



Katerina Kittnarova from the Czech republic showed the result of her year's work at the HGS Institute to Simon Abbott of the Dame Henrietta Barnet Fund which funded Katerina's studies here.



Dr Chris Donovan swings Barbara Honeyball at a lively Suburb Barn Dance organised by the North West Group in aid of the North London Hospice.



Elizabeth and her cats take orders for beautifully made cushions, tea cosies etc sold in aid of charities made up from your own choice of fabric from their collection. For details telephone 8731 7887 am.

Sit back and enjoy the garden

I'm feeling a little bit guilty at the moment. I am always so busy looking at new plants, new ideas etc. that I have overlooked a good old reliable friend, Pulmonaria. Squelching round the garden on a March morning clutching my cup of tea, I realised the Pulmonarias were flowering their socks off. Overnight the miserable little clumps of nothing had turned into plants with wonderful spotted leaves and masses of pink/blue flowers. I noticed Pulmonaria Sissinghurst White was now a sizeable beauty and nearby a pretty little thing in pale pink. Two years ago at a Victoria flower show I bought two deep blue varieties with deep green leaves, Munstead Blue and Blue Ensign. As usual the display plants were huge and magnificent and my

two purchases tiny, insignificant things only noticeable with binoculars! Anyway, I stuck them in the ground, the label the only clue that they were there, and I forgot all about them. Out of sight out of mind, yes that's me! So imagine how I felt on that March morning two years down the line. I was greeted with masses of the deepest blue flowers and bottle green foliage, the labels lost in the depths of these magnificent plants. I am very nice to them now.

On one of my strolls round my estate I noticed that many shrubs and trees had lost a lot of topsoil from around the base. So much rain had washed away at least an inch of soil and many of the small, fibrous roots were exposed. I went round and

covered them all with fresh soil. All this rain will have washed away nutrients from the ground and Alan Titchmarsh recommended using a general fertiliser over the entire garden. I bought a big tub

of poultry manure, which serves the same purpose, and then I mulched.

I still go once a month to the flower shows in Victoria, just a little bit of escapism, and over



the years I have collected many treasures. I was in my primula phase a few months ago and I purchased Eugene and Rosie O'Day. I have added them to Freckles, last year's gem, and I have planted them in a couple of old sinks. They look much better in containers and less easily damaged when I stomp around without my specs! If these plants get to a decent size I shall divide them and put them in the plant sale on May 19 along with my favourite grass, *Stipa arundinacea*, which has already been lifted and divided, a very useful plant to have.

Last year in September I went with a girlfriend to the Rare Plant Fair at the Royal Free. We had such a good time, purchasing unusual plants and

dragging them back to the car park on the heath, laughing with joy and excitement as our fingers bled with the weight of our booty, oh such giddy days. Anyway, they are not holding another one this year as it was so badly attended they said they wouldn't bother. If you want to go to one of the Rare Plant Fairs the only other London venue was Battersea Town Hall on April 12. Bet you wish you had gone to the Royal Free last year!

I am going to grow gladiolus for a change this summer. I haven't grown them for about fifteen years so I thought I would give them a try. I have chosen the most amazing purple variety called Plum Tart and shall plant them in groups, not in rows of soldiers. May is the time to plant gladiolus and your dahlias can go outside if you plant them deep enough, or if in doubt, ask Ken!

My lawn is looking somewhat moth-eaten so I can repair this now by seeding or with new turf. There is quite a lot going on in the Suburb in May. There is the outing to Goodnestone Park on Saturday, 12 May, £11

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DIANA IWI

Considering moving?

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Will it ever stop?

'Terrifying' is how the recent rainfall amounts can be best described. 13in in the first three months of the year is a very large quantity of water. It is, in fact, not the highest for the same period in the North London records since 1980. That distinction belongs to 1995 when there was nearly 15in. However, this year the previous three months had also been exceptional so the total for October 2000 to March 2001 was over 30in. This is more than we usually get in a whole year so it is little wonder that everywhere is so sodden. By contrast October '94 to March '95 had only 25in.

An annual total is a convenient way, but entirely arbitrary, way of looking at twelve months rainfall. Any twelve months could reasonably be considered. The total for the year 2000 was 41in but the amount received from April to the following March gives a truly staggering indication of what has happened to our weather. At 49in, April '00 to March '01 experienced 9in more than the previous highest total, 40in in '93-'94. This is nearly a quarter as much again. Oddly enough, taking these twelve months instead of the more usual January to December produces much greater extremes. In 91/92 and in 96/97 the April to March periods has less than 21in. This has never occurred in calendar years, where the lowest totals since 1980 have not been less than 23in.

A possible comfort gained from studying all these figures is that the two previous wettest April to March periods have been followed by summers that were reasonably dry. Let us hope this summer will prove the same.

DIANA IWI



Ducks on Central Square!...



.... it's a topsy turvy world.

News, pictures, articles and letters are welcomed by the Editor, 26 Hampstead Way, NW11 7JL. Deadline for the Summer issue is June 16 for publication July 28. Views expressed in Suburb News are those of the authors and not necessarily of the publishers, the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association.

ON THE NET

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