

I wondered what emotions and experiences little Lucy enjoyed or endured.

Ethiopia is one of the greatest coffee producers and consumers in the world. Not surprising as the plant, *Coffea arabica*, was first noticed in the Keffa region in the 7th century and took many years to be discovered and adopted by western countries, along with tea, as the social drinks of choice. Legend has it that a goatherd noticed that his animals became excited and over active after eating the leaves and berries of the bush hence over time cultivation began for the local population.



5 A traditional and typical Ethiopian dinner comprised a platter of assorted vegetable and meat dishes, some spicy – mostly bland, but all delicious, presented buffet style but with no cutlery. The trick is to eat strictly one handed, using a rice-flour based roll of what looks like loo paper, dexterously fingering and wrapping into a mouth sized parcel while a young lady comes round with a large kettle of lemon scented water and towel for endless washing of the hand in use, and in my case, the chin as well. The Ethiopians are one of the most social and family orientated nations in the world and to experience it was unforgettable.



7 Just the precursor to the unique coffee ritual we were told, so off to a separate shrine-like building we went and through a screen door to be greeted by our 'brewers and servers'. After a short talk on the beauty and character of their coffee (it would put a wine tasting to shame) we could choose either Sidamo, Genika or Harar beans all named after the region of origin, but equally robust and interesting with hints of this fruit or aromas of that citrus etc.

Our selected beans were then reverentially roasted, one portion per person, in a small iron pan over an open charcoal brazier; then ground, still smoking, in

an ancient mortar with a wooden pestle, then to a battered pot and hot-but not boiling, water from a silver kettle. At long last, to drink it - from a small china cup with no handle! The aroma was amazing but scorched fingers not so.



8

Despite the evidence of poverty in many rural areas, we felt safe and never threatened by the absolutely charming and very friendly people. At high altitude and the habit of never walking when you can run, run and run, it was obvious how the likes of the Bekele family, Gebresilase, Shura Kitata, Mamo Wolde and their clans and many more, have won a great number of medals for long and middle distance running at every Olympics and world games since Mexico in 1968. It's in the genes, literally, and youngsters (girls and boys) aim to be an 'adeganya' or 'dangerous runner'; not reckless just making sacrifices, sprinting up steep hills for miles, often at night (barefoot as shoes are expensive) and generally enjoying pushing themselves and their mates to the limit, and beyond, to become a famous Olympian. The sight and sound of running feet in the small and early hours going past the hotel stays with me still.

Another memorable country and its welcoming people and then on to Djibouti....

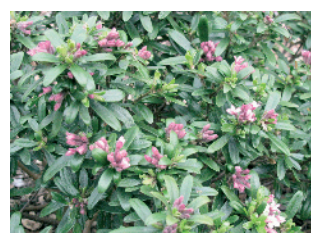
Photos:

- 1 The Beta Giyorgis church at Lalibela
- 2 The scale of the excavation from the volcanic rock
- 3 'Lucy' modelled to show her size and the brown original fossils, the white being new castings
- 4 The 3.5 million year old fragments as excavated, including the jaw bone and teeth
- 5 Our meal, the infamous flour roll, top right
- 6 The hand wash ritual. A new take on Covid precautions
- 7 The beautiful, expert coffee brewers and servers
- 8 The coffee kit - Charcoal fire (in a timber building!), Mortar, pestle, iron pan and bean basket

THROUGH THE GARDEN GATE

LIZ NAPIER

After a really warm spell in early spring, the weather turned cold with quite sharp frosts. It has also been very dry – not good for gardening with many plants and shrubs suffering. I'm writing this in mid-April, the driest April for many years so don't be surprised if you see me doing a rain dance in the garden!



Despite the dry and cold weather, spring has well and truly arrived. The daffodils have been glorious and the blossom even better. I see that the *Daphne Eternal Fragrance* I planted two years ago is now covered in

flowers. This shrub doesn't grow very large and the beautifully scented flowers will continue throughout the summer and into the autumn.



Also putting on a wonderful show are the *Erythronium Pagoda* (yellow dogs-tooth violets) and the *Mahonia aquifolium Blackfoot* with bright yellow flowers set off against glossy evergreen, very prickly, leaves. This shrub retains interest throughout the year but can be invasive as it spreads by suckers and can pop up even in the lawn! Talking about lawns, at least the cold, dry weather has meant that the grass is not growing so quickly. Even so, it is worth trimming the edges just to tidy things up a bit.



When I planted shrubs around the monkey puzzle tree, I covered the whole area with Strulch, a mineralised straw mulch. It has worked so well in keeping moisture in and suppressing weeds that, this year, I have used it on the herbaceous border. It is also a slug and snail deterrent and seems to be doing its job as there has been no sign of the little perishers. A lot of the plants in the border needed

splitting up this year so I have been hard at it – good for the plants but not so good for the back!

At the risk of boring you to death, I'll continue with the history of garden design, starting with oriental gardens. Japanese and Chinese gardens didn't follow world trends towards either the Renaissance style or the more relaxed, romantic concept of the English gardens of the 1800's. Japanese gardens reflected the worship of nature and focused on the elements of the universe where the sky, sun, sea, animals and planets were revered. The gardens were all about worship, energy and inner peace. Flowering cherries, acers, rhododendrons, camellias, bamboo and wisteria were used in abundance and,



underneath, in the shade of the trees, ferns, hostas and moss covered the ground.

Chinese gardens created miniature landscapes and contained ornate pavilions with chimes and incense burners, decorative rocks and sculptures and always



with a strong focus on water. These gardens were used every day for social or solitary contemplation. Whilst in China in 2013, I visited the Summer Palace near Beijing. The Palace stands in grounds of just under 3 square kilometres, three quarters of which is water. The vast Kunming Lake is entirely man-made and the excavated soil was used to form Longevity Hill. The Summer Palace is believed to be the largest and best preserved royal garden in the world. Later in my visit to China I went to Yu Yuan gardens in Shanghai. These were first constructed in 1559 during the Ming Dynasty but were damaged many times during the 19th century and again, by the Japanese, in 1942. They were carefully restored between 1956 and 1961 and declared a national monument in 1982. And, of course, the Chinese

also built the longest wall in the world – not exactly a “garden” wall though!



Back in England, following the re-modelling of the countryside by Capability Brown, the Victorians developed a passion for colourful displays of annual planting and their carpet bedding schemes were also adopted by most of the municipal gardens over the whole of the country and, in some cases, continue to this very day. In the early 1900's the Arts and Crafts movement linked architecture with garden layout. The architect designing a property would also design the garden to match and include traditional craftsmanship and charming “outside” rooms, each with its own character. John Ruskin and William Morris were two famous names of the day and Sissinghurst Castle in Kent is one of the best examples.

Abstract and post-modernism followed the Arts and Crafts movement with designers promoting the idea of “less is more”. They used different materials and interesting geometric designs including the use of concrete, steel and bright colours. They



incorporated reflective surfaces, creating illusions and surprise. Just about anything was possible. So where are we now? Environmental and green issues are starting to dominate with naturalistic planting. Green walls and rooftops are a recent trend with people trying to reduce the urban heat island effect. It will certainly be very interesting to see how we all cope with global warming

and the need to protect the flora and fauna of our beautiful planet.

Tips for May and June:

- Keep watering newly planted trees and shrubs. A good bucket full every week so that they establish their root system
- Deadhead rhododendrons and azaleas once the flowers are over, to encourage the formation of next year's blooms
- Divide and replant any marginal plants around ponds that have spread beyond their allotted space

- Thin overgrown clumps of water lilies and remove some of the larger leaves
- Keep ponds clear of algae before large masses form
- Lift and divide primroses and polyanthus after flowering
- Hoe frequently to remove weeds while they are still young
- Plant out half-hardy annuals when the fear of frost has passed
- Plant dahlia tubers in well-prepared ground that has been enriched with well-rotted manure or garden compost
- When the soil is moist, the golden rule is mulch, mulch, mulch. You can use garden compost, well-rotted manure or bark and your plants will thank you in dry spells.
- Protect plants from slugs especially when the weather is warm and humid
- Trim back spreading rockery plants, such as aubrietia, to 2-3in from the base when they have finished flowering
- Don't forget to sit down and enjoy your garden after all of your hard work!

We are keeping fingers crossed that we will be able to hold **Flowers in August** this year. It may be a little different with, perhaps, fewer classes so that judging will be easier if we still have to socially distance but we all think that the show is well and truly needed as it is, of course, part of Frampton's social calendar. Full details will be included with the July/August issue of the Village News so get your green fingers working!

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BON APPETIT!

Mediterranean Fish Traybake

Serves 4. Takes 50 minutes

2 red onions, sliced

3 tsps olive oil

1 lemon

125g fresh spinach

250g pack cherry tomatoes, halved

4 garlic cloves, roughly chopped

**10g fresh rosemary, leaves picked and
roughly chopped**

4 frozen white fish fillets

400g potatoes, scrubbed and thickly sliced

10g fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

METHOD

1) Put a baking tray in the oven and preheat it to gas 6, 200 C, fan 180 c. Put the onions in a large baking dish and toss with 1 tbsp oil; season. Bake for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, cut 4 thin slices from a the lemon and set aside.

2) Stir the spinach, tomatoes, garlic, rosemary and another 1 tsp oil into the baking dish with the onions. Top with the fish, drizzle each fillet with half tsp oil, season and top with the lemon slices. Cover the dish with foil.

3) Remove the hot baking tray from the oven. Put the potatoes on the baking tray and toss with 1 tbsp oil; arrange in an even layer. Bake the fish and potatoes for 25-30 minutes, turning the potatoes half way through, until the fish is flaking and cooked through and the potatoes are browned and crisp. Squeeze the remaining lemon over the fish and scatter with the parsley to serve.



HOPE ...

Apparently we are one year older
But now we will have to be bolder.
We believe we are winning the war
And soon we can hug like before!
We've been taught how to appreciate
The things that are inside our gate.
The house and garden for sure
But too much cleaning can be a bore.
Thank goodness for Webex and Zoom
But we need you right here in the room ...!

(Mike Champion)

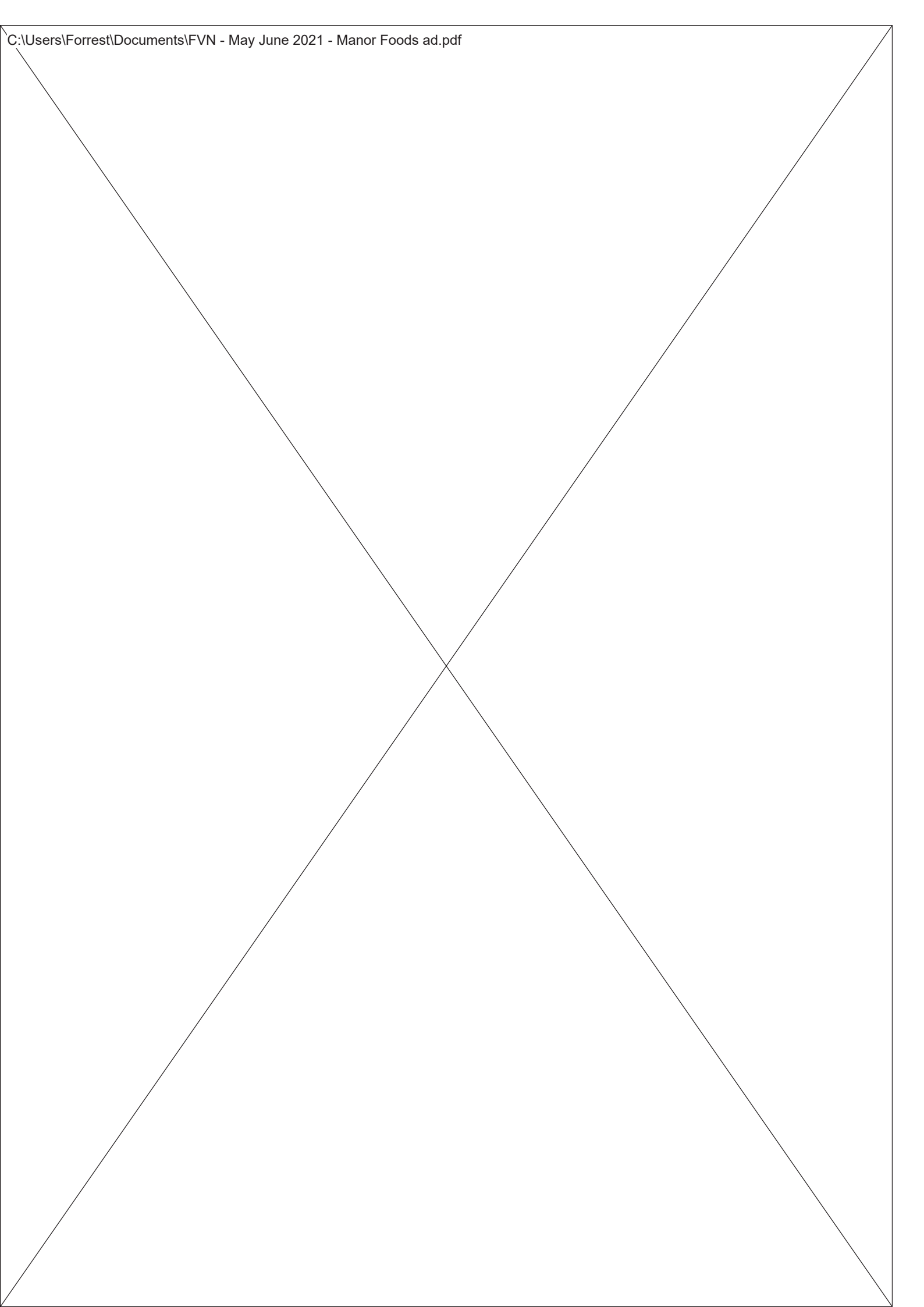
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