**STORRINGTON HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

At the March meeting we were treated to a talk by Rose Philpot on Arundel Castle Gardens. Rose is a young local girl who originally went to the gardens as work experience from school; she soon became bitten by the gardening bug and after further training is now working there, full time.

Rose explained that the gardens cover 40 acres has seven full time staff plus a few volunteers supervised by the head gardener Martin Duncan. There are several areas of differing gardens, roses, stumpery, walled, cut flower, vegetable, wildflower to name just a few. The produce from the cut flower and vegetable gardens are used within the castle. Box hedging which at one time was a feature of many areas has been removed because of box blight and box caterpillar. This has been replaced with Lavender and Yew cones or balls for structure .

The stew ponds have been conserved and in 2020 won the Sussex heritage award. A dipping pond was also created in the same area and is now a haven for birds, insects and butterflies. Paths have been laid by the ponds so people can wander around without causing damage to the wildlife habitats.

Arundel Castle is famous for its Tulip Festival opening at the end of March and this year 76,000 tulip bulbs have been planted making a total of over 1.2million in the last decade. Tulips have been planted on the grassy ramparts, in lawns flower beds and hundreds of pots. Rose advised us that if you wish for repeat flowering tulips year after year it is best to buy a Darwin hybrid called Appledore. The fee for the talk was kindly donated to a gardening charity.

The meeting closed after a raffle and light refreshments.

The next meeting will be on Friday 19th April when we welcome Melanie Barton Gibson who will be talking about Parks and Gardens of Flanders.

Janet Webber