



Merry Christmas and a  
happy new year to you all  
from the GayWest Team



**Contents:-**

- Page 2 Mack and Mable.  
Woodpecker walk.**
- Page 3 The Sounds of music**
- Page 4 Holly**
- Page 5 Holly continued.**
- Page 6 Panto Time**





## Mack and Mabel

It was with much anticipation that I attended a performance at Bath's Theatre Royal by local amateur company BLOG—Bath Light Operatic Group. The musical show by Jerry Herman originally premiered on Broadway in 1974 to huge public acclaim, winning eight Tony awards.

With no less than twelve songs, it tells the story of Mack Sennett and his silent film production company in the 1920's and the introduction of slapstick. His muse is Mable Normand who is hopelessly in love with him, but her love is not returned.

After many years under his direction, she leaves the Sennett studios and works for another film mogul, eventually returning to Mack after five years away.

The company BLOG as usual were meticulously rehearsed and looked good, but the show itself was overlong and lacked any kind of humour. The best musical number for chorus and second female lead was the penultimate "TAP YOUR TROUBLES AWAY" which as the title implies was a fully-staged tap dance scene—performed to perfection.

Alas, there is no happy ending for this story as Mabel becomes addicted to alcohol and "Angel Dust" and dies at the early age of 36—her love for Mack unrequited.

Valentino

We would like to offer a warm welcome to our New Members, Lizzy and Michael, and Bill, We hope that you will enjoy your membership. Of this very unique group.

## Woodpecker Walk.



The last Woodpecker walk took place on Sunday October the 16th. As normal the walk started at number 30 and finished back at number 30. The walk was a gentle urban affair taking in the sounds and sites of new and old housing separated by some wooded areas that are very popular with the local residents. The woods are Abbott wood and managed by the local council for the woodland Trust. See Photo,

The walk finished with tea and coffee and homemade cream and strawberry scones, well you have to have something to tempt them out!.

## The Sounds of Music



We are surrounded by sounds of all sorts. Annoying sounds such as heavy machinery or relaxing sounds like bird song.

Different sounds create different moods in us humans. Sounds that can make us stressful or anxious, sounds that are soothing and relaxing.

A while ago when I was a young lad, I can remember my mother singing away as she did her chores and quite often along with the music and songs on the radio. It was when I was about 14 or 15 that I became heavily involved with music and started to learn my 1<sup>st</sup> instrument. My mother was very supportive. In later years, I realised that the reason she did not complain too much about the noise I was making, with a drum kit of all things, in my bedroom, was down to the fact that her hearing was becoming a serious problem.

It has been found that certain music can help those suffering from depression, dementia and other illnesses. Singing to yourself while working or just pottering, maybe out walking also has health benefits. Rock music can make you more active, even aggressive along with Rap and associated musical styles. We all know how the marching bands used by the military can stir the soul. Remember how the constant repeated beat of the drums was used to keep every one in step at our Queens funeral. Have you noticed how countries like China and North Korea use band music on a grand scale at their state events. The people involved are controlled by the music being played.

We also have the piped music in Restaurants and bars even in some of the shopping malls, all there to influence your decisions. So music can control how we feel and is a very powerful tool in the marketing world. Especially this time of the year. We all remember the Snowman TV adverts with the song Walking on air. The famous Hovis bread adverts that used "Dvorák's Largo and of course the Hamlet cigar adds "Air on a g string" by Johann Bach. All powerful pieces of music that were used skilfully to invoke the mood of the listener and with the images make a very powerful influence on us. Call it brainwashing if you like.

The music that has been composed to accompany films has an almost total control over your feelings when watching the film and can be the making of the film, who does not know the James Bond theme. Then there is that other magical thing, dance music. When Rock and Roll came about in early 50's and the teenager was Born, the establishment wanted to ban it. What was this terrible row put upon us. It was no different to when Johann Strauss brought his waltz's to the world, you find you cannot stay still when an upbeat waltz like "The Blue Danube" is played

Most Sunday afternoons these days, I tune into "Sounds of the seventies" on Radio 2 with Johnny Walker Takes you back to an age of fantastic music. Pink Floyd, Queen, Wishbone ash, Genesis and many more brilliant bands, who's music still sounds good to this day.

For someone who has profound hearing loss, the sounds around me are changing. Music from TV Radio, Hi Fi is still available to me using a loop system or blue tooth equipment. Live music can be partially enjoyable, as with my aids I can adjust the volume and feel the vibrations. But the singer's voice is a sound, with the words never clear, no matter how loud they sing.

But I have discovered with my research into hearing loss that the brain analyses the sounds of music in a different part to that of the human voice. So this explains the reason why someone like myself can still enjoy music to some degree but struggles with the sound of the voice.

We would be much poorer as people if we did not have music.

The one thing I personally find annoying though is the fad for everything electronic to bleep, and bleep and bleep. Your phone, tablet ,PC, watches, cookers ,hobs, the list goes on. Why not a gentle soothing light indicator just to let you know that it is responding to your commands.

Now I can tell you are thinking, well how, if someone has poor hearing would this make a difference? Well you see these high pitched sounds vibrate at a hi speed that effects the electronics in the hearing aids, very annoying! But without the use of hearing aids, the sounds from these things has gone. What bliss. So if money makes the world go round so does the sounds of music.

Turn that noise down!!

Colin.



# Holly.

Traditionally around Christmas or Celtic winter solstice festival, we would bring in evergreen foliage in to the house and decorate with sprigs or made-up garlands and wreaths around rooms within our houses. Often used was Yew, mistletoe, holly, juniper, ivy, as these are commonly growing natives. In more modern times there's a whole array of evergreen foliage's available from our gardens.

Of the best of these foliage's used is the humble holly or in Latin Ilex.

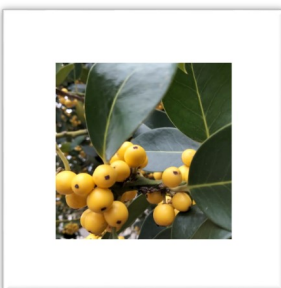
Ilex is a group of predominantly evergreen shrub or small trees. They are mostly diecious and this means that they have separate male and female plants. Some however are hermaphrodites. Ilex usually flowers from October through to February. The flowers found on second years growth and are small and white. The berries are often red but some are yellow and even orange. The foliage is normally prickly and green or silver and green or gold and green. In some varieties the leaves are smooth.

Hollies are versatile plant group for the garden. Having strong green or variegated foliage's that are predominantly prickly and glossy that bounce light from their leaves. This group are often used as hedging plants but also can be used in topiary these are usually variegated versions.

Some to take note of,

## Ilex aquilifolium

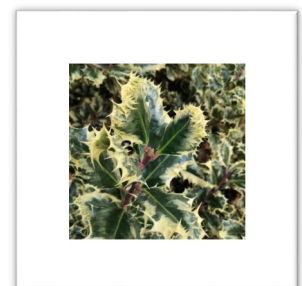
Our common native holly. It is diecious. It has dark emerald green glossy foliage. Usually grows as a small to large tree if unchecked. Makes a very good plant for hedging. Pruning this holly as a hedge or small tree keeps the foliage prickly. Mature trees often have smooth foliage. The wood from our common holly is pale when seasoned, it's a hard wood and make excellent logs that burn slowly. The berries on females are a good red.



A nice hybrid from I.Aquilifolium is "**Bacciflava**" lovely dark green leaves often used for topiary and has good clusters of yellow berries.

## Ilex aquilifolium "**Ferox argentea**"

The very apt hedgehog holly. It has this reference as it has additional spines on the leaves. This version makes a large shrub over time as it is very slow growing. Has attractive green and silver/cream leaves and has rich purple stems. This is a male.



Continued on Page 5

**Ilex Silver queen**

A striking small shrub with black/purple stems that carry prickly dark green and silver leaves and the berries are a nice red.

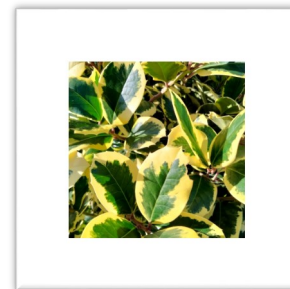


**Ilex Lawsoniana**

A largish shrub /small tree produces largish leaves that are dull but has a very attractive gold splash in the center of the leaves.  
The berries on this variety are brown.

**Ilex altaclerensis golden king**

A large shrub or small tree with ovate shaped leaves that are slightly spiny has an attractive gold and green foliage.  
One of the best gold variegated hollies around.



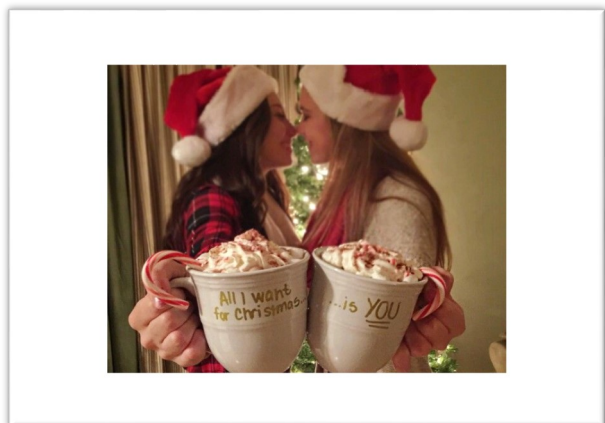
And finally, as a curio

**Ilex Verticillata Christmas Cheer**



This is a deciduous form. It grows to a twiggy large shrub with green leaves that turn golden in autumn.  
Once fallen it reveals clusters of shiny red berries that hold through the winter.  
This shrub is also unsuitable for chalky soils.  
There is also a gold berry version called 'Winter Gold'

Stephen. Your Gardening Consultant





**Its Panto Time!**



*Your events organiser has been busy along with Santa's elf's to bring you some Christmas time events for you to go along to.*

**Pantomimes**

**Hippodrome, Cinderelle.** December 2nd—DEC 31ST No Saturdays except 24th Christmas eve 1pm—5pm and 31st 1pm—5pm. Tel 08344 871 7615

Performances 2pm & 7pm Christmas 24th & 26th 1pm & 5pm

**Bristol Old Vic**

*Nutcracker* 24th Nov — 7th January 2023

Open concessions as little as £3 ( previews ) Tickets from £8 00p.

Tel 0117 987-7877

**Tobacco Factory**

**The Snow Queen.** Thursday 1st December — Sunday 15th January 2023

Tickets from £ 12 Matinees 2pm evenings 7pm

Tel. 0117 902 0344

**Theatre Royal Bath**

**Aladdin** Thursday 8th December —8th January 2023 Seats from £9 Gallery—Stalls £ 38.50p

Performances 2pm —7pm

Tel. 01225 448844

