



Potting Shed News

The fortnightly newsletter of Cliveden Gardens



2018—a year in the gardens



It's hard to remember the beginning of the year as so much seems to have happened since. 2018 started off with thousands of snowdrops blooming around the gardens whilst roses and wall shrubs were pruned and the laurel lawn between Blenheim Pavilion and Canning's Oak received its



annual hair cut. This was followed by more stunning bedding displays beginning to colour up. The Long Garden was a sea of pink courtesy of 11,000 *Bellis* 'Bellissima Mixed' (see above right). Despite the cold weather and heavy snow during the spring months, the team managed to install a new path between the Fountain of Love and the Long Garden (see above left). This was long overdue and meant that visitors could now circuit the formal gardens on hard surfaces, particularly great during those wet winter months.

March saw an abundance of spring colour from daphnes and hellebores to daffodils and forsythia. We began pea-sticking on the herbaceous borders and putting the finishing touches to the lower terrace restoration project. Here we planted over 1,100 yew trees to form the hedge at the back and re-instated the ribbon bedding style that



John Fleming—Head Gardener here in the 1850s—planted up. This summer, the beds were filled with 1,600 marigolds planted in ribbons of four different colours: gold, orange, vanilla and yellow. We turfed the area in front of the ribbon beds and the well heads were returned to the stone bases and planted up (see left—during and after work).

The newly restored Duke's Garden was also colourful and certainly a transformation from how it looked the previous spring. At the beginning of June, we installed a carpet bedding display to commemorate 150 years since John Fleming first introduced carpet bedding to Cliveden in 1868, recognising his employer Harriet, the Duchess of Sutherland who died later that year in October (see below left).

This summer's heatwave seems a distant memory now but the garden team spent many an hour watering to keep plants and lawns alive. Despite the heat and the parched lawns, the

gardens still looked colourful.

The Rose Garden flourished, the herbaceous borders were packed with colour and gladioli filled the central azalea beds on the Parterre. One of our favourite views was the red salvias planted with an edge of *Senecio cineraria* in the semicircle (see right).





Hellos and goodbyes

We couldn't let this edition pass without reminding readers of the special guest who came to stay on Friday 18th May—none other than Ms Meghan Markle (*see left: pictured leaving Cliveden on her way to become the Duchess of Sussex.*) There was a huge buzz of excitement around the estate during the week leading up to the royal wedding as we strived to “Sparkle for Markle”—the pressure was on for the gardens team to cut the lawns in dead straight lines and pull up every weed. The maintenance team painted bollards and cleaned fountains. Every inch of Cliveden was cleaned, tidied and the whole place looked immaculate. It was a privilege to be part of history and be seen by millions of television viewers all over the world (even if it was only for a couple of minutes!)

A few weeks before the royal wedding, we had welcomed a group of 15 sculptures by the post-war sculptor Lynn Chadwick (1914-2003). This was the second part of a three year partnership, bringing contemporary sculpture into the grounds of Cliveden in conjunction with the London based art gallery Blain|Southern. It was the largest ever public display of Chadwick's work and the pieces certainly were a talking point. This six foot bronze sculpture (*see left*) is called 'Sitting couple on a bench'.



July saw us bid farewell to our Head Gardener Andrew Mudge (*see right*) after 12 years in charge at Cliveden and a career of over forty years with the



National Trust. He and his wife Lyn headed off for a well earned retirement to East Devon where he has been spending many an hour fishing on his boat and recently enjoyed a trip to New Zealand (although he took a plane here rather than rowing!) To mark his retirement, Commercial Manager Gemma made a very appropriate cake which



was enjoyed by everyone when we gathered for a party on the lower terrace one sunny evening in July. No prizes for guessing what it depicted! (*see left*). Andrew has been replaced by Anthony Mason (*see right*) who prior to joining us spent 12 years as a Senior Contracts Manager for landscape management company Gavin Jones. Anthony emigrated from Australia in 2005 and in his spare time is a keen allotment holder. This year we have also said goodbye to gardeners Jen Tait (who moved to Wales in July to work at another NT property



Dyffryn) and Emma Massey. HBGTP trainee Helen Roche successfully completed her 2 years with us in the summer and has now moved back to Ireland.

It's not all bad news though as we have welcomed several new faces including Gardeners James, Ruth, Christina and Catherine as well as one-year HBGTP trainee Ewa Krupa.

Just a reminder that Cliveden will be closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We would like to wish all of our readers a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

And finally... As many of you already know, after seven and a half years, 152 editions of Potting Shed News and sixteen bedding changeovers, I will temporarily be passing on my pen and secateurs to someone else for the next twelve months. Mark Lamb, currently one of our Senior Gardeners, will be taking up the Assistant Head Gardener baton from 17th December. Thank you all for reading over the years and for all your support. Happy Gardening.

Compiled by Chantal Lawrence, Assistant Head Gardener

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