

# *Street Chrysanthemum, Dahlia & Vegetable Society*

## **Newsletter**

Spring 2016

A new gardening year begins, and already there is much to be done in preparation for summer. One of the best things about gardening is that we are always looking forward to the results of our labours, whether it is an attractive array of flowers in the garden, or prize winning exhibits in the Annual Show. Either way, it is always a challenge to coax a seed or small plant to produce fantastic flowers or vegetables – preferably better than the picture on the seed packet! Good luck with all your growing efforts.

### **Annual General Meeting:**

The AGM took place in the pool room at the Unity Club on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February and was well attended in spite of the inclement weather. Early arrivals arrived before the rain, sleet, hail and snow descended on us. The sound of the rain and hail on the skylights was present through much of the evening, although it was again dry when the meeting finished. Communication was better this year, and approx. 30 people attended.

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted, and it was noted that following Chris Smith's talk last year on "The Search for Gold", Chris went on to be awarded gold at Chelsea Flower Show. The Chairman gave a report on the successes of the last year and thanked all members of the committee for their invaluable contributions to running the Society. The Treasurer, Pat Baker, gave his report, and issued copies of the accounts, which he expanded on. Essentially they showed that the Society continues to be in a satisfactory financial position.

Elections were held and the new officers and committee are as follows: -

President:	Ken C. Dunthorn
Chairman:	John Merrick (Avalon House, Lower Godney, Wells BA5 1RZ)
Vice Chairman:	Jim Searle
Correspondence Secretary:	Mrs Lin Driscoll
Minutes Secretary:	Mrs Mary Whitaker
Entries Secretary:	Pat Baker
Membership Secretary:	Pat Baker
Treasurer:	Pat Baker (2 Prospect Close, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5YD)
Show Manager:	Gordon West
Press Officer:	Ruth Hamlett
Committee:	John Baker, Chris Bentley, Paul Boncey, Mrs Kay Burleton, Colin Driscoll, Sonny Dunthorn, Barrie Lovelace, Mrs Sandra Lovelace, Tony Nicholls, Les Taylor, Terry Vernoum, Kate Wilson Plus Officers

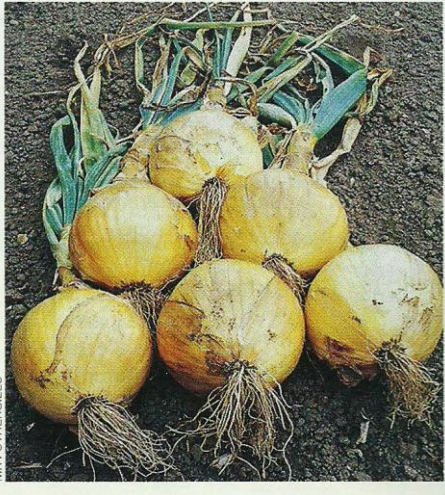
Again, the officers are unchanged, but we have a new committee member – Kate Wilson. She is very enthusiastic, and, apart from bringing new ideas to the committee, her presence will also reduce the average age of the committee considerably!

Thanks to Pat Baker for organising the raffle and to Gordon West for arranging the refreshments.

After the break, Mike Shepherd gave a fascinating talk on "Late Flowering Chrysanthemums", with slides showing the dedication required to exhibit winning blooms at national level. Mike has been a member of the Society for many years, and is also heavily involved with the NCS Western Group. Many questions were asked and much advice given by Mike.

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We are very pleased to have some “new blood” on the committee, but if other members feel they would like to contribute ideas or make suggestions, please contact us – see “Communication” below, or contact us via the website. It is useful to have feedback – both positive and negative – from members, about the Society, comments on classes in the schedule or any other matter.



## Kelsae Onions!

The above photo and rather worrying text on the right appeared recently in the RHS magazine, *The Garden*. However, we are informed that Kelsae onion plants will be available for members who wish to enter the members only class 63. These will be available at the **Annual Plant Sale on Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> May in the Library Gardens, Street**, starting at 8am until c12 noon. Fuchsia plants for the Members Challenge cup will also be available. Plants are being supplied by members and grown on by Sweet Acre Nursery. We plan to have an even better selection of plants this year, so come early for best choice. Money raised at the plant sale helps to fund the Annual Show, along with donations and sponsors. Anyone wishing to sponsor a class should contact Ken Dunthorn on 01458 442477 ASAP as he is currently preparing the schedule for printing.

The date for the **Society's Annual Show** will be on **Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> September in Crispin Hall, Street**. We hope to have some improvements in the venue for this year. Schedule's should be available at the Plant Sale.

The RHS magazine also carried the information in the text on the right. Useful for anyone with an interest in dahlias. Looks like there is a lot of information there!

*A pictorial database of dahlias, that took more than a decade to compile, now contains around 10,000 cultivars. David Brown's Picture Library also includes classification, flower size and origin. [www.dahlia-nds.co.uk](http://www.dahlia-nds.co.uk)*

To improve communication and to save paper and postage, it would be helpful to have e-mail addresses for as many members as possible. This would reduce the cost of keeping you informed. Please send your e-mail addresses to Pat Baker ([pbaker042000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pbaker042000@yahoo.co.uk)) or John Merrick ([merrickj13@gmail.com](mailto:merrickj13@gmail.com)).

## Hailstorm halts supply of giant onion seed

One of the most popular cultivars of exhibition onion, 'Kelsae' (above) is likely to be absent from show benches this year, after the seed crop grown by a major supplier was lost following freak weather.

The renowned Scottish-bred onion has regularly broken UK and world weight records. Seed merchant Mr Fothergill's currently maintains the original seed strain (which is produced by carefully controlled open pollination) and grows its seed crop in Italy where conditions are usually more favourable than in the UK. However, during summer 2015 a hailstorm flattened the plants just as they were flowering.

Vegetable grower and exhibitor Medwyn Williams (briefly the UK's only supplier) stocked his own selected strain, but has now sold out. Other seed companies, such as Suttons, are selling alternative cultivars.

'We are growing in three areas in the coming year to try and ensure the true strain of 'Kelsae' will be available during the 2018 season,' said Mr Fothergill's Technical Manager, Tracy Collacott.