

water, ponds and canals

We went for talk this evening by someone who runs a firm that builds ponds. We discussed how to get rid of pond weed, how to prune water lilies which you do by cutting them out at the root, throwing most away and planting one or two good specimens. The best thing for reviving goldfish is to put them in an aquarium with copious quantities of salt. All the usual things that you want to know.

How many slides make a good evening? What makes a good slide presentation? I think one to one and a half trays of slides, I mean the circular trays, is about right. It is possible to see too many images and the whole thing turns into a blur after a time. The speaker got a few brownie points from me by saying that if you want to jump in and ask a question at any time please do so and do not wait for the end. I think it's a good thing to show slides at a fair rate and just make two or three points per slide. It annoys me when slides are allowed to linger on the screen for more than 3 or 4 minutes. it is also rather bad manners to show a slight and say something like "we don't have time for that one". I noticed this more in the United States where lecturers seem compelled to disgorge every last bit of knowledge in 45 min.

The speaker talked about using clay which is one of the most difficult substances to work on and said that if you're going to waterproof a canal or large pond you need it least 12 inches of thickness to be effective. That is quite a few tons of clay per mile. I discussed with someone the inactivity in the local Canal Society. The desire is to reclaim and restore coal canals but there are a number of problems. First of all if you want to dig the canal you have to pay someone to do with quite a large digger to do it. Secondly you have to get permission from people who own canalside properties. Some are enthusiastic but some say "over my dead body". The third point is politics, regulations, and squabbles between people.

I pointed out that I am a member of the local society and had given my membership fee and e-mail address in the expectation that I would be kept up-to-date with what was going on. Although we had been members for nearly a year and nothing had been forthcoming. This is crying out for a monthly newsletter with a mail client such as Mailchimp, which is free and so easy to use that anyone with the ability to type can manage. I don't understand someone who is secretary of the society not wishing to involve people in this way. I think we get a couple of newsletters per year in printed form but the news is more historical than current.

The evening ended with some lovely coffee and biscuits, very good coffee and very real and crunchy biscuits with oatmeal in them, none of your cheap supermarket rubbish. It was pleasant to stand outside in the dark and just enjoy the arrival of more clement weather. It was actually 9°C but with no wind it seemed a little bit warmer. before we arrived, by the way, we saw two hot air balloons silhouetted against the setting sun. It rather stopped us in our tracks and caused my wife to warn me against erratic driving.

And so to bed.