



FROM THE GARDEN SHED -2

Dear Fellow Gardeners

Hasn't it been bliss! Wonderful weather and peace and quiet – no diary consultations. No traffic noise. We are so fortunate and have food aplenty. There are still frozen beans in the freezer from last year and their successors are slowly appearing in pots in the greenhouse.

I have spent a large part of this week in the superior garden shed clearing out stuff. In fact this newsletter could take on a Bridget Jones' style intro as in:

Years-worth of <i>The Garden</i> thrown out	17
Number of courgette seeds finally appearing	2 (out of a whole packet!)
Number of pelargoniums to survive winter	7

And so on.....



However - I am loving the opportunity to think gardens and garden history hence this newsletter. And – apologies - again I'm going to feature female gardeners and we start with Vita Sackville West who seems to capture what many of us are experiencing:



*Days I enjoy are days when nothing happens, When I have no engagements written on my block,
When no one comes to disturb my inward peace, When no one comes to take me away from myself
And turn me into a patchwork, a jig-saw puzzle, A broken mirror that once gave a whole reflection,
Being so contrived that it takes too long a time To get myself back to myself when they have gone.*

Her writing was always pithy and well observed, these are her comments written in her column in *The Observer* during an Easter week.

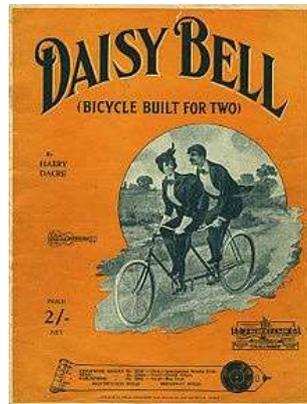
The Pasque flower , Anemone pulsatilla, is blooming just now for Easter as its name indicates. This is a native to our Downs, getting rare in its wild state, but still cultivated in gardens. It is a soft and lovely thing, pale lilac in colour with a silvery floss-silk surround: and it can now be obtained also in a rosy -pink colouring, which mixes and merges most exquisitely with the original mauve native....There is also a white form. It is easy to grow anywhere, though as a native of the chalk it appreciates a bed of limey rubble in the sun. The sparrows so far have left it.

April Vita Sackville West

Vita is just one of the many female gardeners who came into their own in the 20th century. Take the women who became educators. Beatrice Havergal started Waterperry School for women gardeners. A tough regime of double digging and dawn get ups. One of her neighbours in Oxfordshire was Roald Dahl who visited her frequently and used her for his idea of Miss Trunchbull in *Mathilda*



Daisy, Countess of Warwick also started a school for women – Studley College – Daisy was the inspiration for the song *A bicycle made for two* – inspired by her many liaisons with the great and the good.



Studley Castle Horticultural College for Women 1903

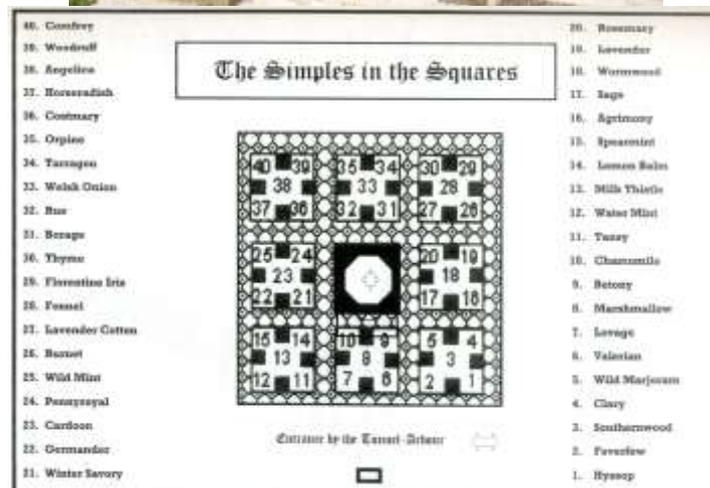


Gradually more and more women were accepted for positions in the great gardens of England. They eventually made it to Kew Gardens. No woman could work at Kew unless she was single and all recruits were given a special uniform to wear for their work



They gardened in bloomers the newspapers said:
so to Kew without warning all Londoners sped:
From the roofs of the buses they had a fine view
Of the ladies in bloomers who gardened at Kew.
(*Fun* magazine 1900)

Health matters are very much on everyone's mind. I think it would be timely to remember the early **medicinal gardens** during this present ghastliness. What was it like before the NHS, Doctors, hospitals? The care for the sick fell to those in monasteries and convents The Jardin Monastique de Tusson in France which was run by Nuns has been restored and the Simples garden is a joy. They grow the medicinal and culinary herbs in 8 beds as shown. Some herbs, such as poppies, could be used in helping an open wound. When the peel of the poppy stalk was ground and mixed with honey, it could be used as a plaster for wounds. Other herbs and plants were used for internal complications, such as a headache or stomach ache. For instance, almonds were said to make a person sleepy, provoke urination, and induce menstruation. TMI!



The design of the garden was symbolic:

- Walls and gates – enclosed, symbolising the monastic closed order- enclosed but open to the skies – terrestrial and celestial
- 40 ancient plants arranged in 9 stone squares with a fountain in the centre symbolising the Incarnation.
- Arranged in threes – The Trinity
- The 9 beds symbolise the Novena – the 9 days during which acts of devotion invoke the cure of a sick person

- Hildegard of Bingen – divined the essence of man was regulated by the number 5 - so the 8 beds each contain 5 plants to house 40 plants in all – symbolising the 40 days in the Wilderness
- Also '40' used in Middle ages as we use '100' s now

It was this layout for simples/ herbs in 9 squares that inspired Dr Joachim Cavallo when he came to designing Villandry. He planted a standard rose at the corners of the beds to represent a working monk.



And this in turn, I believe, inspired Rosemary Verey when she designed her Potager at Barnsley House



Villandry is one of my top 10 gardens. Another time we can look at the Jardin d'amour

BUT TIME NOW FOR A BIT OF A QUIZ

We now have more time to read so this week's quiz is to do with books and trees.

Work out the missing trees to complete the book titles:

1. *The Wind in the* By Kenneth Grahame
2. *The Children ofTree Farm* by Enid Blyton
3.Street by Maeve Binchy
4. *Children of theTree* by Sahar Delijani
5. *Under theTree* by Thomas Hardy
6. *Sad* By Agatha Christie
7.Valley by Holly Throsby
8. *TheTree* by Mary Stewart
9. *And to think I saw it onStreet* by Dr Seuss
10. *Under theTree* by Julie Stiegeeyer

I am having problems with my greenhouse. It is pointing the wrong way. By moving just one match can you make the greenhouse face east instead of west?



NEXT TIME I'll be writing about A MELANCHOLY OF MINE OWN, and how in the 18th century a fascination with nature and solitude brought hermitages out of the desert and into the garden.

The following sheet is for the grandchildren.

GOOD GARDENING AND KEEP SAFE

FIND A FLOWER IN THE GARDEN

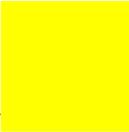
My first is in CUP  but not in MUG. 

My second is in BREAD  and also in ROLLS 

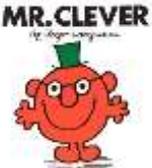
My third is in INSECT  but not in BUG 

My fourth is in DORMOUSE  and also in MOLES 

My fifth is in RABBIT  and also in RAT 

My sixth is in ORANGE  and also in YELLOW 

My seventh is in SCARF  but not in HAT 

My last is in CLEVER  and also in GRANDCHILDREN 

MY WHOLE IS A FLOWER YOU CAN SEE IN THE GARDEN.

HAPPY HUNTING