

## 2024 Presidents Report

As in previous years, the Society has had a strong year, achieving much and remaining in a good position at the end of the period. The following list of achievements would not be possible without the fabulous efforts of our committee and the many volunteers who make a great team. I'd like to thank everyone for their help and support throughout the last 12 months.

As you may be aware our primary objective requires us to advance education and knowledge of gardening and horticulture. To this aim, our varied talks programme commenced with three of our members giving us a short insight into their passions and experience. Thank you to Joy, Sarah and Nick for a very informative evening which was helped long with some wine and cheese.

Libby Morris gave a very interesting talk on the Magic of Herbs and particularly referencing the Lothian region and the hospital at Soutra.

Ian Silver gave us his experience in Growing Better Roses.

Jim Jermyn talked about plants for the woodland garden and Dr Jim Bradshaw talked about Potatoes Feeding the World.

We hosted the Inter-Society Quiz in April. It was a full house that night, and our Gifford team of Sarah, Katherine and Joy excelled, coming second, missing out narrowly to Pathhead. Thank you to Stan da Prato for his excellent quiz writing and mastering skills.

### Outings

This year our outings were to the Scone Palace Garden Festival, and then in September to Kailzie & Portmore gardens. We were blessed with great weather on all our outings, and the settings of both the Peeblesshire gardens, were stunning. We had lower numbers for our September outing which was disappointing and that influences the income which will be seen in Sandra's financial report.

Our evening visit to Johnstounburn was particularly well attended, possibly because the gardens haven't opened much in recent years, it was wonderful to be hosted by the Plowden's and their gardener as they answered questions in their beautiful garden.

### Flower Show

One of the Society's original objectives was to encourage excellence in gardening through competition. The Gifford Flower Show remains one of the largest gardening competitions in East Lothian. This year, we had 765 entries from 208 members and young people which, down on 2023, was at similar levels to 2022. The difference was largely in the number of entries from young people. The weather over the growing season was far from ideal, and could have influenced numbers, particularly in the fruit and veg classes. Visitors to the Show were similar to 2023, and feedback remained very positive, the whole village was busy and the atmosphere was terrific.

Teas in the Village Hall were provided by the Community Woodland and the Parents of Yester School, the Tombola on the Saturday was delivered by the Village Hall committee, and the Sunday evening concert gave proceeds to the Village Hall. The Flower Show helped

three community groups to raise almost £1,500 for their causes- meeting our final objective of assisting in the improvement of the environment and fabric of the village and neighbourhood.

We really appreciate all the help from members and volunteers that go into making the Show the success that it is, It truly remains the highlight of the Gifford calendar.

Another competition that premiered this year was the potato growing competition, run by Sarah and Richard. 64 members took a bucket and a seed potato in March. Over the summer months, relationships were strained, families stopped speaking, all to grow the biggest haul of tatties.

### **Membership**

We continue to grow our membership, we started the year with 154 members and have increased it by 32. Ending the year with 186.

### **Thank You**

I started off by thanking everyone for their support over the year, and I want to end by thanking the office bearers and members of the committee for all the hard work, time, dedication put in throughout the year.

A copy of this report will be placed on our website.

Roger Wilson  
President

November 2024