

News from the National Board

JULY 2020



Following on from my short virtual message in June, I thought you might enjoy hearing what the Board of Directors have been up to during lockdown. From the following messages you can see that when not attending to NAFAS business everyone is

keeping busy and filling their spare time one way or another. I have just finished reading the autumn issue of *The Flower Arranger*, I do hope you enjoy the magazine as much as I do. Soon it will be time to renew my subscription for 2021 so although my Flower Club might not have resumed, I must make sure to contact my Club Flower Arranger Officer, it's just such a wonderful magazine I'd hate to miss renewal dates. I do hope you are all keeping safe and well. With all good wishes.

Sue Brinton - NAFAS National President.

**From Sue Brinton
(National President)
King's Lynn**



I just couldn't resist picking a couple of these happy smiley flowers then adding a few other garden bits onto a small pinholder in a dish of water. It's such a joy to see the wonder of nature, having sown and tended the seeds, watched them grow, enjoyed them in the garden and brought a couple indoors to further enjoy makes me realise how much I have missed the monthly Flower Club demonstrations.

I long to return to meet fellow members and join in all the Club's activities but until then I'll enjoy my simple offerings.

Sue

**From Kathy Lee
Carmarthen, Wales**

In the early days of lockdown, I really enjoyed having the extra time at home. Spring cleaning is not a task that I can honestly say comes naturally to me, but the house did benefit at the time. It has now reverted to its usual state! The garden has flourished, probably too much, as the shrubs that I usually prune when cutting for demonstrations and classes have missed the trimming. I was able to sow seeds at the right time and care for them. I now have a proliferation of *Amaranthus* and *Nicandra* seedlings!

The weekly Board of Directors meetings and my club committee get-togethers on Zoom have kept me in touch with many of my friends and colleagues as well as NAFAS business. The Club's AGM was due in May, and the Chairman contacted all members, most of whom have sent in their annual subscriptions as usual, helping to ensure the financial health of the club, Area and NAFAS.

Whilst I am missing the personal contact with my flower friends (as I am sure you all are), I have spent many a happy hour looking through old photographs, scanning some into the computer so I can easily access them again. This one is from an early demonstration, whilst the flowers have not dated, I have certainly aged since then!

Using Social Media has kept me inspired, and I have even tried my hand at videos up-loaded to YouTube. I will be experimenting with this again. Perhaps this may be one part of the way forward for us all.

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I am very much looking forward to the day when we can all meet up at our clubs again, sharing our love of flowers and floral design in person.

Kathy

**From Peter Mathers
York**

Like many, the enforced “stay at home” meant that the garden got rather more attention than it usually gets so at the moment it is looking very colourful and the seedlings of both flowers and produce are all forging ahead, growing in the combination of sun and rain that we are experiencing.

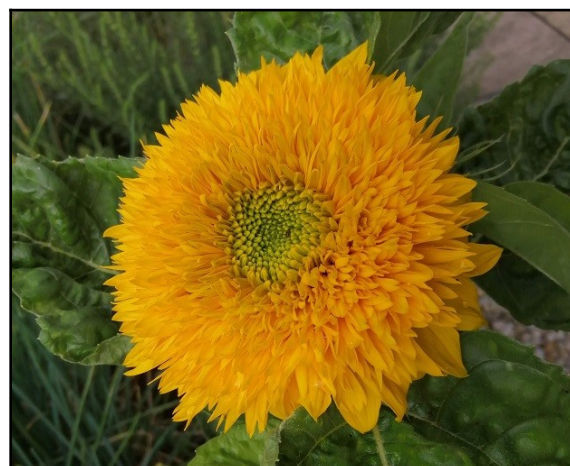
Our Runner Beans and Dwarf French beans are doing really well but don't think the dwarf beans have realised they are not supposed to grow as tall as the runner beans!



‘Dwarf’ French beans!!

With all the sunshine in June and then the rain everything seems to be flourishing. Lovage is the tallest it has ever been at about three metres. We planted some garlic last October which is about ready to be harvested.

Our first sunflowers have burst into flower and the roses are doing really well even though they never get fed.



One of our “teddy bear” sunflowers

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Rose "For Your Eyes Only"

Now that things are slowly coming back, we are venturing out on short trips. This afternoon we managed to book a garden visit to one of our local National Trust properties, Beningbrough Hall.



**From Ellie Meaking
Beoley, Redditch**

The only other lockdown I have experienced is whilst watching Pointless at 5.15!! However, this has been a completely different experience. No meeting up with friends at Flower Clubs and no meeting up with colleagues in London at NAC Meetings and Board Meetings. I have not missed the rush to catch the 7.20am train from Birmingham International followed by navigating the underground system in London and then rushing back to catch the 6.20 pm train back to Birmingham. These specified times to be taken in order to get the cheapest fare!! However, I have missed the social interaction and personal

communication as a result of the restrictions. Zoom meetings have become the norm – when did those wrinkles appear? I have now invested in a high definition camera and I am told it has worked wonders!! When I joined the Board of Directors I did not envisage having to embrace modern technology so quickly but am pleased to say that I am coping quite well, although I do occasionally forget to unmute myself – some may say that is an added bonus.



Looking to the future I am quite convinced that the day is not too far away when we can all share the fun, friendship and flowers we love so much, but not in a virtual way. Our Organisation is wonderful, it has given me many hours of pleasure and friendship and will continue to do so in the future. Stay safe.

**From Michael Bowyer MBE
Salisbury**

Life is full of surprises. Returning from judging the World Show in Jaipur in early March little did I realise how our lives were about to change in so many ways and for so long. Seeing streets without traffic made me feel like a young child again and there seemed to be more birds and butterflies in the garden than ever before. I had the opportunity to reclaim the jungle at the bottom of the garden. More reluctantly, drawers are tidied and bookshelves neatly stacked.

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How good it has been to keep in touch with our floral friends through emails and newsletters. I am sure that like mine your club has been innovative in helping us through this period of lock down. The chairman of the newest club in my Area, Wessex and Jersey, delivered a posy of garden flowers to every member. The Area had a virtual show with double the usual number of entries. I also know many of you have been viewing the series of videos we produced (YouTube Wessex NAFAS) we still have three more for you to enjoy.

Possibly you too have a collection of `spent` orchids on a spare bedroom windowsill. Half way through May I noticed two of them had signs of buds and both are now blooming beautifully. Perhaps these are symbolic, that our clubs will blossom again – we will meet again.

Michael



Michael's entry in the Wessex and Jersey virtual Show



Above is a still from Michael's Wessex and Jersey online demonstration using a Constance Spry urn. This video, and many others organised by Wessex and Jersey area, is still available for viewing on YouTube. A link to Michael's is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1VGn1VcJ-4>

**From Pat Martin
Middlesbrough**

I am so pleased to have the opportunity to contact you through this newsletter from the National President and Board members and hope that you are staying well and managing to fill your days during this difficult time. Over the past few months our lives have changed beyond all recognition but I am sure like me the garden has been a more special place to enjoy and has never been so weed free. Many Areas and Clubs have been keeping in touch with their members and encouraging participation in various competitions and updates on previously arranged activities. I hope you have been taking advantage of all that they are offering to keep you in touch with your fellow arrangers as it is going to be sometime before we can all return to our regular Club meetings.



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I have recently been invited to join the Board until the AGM in October and have experienced how hard everyone at headquarters is working on your behalf to improve the current financial situation, looking at all aspects of the way forward for our Association while supporting all the committees with their important responsibilities for the different disciplines in NAFAS. This is made more difficult by not being able to meet in person but through technology contact is maintained and important decisions taken. Through the NAFAS website and face book you can enjoy the virtual demonstrations and workshops that are taking place.

When it is safe to do so we shall all be able to meet together again but until then please keep in touch with your friends through flowers, support your Club and Area financially or in whatever way you can and together we will survive this pandemic and emerge a stronger Association.

Keep safe and well.

Pat Martin

**From Ann Harding
Skipton**

So much that is good about the human race has transpired over the last few months from the COVID-19 even though the lockdown has affected us all in so many different ways. We have had to learn to use new technology to stay in contact with each other, for a while the sky was a clear blue and traffic was noticeably quieter on the roads and in the air. Whoever would have thought that the main highlight of the day would be our cooked from scratch evening meal, with or without the odd bottle of wine, or we ladies giving our complexions a rest by only wearing make-up for Zoom meetings! As for our hair, it is growing longer by the day!

When did I last have time to enjoy my home and small garden without thinking I should be concentrating on paperwork rather than feeling guilty for sitting in the sunshine reading a book? We have been so lucky to have had such lovely weather, our outdoor spaces have been a Godsend and our gardens have never had so much attention.

It has been a joy to hear of all the activities taking place in our 21 Areas and my own Area has held online flower arranging and photography competitions as well as quizzes and mini demonstrations to keep everyone in touch with each other and keep up the momentum and interest in all things flowery and

NAFAS! Clubs are sending Newsletters to their members more regularly and now we are coming out of lockdown, even holding socially distanced meetings and workshops in their gardens.



Wonder if they are taking their own Gin & Tonics with them?

Stay safe, keep smiling and we will meet again, even if we are all wearing face masks!

Ann

