

# The Castle Garden

Middleham's Community Garden news Summer 2020





Cosmos

## Abundance

What with one thing and another, plus my terminal procrastination, the summer edition has merged with Autumn. Lockdown 2, the sequel, has seen me finally finish my project to document the community garden for a year.

This summer has not been without its difficulties but looking back at the images I've taken while recording the progress of the garden I had this word, like an ear worm, going over and over in my head, ABUNDANCE!

Abundance of colour and growth; Fran Bright's Cosmos have been the best value ever, so prolific and a joy to see. Despite the issues associated with climate change; the rain and dry spring, the photos tell a tale of exuberance and a surprising range of plants all apparently happy to be in the garden.

We've enjoyed opportunities to work outside and meet friends, and have discovered the potential for more projects that can enhance our well being in Middleham. For example we've been talking Croquet and Boules!!!

One of the more mundane projects that I've been concerned with has been composting.

We are fortunate to have a really excellent composting area on the garden, for green waste only. However I've been concerned about all the other food waste we have in Middleham, and how it would be good to have the conversation some time about how we could turn all our food waste back into super fertile compost. On an episode of Inside Science , BBC radio4, earlier in the year Dr Adam Rutherford showcased a really accessible citizen science project being conducted at UCL about the alchemy of turning waste into good rich earth. This is particularly important as we are losing so much topsoil every year. So material scientists are wondering if all the stuff that comes through our doors that is labelled biodegradable actually is. The team asked the general public to take part by just observing how some of the

new materials are breaking down in their own compost bins. I've been composting the wrapper from the magazines that come with my weekend newspaper, and now some of the results from this project are being made available. You can discover more about this subject at [www.bigcompostexperiment.org.uk](http://www.bigcompostexperiment.org.uk)

I'd really like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who donated money to the Spring edition of this publication, particularly Chris and Judy Fairhurst for their very generous donation, which I know the Alzheimer's society will be grateful for.

I'd also like to thank Keith Garrard of Milners for his donation to the production of this issue.

A friend pointed out that it would be helpful if I named the plants in the photographs, so I'll attempt to do that, and hope that you enjoy this look back at the summer.



Dahlia. Sweetpeas. Nasturtiums. Rudbeckia. Crocosmia. GardenPeas Verbena Bonariensis





## The Shed

The Shed continues to be a hub for activity. Fran has got it organised and the Bright family have also provided us with a beautiful raised bed, which we have just finished planting with grasses and Echinacea, Wallflowers and Russian sage, tulips and allium bulbs. Really looking forward to seeing this area developing.

Nigel and Jackie managed to secure a 6th place at the Leek show. If you look back to the Spring edition of this publication you can see how well he did considering what he started with and that he had most of the old tennis court in the roots of his leeks; an impossible task to remove!

Nigel managed to get a whole range of flowers to grow on the embankment behind the shed, despite the battle with the nettles the Californian poppies and Cornflowers were particularly striking. We want to build on that success for next year and perhaps get rid of many of the weeds, but also leave enough of them to provide cover for wildlife. Hedgehogs are still endangered and need as many suitable habitats as possible.





Dahlia



Agastache rugosa Golden Jubilee



Papaver somniferum



Sweet peas and Nasturtiums



Sunflower

## Summer's Greatest Hits!

We have tried to plant in order to attract insects to the garden and judging by the number of butterflies I've seen this year it looks like we've been successful. Some days they have appeared almost satiated by the nectar, reluctant to fly off despite me waving my camera at them..

Here are some of the flowers that have given me joy this summer. I loved growing the Peony headed poppies but they were so short lived, unlike the enormous peach coloured Antirrhinum that flowered for months and could be seen from out of space....possibly!

And so many folk have asked us about the perennial Helianthus that we have in the big flower borders, they have provided us with much needed height but I suspect that they're going to behave thuggishly if we don't keep them in check. There is a photo of them en masse on page 13.



Gladioli



Snap dragons Alliums and Bronze fennel



Buddleia

## The Orchard and Meadow

If I'm honest, we probably took our eye off the ball as far as this area of the garden is concerned.

We were so delighted to see that our ally, the Yellow Rattle had survived both the flood and drought, that we rather left the meadow to get on with it.

Last year Jackie had put weed suppressing fabric around each tree but still they did struggle, and although there was much blossom not much fruit appeared.



We were still presented with the single Conference Pear, which we have now shared as part of some new autumnal ritual.

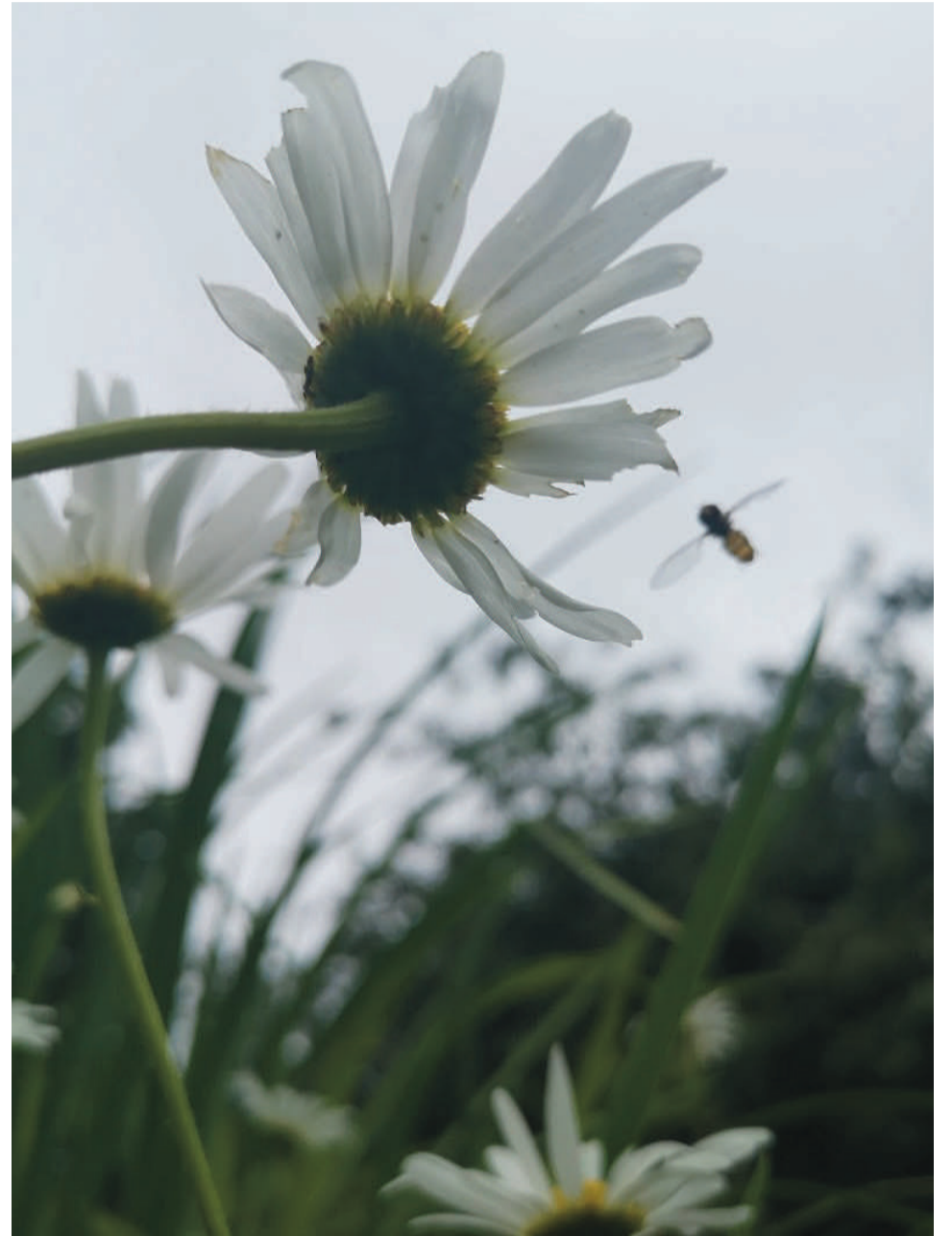
Well we have now weeded around the fruit trees, and taken the grass right back to earth. We shall sow the rattle again and attempt to grow wild flower plugs to populate the meadow later on. It is a fine balance trying to establish a meadow and we are still learning.

We know that Cowslips, Yarrow and Ox-eye daisies, Musk Mallow, Teasel and White Campion grow well in clay soils, so we shall encourage as many as we can.



Kniphofia seems happy in wet clay.





Oxeye daisies



### Home Grown

These photos remind me how wonderful it was to grow our own veg . I'm finally running out of pumpkin thank goodness, but grateful for the pickles I made earlier in the year.

Fran's Strawberries



Rev'd Liz's runner beans that came back to life.

## Home grown



Ed and Kayleigh's beautiful pumpkins.



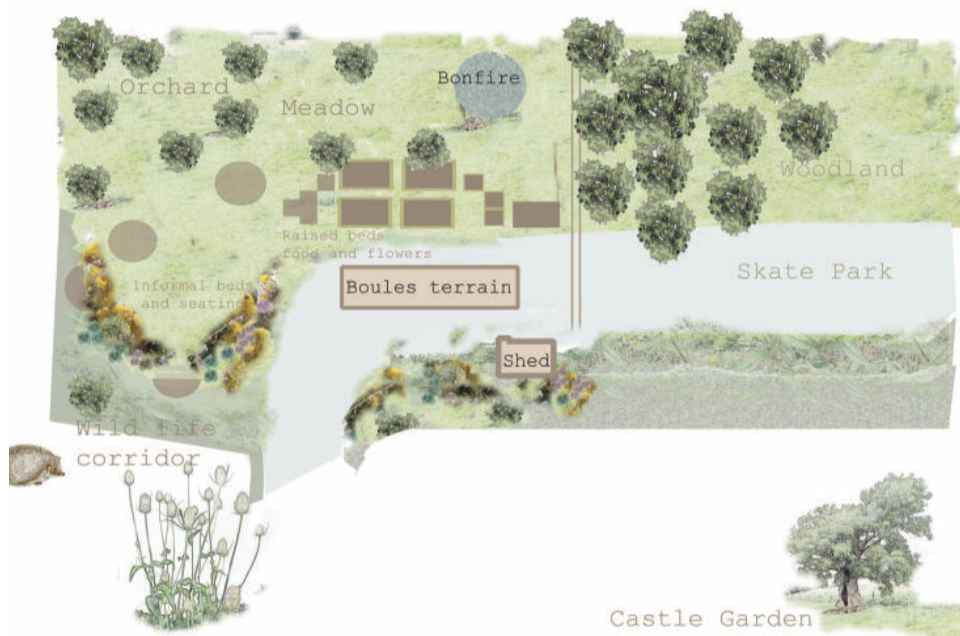


## Events we missed!

Coming in and out of lockdown, and social distancing has meant that some events like bonfire night had to be cancelled.

Usually I'd be having fun making a Guy for the Community Garden Bonfire but this year it wasn't to be, so instead, out of boredom, I took photos of my veg.

One event that we did manage to squeeze in was the Harvest thanksgiving service and in a way this comical image is my thanksgiving! Although more experienced growers may wonder how I only managed to grow one pumpkin, one Butternut squash and so few tomatoes I can only respond with, I shall try to do better next year.



## Future Plans

It was really lovely to have had a harvest thanksgiving service in the garden on the 20th September. We'd like to thank Rev'd Liz Moddy for her blessings on the garden and the children for their prayers and contributions to the service. Thinking about the future restrictions placed upon us due to Covid; meeting outside, at a safe distance seems to be our best option for safe socialising.

To this end we gardeners have been discussing activities that could bring folk together in the garden whilst trying to keep us healthy. Boules or Petanque is an option. We have the space and the terrain (this is what the playing area is called I have discovered) is relatively cheap to make and would also help the appearance of the old tennis court.



Rev'd Liz Moody and some of the congregation of St Mary and St Akelda.

## Bringing the garden inside

As we start to think about the shorter days and longer nights, and consider further restrictions on our movements; many gardeners start to think how they might prolong the growing season and bring the garden into the home. I follow Frances Tophill (Gardeners World) on Instagram and she has been enthusing about the Acer inspired prints by her sister Lotte Tophill. Apparently Monty likes them too.

Textile designers have been inspired by gardens and nature since time began and Charlotte Mudd is a local illustrator and designer whose work reflects this fascination with flora. Born and raised in Wensleydale she says that she has always been influenced by nature and her observational drawings of flowers and plants have a delicate vintage quality which is carried through into her portfolio of textile designs.

She works in the interior design department of Milners of Leyburn where I have been tempted quite often by the choice of wonderful wallpaper and fabric prints.

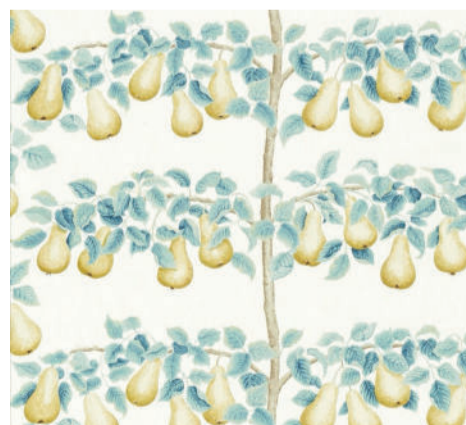
I've been particularly excited by the new partnership between Ben Pentreath and Morris and Co.

Charlotte and the rest of the Milners team have been promoting another successful design partnership from parent company Walker Greenbank plc, between Sanderson's and the National Trust, although their Perry Pear print just reminds me how much I have to learn about growing fruit.

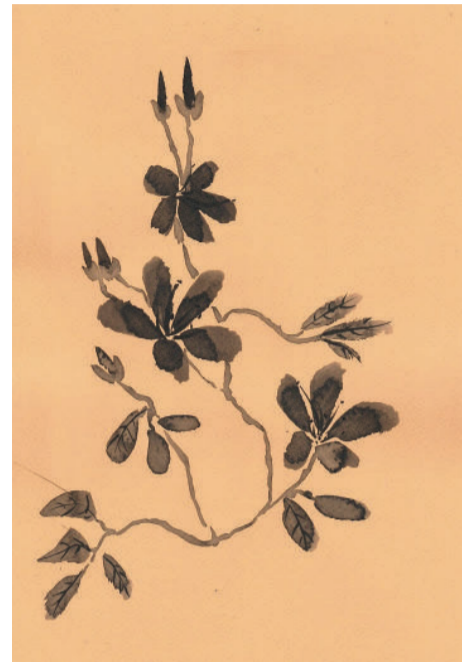
See solitary pear page 8

Find Charlotte's work at [www.etsy.com/uk/shop/Muddillustration](http://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/Muddillustration)

For interior design services contact Milnersofleyburn.co.uk



Perry Pear print part of the Sandersons National Trust partnership available at Milners of Leyburn



A selection of prints and drawings by Charlotte Mudd.



Beautiful wallpaper mural on the bedroom wall at the Schloss Roxburgh Hotel Kelso. Well worth a visit.



Clover by Charlotte Mudd



**We managed to grow a rainbow.....almost.**

If you would like to work on any area of the garden do get in touch through Nigel.

HopperN@gmail.com

Remember you can still work in an allotment/ community garden through lockdown by following social distancing guidelines.

All words and pictures by Amanda Langdown Hopper.

Thanks to Jackie Fletcher and Charlotte Mudd for their images.

Thanks to Milners of Leyburn for their support.