

# NEWSLETTER 84

## MARCH 2026

### Chairman's Chat March 2026

Welcome once again to your club newsletter. We had a wonderful start to the year with a good turn -out for the Sam Gallivan talk. It was lovely to see you all and we signed up 5 new members so a very warm welcome to them. We had a large number of entries for the BAFTA, so many thanks for your enthusiasm on that and also on signing up for our celebrity talk in March. Sam Gallivan was an excellent speaker and gave us very interesting insights into the propagation of plants for the gardens at RHS Wisley. I didn't know that they didn't supply the garden centre, which goes a long way to explaining why I can rarely find a plant that I have spotted in the garden when I go into the plant centre 😊. I also didn't know that tomato plants should not touch each other: it make them long and thin (the word is "etiolated") apparently. Sam encouraged us to add feed to peat free compost pretty early on in the propagation process, if not at the beginning. The nursery runs on very few staff and some volunteers, as well as training horticultural students in the practicalities of their course. Altogether, many reasons to admire what is achieved at the gardens.

The numbers for the David Hurrion talk, 11<sup>th</sup> March are increasing comfortably. If you wish to bring a friend it is only £5 for non-members and they are very welcome. We would just ask that they sign up via the website. All instructions for this are on page 3 with the poster. If that is difficult then an email to our admin account will be OK. There are no tickets being issued, but please sign in on arrival. I have also included a reminder of the Surrey Federation talk by Tom Brown (West Dean Gardens). Catherine has been trying to book him for some time so this is a good opportunity to hear him.

Do take some time to read through the CLUB NEWS page 2. It's our best way of keeping you updated without sending copious emails. We have 2 more confirmed dates for your diaries on that page.

As I write I'm still waiting for that warmer weather to get things going, but Diamuid Gavin advises that if it's still cold at night then the wildlife will still be hiding so don't get too enthusiastic with the clearing up. Suits me! I have mostly stayed in my potting shed getting Dahlia tubers started and seeds sown At which point I had to ask myself "which idiot ordered 36 new dahlias?" It was me of course! Over enthusiastic as always. How are your show bulbs (Midnight Sensation) coming along? Mine are looking quite good at the moment and thankfully not yet in bud. Now the trick will be to try and arrange flowering at the right time. With the temperatures fluctuating as much as they are it's not easy! See you at the next meeting, Christine



The nursery uses only biological controls and raises 27000 plants from seed each year.



### COMING UP !!

**WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> MARCH DAVID HURRION**

Poster on page 3

**SATURDAY 21<sup>st</sup> MARCH TOM BROWN**

**a Surrey Federation talk**

Poster and info on tickets on page 4

**SATURDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> APRIL**

**SPRING SHOW**

**2.30 -4.00pm**

## CLUB NEWS

### REFRESHMENT ROTA

Thank you so much to all who have volunteered to be on this rota. This will be just for club evenings. I will put an individual plea out for shows and plant sale dates as they arise.  
The rota will be displayed at meetings and the guidance is on page 4

### BAFTA winner

THE WINNER OF  
LAST EVENING'S  
BAFTA  
COMPETITION WAS  
A BEAUTIFUL  
HELLEBORE  
BROUGHT IN BY  
STEPH  
STEVENSON. HER  
FIRST EVER  
ENTRY!



### PLANT SALE 23<sup>rd</sup> MAY 2026

Please continue to consider our plant sale when you are sowing seeds and taking cuttings. Also, when you have a plant that is getting too big and needs dividing. Even if you only have 3 tomatoes or similar to donate: It all helps. I have taken a chance this year and sent for some bulk order perennials and begonias. This gives you all an opportunity to buy them inexpensively without having to order 60 at a time. It will also help club funds. If propagation is not your thing but you can help with potting these on then please let me know! I would appreciate it if you can take maybe even 10 to do.

We would like to bring your attention to the benefits of our affiliated membership of the RHS.

We get the RHS magazine each month, which I will place on the noticeboard table. If you would like to look through it on arrival or borrow it, then please feel free. We also have a card giving complementary entry to RHS gardens. If you are not a member yourself then you might like to make use of this. Just ask me **at any meeting** and you can borrow until the next meeting. I'm afraid this is the only practical way for us to lend this.

### HEALTH AND SAFETY

With our smaller committee, we don't always have the manpower to be at the welcome table. Please can you make sure that you sign in when you arrive. This is a health and safety requirement. The table will be next to the raffle in future. For the David Hurrion talk you will just need to tick against your name. Many thanks Christine

### EXTRA DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

We are pleased to say that Catherine has liased with Marion Lewis, who has secured us a date to visit Watts Gallery garden. The date is 10<sup>th</sup> June pm and should nicely fill the "June Gap " in our programme  
The joint garden visit with Miford has been confirmed by them for 7<sup>th</sup> July pm. The cost will be £12 plus an optional £7.50 for afternoon tea.  
There will be full details in due course, but we will, of course have to book and pay in advance for Losely.

**WEDNESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
2026**

# DAVID HURRION

This year's celebrity speaker

## RAISED BEDS

You will need to book this  
talk

WGA are pleased to welcome David back with his latest inspirational and entertaining talk 'Raised Beds'.

David is a well-known gardening journalist, tutor, lecturer and RHS judge. He runs workshops, both in person and online and accompanies several gardening holidays each year. This talk will be full of creative ideas and practical tips for raised beds.

You will certainly be inspired by David's extensive knowledge, which he always presents in a very accessible way.

If you had not yet thought of having a raised bed you will certainly want one after this talk!

There will be a chance to buy a signed copy of David's 'Raised Beds' book on the evening.



### BOOKING

As David is this year's celebrity speaker, we will need to ask you to book, as we expect larger numbers. Please do bring a friend. If they are a non member the charge will be £5 as usual. Please sign up at a meeting or book online.

**THE CHICHESTER HALL WITLEY**

**Doors open 7.00pm for a 7.30 start.**

**Welcome drinks will be available**

**Non- members £5. Please book via the website**

**[witleygardening.org](http://witleygardening.org)**

## GUIDE FOR REFRESHMENT GROUP

- We aim to get 5 glasses of wine per bottle and use that as a guide to buying the wine which we normally buy when something is on offer eg £7 to £8 a bottle. We get around 40 members at a meeting.
- Until such time as we get a REFRESHMENTS ORGANISER Please could you buy the wine for your “duty date” and also 2 cartons of juice, usually Orange/Cranberry . Any left-over juice and half used bottles is for you to keep, but please hand any unopened bottles to the next person on the rota.
- Please join us for setting up at 6.30
- The wine glasses are kept in the cage (cupboard) on the shelves. There are 3 crates each holding 24 wine glasses.
- At the end of the evening please wash and dry the glasses (I’m sure people will help) or take them home to be returned at the next meeting. If necessary, please take tea towels home for washing and drying.
- Christine has a poster for the table to offer the chance to donate £1 per glass.
- All receipts are kept and given to Larissa with a claims form  
(provided by Christine) for reimbursement into your bank account.
- An email list for refreshment helpers will be provided. Please **swop with someone** if you find you can’t make your date and let the organiser know.

### **THE ORGANISER would only need to do the following:**

Manage the rota by emailing a reminder a few days before the meeting

Buy the wine and juice

Take home tea towels, wash and dry.

**The Surrey Horticultural Federation Spring Talk**

***Head Gardener at West Dean Gardens***

# **Tom Brown**

**“Getting the Most From Your Greenhouse”**



**2:30pm, Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2026**

**Normandy Village Hall, Manor Fruit Farm,  
Glaziers Lane, Normandy, GU3 2DD Doors open 2pm**

**Ticket Prices:** SHF Affiliated Clubs/Members: £10 in advance  
Non-members/Visitors in Advance and All Tickets at the Door: £15

Advanced Tickets (non-refundable) can be purchased by:

**BACS transfer:** Surrey Horticultural Federation, Metro Bank  
Sort Code: **23-05-80** Acc No: **55314837** Reference: **Talk + num of tickets**

**Cheque:** payable to Surrey Horticultural Federation, sent with SAE to the Treasurer:  
Katharine Deaville, 'Garec', Ham Lane, Elstead, GU8 6HG. Tel: 01252 703378

For confirmation of tickets please include email address/phone number.  
Advance tickets will be available for collection at the door on the afternoon.

Any queries **Tel: 01252-783133** or email: **kathy.deaville@gmail.com**

**[www.surreyhorticulturalfederation.org](http://www.surreyhorticulturalfederation.org)**