

Plant Heritage

National Council for the Conservation of Plants & Gardens



SUFFOLK GROUP JOURNAL

Autumn 2010



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Front and back page photograph of Dahlias taken by Maggie Thorpe at Chelsea this year. Cover design by Sally Geeve, www.sallygeeve.com. Thanks to Nicola Hobbs for layout.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

MAGGIE THORPE

Last November we announced the sad death of our very popular National President, Robin Compton VMH and we now send a warm welcome to his successor, Alan Titchmarsh.

I am thrilled to be able to tell you all that our Spring Plant Fair at Helmingham had the highest attendance ever. Over 2000 people came and our 800 free plants of Sir Cedric Morris irises, grown by our Collection Holder Sarah Cook, were so popular that we quickly ran out. Robert Shepperson again did a fantastic job on our own Plant Stall, raising over £900.

Sadly, Robert wishes to retire after our Autumn Fair and, as was pointed out to me, we will need at least nine people to equal the work he does and has done for many many years. Please come forward and offer to help in this respect.

One or two members have already offered to grow on some of the plants we propagate and members are invited to bring suggestions to members of the Committee if they think they have plants we could be dividing or propagating by other means. Anne Tweddle has searched for bulbs of rare narcissus which we will twinscale and in a few years will be able to let members buy them as collections. Our motto, is of course, 'Conservation through Cultivation'.

No sooner have we recovered from the Spring Fair than it is time to start thinking about the Autumn one. Please make sure you have plenty of leaflets (if not, ask Sue Burton for more) to distribute wherever you can and prominently display in local post offices, shops, libraries etc.

At national level, we now operate a Threatened Plant Project which is helping us identify those plants most in need of conservation. The project is funded by grants from charitable trusts and the really good news is that our organisation, after years of deficits, is now heading for a surplus. Increased membership should now be our main concern. Please introduce a friend.

Three members from the Suffolk Group helped to man the cloakroom at the Chelsea Flower Show this year raising £4,600 for Plant Heritage. Let me know if you are interested to help in future years. There is a rota of three to four hour shifts each day and all you have to do is take in and give

out bags and coats in return for a free full-day ticket.

Requests have been made by members in the east of the county to hold some of our meetings further towards the east. Nick Cook, has very kindly offered to let us hold our Annual General Meeting and Party in the barn at his home, Barton Grange in Worlingworth.

This will take place at 7.00pm on Monday 29 November and we shall have a talk on the 'Restoration of Bridge End Garden' by Mark Ropkins. This will be followed by a glass of wine and light refreshments. To help with catering arrangements, please let me know if you intend to come.

Congratulations to our Collection Holders who have won medals this year

Malmaison Carnations	Gold medal	RHS Chelsea Flower Show
Mickfield Hostas	Silver gilt	RHS Hampton Court Flower Show
	Silver gilt	BBC Gardeners World Birmingham
	Silver	RHS Malvern Flower Show
	Silver gilt	Harrogate Spring Flower Show.

SUFFOLK'S NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

AESCULUS	Bury St. Edmunds	Robert Grimsey, 01728 685203
BUXUS	Bury St. Edmunds	National Trust Ickworth Park, 01284 735819
CAMPANULA	Bury St. Edmunds	Sue Wooster, 07879 644958
DIANTHUS (Malmaison)	Ipswich	Jim Marshall, 01473 822400
EQUISETUM	Stowmarket	Anthony Pigott, 01449 766104
ERYSIMUM	Walpole	Dr.Simon Weeks, 01986 784348
EUONYMUS	East Bergholt	Rupert Eley, 01206 299224
HIBISCUS	Woodbridge	John Woods Nurseries 01394 386914
HOSTA	Stowmarket	Mickfield Hostas. 01449 711576
IRIS	Ipswich	Sarah Cook, 01473 822400
(Sir Cedric Morris introductions)		
SYRINGA	Stowmarket	Norman's Farm, 01449 781081

PROPAGATION OFFICER'S REPORT

ROBERT SHEPPERSON

After last year's flirt with horticultural holocaust, courtesy of the Helmingham Plant Sale free plant production near-nightmare, I have to say that it has been very much business as usual this year. The usual band of stalwart helpers gathered on the plot for propagation in March and as always they produced an impressive number of plants in a very short space of time. As I grew the stock on, some varieties proved to be relatively disappointing whilst others were surprisingly good; but then that is usually the case.

The passing of April and May were as ever punctuated by my conviction that insufficient plants would be looking good on the day, but as always in the event there were so many that I couldn't carry them all. As usual somebody was good enough to help out with transport to Helmingham, and once there I received all the valuable assistance and plant donations that I have come to rely on, from all of the usual helpers of course!

The plant fair was, as usual, superbly well run by the organising committee, who should be commended for their efforts, and once again the day was a resounding success. Verging on the tedious this you might say. So what, if anything, did stand out as different?

Well for a start those well-run fairs have expanded for three consecutive years, setting new records for attendance, number and variety of exhibitors, and income for Plant Heritage in the process. Our presence at Helmingham Hall now fully complements this prestigious venue, and the plant fair committee should be justifiably proud of their achievements here.

Back on the plot, plant raising was perhaps rendered unusual by the very slow start to the growing season. You might remember how much later the daffodil season was; well according to my collection of miniature varieties the very earliest (January Gold, Spring Dawn, Early Sensation) were delayed almost six weeks. This would be late February; by mid-April the discrepancy was still a good three weeks, and the residue of this tardiness persisted up to the Plant Fair. For example we were able to sell *Geranium maculatum* varieties in good flower, when normally the process of loading them into crates for the sale causes the last few miserable petals to fall off in a most tantalising manner!

As I now write in early July all vestiges of that late spring have been swept aside by the heat and drought of the previous month; already our lawns are

developing the kind of tan we normally associate with the end of August, and allotment holders are cursing the day that nature made water so heavy. I've done more than my share of lugging water about too, which is one of the reasons why I've decided to cut down on my horticultural activities after this year and spend more time on some of the other things I never get round to doing. Now that is unusual.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

PAULINE BYFORD, SUFFOLK GROUP MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

Despite the continuing financial climate we have had 20 new members since this time last year. Our membership is now 267, a few down from two years ago but slowly rising. I often visit, or even pass, beautiful gardens and have taken to stopping and talking to the owners if they can be seen. So far I have not had any luck, but I am aware that there are many good gardeners who have not heard of Plant Heritage nor of our plant fairs at Helmingham Hall, or even know where Helmingham is. I have been thinking about what we can do.

- ✧ If you know of a garden which opens to the public, apart from those in the Suffolk NGS ('Yellow Book') scheme which Sue Burton mails, ask them to have some of our leaflets on the table or even hand them out.
- ✧ Talk to owners of gardens. They do appreciate interest and praise.
- ✧ Invite a likely new member to an event and introduce them to me or our chairman. If they say they cannot remember the names of the flowers then point out that neither do many of us!
- ✧ If you see a garden, but no owner, pop a membership form through their door.
- ✧ If you think of or have tried something else please let me know. I usually have a pile of forms.

ONCE MORE - please send me (pabyford@btinternet.com) your current e-mail address if you do not get an e-mail from Plant Heritage the week this journal comes out. This means we won't have your details.

E-mailing members is quicker and cheaper than notifying you by post but if our contact details for you are out of date you won't receive Plant Heritage news and information.

MEMBERS' GARDENS OPEN

AUTUMN 2010

GABLE HOUSE

Redisham, Beccles

Sunday 5 September. Autumn bulbs and perennials

11am - 5pm. Free admission. Ploughman's lunches and homemade teas

FULLERS MILL

West Stow, Bury St. Edmunds IP28 6HD

Wednesdays and Saturdays till the end of October

2 – 5pm Admission £4

THE LUCY REDMAN SCHOOL OF GARDENING

6 The Village, Rushbrooke, Bury St. Edmunds IP30 OER

01284 286250

Fridays till the end of September as part of the Gardeners Fridays scheme

11am – 5pm Admission £2 (children free)

BELLFLOWER NURSERY

The Walled Garden, Langham Hall, Nr. Bury St. Edmunds, IP31 3EE

0784 286250

Thursdays 10-5, Saturdays 10-1. Admission free

Fridays as part of the Gardeners Fridays scheme 10am - 5pm

Admission £2

DO YOU OPEN YOUR GARDEN??

Please let us know if you are opening your garden for charity, a good cause or even just for the enjoyment of others during 2011, so that we can publicise it in the Spring edition of the Suffolk Group Plant Heritage Journal. Send details before December 1st to

widget.finn@btconnect.com

PLANT HERITAGE SUFFOLK GROUP EVENTS

2010

SEPTEMBER

- Saturday 11 Talk on 'Geums' by Sue Martin of Frittenden, Cranbrook, Kent. 2.30pm. Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4AL*
- Sunday 19 PLANT HERITAGE AUTUMN PLANT FAIR. 10.30am-4.00pm. Helmingham Hall

OCTOBER

- Saturday 23 Talk on 'Winter and Spring Bulbs' by Rod Leeds. 2.30pm. Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4AL*

NOVEMBER

- Monday 29 AGM and Party – Talk by Mark Ropkins on 'The Restoration of Bridge End Gardens. 7.00pm. Barton Grange, Worlingworth, Woodbridge IP13 7PE. Please ring Maggie Thorpe if you intend to come.

2011

JANUARY

- Saturday 29 Talk 'Finding Plants in the Wild and Snowdrops for Galanthophiles' by Joe Sharman. 2.30pm. Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4AL*

FEBRUARY

- Saturday 26 Talk 'The Scented Garden' by Caroline Holmes, 2.30pm. Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4AL*

MARCH

- Saturday 26 Talk on 'Ornamental Grasses' by Richard Ford 2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4AL*

APRIL

Sunday 17 Study Day 'Magnolias' by Brian Humphrey
Morning talk at The Riverside Centre, Stratford St.
Andrew followed by afternoon visit to Brian's garden to
view magnolias. £10 per person including light lunch
(guests welcome). Booking necessary 01787 211346

MAY

Sunday 29 PLANT HERITAGE PLANT FAIR. 10.30am - 4.00pm
Helmingham Hall

JUNE

Sunday 12 Garden Visit, Marks Hall, Essex IP13 7NJ.
£3 per person. Meet at Visitor Centre, 2.00pm

JULY

Saturday 30 Talk 'Garden Photography – Getting the Best Using
Photoshop' by John Metcalf.. Stowupland Village Hall
IP14 4AL

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 3 Talk 'The Restoration of the late H. Avray Tipping's
garden' by Mrs Helen Gerrish. Tipping dominated the
pages of Country Life in the early 20th century, writing
learned articles about houses and gardens which he later
turned into influential books. 2.30pm Stowupland Village
Hall IP14 4AL*

Sunday 18 PLANT HERITAGE PLANT FAIR
Helmingham Hall

Wednesday 28 Study Day 'Irises – cultivation and propagation' by
Sarah Cook at Hullwood Barn, Shelley.IP7 5RE
Booking necessary 01787 211346

NOVEMBER

To be arranged Suffolk Group Annual General Meeting and party

*Lectures marked * are free to members, with £3 entrance for non-members*

PLANT HERITAGE PLANT FAIRS AT HELMINGHAM

WIDGET FINN

The spring Plant Heritage plant fair at Helmingham in May was bigger and better than ever. There were over 2,000 visitors, our share of the profit was £6,340 – and the sun shone!

The visitors who spend an enjoyable day at our fairs seldom realise the huge amount of planning, effort and hard work by Plant Heritage members which go into making each event such a success. The word ‘committee’ brings to mind a rather stately group –so perhaps in the current fashion our energetic and effective plant fair committee should be re-named ‘Team Helmingham.’ They, together with volunteer members, are the unsung heroes of the plant fairs.

Preparation for the spring fair starts at least a year ahead, when the committee decides on the **free plant**, around 800 of which will be given away. It has to be relatively rare, to fit in with the aims of Plant Heritage, and if possible have a local connection. Once it is identified, we find a supplier who can provide the quantity, and a nursery who will nurture it. Then volunteers re-pot the plants in preparation for the fair.

Choosing, contacting and booking **exhibitors** – both nurseries and garden-related companies – begins before Christmas as many exhibitors plan their

VISIT THE PLANT DOCTORS .. at the Autumn Plant Fair

Do you have some plant problems or problem plants?
Then bring them along to the Plant Heritage Plant Fair at
Helmingham Hall on 19 September, and our team of
expert plant doctors will be there to help.

Ivan Dickings, RHS committee member and Suffolk Group
president, will be on duty at the Plant Clinic throughout
the day, aided and abetted by Jim Marshall, former
National Trust Gardens Advisor, and Sarah Cook,
former head gardener at Sissinghurst.

programme early in the New Year. However we are still signing up stands until the last minute as we come across interesting and new businesses.

Designing and planning the distribution of **leaflets** starts before the New Year, as well as the **media publicity**, since many national magazines work several months in advance.

In early spring the pace quickens, and we book the **cadets** who help on the day, make sure **tables and marquees** are

organised, and continue to distribute leaflets to garden groups, parish magazines, the WI, NGS gardens and a huge list of other venues. We also liaise with Helmingham about **catering**.

The day before the plant fair we **mark out the site**, with each exhibitor's plot taped and numbered. **Signs** are erected and the **car parking** area marked out. On the day we're on site from 7am to **meet and greet** the exhibitors and smooth out any wrinkles.

During the fair we're taking entrance money at the **gate**, handling the **car parking**, manning the **Plant Heritage gazebo**, distributing the **free plant and questionnaires**, keeping an eye on the **Plant Doctor** and generally making sure that everyone enjoys themselves.

And of course at the end of the day we stay around to tidy up!

Would you like to be part of Team Helmingham? As you see, there are lots of jobs to be done ahead of the fairs and on the day. We'd love to have your help. Please contact Pauline Byford pabyford@btinternet.com or Widget Finn widget.finn@btconnect.com



Ivan Dickings prescribes the horticultural remedies at the Plant Fair at Helmingham in May

PLANT HERITAGE PAEONIES FOR SALE

ANNE TWEDDLE

The Suffolk Group has a number of *Paeony ganzu* and *Paeony delavayi* for sale. Our president Ivan Dickings donated the seed. The plants we have grown from Ivan's seed are now three years old, and for sale at £8.00 each.

Plants can be ordered from anne.tweddle@onetelnet and we will also have some on our group plant table at our plant fair at Helmingham Hall on Sunday 19th September

Paeony ganzu

A shrubby or tree paeony, famous for its large well-perfumed flowers. Colours range from white through to dark maroon. There is a large dark blotch at the base of the petals. This paeony is straightforward to grow, preferring some shade. It is completely hardy and a beautiful addition to any garden. Flowering in spring, the foliage looks handsome all summer before colouring up well in the autumn.

Paeoni delavayi

A shrubby or tree paeony, with dark deep red flowers. It typically grows to 5-6 feet high and 4 feet across. The RHS awarded it an AGM (Award of garden merit).

CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS

Plant Heritage Surrey Group is again organising a national photographic competition.

This year the title is 'My Favourite Plant'
Remember to take your camera when visiting gardens this summer.

For more information go to:
www.nccpg.com/news/photographic-winners.aspx



The photo taken in Bridge End Garden in Saffron Walden which won first prize in the Plant Heritage Surrey Group's photo competition last year. This was for a picture entitled 'Through the Garden Gate'. It was taken by Suffolk Group Chairman, Maggie Thorpe ,with her digital Nikon Coolpix 7900 and was not photoshopped. Her prize was a cut-glass rose bowl to hold for a year and a £50 garden voucher. See opposite for details of this year's competition.

WANTED: SUFFOLK HOME FOR EUPHORBIA GLAUCA

MAGGIE THORPE

Don Witton, the National Collection Holder of Euphorbia, gave a talk to the Suffolk Group in March 2009. He mentioned briefly that *E. glauca*, endemic in New Zealand and the Chatham Islands, was one he did not have and was rare in this country.

Enough said: our New Zealand member, Anne Tweddle, sent off to Shirley Stuart, New Zealand Native Plant Collection Curator at the Botanic Garden in Dunedin, who immediately replied with seed for our Group to trial. Four members were each given a few seeds – germination was sporadic but several plants emerged during 2009 and flourished this spring after surviving a very cold winter, kept fairly dry in a cold greenhouse. Two have flowered this summer and one was taken to a meeting of the RHS Herbaceous Committee at Helmingham Hall where Suffolk and Norfolk Plant Heritage members were invited to attend and take plants of interest for discussion. Our plant was photographed by John Fielding for his book on the genus, soon to be published.

This plant has threatened status in New Zealand, is in serious decline due to coastal development, road widening and animal trampling and in South Island is prone to a fungal disease. It grows on coastal cliffs, sand dunes and rocky lake shore scarps. The large cigar-shaped leaves and red cups around the flower-like inflorescences distinguish this species from other Euphorbia species. Can we find the right spot for this very elegant plant somewhere near the coast in Suffolk?

For more information, visit:

www.nzpcn.org.nz/vascular_plants/detail.asp?PlantID129

VISIT THE APPLE DETECTIVES at the Autumn Plant Fair

Bring your apple queries and problems along to the Apple Revival stand at Helmingham on 19 September.

PROPAGATION PROJECT IN THE PIPELINE

ANNE TWEDDLE

Narcissus propagating projects are familiar to us in Suffolk. Our latest idea is a collection of white Narcissus bred by Reverend G.H. Engleheart (more of him below). Suffolk Group has purchased and been gifted five of his distinctive white cultivars and plan to make them available to members as a collection.

The number of bulbs available will be limited to somewhere between 20/30 collections, one collection per member. The collections should be available from 2011/2012.

A collection will cost £6 to members. To subscribe to this collection please send me your details at anne.tweddle@onetel.net

Rev. G.H. Engleheart was an important Narcissus breeder and it is in recognition of this that we are running the propagating project.

The cultivars we have chosen are:

N. 'Albatross' 3W-YYO pre 1891

Clean white perianth segments becoming propeller-shaped with age. Shallow pleated corona, clear lemon-yellow with well defined narrow orange trim. With age, yellow darkens and orange less sharp.

N. 'Seagull' 3W-Y pre 1893

Milky-white perianth segments becoming propeller-shaped with age. Corona rather small and shallow; closely, regularly and shallowly ribbed: lemon-yellow with narrow reddish orange trim on opening which soon disappears.

N. 'Mitylene' 2W-Y pre 1923

Corona widely expanded at maturity. Milk-white, broadly ovate perianths. Corona deeply and quite closely pleated; creamy buff, soft apricot on opening, fading to buffy cream

N. 'Evangeline' 3W-Y pre 1908

This is perhaps the most luminous yellow Small cup. Perianth remains more rounded and corona less expanded.

N. 'White Lady' 3W-Y pre 1898

Perianth segments milk-white, spreading; margins waved but never becoming propeller-shaped. Corona very variable; always deeply pleated,

citron-yellow at first, and scented; sometimes with overlapping ruffles and fading to cream.

Four of the cultivars are being purchased and one is being gifted by Jim Marshall and Sarah Cook. N. 'Albatros' is currently unavailable in the RHS Plantfinder. The other cultivars are available from one supplier.

The Reverend George H. Engleheart 1851-1936 spanned the Victorian and Edwardian age. He was a clergyman, classical scholar and amateur plant breeder. He drew on experiments and work of the pioneer narcissus breeders Leeds and Backhouse. His objective was to improve on their work. Most of his breeding work was done while living at the vicarage at Appleshaw in Hampshire after 1880. His breakthrough came when he produced a good pure white cultivar.

White daffodil cultivars all have *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* subspecies *moschatus* somewhere in their genes. Engleheart took an existing white cultivar and crossed it with the species. The result was success on several levels: a white daffodil with a distinctive good sized flower and strong stem, bulbs that grew well and produced a plant full of vigour. This cross put Engleheart out in front in the world of daffodil breeders.

Between the 1880s and 1930s Engleheart continued to breed daffodils. His seedlings became known for their superior size and form. He managed new colour breaks and kept his introductions healthy and full of vigour.

Some of them are still show winners of today. His work continues in the hands of current day breeders, using many of his introductions in current breeding programmes.

The RHS acknowledged his breeding work by awarding him their highest honour of the VHM and naming a competitive cup in his honour. The Engleheart Cup is contested annually at the February Show. It is awarded to the best exhibit of 12 cultivars raised by an exhibitor.

Prices: White lady £1, Evangeline £3, Albatros £1.50, Seagull £1, Mitylene £1.50. Special collection price to members £6. Collection price to non-members £8

HEAD GARDENER REQUIRED

The position of head gardener has become available at Fullers Mill, West Stow. He/she will work with a team of four part-time gardeners plus volunteers. If you are interested or know of someone who might be, in the first instance please telephone 01284 728248 for an informal chat and full information.

THE BELLFLOWER NURSERY

SUE WOOSTER

It's been a busy year so far in The Walled Garden at Langham Hall near Bury St Edmunds, home to the National Collection of Alpine Campanulas. At the end of March, Bellflower Nursery had its launch at our NGS open day. The Collection has flourished this summer and has attracted many visitors from near and far. Features in The Times, Sunday Telegraph and Let's Talk have helped put the garden and nursery on the map.

Another launch, the Gardeners' Friday scheme, has been extremely popular: until the end of September visitors can come along to the Walled Garden on Fridays between 10 and 5, and also visit Wyken Hall, The Kitchen Garden at Troston and Lucy Redman's Garden at Rushbrooke. No pre-booking required – entry £2. Plants for sale at each venue!

If any Plant Heritage members could manage to volunteer a couple of hours at any time to help in the walled garden, please let me know.

Bellflower Nursery is open in The Walled Garden on Thursdays and Fridays 10-5 and Saturdays 10 – 1. Huge range of hardy plants, alpiners and shrubs on offer, as well as campanulas.

Gardeners' Friday scheme runs until the end of September. 10-5. Entry costs £2 at each garden. except Wyken which is £2.50 and open 2-6)

For further details contact me - Mobile: 07879644958, Email: campanulas@btinternet.com

HELP NEEDED!

for our Autumn Plant Fair
at Helmingham Hall
on Sunday 19 September

Volunteers are needed at the gate, free plant table, questionnaire desk and members' gazebo. If you can spare an hour or so please contact Pauline Byford 01284 762628, pabyford@btinternet.com

Helpers get free entry to the sale and Helmingham Gardens.



Above: Jim Marshall with his gold medal for Malmaison carnations at Hampton Court.
 Below left: Anne Tweddle's mystery orchid (page 28)





Right: Ivan Dickins winter survivors (page 29) *Grevillea bipinnatifida* 'Canberra Gem' and below right: *Photinia prionophylla*

Below middle *Euphorbia Glauca*, in need of a good home (page 14)



Left: Engleheart Narcissii (page 15) clockwise from above left: *N. Evangeline*, *N. Mitylene*, *N. Seagull* and *N. Albatross*.

THREATENED PLANT PROJECT -

An exciting and ambitious undertaking

MEL COLLINS

Members of the Plant Heritage Suffolk Group were joined by Jamie Blake (chair of the Norfolk Group) and Sue Lander (coordinator for the Essex Group) to be briefed on the Plant Heritage Threatened Plant Project, at the end of January. The meeting was very lively, despite the soporific effect of comfy seats and lovely food, probably because the subject matter is close to our hearts.

Mercy Morris and Peter Halliwell presented the project, which aims to objectively identify cultivated plants which may be in danger of extinction. The project is ambitious, as there are thousands of cultivars in existence, spanning thousands of genera. Simply creating a process by which to assess such a massive range of plants is problematic.



Threatened Plant Project meeting with Peter Halliwell and Mercy Morris on the left.

It needs to be simple to understand, not so strict that it precludes some general, or too broad that there are no defined limits to the scope of the project. It also needs to be simple to implement, to encourage as many people as possible to participate in it. And, besides, you need to start somewhere otherwise you would not get beyond the theory, into a working process.

Mercy and Peter spent some time going through the criteria of the project and there were some interesting questions posed. At one point Sarah Cook clutched her head and mentioned 'Johnson's Blue', a geranium that Jim Marshall has referred to many times as a particular favourite. It proved an excellent example to put through the assessment process.

The group quickly reached the conclusion that it should be classed as 'Vulnerable in cultivation'. This quick example illustrated how easy the assessment was to make, given the criteria laid down and it was an encouraging start.

The project needs the support of collection holders, and members of Plant Heritage, as their expertise on specific genera will add greatly to the classification of plants at risk. Mercy and Peter have already done a significant amount of work to get the project to the stage where Plant Heritage members can get involved and the next phase of the project will require as much help as members can possibly give.

This is an exciting project, not least because it underlines the remit of Plant Heritage. It will ultimately provide a list of endangered cultivars which can be supported through a number of channels. It will also provide a valuable source of information to justify why we are all involved in Plant Heritage, striving to preserve all plants, not just those under threat.

Some 'thank you's': first to Jim and Sarah for hosting the event and welcoming us all into their home, to everyone who helped put together the wonderful lunch and afternoon refreshments and to Mercy and Peter for travelling all the way into darkest Suffolk to get us on board with the project.

A more detailed overview of the Threatened Plant Project can be seen on the Plant Heritage website at www.nccpg.com/Info-centre/Threatened-Plant-Project.aspx. Anyone wishing to get involved, in any way, please contact Mercy Morris at National Office

Update: Peter Halliwell is no longer involved in the Threatened Plant Project. Sarah Barton has been appointed as the new co-ordinator. There is more about her in the extracts from Newslines on page 33.

VISIT TO FULLERS MILL GARDEN

MIG BACON

Fullers Mill Garden is a truly magical place. Reached via a drive through Forestry Commission conifers, it contains many mature trees, huge oaks and towering willows and this benign canopy gives a great coolness to the whole place, especially on a hot summer's day

We were led through his creation by Bernard Tickner who bought Fullers Mill in 1958 and started to make a garden on what is now known as The Island, so called because it is surrounded by the River Lark, Culford Stream and the Mill Pond. Later more land was bought and now the garden covers about seven acres. We began by exploring the Top Garden with its masses of alstromeria, and the birch grove of charming *Betula* 'Silver Grace' which all came from a chance seedling found at the lakeside. Here also can be seen a hybrid euphorbia, *Euphorbia* 'Redwing' (it has a red 'nose' which develops over winter) which first arose in this garden, and the fascinating *Euonymus cornus quinquintus cornutus* with its horned seedpods.

On we went, over the River Lark to the 'Outer Quandary' where we marvelled at a bank of huge and perfect hostas. What no slugs? Bernard Tickner orders ferric phosphate in large quantity, hence no slugs but no harm to other wildlife. Here also was *Saruma sp.*, a new plant with spade shaped leaves and three petalled yellow flowers, "full of eastern promise", said Bernard and *Aesculus* 'Sydney Pearce' hybridised at Kew, still flowering magnificently in late June. In the Inner Quandary we found another plant which is unique to Fullers Mill Garden; *Lunaria rediviva* 'Honour Bright' is a fitting name for this shining variegated honesty with lovely pale greeny white stems and elliptical seed pods.

We skirted the dark Mill Pond lit round the edges with masses of *Primula japonica* like glowing embers, where Bernard's head gardener Neil Bradfield, pointed out *Thalia dealbata* an insectivorous plant with paddle shaped leaves which throws up a spike of purple flowers, strategically placed to feed on the unsuspecting flying insects gathered over the still water. Harking back to the past of the place are healthy specimens of the Fuller's Teasel with enormous heads well able to cope with the business of brushing up the felt of the cloth - beautiful and efficient tools. Nearby was a short hedge made of a single ginkgo. This garden is full of the unexpected.

Crossing the Culford stream we gazed out across the lovely lake, created

after gravel extraction in 1974, now home to many waterfowl. A pair of swans (named after his aunt and uncle) are personal friends of Bernard's. He much enjoys seeing them sitting among the ox-eye daisies in the early morning sun when they bring their cygnets along to join in convivial breakfast conversations.

The garden abounds with lilies. One such beauty is *L. 'Lake Tulari'* made, said Bernard, by Derek Fox. Its flowers are pale pink outside with a much darker inside, the contrast between light and dark giving a dancing effect to a group of these plants. Then there was *Cardiocrinum yunnanense* the big bulb of which produces a ring of bulblets after flowering and then you have to wait six or seven years for another flower. However there are always one or two flowering somewhere in the garden each year.



Bernard Tickner

By now I was uncertain just where we were. Was *Salvia turkistanica* ("Sweaty Betty" said its twinkling owner - yes definitely), in the Low Garden? Should you get lost perhaps you may relocate yourself by the presence of two newly reclaimed beds name Arista and Thexia. Now, I speak no Greek, ancient or modern. "What", I enquired brightly, expecting some classical or romantic reference, "does that mean?" Left and Right was the triumphant reply! Well, what else could you expect from the man who, when creating the new garden between the river and the stream

and unable to decide on a name, solved the problem by simply referring to the Outer and Inner Quandaries!

Our last port of call was for a cup of tea in the newly built small wooden building alongside a grassy patch where, in spring, *Narcissi bicolia* bloom followed later by the parasitic yellow rattle.

This garden abounds with the intelligence and humour of its creator who for over half a century has filled it with unusual, beautiful and sometimes unique plants. This report would be nearly as fat as the RHS Plant Finder if every plant within the garden were mentioned. The best answer would be to visit it yourselves. I think you will leave, as we did, grateful, smiling, wiser and completely satisfied.

[Not just a summer place, Fullers Mill is a garden for all seasons. It is open at times advertised in the local press and on www.fullersmillgarden.org.uk Check before you go.

Telephone 01284 728248 for an informal chat and full information.



Plants that steal the
limelight, from top:

Euphorbia stricta

*Bupleurum
rotundifolium*;

Euphorbia Donii.

PLANTS THAT STEAL THE LIMELIGHT

AUDREY TYERMAN

Of all the colours in the plant world, yellow is the most difficult to place in a garden. In spite of being the colour of happiness it is the least marketable commercially. Not long ago yellow was the year's choice as a fashion colour for garden accessories and picnic ware, but had to be withdrawn as it attracted insects making it unpopular.

Yellow at its brightest is the colour of spring, of sunshine and should therefore be welcomed. Nowhere is it more needed than in my small narrow north facing and shady garden. My solution is to use lime greens as a foil both for colour and texture.

First choice is euphorbias in variety. Bernard Tickner whose garden the Suffolk Group recently visited has its own special collection, and a talk last year by Collection Holder Don Witten boosted mine. Nowadays I have only about a dozen of the more than 2000 species, many of them not for our English climate. The plant was named by Linnaeus after Euphorbus, physician to Juba II King of Numidia in the 1st C who used it for its medicinal virtues. Using the milky sap to treat warts has long been practiced, however caution is advised at all times and secateurs should be cleaned of the juice before it can gum up the works.

Some of the most attractive architectural specimens have outgrown the space I can allow. *E. wulfenii* and *characais* can make bold statements and earned the nickname by A.E.Bowles of 'frog spawn plant.' Lambrook Gold eventually had to go when it grew too large as did Portuguese Velvet grown from a cutting from Ivan Dickings until it swamped smaller treasures.

By contrast the smallest and most delicate is an annual, *E. stricta* which came to me from Cedric Morris' garden at Benton End. It has attractive scarlet stems and at first an uninteresting inflorescence which one is tempted to pull up then suddenly bursts into a frothy head about 18 inches high earning the name of foam flower.

Robbiae can be the saving grace of all shady gardens with dull corners where nothing else will do. Not all have green foliage, there are greys and bronzes, many tinged with red or orange in varying degree and in some the season is extended when the lime leaves become tinged with autumn colour. *Longifolia*, now *donii* is for me the star. It produces its first

inflorescence at the proscribed one metre, the first set of cyanthium leaves and flowers larger than those that follow and a clear buttercup yellow. Each stem then continues to grow taller, remaining graceful at about six feet, faded to lime green, the topmost panicle held up like the stays of an umbrella. It was bought from Dowcra's Manor along with *E.ceratocarpa* much commended by Sarah Raven for cutting all the year round with its long stems and delicate flowerheads.

She would have known it from childhood in her father's garden as Professor John Raven was a great botanist and collector. It was on a visit to his garden that I first saw *Bupleurum rotundifolium* which I would not now be without. It self seeds in one section of my garden flowering in May with purple alliums, a showstopper for three to four weeks.

In the first year the seedlings are no more than a pair of seed leaves which quietly go on to produce a small corm. This produces celery-like growth next season followed by a single stem topped by flowers. The whole plant is bright lime yellow. When the colours fade the plants can be removed leaving just enough for next year's seed. When picked the stem will dry to a lovely parchment shade in contrast to the shiny black seeds which hang on indefinitely.

I am not a great lover of variegated plants but have and enjoy *Astrantia* 'Sunningdale' planted near *Hosta variegata* with *Alchemilla venosa* between them. This alchemilla is marginally smaller in all its parts than *mollis* but with smooth leaves. It flowers a month earlier so that by dead-heading both one can have four flushes a year of bright lime flowers.

By the end of July most of this brightness has faded but in one of my boundary hedges I have *Hedera* 'Paddy's Pride' or 'Sulphur Heart' if you prefer, then a short length of my neighbour's golden privet and between them *Hedera* 'Buttercup' on an old tree stump and *Hedera* 'Poeticus' whose orange/yellow berries come with the daffodils in March and are beloved by the blackbirds.

PLANT HERITAGE NEWS

For an update on what's happening at National Office visit the
current issue of Newslines on the website

www.nccpg.com

To find out more about the Suffolk Group's activities visit

www.nccpgsuffolk.org

BEE-FRIENDLY

ANN SOMERVILLE

Bees play a vital role in food production by pollinating plants, but there has been a 15% decline in the UK's bee population in the last two years. The decline has been blamed on everything from pesticides to mobile phones, and the UK government has put aside £10m to research into why they are disappearing.

The message that bees are essential for our survival is beginning to get through. The Global Stone Bee Friendly Plant Garden won a silver medal at this year's Chelsea Flower Show, designed by Suffolk-based garden designer Janey Achincloss for the Bee Friendly Plants Nursery at Drinkstone, Suffolk. Daily Telegraph has launched a 'Bring back bees' campaign and the RHS website has news and information about bees. We can all help to conserve and support the bee population – but first know your bee.

Bees have evolved from wasps. There are over 250 species of bee in the British Isles, with fewer than 30 species seen commonly in gardens. Honey bees and bumble bees are the most familiar.

Honey bees and bumble bees are truly social. Each honey bee colony contains a queen, who lays all the eggs, males (drones), who mate with new queens and then usually die or are expelled from the hive before winter and sterile females (workers) who care for the larvae. Older workers forage for nectar and pollen – the diet of the larvae.

As honey bee colonies can reach 100,000, this diet necessitates that many flowers are available to supply the nectar and pollen. The workers forage from a wide variety of plants, probing the flower for nectar, a sweet nutritious food produced by special glands within the flower head called nectaries. So flowers have evolved to encourage bees to search for their nectar, and as a result their own reproductive system can be successful, through pollination. A perfect example of symbiosis.

To help the bees find their way to the nectar, flowers have developed 'nectar guides' which act like a map to the insects. Honey bees are most attracted to white, yellow, mauve and blue flowers, which smell pleasant, have shallow flowerheads, a landing platform or are tubular.

As the worker bee delves into the flower, it brushes past the pollen on the anthers and this sticks to the bee's body hairs. She then uses her legs to

pack it into a carrying basket, called the corbiculum, using a little nectar to help it stick. Only honey bees and bumble bees have this structure. During their daytime activity, while searching for nectar, bees constantly collect pollen from the anthers of one flower and brush it on to the stigmas of another, allowing pollination to take place.

Without bees, pollination would be much more haphazard and less reliable. 80% of the 1,400 crop plants grown around the world need pollination by bees or other types of animal pollinator. The 'new and exciting' plants created by man are often poor producers of nectar, so bees find it more difficult to locate enough food. Gardeners can help the situation by planting more 'bee-friendly' plants, increasing the bees chances of survival.

There is a wonderful selection of plants beneficial to bees. Gardens which are 'bee-friendly' can still be beautiful, with a mix of shrubs and flowers. Ideally, nectar rich plants should be available through spring, summer and autumn, with the early flowers particularly welcome to hungry bees. Planting the same plants close together is also a benefit to the bees, as they prefer to flit quickly from one flower to another.

Some plants which are suitable include rosemary, pulmonaria, flowering currant and mahonia. Favourites include ceanothus, cotoneaster, honeysuckle, foxglove, thyme, hyssop, lavender, scabious, marjoram, buddleia, *phacelia tanacetifolia*, *cephalaria gigantea*, *verbena bonariensis*, *salvia pratensis* and borage. In early autumn *echinacea purpurea*, asters, sunflowers and ivy are valuable

So, enjoy your garden and allow the bees to share your enjoyment.

www.telegraph.co.uk/beekeeping

www.beefriendlyplants.co.uk

www.rhs.org

www.britishbee.org.uk

A JULY MYSTERY

ANNE TWEDDLE

One of my July pleasures is to discover what the orchid fairy has brought. We aren't lucky every year, but most years we have a smattering of small bee or pyramidal orchids in the meadow in front of our house. The meadow used to be cut for hay, and the uprisings sold to the local horsey folk. For the last few years it has been cut, slightly more often,

but no longer collected. The grass is poor in parts, and there is a battle with thistles. The orchids almost always appear where the ground was damp in winter. Experience tells me where to look for them.

A week or so ago, I went see what offerings there were this year. Just a few pyramidal, but no bee orchids. The specimens were small, and of the half dozen I found a pheasant had beaten me and already bitten through the stem of one. That was excuse enough to bring it into the house for closer scrutiny. The meadow did reveal something new though, a white version of the pyramidal. I have never seen this before. I searched the web and my modest selection of books covering such a subject and drew a blank. No mention of a white anywhere.

The plant finder shows only a single species under *Anacamptis pyramidal*, so no obvious alba. I felt fairly confident the white orchid was the same species as the normal pink. All the visual characteristics fitted such as leaf appearance, stem and flower construction etc. Can anyone enlighten me, please!

A colour photo of Anne's white mystery plant is on page 18.

After the worst winter for decades followed in July by the worst drought for many years, gardeners have been counting the cost. But as Ivan Dickings discovered, many plants have proved unexpectedly hardy

WINTER SURVIVORS

IVAN DICKINGS

We are all familiar with the ubiquitous *Photinia* 'Red Robin' but there are others of equal garden worthiness like *P glabra rubens*. One which is not seen very frequently because of its doubtful hardiness is *Photinia prionophylla* which I have had growing in our garden for several years and has now made a sizeable shrub of fifteen feet high. The top is open to the vagaries of the north east wind but it didn't suffer any ill effect from the last winter. It has been quietly growing into what most people would call a rather dull looking plant with very large very leathery obovate leaves 7" long, which could be used to repair shoes with I am sure.

The young growth in the spring, which is downy, is pale tan/brown, not exactly startling but different. This year in July the whole plant was covered in large corymbs of white flowers 6" across emitting a rather foul smell. The plant was introduced from western China by George Forrest in 1916.

Another surprise survivor has been *Grevillea bipinnatifida* 'Canberra Gem' AGM, a member of the Proteacea family which is a native of Australia and is supposed to enjoy acid conditions and a sheltered situation. Mine is in a sheltered situation but certainly not in acid conditions as our soil is Ph8.

I was concerned after the winter as most of the flower buds had turned black and fell away from the plant, but some did survive and fresh buds started to form on the needle-like leaves and we had a very good display of the bright red flowers which are still showing. The bright green foliage has not been affected by the winter.

WAR TIME GARDENING

ELIZABETH SEIFFER

I have copies of 'The Garden' going right back to the second one published in 1934. They make fascinating reading, especially those published in the war years and directly afterwards. They have a combination of serious and informative articles by such writers as A. T. Johnson and Will Ingwerson and toe-curlingly whimsical ones by people such as Beverley Nichols. They are all liberally sprinkled with awful poems: 'A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot' sort of thing.

The adverts were for Chilprufe vests, for Players cigarettes and biscuits made in 'clean modern factories'. Most of the adverts though, were for things you couldn't have because of the war; Ford cars, batteries and films which were needed for the war effort. Peak Frean's biscuits were unavailable at the moment, but would be back after victory. Even Chappie dog food was only available for a few privileged dogs, 'the dogs would say: "sorry fellars, ere's not enough Chappie for all of us" and the advert urged everyone to save their dogs' bones for salvage. This is taking recycling to a level unimagined by the greenest of us.

Contributors to these early editions include Captain W. E. Johns of 'Biggles' fame. In 1944 he told how he was at a loss as how to recycle an

embarrassing number of wine bottles. He feared that after five years they were a monument to his depravity. He solved the problem by burying them under his terrace.

Other contributors were F.C. Puddle, and the appropriately named F.A. Bush who, in 1934, without any sense of irony explained which were the best shrubs to grow.

There was a great deal of worrying about how gardens would be replanted and managed after the war. In 1944 the editor, Theo A. Stephens, bemoaned the fact that the minimum wage that was £1 a week for gardeners before the war, may go as high as £3.5s. He suggested that all wages paid to gardeners should be deducted from employer's gross income before assessment for income tax.

The thought of having to start so many overgrown gardens from scratch must have been daunting but Theo Stephens took comfort from the fact that there would be many new chemical aids to gardening after the war such as DDT. (Brilliant for keeping pests off your veg.). The big concern for gardeners though, must have been the vast loss of plants when flower gardens were dug up or abandoned. The difficulties for nurserymen to keep things going at times of austerity must have been immense. Some contributors to the Journal were sympathetic to their problems, others complained about the high cost of plants. Captain Johns accused a nurseryman of 'rank profiteering' when he had to pay seven shillings for a cyclamen. But how were they to make a living when everyone was growing nothing but turnips?

This year, 2010, has been the best for many years for roses, and as we have been enjoying them it is sobering to think how very close to losing many of our favourite old fashioned ones we came when the fashion was for the biggest and brightest hybrid teas. And indeed how many were in fact lost forever.

It is heartening to read Walter Easlea putting in a plea for the charm of single roses in 1944. He wrote of the delights of two of my favourites, R. 'Dainty Bess' and R. 'Mrs. Oakley Fisher'. In another article in July, 1944 titled, 'Hold on to the Old Roses', he suggested readers should look after the old varieties because they may become unavailable. This was a very real risk at the time, and it is good to realise that people like Easlea and later Vita Sackville West were championing these beauties which we now value so highly. Easlea listed 30 varieties which he believed to be particularly at risk. He urged his readers to take particular good care of them. Of these 16 are well known and loved today, but 14 of them are unknown to me and they are not listed in The RHS Dictionary of Roses. These are R. Prince de Bulgare, R. Laurent Carle, R. Lieutenant Chauré,

R. Lady Alice Stanley , R. Pharisaer, R. Sachsengruss, R. Viscountess Folkestone, R. Grace Darling, R. Tosca, R. Antoine Mari, R. Gorgeous, R. Mrs. Foley Hobbs, R. Mrs. Wemyss Quin and R. Gustave Regis.

I would be interested to know whether anyone knows of any of these roses, some of which I presume were early Hybrid Teas , but all considered by Easlea to be garden-worthy.

In October 1944 W. Slinger replied to the article with one entitled “WHO Wants the Old Roses?” He said that as a nursery man he found that these roses were simply not in demand. He had offered them because of their wonderful perfume but no one bought them. He admitted that there might be a case for stocking old roses but nurserymen simply could not afford to carry dead weight. It is sad to think how many lovely roses have been lost to us because of our grandparents and parents love of the horrible, scentless stiff hybrid teas popular in the 1950s and 60s such as R. Piccadilly and the awful R. Super Star. Many of these garish plants have no right to be called roses at all.

Thank goodness that most gardeners now appreciate the gorgeous, opulent shapes and perfumes of old roses.

PLANT HERITAGE COUNCIL REPORT

ANNE TWEDDLE, COUNCIL MEMBER

The big news from the last council meeting held in April 2010 was a large reduction in the expected budget deficit. The latest figure, which had been audited and reported in the annual accounts at the AGM held in May was a deficit of £10,000. The annual deficit has been a concern for a number of years. It was unlikely ever to cripple the organization, but did encourage speculation about how we were ever going to ‘break even’.

Most of the organization’s costs spring from running the National Office. Getting those costs under control was largely out of the hands of the groups and had to be addressed by the Chairman, Board and National Office. It is a great encouragement for everyone such strides have been made. The figures for 2009/2010 are looking promising. The revenue objective is £202,000. Three months into the year 60% of this , that is £133,144, had been achieved.

A good way of keeping right up to date with National Office activities is by subscribing to their email newsletter. www.nccpg.com

NEWSLINES FROM PLANT HERITAGE NATIONAL OFFICE

COLLECTION HOLDERS SWEEP THE BOARD AT CHELSEA Nearly a quarter of the Gold Medals in the Great Pavilion at the Chelsea Flower Show 2010 were awarded to Plant Heritage Collection Holders, a fitting tribute to their skill and dedication. The total medal tally was twenty three. 14 gold, 5 silver gilt, 1 silver and 3 bronze. Special congratulations go to Winchester Growers (Dahlias) who were also singled out as one of the Daily Telegraph's 'Unmissable stands' and Plantagogo.com (Heuchera & x Heucherella) one of the newest collections to join Plant Heritage

THREATENED PLANT CO-ORDINATOR Sarah Barton has been appointed as TPP co-ordinator. She is a keen plantswoman and Merrist Wood Student of the Year in 2008. She has a strong background in the charity sector and previously worked for Barnardos and Action for Children in senior positions.

PUBLIC RELATIONS a new service exclusively for members – free website links. Plant Heritage members can advertise their nursery on the PH website with a link to their own website.

FUNDRAISING The cloakroom at Chelsea Flower Show was manned by a hardworking team of 100 Plant Heritage members and broke all records, raising a staggering £4,600 in donations, £400 up on last year. Joanna Jones, fundraising officer, comments 'The word cloakroom just doesn't do us justice. It should be called 'Picnic parking, left luggage storage and shopping drop'!

ADVERTISING REVENUE By July the advertising revenue from the Directory and Spring Plant Heritage Journal totalled £9,100

LEGACY DONATION We have received a legacy of £15,000 which is a huge boost to our core funds. Do remember Plant Heritage when making or changing your will

CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS 'My Favourite Plant' is the subject for the 2011 Plant Heritage National Photographic Competition organised by the Surrey Group. An entry form will be published in the autumn edition of Plant Heritage. The closing date for entries will be in March 2011. For more details visit www.nccpg.com/News/National-Photographic-Competition-211.aspx This year's winner was Maggie Thorpe, chairman of the Suffolk Group

These extracts are from Newslines, the on-line newsletter published quarterly on the Plant Heritage website www.nccpg.com

THE CLAIRE MARSHALL ROSE

JIM MARSHALL

The 'Claire Marshall' Rose was launched at Chelsea Flower show this year by Harkness Roses. It was chosen by an RHS panel as one of the 20 best new plant introductions at Chelsea - a new competition. It is a modern repeat flowering floribunda, with lilac to mauve shades and superb fragrance, ideal for mixed borders, container growing or to be used as a cut flower.

The launch was attended by Claire's two eldest daughters, myself and Sarah, and their grandmother June Jones. The girls had chosen the rose for its modern colour and scent. They were pleased to be invited to the launch, impressed by the show and especially sightings of a number of celebrities, including Twiggy, who launched her own rose, also bred by Harkness. They will have some good memories of the day and the rose is a fitting tribute to Claire.

Plants can be obtained from Harkness Roses. 0845 3313143
www.roses.co.uk

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these new members who have joined the Suffolk Group since our last newsletter. Please introduce yourself to committee members when you come to our events. If other members live nearby do get in touch to see whether you can share a lift to our talks and visits.

Mrs Jean Winning, Bury St. Edmunds
Canon Rowe, Honey Tye, Leavenheath.
Mrs Catherine Martindale, Pettaugh, Stowmarket.
Mrs Kathryn Smith, Framlingham, Woodbridge.
Mrs Ruth Prior, Ipswich.
Mrs Maureen Thompson, Lavenham, Sudbury.
Mr Nicholas Cook, Worlingworth.
Mrs Helene Jardine, Framlingham, Woodbridge.
Ms Jane Reeves, Lambourne End, Essex.
Mrs Elizabeth Walker, Bury St Edmunds.
Dr. Christopher Chapman, Norton, Bury st Edmunds
Dr. Barwise, Clare, Nr. Sudbury.

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