

Plant Heritage

National Council for the Conservation of Plants & Gardens



# SUFFOLK GROUP JOURNAL

Autumn 2015



# CONTENTS

Chairman's report	3
Treasurer's report	4
Plant Collections report	5
Propagation days	6
Membership report	7
Suffolk Group events	9
Spring Plant Fair	12
A Quiet Revolution: Suffolk Group talks programme	14
New, different and unusual plants: talk	16
Plant Heritage Council report	19
How to win Gold at Chelsea	20
A visit to Mickfield Hostas	22
Visits to two Old Rose National Collections	24
A visit to Marks Hall	28
Pastures New: Ivan Dickings' new garden	30
Straw Bale Tomatoes	32
Arum Lilies	34
Lily Study Day at Fullers Mill	35
Members Gardens open	36
Painting the Modern Garden: exhibition	37
Favourite gardening book	38
Suffolk Group Committee	39

*Cover photo: Colchicums at Fuller's Mill. Photo courtesy Marcus Harpur*

*Cover design by Sally Geeve, [www.sallygeeve.com](http://www.sallygeeve.com)*

*Layout courtesy Nicola Hobbs*

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

*JIM MARSHALL*

The National Plant Collections together form an essential part of Plant Heritage's work. In Suffolk there are 13, with more on the horizon. Dorothy Cartwright, our Collections Co-ordinator does a superb job in maintaining contact between the collections and committee and most important of all keeping us up to date with National Office information. Our collections vary from Equisetum to Syringa (see list on page 6), all having been recognised as important to the conservation of garden plants.

Anne Tweddle, Maggie Thorpe and the 'propagation group' are doing excellent work propagating and distributing plants, many of which are 'Vulnerable in Cultivation' or 'Threatened'. Members can get actively involved in conservation by supporting Collection open days, joining the Plant Guardian Scheme, or supporting the Threatened Plant Project (visit the National Website to find out more)

The committee will be highlighting the National Collections during the coming year and in particular will be focussing on their plants. Watch out for e-mails and check the website, Twitter and Facebook pages for open days, lectures and workshops. Collection Holders love talking about their plants, so get in touch; I am sure you will enjoy their enthusiasm and knowledge (but of course contact them before visiting). In addition we are inviting three more Suffolk Collection Holders to give 'mini talks' at this year's AGM.

The Spring Plant Fair at Helmingham was a success all round. The Plant Fairs are our major events, but would not be possible without the hard-working members who volunteer to help. However we continue to need more help. Yes it can be fun and enjoyable!

Our new lecture co-ordinator Pam Garside has organised some interesting talks starting on 26th September with Rosy Hardy's talk on Autumn Flowering Perennials. The talks for the rest of 2015/2016 programme are listed on page 9.

Isobel Ashton as secretary acts as the link between the Suffolk Group and National Office. One of her important jobs is emailing information out to members. Please make sure we have your correct email address.

At the AGM in November Suffolk Group officers will be elected. Both Patrick and Margaret Palmer have decided to retire, nominations are therefore required for vice chairman. Patrick and Margaret have done sterling work for the group and will be much missed by the committee. We are very pleased, however, they are going to continue to be involved as volunteers.

Hilary Drain is taking a sabbatical as membership secretary. Any group member interested in helping as a temporary measure would be greatly welcomed. Thanks to Hilary's hard work over the past three years, we have had an encouraging number of new members.

Any group member interested in the role of vice chairman or helping out temporarily with the membership role should contact me (phone 01473 822400 or email [jim@malmaisons.plus.com](mailto:jim@malmaisons.plus.com)).

If you have any suggestions for talks/lectures, study days, or workshops at Helmingham please email me ([jim@malmaisons.plus.com](mailto:jim@malmaisons.plus.com)).

Many thanks for your continuing support of the Suffolk Group of Plant Heritage.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

*JUSTINE CORNEY*

The Spring Plant sale at Helmingham Hall was very successful with over 2,200 people coming through the gates. Thanks to the hard work of Sarah Cook, the number and quality of the stalls was outstanding and the overall income for the day was £19,367. Our 25% share amounted to £4,842, and together with plant sale income less the expenses we made £4,961 on the day.

Anne Tweddle and Maggie Thorpe, together with their team, have worked on propagation and conserving plants. So far this year, including the plant sale at Helmingham, sales of plants have raised £2,549, making a valuable contribution to our funds.

# NATIONAL PLANT COLLECTIONS

*DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT*

This year we have had bad news and good news regarding the National Collections in Suffolk.

The bad news is that the Buxus Collection has had to be withdrawn as there has been a severe outbreak of box blight at Ickworth. Sean Reid has worked with the National Trust Conservation Centre and Anne Tweddle, Propagation Officer of the Suffolk Plant Heritage Group, to propagate the rare species over the past few years so none should be lost.

The good news is that Sarah Cook won Gold at Chelsea this year with her display of her collection of Sir Cedric Morris Irises. Her visual account of the many steps involved is included on the centre pages of this journal. The publicity at the time encouraged people to buy her irises at the Helmingham Plant Fair and she kindly donated the money raised to Plant Heritage.

Also at the spring Helmingham Plant Fair Robert Grimsey did his display of *Aesculus* blooms which is always of great interest to visitors. Kim Forester did a really interesting geographical display of her *Thalictrum*. This showed which countries the different species come from and indicated how the different weather conditions affects the type of leaf and height of the *Thalictrum*. Visitors also loved the arrangement of two types of hostas in one large pot displayed by the Milton family from their collection.

Sue Wooster was also at the Plant Fair with her campanulas and her Open Day was well attended despite the rain falling until just before opening time.

Do take the opportunity to visit collections either on an Open Day or by arranging a visit with the collection holder. You will really enjoy it.

I have received three more enquiries from people who are interested in having a National Collection - so watch this space for new collections to visit.

The current collections are listed on the next page.

## SUFFOLK'S NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

AESCLUSUS	Framlingham	Robert Grimsey, 01728 685203
CAMPANULA	Bury St. Edmunds	Sue Wooster, 07879 644958
DIANTHUS (Malmaison)	Ipswich	Jim Marshall, 01473 822400
DIANTHUS (Perpetual Flowering Carnations registered in the UK before 1970)	Ipswich	Jim Marshall, 01473 822400
EQUISETUM	Stowmarket	Anthony Pigott, 01449 766104
ERYSIMUM (perennial)	Walpole	Dr Simon Weeks, 01986 784348
EUONYMUS	East Bergholt	Rupert Eley, 01206 299224
HIBISCUS	Pettistree	John Woods Nurseries 01728 745100
HOSTA	Stowmarket	Mickfield Hostas, 01449 711576
IRIS (Sir Cedric Morris introductions)	Ipswich	Sarah Cook, 01473 822400
SYRINGA	Stowmarket	Norman's Farm, lilacprez@hotmail.com
THALICTRUM	Worlingworth	Kim Forrester 07796 183988

## PROPAGATION DAYS

All Plant Heritage members are welcome to come along to the propagation group. We meet monthly at the Church Hall in Stowupland. The dates for the rest of 2015 are

Thursday 15th October and Tuesday 17th November

Please let Maggie Thorpe or Anne Tweddle know if you would like to join them: [maggiethorpe37@gmail.com](mailto:maggiethorpe37@gmail.com) [anne@tweddle1.co.uk](mailto:anne@tweddle1.co.uk)

# MEMBERSHIP

We are delighted that 17 new members have joined Plant Heritage since the beginning of the year.

Suffolk Group committee members look forward to meeting people at the talks, particularly those who have joined recently and hope they will make themselves known at the membership table as they sign in. Those who have joined since the last issue of the journal are:

Ms Sarah Clark, Aldeburgh

Mrs Doreen Wrinch, Ipswich

Mrs Susan de Sabata, Chelsworth

Mrs Jen Dolby, Whepstead

Mrs Margaret Salter, Charsfield

Miss Linda Kewn, Little Stonham

Mrs Kathleen Riddleston, Stowmarket

Mrs Anne Miles, Haughley

Mrs Lynne Cockerton, Debenham

Mrs Rosemary Blake, Baylham

Mr Darren Andrews, Raydon

Mr Geoff and Mrs Gill Marchant, Stowmarket

Mrs Linda Dowdeswell, Witnesham

Mrs Jennifer Young, Woolverstone

Mrs Linda Weeks, Clopton

Mrs Margaret Wyllie, Suffolk Punch Heritage Garden, Hollesley

Mrs Sabina Bailey, Eye.

## PROMOTING THROUGH THE WEBSITE

If you have a garden/horticultural event which you would like to put on the Suffolk Plant Heritage website please email Helen Chen ([chen22@btinternet.com](mailto:chen22@btinternet.com)).



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# SUFFOLK GROUP EVENTS 2015/2016

## OCTOBER

Saturday 24

\*Talk: Michael Perry 'New, Different and Unusual Plants'

2.30 Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ  
(see article on page 16)

## NOVEMBER

Sunday 22

SUFFOLK PLANT HERITAGE AGM  
Columbine Hall, Stowupland IP14 4AT

12 o'clock for 12.30 meeting  
Talks by the National Collection Holders of  
Erysimum, Hosta and Campanula  
Buffet lunch. Members please bring a pudding as  
usual. To help with planning and catering please  
let Jim Marshall know if you intend to come.  
01473 822400 jim@malmaisons.plus.com

## 2016

## JANUARY

Saturday 23

\* Talk: 'Bulbs at Kew' by Kit Strange.  
2.30pm. Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ

*About the speaker: Kit looks after the extensive bulb collection at Kew. She maintains the collections in the Davies Alpine House and also develops exhibits for horticultural and educational events at Kew and UK horticultural colleges. She has worked in the Falkland Islands and South Georgia producing plants for display at Kew and the DNA collection, as well as several projects in Spain and Tajikistan. More locally she organises the Harlow Early Spring Show for the Alpine Garden Society.*

## FEBRUARY

Saturday 20th

\* Talk: 'The Narcissus (pre 1930 daffodils) Plant Collection' by Duncan Donald  
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ.

*About the speaker: Duncan trained at Wisley and spent four years at the Cambridge University Botanic Garden as conservation propagator for the*

*Eastern England Rare Plant collection before returning to Wisley as the horticultural taxonomist for the newly formed NCCPG now Plant Heritage.*

*He was Curator at Chelsea Physic Garden before moving to become Head of Gardens of the National Trust in Scotland. Since 2006 he has worked as internal plant registrar for the RHS with a particular responsibility for clematis and lilies. Whilst doing this he has developed Croft 16 Daffodils an outlet for selling surplus plants from his and his wife's private collection of pre 1930 daffodils. This is now the designated National Plant Collection held by him and his wife.*

## **MARCH**

Saturday 19th                      \* Talk: 'Succession planting in the mixed border'  
by Fergus Garrett of Great Dixter Garden.  
2.30 Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ

*About the speaker: Fergus trained at Wye College and became head gardener of Great Dixter garden in 1992. Great Dixter was the garden of Christopher Lloyd and he made it a charitable trust in 2003 with Fergus becoming CEO in 2006. The Trust enables the garden to open to the public and develop educational programmes for all age groups. Fergus has been awarded several honours and has also been the recipient of the Veitch Medal.*

## **APRIL**

Saturday 23rd                      \* Talk: 'A cornucopia of fruit and vegetables  
grown within the Walled Gardens at West Dean  
Gardens, West Sussex' by Sarah Wain.

*About the speaker: Sarah Wain has gardened in Australia and England for forty years, she was worked as Gardens Supervisor at West Dean Gardens with her husband Jim Buckland since 1991.*

## **MAY**

Sunday 26                          PLANT HERITAGE SPRING FAIR 10am-4pm,  
Helmingham Hall IP14 6EF Entrance £7

## **SEPTEMBER**

Sunday 18                          PLANT HERITAGE AUTUMN FAIR 10am- 4pm,  
Helmingham Hall IP14 6EF Entrance £7

## Saturday 24th

\* Talk: 'Attracting beneficial wildlife to your garden with flower power' by Marina Christopher  
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ

*About the speaker: After studying Botany, Marine Biology and Ecology followed by 3 years postgraduate research, Marina Christopher escaped the confines of the laboratory to begin her new life as a nurseryman in 1984 and founded Phoenix Perennial Plants in 2002. Emphasis has always been to provide a balanced ecosystem, so beneficial wildlife, notably insects, are provided with 'cordon bleu' plants for their delectation. Phoenix earns medals vicariously by supplying some of the top garden designers with unusual plants for the Chelsea Flower Show and has won 'Best in Show' for the last 3 years! Marina became an author in 2006 with her book 'Late Summer Flowers' published by Frances Lincoln in the UK and by Timber in the US.*

*She writes magazine articles as well as appearing on television as a guest on Gardeners' World and a programme on women gardeners with Carol Klein.*

## OCTOBER

Saturday 22nd

\*Talk 'Orchids and other plants in habitat; Africa and the Islands'. A journey through Southern Africa by Johan Hermans  
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ

*About the speaker: Johan Hermans is Chairman of the Royal Horticultural Society Orchid Committee, Chairman of the Advisory Group on Orchid Hybrid Registration as well as a member of the RHS Horticulture Board. He is a Trustee of the World Orchid Conference Trust, President of the European Orchid Council, a Fellow of the Linnean Society, an Academic Advisor to the Cecilia Koo Botanic Conservation Centre and an Honorary Research Associate of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew.*

*He has been studying the orchids of Madagascar for more than two decades. He is the author of a number of books among them Angraecoid Orchids- Species from the African Region, Orchids of Madagascar and the Field Guide to the Orchids of Madagascar. He has written a number of articles for the Orchid Review, Curtis's Botanical Magazine, Kew Bulletin etc. He has given lectures at conferences all over the world especially on his travels and the orchids from Madagascar.*

*Lectures marked \* are free to members, with £5 entrance for non-members.*

# PLANT FAIR HELMINGHAM MAY 2015

*WIDGET FINN*

This Journal will go to press before the Autumn 2015 Plant Fair at Helmingham Hall, but here are some photos which give a flavour of our Spring Plant Fair. The sun shone (most of the time), the field in front of the Hall was packed with plant stands, people and a tempting assortment of horticultural accessories. Plant Heritage was there in force with our Membership Marquee, National Plant Collections, the Plants of Distinction table and a display of Threatened Plants as well as our renowned plant stand where everything has been raised or propagated by members. The Talks Marquee attracted an interested audience, and some visitors - who still had some energy after their plantaholic splurge - were tempted onto the dance floor for some 1940s jiving.



From top:  
Suffolk Group President  
Maggie Thorpe at the  
Threatened Plants stand.  
Chairman Jim Marshall in the  
lecture tent, talking on growing  
vegetables in containers ;  
Sally Long of Riverside Bulbs;  
Mickfield Hostas.

Photos courtesy Peter Kendall.





Clockwise from above:  
 'Chocks Away' vintage music and dance demo;  
 Heather Medcraft and Patrick Palmer on the Plant  
 Heritage Plants of Distinction stall.  
 Predator Plants;  
 Sara Eley of The Place for Plants;



# A QUIET REVOLUTION

MARGARET PALMER

A quiet revolution has been occurring at one of Plant Heritage Suffolk's regular events. The location, though unlikely for any kind of radicalism quiet or otherwise, is Stowupland Village Hall. You'll be guessing by now that I'm referring to our regular lecture held monthly from September through to April. Read on and I'll explain what I mean.

Now many of you are already privy to what up to now has been one of our best kept secrets: the chance to draw on the expertise of gardeners of national repute, to gain ideas and inspiration. More recently word has started to get around, the media is paying attention (Radio Suffolk's Lesley Dolphin no less) and visitor as well as member attendance is going up, and this is a trend we are keen to encourage. We seem to have come up with a winning formula which guarantees an enjoyable and stimulating Saturday afternoon.

I've been trying to work out what has contributed to this increasing popularity and it's got to have something to do with the quality of the programme in terms of variety and interest. For example, many of us were ecstatic about the talk on Hamamelis a shrub which I must say had not been till then on my radar to any great extent. Admittedly, my interest had begun to be awakened by a specimen peeping over the wall of my new garden and Chris Lane's talk entitled 'Bewitched and Bedazzled' really did the trick in winning me over completely. The slides of his nursery really had that wow factor, the pictures of his national collection illuminating the winter landscape with spectacular effect and it's really helped me appreciate how to extend the season of plant interest in my garden. During tea there were also murmurings about arranging a visit to Chris's nursery at some time in the future. I certainly wasn't the only one who was impressed.

Talking about awakened interest, Janet Buist's talk on 'The Wonderful World of Salvias' was another that I found inspirational. My new south facing garden will definitely feature the vibrant Mexican salvias which have become my latest yen. I'm banking on their hardiness as our climes evolve.

Speaking of climes perhaps, our biggest celebrity event was the talk entitled 'Weather Intelligence: How Does Your Garden Grow?' by none other than Peter Gibbs of weather forecasting fame. As expected, attendance was higher than usual for this event as we took advantage of the

chance to give Peter the once over. We came away with a deeper understanding of how the weather affects us as gardeners, and Peter proved to be affable and approachable; discussion continued with individual members and visitors well into tea time.

Before tea though, the afternoon wouldn't be complete without a peek at our fabulous plant stall, which is another of the attractions of our Saturday afternoon programme. Anne Tweddle and our propagation team have pots a plenty to satisfy our plant purchasing desires including plants with seasonal interest. There is always a buzz around the stall as we vie to see what's on offer be it a new variety, an unusual specimen or just an old favourite that seems right for that garden space that luckily always seems to become available. In keeping with our ethos plants that are threatened with extinction are always featured and promoted. There's always a feeling of camaraderie around the plant stall as we share each other's pleasure in finding and purchasing that 'must have' plant, and this all adds to the draw of the afternoon.

The garden sundries stall is a further attraction, providing the chance to stock up on everything you need for your gardening trug: gloves; plant labels; secateurs, string to name a few gardening accoutrements.

My mention of teas earlier on leads me to the finale of the Stowupland afternoons which many look forward to despite good intentions to abstain. As only they can, the WI provide refreshments to drool over and many a member or visitor has been tempted to take a slice of cake home as well as partaking while there. There's no rush to get away and taste buds are rewarded as tea is savoured. What could be a better way to round off?

I know that you will all share the sentiment I express when I say there is always something to learn when it comes to plants and that's part of the attraction, and continued motivation and pleasure. Our new programme starting in September has much to recommend it in this respect. For starters there's a chance to explore 'Autumn Flowering Perennials' with Rosy Hardy followed in October by a look at 'New, Different and Unusual Plants' with Michael Perry. Other topics include 'Bulbs at Kew', 'Narcissus' and 'Succession Planting'. The full programme is in this journal.

Personally, I'm already dreaming of new horticultural avenues to explore, and nooks and crannies into which I can squeeze that perfect plant specimen that I just know will take my fancy. If you are not yet a regular attendee at these events why not use this article as a prompt to consult your diary now and reserve space to join us at Stowupland. Even better why not bring a friend or family member to share the experience? You'll be assured a warm welcome and help us build on Plant Heritage Suffolk's burgeoning success!



*Michael Perry, new product manager at Thompson and Morgan, will be talking to Suffolk Plant Heritage on Saturday 24th October about some of the unusual plants which he has brought home from his travels all over the world.*

## **NEW, DIFFERENT AND UNUSUAL PLANTS**

**M**ichael can sometimes be described as a 'modern day plant hunter' - searching for new, different and unusual plants across the world. He has worked at Thompson & Morgan, the UK's largest mail order plant company for over 17 years, having won a garden design competition, run by them, whilst still at school. He now has a unique job role.

Michael was recently named as one of the Top 20 most influential Horticulturists in the UK by The Sunday Times, this exclusive list is their roundup of the people who shape the choice of plants in our gardens. 2015 was the first time that he was added to the list, and he's now in the company of household names such as Alan Titchmarsh, James Wong, and even HRH Prince Charles.

Michael began his horticultural career at the tender age of just five years old, shadowing his nana and granddad in their urban garden, as they cultured dahlias and chrysanthemums for exhibiting in local flower shows. During the teenage years, whilst friends were out causing mischief, Michael was in his parent's garden, propagating herb plants which he then sold through adverts in the back of BBC Gardener's World magazine!

Having joined Thompson & Morgan at the age of 18, he has developed with the business and now heads up the new product team, treating the public to plants such as the TomTato, a worldwide phenomenon, which is half-potato, half-tomato! He also works hard to select plants built for garden performance so they may be longer-flowering, more disease resistant or in colours never seen before. Ultimately, he wants to help gardeners across the UK to grow different, better plants, and to make gardening easier!

### **NATIONAL PLANT EXCHANGE**

Any member who wants to take part in the National Plant Exchange 2015/2016 please get in touch with Anne Tweddle: [anne@tweddlel.co.uk](mailto:anne@tweddlel.co.uk). The lists are put together from November.

Suffolk Agricultural Association  
6<sup>th</sup> Bi-Annual Gardening Conference

# Gardening – An English Love Affair

*At the Events Centre, Trinity Park, Ipswich IP3 8UH*

**Thursday 5 November 2015**

9.30am-3.30pm

Whether a plantsman with a love of plants for their own sake or whether it is the arrangement of plants and relating them one to another and to their setting that fascinates you, the gardening world has us hooked. Gardening, in its humble way, is both an art and a craft, a really humanising occupation.

Our distinguished speakers, **Tom Hoblyn**, **Alan Gray**, **George Carter** and **James Alexander-Sinclair**, will surely help deepen your appreciation of gardens and gardening.

**Ticket prices**

SAA and SGT members	£40.00 (inc VAT)
Non members	£45.00 (inc VAT)
Delegates under 30 years	£20.00 (inc VAT)

Ticket price includes refreshments and a two course hot lunch. During the breaks you have the opportunity to shop with our tradestand exhibitors.

For further information, please call Hannah Woods on 01473 707118 or [hannah.woods@suffolkshow.co.uk](mailto:hannah.woods@suffolkshow.co.uk), [www.suffolkshow.co.uk/gardeningconference2015](http://www.suffolkshow.co.uk/gardeningconference2015).

Photograph courtesy of James Alexander-Sinclair

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# PLANT HERITAGE COUNCIL REPORT

*ANNE TWEDDLE*

A new Chairman of Trustees (Mike Buffin) has instigated a strategic look at our organisation. We need more of what we do well, that is supporting National Collections and plant conservation, but we also need more members and more money. It is also important to get the organisation into the shape and mindset to apply for significant grants, and to continue and expand our work. This review should be completed by the end of the year.

There are changes of staff at National Office. Mercy Morris who has for 10 years been the Plant Conservation Officer is leaving at the end of September. She has had the most influential conservation role in the organisation and supported collection holders through all changes. She will be missed and we wish her well.

Money is always a major topic at council meetings. We will have a deficit at the end of 2015 of somewhere between £10-15K. This is another reason for the strategic look at the organization since to improve our chances of getting grants we apply for we need to be the 'right shape'.

Council has a new meeting place since we moved from a building on Euston Road to Holloway Road. A roomful of Plant Heritage Council members from round the country plus several trustees and partner organisations including the RHS and the Horticultural Trades Association makes for a lively group scrutinising the work of Plant Heritage.

We have had two of our three meetings this year, with the final one being in November.

## PLANT HERITAGE NEWS

FOR AN UPDATE ON WHAT'S HAPPENING AT NATIONAL OFFICE  
VISIT THE CURRENT ISSUE OF NEWSLINES  
ON THE WEBSITE

[WWW.PLANTHERITAGE.COM](http://WWW.PLANTHERITAGE.COM)

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SUFFOLK GROUP ACTIVITIES  
VISIT [WWW.SUFFOLKPLANTHERITAGE.COM](http://WWW.SUFFOLKPLANTHERITAGE.COM)



# HOW TO GET GOLD AT CHELSEA!



1. 2007, find a wholesale partner (Howard Nurseries).
2. 2013, decide to go to Chelsea.



3. April 2014, finalise design.
4. July 2014, fill in application form.



5. August 2014, set artist to work.
6. October 2014, pot the irises.
7. October 2014, hear we have a space in the Grand Marquee (pew, what would I have done with the half finished backdrop?)



8. December, move irises to poly tunnel to bring forward (then move to shade to delay, and rush them between the two more and more frequently as Chelsea gets nearer.

9. Feb to May 2015, endless forms to fill in (Health & Safety, transport, etc



10. April, all hands to the pump - we fear the box hedging is not good enough.



11. May, wrapped up and ready to go.



12. May 14th, setting up.



13. May 15th, delivery.



14. Set up.



Sarah Cook, in conjunction with Howard Nurseries, won a gold medal at Chelsea 2015 for her National Collection of Cedric Morris irises

15. Rivalry in the (but Norwich su Michael was a n - he had put up Gold Medal ex Blooms!). Norw Ipswich 1, oh n



16. Flower arranging in the studio.



20. Is this another Cedric iris?



17. Sunday 17th, all done ... but is it good enough?



21. Just a small TV crew for the Thursday night BBC coverage.



18. Chelsea Monday, best bib and tucker!



19. Tuesday 7am, phew, it is good enough!



22. 'Benton Olive', Carol's favourite flower at Chelsea.

23. Too tired to take pictures of the 'breakdown' but arrive home Sunday pm exhausted but happy.

24. August, nearly recovered.



# MICKFIELD HOSTAS – A SUFFOLK NATIONAL COLLECTION

*ISOBEL ASHTON*

Pam Bowling and I had a very enjoyable visit to Mickfield Hostas in early June. While Melanie and Rob were choosing and preparing plants to take to Gardeners' World Live, Robin and Yvonne showed us round their collection of over 2000 cultivars, pointing out some of their many favourites and talking about the joys, and some of the tragedies, their devotion to hostas has brought.

Long rows of potted hostas are lined out thickly in five, or was it six, enormous sheds. The sheds are not roofed or glazed but covered in shade netting which lets in the rain, but not hail which can be destructive of hostas. Robin said that a new shade covering, the cost of which was supported by Suffolk Plant Heritage, was due to arrive any day. He was obviously grateful and planning the task of installing it.

Many new cultivars are sourced from the US and grown on for three or







Top left: Hosta 'Rhein';  
Below: Hosta 'Frances Williams';  
Above: Leaf selection from fragrant varieties.

more years to test interest and stability. White leaved cultivars have become popular but, because they lack chlorophyll, they tend not to be long-lived. Pam expressed interest in the small leaved 'mouse' varieties, and Robin and Yvonne were excited about some handsome new cultivars with red stems.

Our hosts were full of interesting ideas and advice picked up over many years working with hostas which made me want to find out even more. Much is also to be found on their amazing website (see below).

Before we went Dorothy Cartwright had given us a copy of the questionnaire provided by Head Office to all co-ordinators as a guide for making their bi-annual reports to HQ, and this prompted us to focus our informal questions from a Plant Heritage point of view. If you would like to visit a collection holder, do speak to Dorothy so that she will know that more of our members are supporting the collection holders and Dorothy in her work.

[www.mickfieldhostas.co.uk](http://www.mickfieldhostas.co.uk)

# TWO OLD ROSE NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

PAM GARSIDE

We decided to make a visit in late June to the National Collection of Hybrid Musk Roses introduced by Pemberton and Bentall between 1912 and 1939 in Havering-atte-Bower Essex which we hadn't visited before. We also decided to visit Peter Beales old rose collection, in Attleborough, which we had visited several times, but is now under new management. We had seen their stand at Chelsea this year in the Exhibitor's tent and had been very impressed with their display

## **Pemberton and Bentall Hybrid Tea collection based at the St Francis Hospice, Havering-atte-Bower, Essex**

Havering-atte-Bower was the home of the Reverend Joseph Pemberton who lived in the Round House and cultivated his collection of 'Grandmother Roses' which were to remind him of the old roses in his grandmother's garden, which had fallen out of fashion in favour of the standard roses first introduced from France.

Joseph originated a new group of varieties of rose which he started calling Hybrid Musks in 1919. These are large bushes, in bloom more or less continuously bearing flowers of varying size and doubleness, mostly white, pale pink and pale yellow in large clusters. He chose *Trier*, a hybrid multiflora offspring of *Aglaia* as the base for his breeding. He became president of the National Rose Society and wrote several bestselling books on roses. The best known roses are '*Penelope*' (1924), '*Cornelia*' (1925, pictured left) and '*Felicia*' (1928).



He left his collection to his gardener John Bentall and his wife Ann who carried on breeding roses. Ann Bentall discovered '*Ballerina*' as a chance seedling in 1937, and introduced '*Buff Beauty*' as a tribute to her husband in 1939.

The collection is now at the St Francis Hospice and it contains most of the Pemberton collection and is supported by lottery funding. It is well labelled and there is an excellent book and audio guide which have been produced to guide you around the roses.

Some of the roses can only be seen here, or at the Europas Rosarium in Sangerhausen Germany.

### **The National Collection: Rosa (Peter Beales old rose collection) Attleborough Norfolk**

We have bought many old roses from the Peter Beales collection and have always enjoyed visiting and seeing the display garden. However in recent years it was not looking its best due to the tragic deaths in the Beales family. Fortunately for the nursery and the collection a Canadian businessman, Ken Flood, has bought the company.

To our eyes the display garden has been transformed and is now a beautiful place to visit in summer to see the collection of roses in a garden context. As well as the viewing platform to view the collection, there are rose arches and impressive pergolas which show the roses off beautifully. The old species roses are now well labelled and displayed. The catalogue is still beautifully produced.







The nursery sells a huge range of old roses as well as modern roses but this is a commercial nursery and they have dropped about 75 varieties which were not popular. Ken Flood is reported as saying that 'we can't be a museum; we have to be a commercial business'.

In the 2014 Historic Rose Group Journal Charles Quest-Ritson poses the question: should we not have a system of monitoring the rarer roses in Britain, and keep the horticultural history of our country? This of course will seem a familiar question to those in Plant Heritage.

However, Ken Flood has saved this valuable collection.

Left: Peter Beales' stand at Chelsea.

[www.pembertonroses.org.uk](http://www.pembertonroses.org.uk)

[www.classicroses.co.uk](http://www.classicroses.co.uk)

*References: Pemberton's Passion: A tale of a Havering rose breeder. Pub. Saint Frances Hospice 2015*

*Charles Quest-Ritson. Peter Beales Drop List. Historic Rose Journal Autumn 2015*

## Missing roses

Roses missing from the Pemberton and Bentall collection are listed below. If you have any of these roses or have pictures of them could you please contact: [pembertonroses@sffh.org.uk](mailto:pembertonroses@sffh.org.uk)

'*Bentall's Scarlet*' introduced in 1935.

'*Bertha Turner*' introduced in 1925. (Salmon peach. With large semi-double to double cupped, globular flowers. Tea rose fragrance. Bushy and upright.)

'*Dinah*'. A Hybrid Musk, cherry pink, perpetual flowering and mildew proof. Rich dark crimson flowers with delicious fragrance. (Date of introduction not known).

'*Galatea*'. Hybrid Tea introduced in 1914. Light brown rose with pink edges. Small rosette blooms in large clusters.

'*Havering*'. Introduced in 1937. A pink rose with a strong fragrance.

'*Helen Taylor*'. Introduced in 1924. Colour rosy salmon. Fragrant.

'*JH Pemberton*'. Introduced in 1931. Scarlet damask fragrance.

'*Joan*'. Introduced in 1919. Colour copper, peach bud. A good autumnal .

'*Mary*'. Introduced in 1931. Tan and orange with a moderate tea fragrance.

'*Mayfair*'. Introduced in 1935. Deep pink large double.

'*Naomi*'. Introduced in 1926. Coppery buff colour. Upright.

'*Rachel*'. Introduced in 1929. Orange buff colour.

'*Ruth*'. Introduced in 1921. Colour yellow flushed coppery red. Sweetly scented.

'*Sun-Ray*'. Introduced in 1932. Golden yellow semi-double I bloom with a moderate fragrance.

'*Winter Cheer*'. Introduced in 1914. Crimson to semi-double bloom. Flowers late in the autumn.



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(Fullers Mill Garden is owned and managed by Perennial a registered charity and remains fully funded by its maker Bernard Tickner).

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# A VISIT TO MARKS HALL

*Rosie Ansell*

Marks Hall garden and arboretum are situated just outside Coggeshall in Essex – not too far to visit from Suffolk.

From the 17th century the estate was owned by the Honywood family but it was sold in 1897 to Thomas Phillips Price who loved the trees and woodlands. He thought that the estate would make a great home for Kew Gardens, which, it was felt in the earlier 20th century, might have to move further away from London due to the effects of pollution.

In his will therefore he left the estate to the nation for the advancement of agriculture, arboriculture and forestry. However he also left a life interest in the estate to his third wife who was a great deal younger than him and did not die until 1966, 34 years after her husband.

Unfortunately by this time the estate was badly neglected. During the war substantial parts were requisitioned for the use of service personnel at the nearby Earls Colne airfield, the buildings and lakes had fallen into disrepair and a number of the old trees had been felled and conifers planted. Marks Hall Mansion was demolished in 1950.

By 1966 it was no longer thought that Kew Gardens needed to move away from London and in any case the Marks Hall estate was in no condition to be adopted as a Botanic Garden. The walled garden was a jungle of weeds, overgrown bushes and self sown trees and the lakes were choked with mud, overhung with trees and the banks had been damaged by tree roots.

In 1971 the Thomas Phillips Price Trust was established and the following year the trustees decided to establish an arboretum in the garden and parkland, and the Forestry Commission gave up the areas in which they had planted the conifers. The area round the site of the





mansion house and the walled garden were cleared and landscaped, and the lakes cleaned out and the banks and cascades restored.

The Arboretum now consists of 200 acres and there are 1400 metres of paths to allow year round access for all. It is planted on a geographical theme, with European species near the entrance also including the Honeywood oak, one of the few old trees surviving and believed to be 800 years old. The Asian section includes the Birkett Long Millennium Walk, planted next to the upper lake and with autumn colour and winter scent in mind. The southern hemisphere section includes a wollemi pine. Next to the lower lake is a nuttury and an area devoted to spring flowers.

Once the estate was opened to the public it was noticed that the walled garden was still an attraction so in 1998 plans to restore it were drawn up by Brita van Schoenaich and £150,000 raised to implement them. The garden was opened in 2003.

The walled garden is only walled on three sides, the other being open to the upper lake. A long herbaceous border backs on to the main wall and the garden is then divided into five sections. It includes earth sculptures, walls and shaped plants and stonework. Grasses and autumn colour maintain interest late into the year. A 15th century barn has been moved to the estate and now forms the visitor centre where there is a shop, café and plant centre. There is abundant bird life at Marks Hall and there are also deer in the area of woodland walks. Events are held regularly and in August 2015 there was a large sculpture exhibition.

*[www.markshall.org.uk](http://www.markshall.org.uk)*



*Ivan Dickings is a past president of Suffolk Plant Heritage, and his lovely garden at Bedfield was well known to many of our members.*

## PASTURES NEW

*IVAN DICKINGS*

Having reached an ancient age, we decided to up sticks and find a smaller property and garden. Our present rear garden is 34ft x 41ft and the front slightly smaller which is considerably smaller than the 1½ half acres which we have left with a heavy heart. The light sandy soil has a ph of 4.5 which is a great relief from heavy clay with ph of 8.

The garden was full of conifers and shrubs which had been lollipopped and everything was cleared completely to have a clean sweep. We first started on the front garden which faces west. Amongst *Lavender*, *Santolina*,



*Euphorbia* and other sun lovers we planted *Acanthus sennii*, which is a vicious brute with large silver green variegated foliage with spines around the wavy edges but with red flowers. Quite a stunner.

Another prickly customer is *x Hulthemia hardii*, *Rosa hardii*.

An interesting rose which originated in the Middle East, with deep yellow small single flowers with a dark red eye in the centre and is believed not to be hardy and likes free draining light soil, but it grew well in our previous garden. I believe it was used in the breeding of the Rose of the Year in 2014 'For Your Eyes Only.'



Whilst visiting Ford Abbey in Dorset a few

Left: *Acanthus senii*.



Rose 'Margo Foster' ex Forde Abbey.

years ago, I noticed a beautiful small flowering double pale orange polyantha type rambling rose growing on a wall which nobody could give me the name of. I have now tracked it down as Climbing Rose 'Margo Foster'.

Yellow flowers are often sniffed at by some garden designers, but I like a good splash of yellow which brightens up any border and two of my favourites are *Euryops chrysanthemoides* with deeply veined grey foliage and *E. pectinatus* with bright green veined foliage. Both have bright yellow daisy flowers 2" in diameter and the plants are 3-4 feet in diameter (I don't understand cm's), with flowers for most of the year; well we are in tropical Felixstowe.

We have of course found room for young plants of *Paeonia rockii* var 'Highdown' P. 'Argosy' and P. 'Sybille Stern'.



Right: *Euryops pectinata*.

# STRAW BALE TOMATOES

*MAVIS AND LAWRENCE SMITH*

In early Spring we read Bunny Guinness's review of an American book by Joel Karston entitled 'Straw Bale Gardening Complete'. It sounded an interesting way of growing tomatoes – at least we wouldn't need compost bags! Having bought the book, we were not impressed by the pictures and realised that it did not relate to greenhouse growing at all.

Undaunted, we sourced small bales of wheat straw (not that easy nowadays) and arranged them in a tight 3x2 block. We then started the process of composting the straw through a combination of daily watering and regular doses of high nitrogen fertiliser over three weeks. The book did warn that neighbours might complain of a sweet odour as heating commenced – we soon realised that this was ammonia fumes that in an enclosed greenhouse started scorching plants and seedlings, requiring hasty evacuation.

After a slow start, the bales eventually became extremely hot (140 F) and the straw softened making it easy to cut planting holes. We stuffed the rotted straw in the cracks between the bales but then had to wait for it all to cool down before finally planting (root bound) tomato plants on May 10.

The addition of compost to the cracks enabled us to also grow lettuce and basil initially but radish were a complete disaster.

The tomatoes are 'Marmalade' a beef variety, which grew rapidly and are now cropping heavily. One lesson we've learnt is the need to stake them firmly, ours have collapsed twice under the weight. They need regular feeding and watering







otherwise the normal tomato problems occur. We did have some blossom end rot which we eventually attributed to acidity but sprinkling lime on the bales has cured it.

We are sufficiently encouraged to try again next year. All being well, we'll have juicy tomatoes well into the autumn with plenty to purée and freeze.

We will also have a wonderful pile of well-rotted straw for our pumpkin patch next year.

We will cut back on the high nitrogen doses, attempt to coordinate the growth of our tomato seedlings with the com-

posting of the bales, devise a sturdy staking system and find a local source of bales. This year's came from Hampshire!

### **To advertise in Suffolk Plant Heritage Journal**

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# ARUM LILIES

MAVIS SMITH

I have been admiring the arum lily, *Zantedeschia aethiopica* (*Araceae*) this year. It is flowering extremely well, an indication of how mild the weather has been. In mild winters it is evergreen and because the flower buds are produced very early both leaves and flowers are destroyed in a heavy frost. It is one of the plants in my garden that I am sentimental about. Plants given to one by a close friend are always special. Mine came from a friend's garden in Scotland so I can vouch for its hardiness as it survived -20°C one



winter. It is one of the many plants that we persuaded the removal firm to carry in their van when we moved from Scotland 17 years ago.

Arum lilies originate from Southern Africa but have now spread all over the world because of its use as a florist's flower. It has naturalised in parts of Australia, I know, because I have seen them there and when I was a little girl my Australian mother used to tell me how she picked armfuls of them on her way home from school. They like damp conditions and will even grow in water as in Beth Chatto's garden. I have also seen them planted in the herbaceous borders at Barham Hall.

Have you noticed how popular they have become this year as cut flowers, they have even been on sale in supermarkets. Our church was asked to arrange a pedestal in Bury St Edmunds cathedral for the Bishop's enthronement. Our instructions were to use 'white or cream flowers with gold bits'. Looking for something different we wanted to try arums but didn't know how they would behave in oasis. We took them with us but lost our nerve and so brought them home again. However I did use them in our church and they lasted well over the week so I needn't have worried.

I have found a seedling in my garden so this year I shall make a determined effort to collect some seed and perhaps I could persuade others to grow this plant.

# LILY STUDY DAY AT FULLERS MILL

JUDE LAW

As those of you who watched the BBC's Great Garden Revival programme on lilies, which was filmed partly at Fullers Mill Garden, or those who have visited the garden recently will know, they grow lilies wonderfully well at Fullers Mill. It was therefore the perfect place to host a Lily Study Day!

As I learnt during the day, the garden with its free draining but moist soil provides perfect conditions for many lilies. The diverse varieties grown have been skilfully chosen over the years by garden creator Bernard Tickner to suit the conditions and are now tended with great care by full-time gardeners Annie Dellbridge and Heather Medcraft, apprentice George Fisk, part-timers Christine Butcher and John Spear together with their willing band of volunteers.

Bernard, Annie and Heather and were on hand to welcome participants and after Bernard's brief introduction, head gardener Annie led us on a tour of the many species and cultivars which were proudly holding their blooms aloft for all to enjoy.

There were scents in abundance, differing heights, woodlanders and sun lovers and colours across the spectrum from the sultry tones of 'Night Flyer' through the more subtle tones of some Chris North hybrids to the yellow of 'Citronella strain', the white of *L. candidum* and the speckled orange of *L. lancifolium*. For the learned, there was even a case of mistaken identity with a plant thought to be *L. lancifolium* now renamed as *L. davidii*; the difference between the two, the numbers of bulbils and the presence or absence of hairs on the stem.

After the tour we were treated to scholarly talks by Annie and Heather on the botany and cultivation of lilies, as well as lily beetle control. We were also intrigued to learn that lily bulbs are a culinary crop in some parts of the world.

The participants varied from the complete lily rookie (me) to the very knowledgeable, but all had stories to tell and experience to share. Falling into the latter category was Nuala Sterling, chair of the RHS Lily Group who came to share her passion and encourage people to join the group ([www.rhslilygroup.org](http://www.rhslilygroup.org)). Nuala had recently returned from visiting a lily grower in Perth where she had been intrigued to discover the different methods used to grow and propagate lilies successfully in a more northerly



climate. Nuala also brought heaps of lily plants in different stages of maturation as well as many tips on successful growing to encourage us all to propagate, stressing that there is a lily and a way of growing suitable for everyone.

This augmented the practical sessions arranged by Annie and Heather (left) who demonstrated planting distances and depths, staking and propagation from scales and bulbils.

Soon everyone was separating lily scales and adding them to bags of compost and perlite, and planting their own bulbils to take home. Six weeks later and my bag of *L. 'Montebello'* scales contains lots of little bulblets ready for planting up and there are pots of *L. pyrenaicum*, *henryi* and *candidum* seeds (generously provided by the Lily Group) hopefully beginning the process of germination. I will remember a very enjoyable Lily Study Day as they hopefully grow to maturity and I wait patiently for them to flower.

I'm sure all participants are grateful to Bernard, Annie, Heather and Nuala for a fabulous day. As for the star lily of the day, I think for many it was the fasciated *L. 'Citronella Strain'* blooming its socks off behind the bothy.

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Entry £4.00

Sunday 4 September 11am – 5pm.  
Autumn bulbs and perennials  
Collection of cyclamen, crocus, colchicums, fritillaria, erythroniums etc.  
Free entry

**A fuller list of gardens being opened by Suffolk Group members will be included in the spring edition of this journal. Please let Widget Finn know by November 30th if you are opening your garden during 2016. Email [widget.finn@gmail.com](mailto:widget.finn@gmail.com).**

## **PAINTING THE MODERN GARDEN: MONET TO MATISSE**

**I**n January 2016, the Royal Academy will present a major exhibition in London examining the role of gardens in the paintings of Claude Monet and his contemporaries. Spanning the 1860s to the 1920s – a period of great social change and innovation in the arts – the exhibition will showcase Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and Avant-Garde artists, including Manet, Cézanne, van Gogh, Matisse, Kandinsky, Klee, and Klimt.

Alongside the paintings will be a rich selection of documentary material including horticultural books, journals and letters. The finale of the exhibition will feature a magnificent selection of Monet's water lily paintings including the Agapanthus Triptych of 1916-1919. It will be the first time this monumental triptych has been displayed together in the UK.

### **EMAIL ADDRESSES**

**I**f you have changed your email address recently please tell Jim Marshall ([jim@malmaisons.plus.com](mailto:jim@malmaisons.plus.com)) so you can receive all the information that is sent out to members.

*What is YOUR favourite gardening book? What inspired you to start or got you going, which is your constant companion or a book which you frequently refer to – or read in darkest winter to remind you that summer will come again. Please tell us about it – email [widget.finn@gmail.com](mailto:widget.finn@gmail.com) with your favourite book for the next edition of the Journal*

## AMONG MY FAVOURITE GARDENING BOOKS....

**Perennial Garden Plants or the Modern Florigeum’ by Graham Stuart Thomas pub. Weidenfield and Nicolson**

*JIM MARSHALL*

When I first joined the National Trust in 1978, Thomas’ book had just been published and it was therefore a ‘must’ for an inexperienced assistant gardens advisor. It was most important because in my early days with the Trust he acted as a consultant and on occasions I was fortunate enough to visit gardens with him to give advice. When discussing plants he would often suggest that I should refer to his book, and the final chapter ‘Cuttings from my notebook’. He recommends every gardener keeps a notebook as an aide-memoire. I used to, but I am afraid now it is Sarah who makes the notes for both of us!

I continue to refer to ‘Perennial Garden Plants’ when considering what to plant and for plant identification, but perhaps what I enjoy most are his descriptions of plant associations, for example “*Lavateria olbia*, lovely with *Campanula lactiflora* and agapanthus. Non-stop display, there are not many pink flowers for August”.

Although many new herbaceous plants (both species and cultivars) have been introduced since this book was first published it remains a wonderfully well written book and his general comments and cultivation notes are as true today as when he wrote them. It is also fascinating to see how many of his favourites have stood the test of time.

Contributions to the Spring edition of Suffolk Plant Heritage Journal are wanted by 30 November. Please send to Widget Finn, [widget.finn@gmail.com](mailto:widget.finn@gmail.com).

# SUFFOLK PLANT HERITAGE

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*As a temporary measure enquiries about membership will be handled by Jim Marshall.*

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