Annual report for the North Berwick Gardening Club 2021/2022

A time of COVID measures: social distancing, one-way systems and no cash handling, this is what the Club got up to.

**MAY - CHOOSE A PLANT AND DONATE.**Members of the gardening club and North Berwick in Bloom brought along seedlings, perennials, herbs, houseplants, and alpines, all displayed along the path outside the Abbey Church.  The tulip festival had come to an end and there were also hundreds of newly lifted tulip bulbs available.   A steady flow of visitors chose plants and made donations as they left.  An amazing £1200 was raised for North Berwick in Bloom

**JUNE - WILDFLOWER WALKS.** We ran 2 wildflower walks, a small group led by Dr Stan da Prato, our Honorary President started at the Seabird Centre and finished at Coos Green.  Along the way we examined the various wild and naturalised plants along the sand dunes, inspected a few gardens on the seafront and ended up hunting orchids, hidden in grass at Coos Green.

**JULY - VISIT TO INVERESK LODGE GARDENS.**  Colin Wren, Gardens & Designed Landscapes Manager (Edinburgh and East) National Trust for Scotland welcomed us.  We learnt about the history of the garden, how the garden is managed and toured the formal and the managed wilder parts of the garden.  The sun shone and the roses and clematis were looking glorious.  The group were welcomed under the shade of a Yew tree, dating back to the late 1700's when the garden was first designed.

**FISHBOX CHALLENGE – An idea formed in lockdown, a joint project with North Berwick in Bloom, with the aim of create a display of mini planters around the town by repurposing old polystyrene fish boxes, photos of delightful displays are featured on the website, and some are still on display outside the Abbey Church on the High Street demonstrating how you can create all year round displays.** Entrants included the community groups like the Brownies and the Day Centre, families, and individuals. We are running it again with North Berwick in Bloom.

**AUGUST SHOW -** We came together on a sunny afternoon to create a glorious display of flowers, produce and horticultural excellence.  It was a smaller schedule than usual to allow plenty of room for people to circulate and admire the exhibits, and we used our own containers to avoid cross contamination, but after a wait for 2 years to have a show, there was an enthusiastic response.

Congratulations to Margaret Ann Crawford who was awarded the John Wightman Cup. It was a very close result, with Libby Morris having the same number of first and seconds places as Margaret Ann, but Margaret Ann having more third places won the trophy.

The Sir Hew Hamilton Dalrymple Trophy for first in class with the most entries, was awarded to Libby Morris for her vase of mixed Garden foliage.

The Rose Bowl for the Best Indoor Pot Plant went to Mary Brown for her outstanding begonia and The North Berwick and District Horticultural Society Cup for best in show went to Betty McMorland for her varied and full trug of beautiful vegetables.

**SUNFLOWER CHALLENGE. The deadline for entries was September. We had the tallest sunflower, the largest bloom and the best photo of sunflowers in my garden. Lots of entries from children, every child that entered was given a certificate and some sunflower seeds for planting. Thanks to Tesco North Berwick who generously donated some vouchers for prizes.**

**SEPTEMBER PLANT SALE AND BULB DISTRIBUTION - 18 September, Abbey Church**The sun shone and many visitors and club members chose from the donated plants, preserves and garden related objects and made donations exceeding £400.  As well as a fundraising event for North Berwick in Bloom and the Gardening Club it was an opportunity for all sorts of gardening queries to be answered by our honorary president Dr Stan da Prato and **Andrew Hogarth, East Lothian Council's**Acting Principal Amenity Officer.

The event was also a chance to start distributing the club bulbs for members to plant and all being well exhibit in our March Spring Show. The club was delighted that 10 new members signed up at the event

**OCTOBER  MEETING - St Andrew Blackadder, 28 October 2021**
This is the list of this year's Club bulbs given out to members:
3 Hyacinth - Delft Blue.
8 Daffodills - Cyclamineus Narcissi Rapture.
5 Tulip - Early Harvest Kaufmanniana

35 members came together on a very wet Thursday afternoon, to catch up and to hear a presentation on Spring Bulbs by Stan. The presentation covered everything you would ever want to know about all sorts of Spring flowering bulbs, with practical advice and encouragement to grow them for the Spring Show in March.

**NOVEMBER MEETING - St Andrew Blackadder 25 November 2021**Club members Sheila Montgomery and Margaret Ann Crawford were joined by Joan Mackenzie from the North Berwick Floral Art Group and all beautifully demonstrated how to create festive arrangements and decorations.

**JANUARY 2022 – ZOOM meeting .** We were delighted to be joined on Zoom by Colin Wren, Gardens & Designed Landscapes Manager (Edinburgh & East) for the National Trust for Scotland.  Colin guided us through the long process of research and the continual process of discovery at Newhailes uncovering the gardens that were originally designed in the 1700s.

**2022 FEBRUARY MEETING - Perthshire Farm Boy and Seasonal Potato Advice**
Our first "in person" meeting of 2022, John "Tattie" Marshall ventured through the snow in Fife to arrive in North Berwick to entertain us for the afternoon with one of his Tattie Talks, "Perthshire Farm Boy", this was followed by lots of practical advice on selecting and planting potatoes for 2022.

**CHILDREN’s JETFIRE bulbs. In October we distributed bulbs, compost and pots to Law Primary School & Nursery, North Berwick Playgroup and Brownies, these were all exhibited at the Caley Spring Show in Edinburgh. The results – Silver for the playgroup and Brownies. Excellent as this was the first year they had entered. The nursery won a gold, and the primary school not only won a gold, they scooped the cup**

**2022 MARCH SPRING SHOW North Berwick Community Centre**

The show was judged by Dr Stan da Prato and Andrew Hogarth. Whilst the judging was taking place, Cathie Wright, presented a fun quiz, all questions had a horticultural theme, but required local knowledge and lateral thinking as well. The schedule was slightly reduced this year, so that we could accommodate any COVID requirements, but that did not reduce the quality of the exhibits or the competitive spirit. Margaret Ann Crawford won the Peter Atkins trophy for the most points in the club bulbs section, with a first prize in all 3 categories and Libby Morris won the New Challenge Cup.

**2022 APRIL - VISIT TO EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL NUSERY APRIL**

**Members were delighted to tour the nursery, it was full of excellent plants ready to be distributed around East Lothian.**

Cathie Wright

Chair. North Berwick Gardening Club

25 May 2022