moved to his new nursery site so this is a chance to see his progress.

SOGS IS A MEMBER OF GARDEN ORGANIC

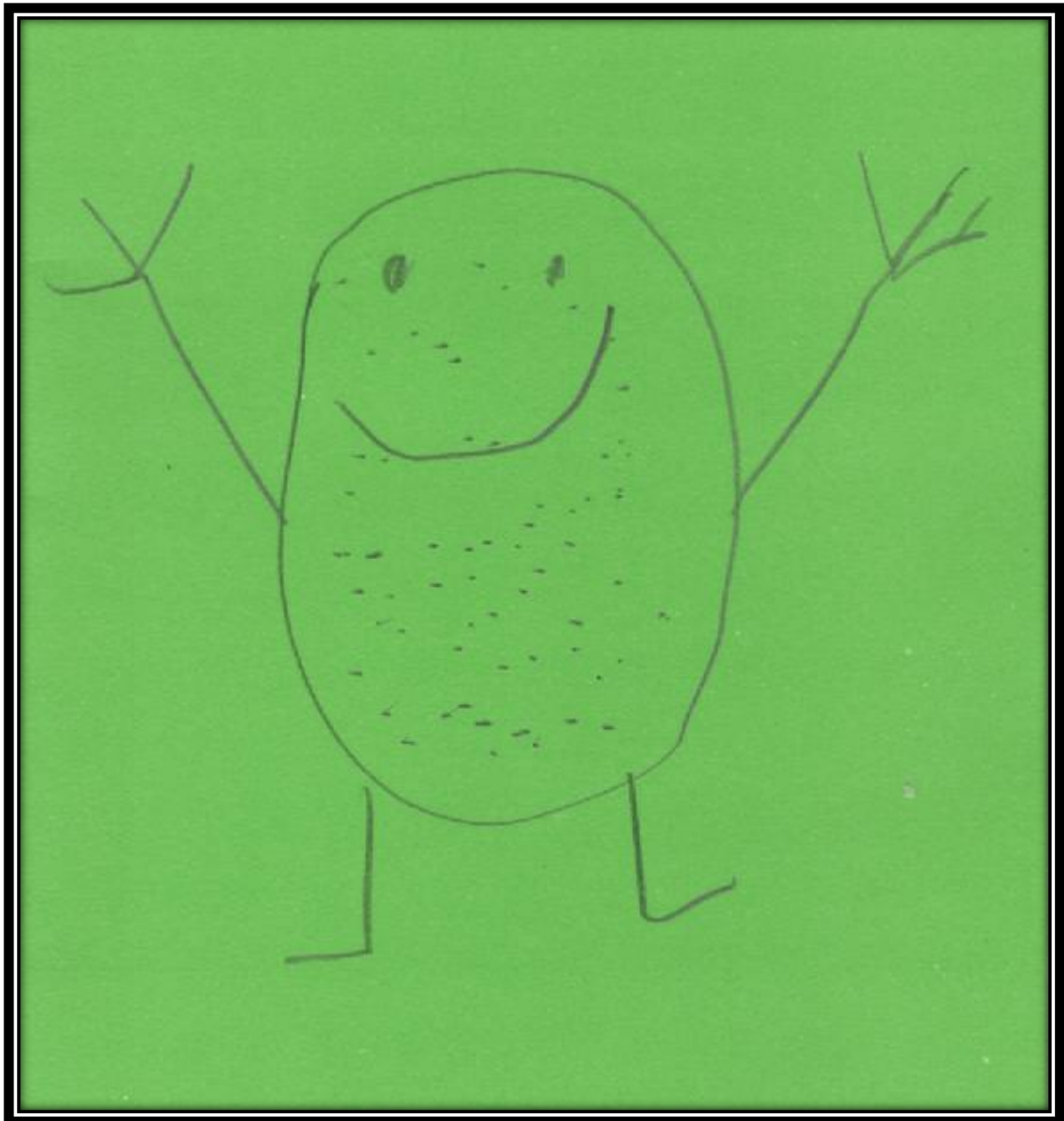


Illustration: Wren Grace, age 7, Maralyn Hepworth's grand-daughter and future logo designer?!

