



**NEWSLETTER**

**MARCH 2025**

### **A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR**

I am rather pleased that the AGM is behind us and we can look forward to the year ahead. Thank you to all returning members and welcome to anyone who has just joined; I hope you will enjoy your 2025 membership. The official first day of Spring is 21<sup>st</sup> March and it cannot come soon enough following so many drab chilly February days. I am now full of anticipation to really get outside, start planting seeds and anticipate the gardening year ahead. Whether your garden consists of a few pots on a patio or balcony or something larger, there is so much to look forward to. The first day trip to Exbury Gardens takes place on 7 May. Details, together with a booking form can be found below.

### **NEWS FROM THE AGM**

Thanks to everyone who joined our February AGM. I am delighted to say that at the end of the meeting Cynthia Lawrence said she would like to join the committee which is marvellous and she will be co-opted onto the committee.

Your committee for 2025/6 will be as follows:

Miranda Gilmour	Chair + Day Trips
Debs Schofield	Treasurer
Grace Hoskin	Membership Secretary + Website
Myra Hay	Speaker Secretary
Jo Snape	Speaker Secretary
Wendy Jackson	Publicity + Day Trips
Cynthia Lawrence	

Lesley Andrews and Anna Marsden continue to operate Garden Link, Tricia Hayllar compiles the Newsletter, Bev Luxford runs the raffle and Dorothy Aitchison manages the tea rota. Thanks to our committee and non-committee members who help to ensure we are a thriving club.

We thanked Bruce Hayllar who stepped down from managing our website (as well as coping with technical emergencies at meetings). We are immensely grateful to him for all he has done for us. Amelia Trevethick has stepped down from a leading light on the Plant Sale Group, but I am assured will continue to nurture seeds and cuttings and divide plants to bring to the annual plant sale.

Our current committee remains below its fighting strength, so please consider joining us. We hold four morning committee meetings each year and otherwise keep in touch via email. Please do get in touch with any one of the committee or email me at [marlbgainfo@gmail.com](mailto:marlbgainfo@gmail.com) It may be that you would like to join with a friend, the more the merrier as often tasks are better undertaken by a couple of people and it helps to spread the load.

I look forward to seeing you at the March meeting.

Miranda Gilmour

## MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH

*We open the doors at 6.45pm to allow members to mingle and chat with free refreshments, an opportunity to buy raffle tickets, exchange free seeds and contribute towards or admire flowers on the display table, before the speaker starts at 7.30pm.*

Our speaker at our March meeting is a change from the programme as you may remember Richard Cripps was kind enough to fill a gap earlier in the year. So, we will be welcoming a local plantswoman, **Sonia Wright**. Sonia has worked as a garden designer and landscaper in London, the south-west and Scotland. She went plant hunting to south-west China with Kew Gardens and is a great propagator and nurserywomen and has produced three award winning gardens for the Chelsea Flower Show. **Display Table** – The theme for the March meeting *is Early Spring Flowers*.

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

A big thank you to everyone who has already paid their subscriptions. Members voted at the AGM to increase the rate to £15pa and these are now due by 31<sup>st</sup> March. The increase is due to rising costs and it makes sense to control these as much as possible. An example is the transaction charge of fifty pence per cheque paid in at the PO which Lloyds is introducing. To minimise this the committee has decided to ask for BACS or electronic payments only for subscriptions and trips. MGA has a small number of members who do not use electronic banking and of course we'll continue to accept cash and cheques from them. Please talk to Debs Schofield, the treasurer, at a meeting or post/deliver payment to her at 68 Five Stiles Road, Marlborough SN8 4BE. You can also email her on [schofielddeborah1@gmail.com](mailto:schofielddeborah1@gmail.com).

### BACS Payments

Please pay your subs to Marlborough Gardening Association, sort code 30-91-99, Account No: 68746860. PLEASE PUT YOUR NAME IN THE REFERENCE BOX so that we can identify your payment. Programmes will be available at the March meeting or can be viewed on the website [www.marlbga.org.uk](http://www.marlbga.org.uk) To have one posted out, please send a SAE to the treasurer at the above address.

If your details such as name, phone, email or address have changed please let us know by completing a new membership form. These are available on the signing in desk at meetings or can be downloaded from the website [www.marlbga.org.uk](http://www.marlbga.org.uk).

Debs Schofield (Treasurer)

## TEA ROTA

Dorothy Aitcheson will bring the tea rota to the March meeting, so please think about whether you could sign up to help. A couple of people at each meeting is best, so how about roping in a friend to help you. If you have not helped out before, Dorothy is the person to talk to.

**VISIT TO EXBURY GARDENS and STEAM RAILWAY**  
**ON WEDNESDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2025**  
*(for insurance purposes this trip is ONLY open to MGA members)*

Exbury Gardens were created by Lionel de Rothschild in 1919 and are still managed by the family today. Exbury is renowned for spring colour with their world-famous collection of rhododendrons and azaleas, which should be at their best when we visit in May, as will the wisteria in the Sundial Garden. Take a ride on The Rhododendron Line, the narrow-gauge steam train track through the gardens, which meanders through the Summer Lane Garden (only accessible by train) before skirting past the Rock Garden and the Dragonfly Pond.

Mr Eddy's restaurant offers a choice of picnic food, hot and cold meals and snacks which can be enjoyed inside or out. An outside snack bar can be found at the Tennis Court Tea Room. Picnics are allowed in the garden and picnic tables are provided. Exbury has three mobility scooters available for hire at £5 for either a morning (10am to 1pm) or afternoon (1.30pm to 4.30pm) session, or £10 for a whole day. To book in advance please do so at <https://buy.myonlinebooking.co.uk/exburygardens/sessions.aspx?tid=75> There is a Gift shop and Plant Centre, so do come prepared with bags to take anything home!  
*Please note cash is not accepted at Exbury Gardens*

**The cost will be £ 41.00** *(This covers travel, entrance (including train) and driver's tip)*

**Travel times and places:**

**Pick up Ogbourne St Andrew** at the bus stop opposite the Silks on the Down **at 9.00am** *(please indicate on the booking form if you wish to be picked up here).*

**Pick up High Street, Marlborough** (outside the Jubilee Centre) **9.10am.**

**We will leave Exbury at approx. 4.30pm to arrive back in Marlborough at about 6.00pm and Ogbourne St Andrew, soon afterwards.**

Your place(s) on this trip will be confirmed by email *(so please include this clearly on the booking form below).*

***If you are unable to attend, or have any queries about this trip, please contact us a.s.a.p. on [marlbgainfo@gmail.com](mailto:marlbgainfo@gmail.com).***

*(Please retain a copy of the booking form and newsletter in order that you know dates/meeting times and places).*

**REVISION OF THE DAY TRIPS REFUND POLICY**

During the year your committee has looked again at the policy and made some minor changes. We do not aim to make a profit on these trips but hope to cover our costs. This is sometimes not possible for each trip, but is achievable over the whole year. In future if we have not had to pay entrance and/or refreshment costs in advance for the person cancelling, we will refund that element of the booking charge (providing there is flexibility with the supplier regarding the change in the size of the group) and a refund will be made after the trip. At the end of the season the committee will consider if there is a sufficient surplus to allow us to refund other expenses e.g. the coach cost. The revised Day Trips Policy can be viewed on the website.

## PLANNING FOR SPRING

Dreary dull days are a good time for considering what changes might enhance a garden. If you are looking at revamping a border, introducing new shrubs or trees or are maybe looking for ideas on what to do with a difficult corner, Garden Link is a good place to start. Many of the Association's members have lots of experience and expertise in gardening and we aim to put members in touch with each other to share that. Simply go to the website [www.marlbga.org.uk](http://www.marlbga.org.uk) and click on the Garden Link page. This will give you some idea of the range of expertise we can tap into. It is by no means comprehensive so if you have a query contact Lesley on 01672 540180 or Anna on 01672 514336 and we should be able to put you in touch with someone who could help.

## FREE PEAT FREE ADVICE SERVICE

If you find peat-free growing rather challenging, then you will be delighted to hear that the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) has introduced an advice service which for the first time is available to non-RHS members. The queries will be tackled via email, by Nikki Barker, RHS Peat Free. Transition Technical Co-ordinator. Simply email Nikki at: [peatfree@rhs.org.uk](mailto:peatfree@rhs.org.uk)

## MGA DAY TRIPS 2025

We hope that members will want to join some, if not all, of our trips planned for 2025, so why not put the dates in your diary now! All trips are promoted through the Newsletter with details and booking forms appearing usually for two months before the trip.

- **Wednesday 7 May** – a full day visit to Exbury Gardens, see above.
- **Thursday 5 June** – a private tour given by Andy McIndoe around his garden, followed by a visit to Mottisfont Gardens, when we hope to see the famous old roses at their best.
- **Wednesday 2 July** – a visit to the Bishop's Palace Garden, Wells. The 14-acre garden holds Grade II listed status because of its historic significance.
- **Thursday 4 September** – a visit to Tyntesfield House and Garden, a Victorian Gothic Revival House with extensive garden and parkland.

If you have friends, who would like to join you on day trips (but do not live near enough to attend monthly meetings), they do need to take out annual MGA membership, which if they were to join all four outings, would amount to no more than the cost of a cup of coffee added to the cost of the trip – so a real bargain!

**The deadline for copy for the April Newsletter is 24<sup>th</sup> March.**  
Please send contributions to [hayllar@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:hayllar@tiscali.co.uk)