

SUFFOLK GROUP JOURNAL

Autumn 2018



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*Cover picture: Fall Sampler Micky**;*

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

MAGGIE THORPE

Thank you to all helpers at our Spring Plant Fair at Helmingham. We had a record number of visitors but it came with a traffic problem, congestion in the road, which is a major problem for Helmingham Estate. A new entry system is being developed and we will be able to let you know the details before our Autumn Fair on the 16th September.

There have been huge changes at National Office, now to be called Central Office. There are to be changes in management headed by a Board of Trustees with three panels, Resources and Skills, Plant Conservation and Membership & Supporters. Sarah Quatermain, the CEO, has resigned and the whole structure of our organization is under review. More details will be available in our next Journal.

Our 40th Anniversary Party was a huge success and our special thanks are due to Doreen Wrinch, the kind member who hosted our party in her beautiful garden at Roydon Hall.

Congratulations to Sarah Cook who has won the Brickell Award for 'excellence in cultivated plant conservation undertaken by Collection Holders'. Her amazing work in searching for lost cultivars of Cedric Morris irises has been so successful and created a huge amount of publicity for Plant Heritage

Suffolk is always up there amongst the top groups, taking part in Central Office affairs and providing much needed cash from our fairs and plant sales.

We look forward to seeing you at our Annual General Meeting on Sunday 18th November at The Priory, Stoke by Nayland by kind invitation of Mrs Victoria Engleheart (see Events on page 6).

We shall have our usual lovely hot lunch followed by puddings brought by members before a talk entitled 'Perils of a Plant Hunter' by Geoff Hales of Travelling Theatre.

Do please let me know if you have any special requests for either speakers or study days .

TREASURER'S REPORT

PAT STANLEY

Once again the Spring Plant Fair at Helmingham was a great success, with over 3900 gate admissions, thanks in part to the wonderful weather but mainly due to the excellent plant and craft stalls and the hard work and enthusiasm of Sarah Cook and the band of Suffolk Plant Heritage volunteers over the weekend.

Our total income was £8,599, and after costs of £1,125 for free plant distribution and marquee hire to be deducted, our net share amounted to £7,474. Our Plant Heritage plant stall raised a further £972.

The propagation group also continue to raise and sell plants throughout the year, raising over £1,600 this year.



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SUFFOLK GROUP EVENTS 2018/19

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 15th

***Talk: A Passion for Climbers**

Speakers: Jane Lindsay and Toni O'Connor.

2.30 Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ

Tynings Climbers are a nursery specialising in hardy and tender climbers run by Jane Lindsay and Toni O'Connor. They are proud National Collection holders of Passiflora, Jasminum, Thunbergia and Mandevillas with many other unusual climbers. They are regular RHS flower show exhibitors and gold medal winners. Most of the plants grown on the nursery are propagated and grown from cuttings.

Sunday 16

PLANT HERITAGE AUTUMN PLANT FAIR

10am–4 pm, Helmingham Hall, IP14 6EF.

Entrance £7

OCTOBER

Saturday 27th

***Talk: Mr Bowles and his Garden**

Speaker: James Hall

2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4BQ

James Hall started his gardening career at RHS Harlow Carr in North Yorkshire and went on to complete a three year apprenticeship in botanical horticulture at Kew. He has been head gardener at Myddelton House Gardens since May 2015.

NOVEMBER

Sunday 18th

Annual General Meeting and Lunch

12.00 for 12.30 at The Priory, Stoke by Nayland,

CO6 4RL By kind invitation of Mrs Victoria

Engleheart

There will be a talk 'Perils of a Plant Hunter' by Geoff Hales of the Travelling Theatre

Members please bring a pudding and inform secretary Isobel if you intend to come 01284 754993 or isobel.ashton@btinternet.com

JANUARY 2019

Saturday 26th

*Talk: 'All My Own Work'
(The Essex Garden of Lady Bing)
Speaker: Jan Michalak
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

Jan is one of our Collection Holders (Muehlenbeckia) and has researched the life and garden of Lady Bing.

FEBRUARY

Saturday 23rd

*Talk 'Tales from a Norwegian Garden'
Speaker: Tommy Tonsberg
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

Tommy is a Scandinavian gardener, plantsman, propagator, writer and photographer who spends a great deal of time in the UK.

MARCH

THIS YEAR'S SPECIAL EVENT – MEMBERS £8, GUESTS WELCOME £15

Saturday 23rd

Talk: 'Bulbs for All Seasons'
Speaker: ANNA PAVORD
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ
Tickets by cheque in advance to Isobel Ashton,
6 College Lane, Bury St Edmunds, IP331NN

Anna needs no introduction having spoken to us before ('The Tulip'). Her gardening books and articles are read throughout the world and we are delighted she will come again to Suffolk.

APRIL

Saturday 27th

*Talk 'Looking Back at English Garden Daffodils'
Speaker: Sally Kingston
2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

Sally held the post at the RHS International Daffodil Registrar giving the world the first digitized Daffodil Register (1998). She was awarded the Peter Barr Memorial Cup for her work, and now retired, has been instrumental with advice and help in establishing our Group's Dispersed Collection of Engleheart narcissus cultivars.

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 28th

*Talk 'Siberian Iris'

Speakers: Alun and Jill Whitehead

2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

Alun and Jill run a small nursery in Herefordshire. Their National Collection of Siberian Iris was in part rescued in 2007 from an abandoned nursery field near by.

OCTOBER

Saturday 26th

*Talk 'Growing Hardy Orchids in a Garden or Meadow'. Speaker: Jeff Hutchins.

2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

Jeff is the owner of Laneside Hardy Orchids and will tell us all there is to know about conditions and cultivation for growing these native orchids.

** Talks free to members, £5 to non members*

Wanted ~ Events Coordinator

Please let Maggie Thorpe know if you can help with booking speakers for our talks at Stowupland. Suggestions are made by the committee and we need someone to follow up by contacting them and booking the hall. Not an arduous task but a very important one. Please ring Maggie for more information. 01787 211346.

PLANT HERITAGE NEWS

FOR AN UPDATE ON WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CENTRAL OFFICE VISIT
THE CURRENT ISSUE OF NEWSLINES ON THE WEBSITE
WWW.PLANTHERITAGE.COM

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SUFFOLK GROUP ACTIVITIES
VISIT WWW.SUFFOLKPLANTHERITAGE.COM

PROPAGATION REPORT

ANNE TWEDDLE

The propagation group which meet once a month in Stowupland has been hard at it again this year producing many plants for sale at group meetings and our plant fairs. We have plants on sale all summer in Boxford. Last year we raised just short of £5,000. A terrific effort in boosting the funds of Plant Heritage Suffolk Group.

We try to ring the changes a little by having different plants for sale and propagation. I have been collecting pelargoniums from the National Plant Exchange and now have eight sitting in front of me on my terrace. All these plants are acceptable for the Plant Guardian scheme and several are rare enough for the Threatened Plant Project. Some have been propagated already and more will be for sale in the autumn at the Helmingham Plant Fair.

Anthony Pigott, our committee member who has the National Collection of *Equisetum*, came and helped us with propagating ferns from spores this

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time last year. Mine remain in the plastic bag we put them in and look very green, I suspect more from moss and algae rather than nice young plants. The next stage will be to find out what's in the half dozen plastic bags. The mantra of learning more from what goes wrong comes to mind here.

The Iris project has not been forgotten. I haven't mentioned it for a while, largely because all the imported plants are doing their thing and growing on. The cultivars we had from the American Historic Iris Preservation Society will be for sale as soon as they are large enough to divide.

Chrysanthemums continue to interest me, and once again the National Plant Exchange delivered us a few more cultivars. Cuttings of these have rooted and will be for sale in the autumn.

Veronica numbers are growing too. I find them very useful in my dry and in places hot garden. They seem to suit our conditions and flower for weeks. We have white, lavender and various shades of blue in our stocks now, so watch out for these too. They fill in well after the first summer flush and go on into late summer. Nice neat spikes. *Veronicastrums* are a considerably taller and more stately plant which I find need more water and are slower to grow on in my garden. They generally need staking, but they are also very good garden plants.

Our efforts at Helmingham this spring were very good. Not record breaking but just under £1,000 from selling plants raised by the propagating group is an excellent result. Thank you to all the helpers, workers and donors.

I would like to mention the National Plant Exchange. The process of the exchange begins in November when we collect names of rare plants which members want to donate, or members are looking for. So here is your chance to offer a plant, or request a plant from the exchange. If you donate a plant it might end up anywhere in the country in the hands of another Plant Heritage member. I will keep you all up to date with the exchange by email.

It would be great to see Suffolk climb the ladder of Plant Guardian, and involvement in the Plant Exchange. The Kent group had over 200 plants come to them this year and distributed through their membership, Suffolk was below 50. It's not to say we don't do terrific things with the 50 plants we receive, but more members involved means more hands-on conservation.

The propagation group meets at Stowupland and dates can be found on our website. Thank you all for your continued help and support.

THREATENED PELARGONIUMS FROM THE PLANT EXCHANGE

ANNE TWEDDLE

Summer without pots of pelargoniums just isn't summer. So I was delighted when the 2018 Plant Exchange delivered me another clutch of these lovely plants. This is only my second year of collecting and already I'm wondering how I lived so long without them. Lovely colours, scented leaves, endless flowering, plants of great charm and beauty.

There is the problem of winter though, and last winter was something of a challenge, keeping the Beast from the East away from them. Some bubble wrap and my cold polytunnel was sufficient.

Last year I wrote about *P. 'Rollers Satinique'* an American introduction. Leaves when crushed carry a hint of eucalyptus and the small coral flowers cover the plant all summer long. Look out for small plants of this at our sales over the summer. It is a winner.

P. 'Pink Bonanza' was a small plant last year, but one year on it's another stunner. This cultivar falls into the regal group, with a large roundish leaf and big flowers. It is coral pink and deserves a place in anyone's garden. I haven't propagated this one yet, leaving it to flower for the moment.



Both of the above cultivars are 'Threatened in Cultivation', which means they are the highest level of concern. They are both fine examples of lovely garden plants that should be conserved.

If you grow one in your own garden you will be doing hands-on conservation. Both plants

Left: *P. 'Rollers Satinique'*;



Photos clockwise
from top left:
P. 'Pink Bonanza'.
P. 'Pink Raspail'
P. 'The Boar',
*P. Spot on
Bonanza.'*;



can be registered under the Plant Guardian scheme.

The 2018 plant exchange brought me *P. 'Pink Raspail'*, *P. 'King of the Boars'*, *P. 'Pink Bonanza'* and *P. 'Grand Slam'*. *P. 'Pink Raspail'* has an interesting story. Bred in the 1920s it grew at Pyrford Court near Woking. The Surrey group of Plant Heritage were given some material prior to the house being sold in 2001, when the conservatories were cleared and all plants destroyed.

Through the PH Plant Exchange plants have found their way to various groups, as well as Roy Evans in the Nottinghamshire group. He is the son of the World War Two gardener at Pyrford Court. My plant came via the PH group in Cambridge. The cultivar still remains Threatened in Cultivation.

The Plant Exchange is a way all members can access rare plants. It would be good to see more people actively involved in this process and enjoying the fruits of some hands-on conservation.

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome seven new members who have joined Suffolk Plant Heritage since May 2018.

Helen Taylor, Bury St Edmunds

Mr and Mrs Sheldrake, Bury St Edmunds

Lucy Skellorn, Ringshall

Tim Main, Sudbury

Caroline Bilsby, Aldham, Ipswich

Henrietta Willcox, Glemsford

Tina Harding, Wenhaston

The committee and members look forward to meeting you at the Stowupland talks and other events. Please introduce yourself when you sign in at the membership table. If you would like a lift to events contact our membership secretary Isobel Ashton on 01284 754993.

NATIONAL PLANT COLLECTIONS

DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT

It has been a busy year for Suffolk Plant Collection Holders. Sarah Cook went to Hampton Court Flower Show to receive the Brickell Award for her work which they saw as an ‘outstanding example of plant conservation from research, rediscovery, propagation and distribution to bring the Benton Irises back’.

Sue Wooster featured on the Gardeners World TV programme with her collection of Alpine Campanulas, which was good to see.

Anthony Pigott now has two collections as he has been awarded full status for his *Dryopteris* collection which has reference status.

Two new proposals for collections have been accepted by Central Office. Lucy Skellorn for a collection of Irises introduced by Sir Michael Foster, her great great grandfather and Sara Sheldrake for a collection of *Scabiosa*

caucasica. Both of these proposals are very interesting and we look forward to them being awarded full status.

The Collection Holders had their annual meeting at the Suffolk Punch Trust in June where they viewed the collection of Suffolk Garden Plants which is kept there. Lucy Pitman from Central Office attended the meeting and lots of interesting information was shared.

Collection Holders were very generous donating plants to the raffle at the Group's garden party to celebrate 40 years of Plant Heritage. They also worked hard at the Spring Fair at Helmingham displaying their plants and giving talks. We look forward to seeing them at the Autumn Plant Fair.

THE BRICKELL AWARD

The prestigious Brickell Award recognises extensive and vital work achieved by many Collection Holders and is awarded to those considered to have demonstrated excellence in this field.

It was established to celebrate Plant Heritage's jubilee year in 2003 in recognition of

'excellence in cultivated plant conservation' undertaken by Collection Holders and is named after Chris Brickell, a founding member of Plant Heritage and currently a vice president of the organisation.

We're delighted that Suffolk Plant Heritage's own Sarah Cook,

holder of the National Collection of Cedric Morris irises, won the Award this year. It was presented to her at RHS Hampton Court by Carol Klein.



SUFFOLK'S NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

AESCULUS	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
HOSTA	Stowmarket	Mickfield Hostas, 01449 711576
IRIS (Sir Cedric Morris introductions)	Ipswich	Sarah Cook, 01473 822400
MUEHLENBECKIA	Burgate	Jan Michalak, 01359 783452
NARCISSUS (Rev.G.Englehart introductions)		Dispersed collection
SANTOLINA	Campsea Ashe	Jon Rose, Botanica, Chantry Farm, IP13 0PZ, 01728 747113
SYRINGA	Stowmarket	Norman's Farm, lilacprez@hotmail.com
SUFFOLK GARDEN PLANTS (C 20th Hardy)		Margaret Wyllie, The Suffolk Punch Trust, Hollesley, 01394 411327

HAPPY 40TH BIRTHDAY PLANT HERITAGE!

Concern about the loss of plant variety within the horticultural world was brought to a head in 1978 when a conference was arranged with the RHS with the title 'The practical role of gardens in the conservation of rare and threatened plants.' As a result, the NCCPG (National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens) was born. Because of changing patterns of plant marketing and increased costs of production many nurseries were cutting back on the variety of stock offered in their catalogues which caused a loss of available plant variety. The aims of the new organisation included the formation of National Plant Collections as a way of preserving plant material, with their main criteria being 'as complete a representation of a genus or section of a genus as possible.'

There was a steady growth of both collections and membership, and by 1984 there were 200 collections and 3,000 members. In 1992 the NCCPG received the royal seal of approval when HRH the Prince of Wales became patron of the charity. Originally based at RHS Wisley, NCCPG moved to Loseley Park in Surrey in 2007, and changed its name to Plant Heritage to members' relief as few people could ever remember what NCCPG stood for! The charity heads up a number of initiatives including the Threatened Plants Project and Plant Guardians. It celebrated its 40th birthday by dedicating its display at the 2018 Chelsea Flower Show to the National Collections which are at the heart of its work.

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PLANT HERITAGE 40TH ANNIVERSARY GARDEN PARTY

ISOBEL ASHTON

Our group celebrated the 40th anniversary of Plant Heritage with a garden party in the lovely garden and grounds of Roydon Hall in Creeping St Peter. We were invited there by our member Mrs Doreen Wrinch.

We enjoyed meeting in the small paved area near the main door of this lovely listed farmhouse dating from the 16th century with some later additions. This delightful area was surrounded with masses of lavender and, although sunny, there was some pretty shade from adjacent small trees.

On the garden table we had a beautiful flowery sculpture depicting the 40 years of Plant Heritage, made by our Chairman, Maggie Thorpe. There was much more to see while we enjoyed our champagne, strawberries and cream.

The garden provided many secluded areas and interest for the 50 people there to explore. Near the house we could wander along narrow paths between interesting herbaceous beds backed by a lovely mellow brick garden wall covered in climbing roses. Under our new Plant Heritage marquee, Anne Tweddle sold plants grown by our group and, crossing the lawn here, we could look over the natural lake lit by the filtered sun.



Walking back to the drinks table for another glass of

Suffolk Group committee members, back row from left: Dorothy Cartwright, Neil Bradford, Anthony Pigott, Darren Andrews; front: Isobel Ashton and Maggie Thorpe.



champagne, with the sun lighting the surrounding trees, took most people longer than expected as several small, delightful seating areas had to be explored.

One looked along the length of a rose-covered pergola and others were hidden amongst the trees where you could sit and enjoy a variety of welcome

woodland flowers. The garden displayed so many treasures and I am sure each of us will have our own favourites and memories of those we found.

We are most grateful to Doreen for inviting us to have our special garden party at Roydon Hall and to all our committee and friends for making it happen.

Editorial contributions to the Spring 2019 issue of
Suffolk Plant Heritage Journal are wanted by 1st December.
Please send articles and photos to Widget Finn,
widget.finn@gmail.com





SUFFOLK GROUP SPRING
PLANT FAIR
HELMINGHAM HALL
MAY 2018

Photos Peter Kendall



This article is reproduced by kind permission of Kent Plant Heritage. The Kent group has the highest number of Plant Guardians, and in 2018 received over 200 plants in the Plant Exchange, while Suffolk received just a quarter of that. Anne Tweddle our propagation office is very keen for Suffolk members to become more involved as Plant Guardians, and also to take greater advantage of the exciting range of plants on offer through the Plant Exchange. Come on, Suffolk, Plant Heritage needs YOU!

PLANT GUARDIANS

PHILIP OOSTENBRINK

Plant Heritage introduced the Plant Guardians a few years ago. These superheroes of plant conservation all look after one or more rare plants. This can be in a garden, greenhouse, balcony or even on a windowsill. A plant is considered rare if it has two or fewer entries in the RHS Plant Finder. If you have a rare or threatened plant you can register as a Plant Guardian (superhero cape optional). Even if you don't think the plant you are growing is rare, it could be unfashionable, have disappeared from the trade, or be at risk in its natural habitat, so registering your plant could help safeguard its future.

It is an ideal way of getting involved in plant conservation when you haven't got the time/space for a National Plant Collection. Sometimes these rare plants are not even part of any national collection as they may be a missing genera, making it even more important to make sure these varieties don't go extinct.

If you don't own a rare plant, but would like to get involved, you can often get them through our Plant Exchange. As a member of Plant Heritage you can request as many plants as you like for free, and chances are you will receive one or more of your requests. If you find the plant is rare, you can register online. If the rareness of the plant you have is confirmed, you become a Plant Guardian, receive a red label, and the plant name will be listed on the website. If anyone is ever looking for the plant you have, for instance, if they need it for a National Collection, Plant Heritage HQ will put them in touch with you.

'WHAT IF MY PLANT DIES??' is the question we get asked most often. If it dies, then that is a great shame, but you won't be named/shamed/banned for life. Maybe you can try getting it again from where you got it in

the first place, or you can request it in the Plant Exchange, or, if you have given anyone any cuttings, you could get it back from them again.

Being a Plant Guardian is a great way of getting involved with Plant Conservation, and we hope a lot of people will register to make sure all our plants are preserved for future generations.

If you would like more information about becoming a Plant Guardian, please contact Lucy at PH HQ, or Kent Plant Collections Coordinator Philip Oostenbrink on p.oostenbrink@gmail.com / mob. 07794261722.

NATIONAL PLANT HERITAGE 40TH ANNIVERSARY AGM WEEKEND

DOROTHY WYNN

The weekend in April was held just five minutes from the historic market town of Wareham on the Isle of Purbeck, Dorset. 114 members attended, some coming from as far away as Ayr and Arran.

After registration on Friday we received our free plant, *Viola Ordorata*. Groves Nurseries at Bridport kindly supplied the plants. They hold the National Collection of *Viola Ordorata* (sweet scented violet) and also of Parma Violets. Mine is growing very well in the 'keep your eye on plants area' of my garden.

An optional garden visit was arranged for the afternoon to Kitson Old Farmhouse. Rachel welcomed us to her garden, explaining that when they purchased the property in 1960 the garden did not exist, only the roses round the house and an old pear tree nearby. She thought both dated back to the 1930s. The orchard, now home to bantams, also has some 90 year old trees.

Today 'her garden of love' has shelter belts, which include the original old hedge and stone wall, raised vegetable beds, soft fruit, a greenhouse and lawns together with a kiwi plant which climbs over the nissan hut. The abandoned garden she says is good for 'wild things'. Rachel, now in her 80s, makes her own potting compost. The resident ducks and bantams, plus toads and snakes all help to keep the balance so pesticides are avoided. It

is a haven, and having sampled her cake with my coffee, I returned ready for our pre-dinner talk by Neil Lucas of Knoll Gardens, Wimborne.

Neil was concise and amusing, illustrating his talk with an excellent presentation of his own slides. The leading ornamental grass specialist, Neil holds the National Collection and has shown at Chelsea for 10 consecutive years. His message, "Use grasses in the landscape".

After dinner that night, Steve Griffiths, Curator at Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens, gave us an interesting and useful talk about the gardens and his own plant hunting days. Abbotsbury was established in 1765 by Elizabeth Fox-Strangeways, 1st Countess of Ilchester, as a kitchen garden for her nearby castle. Now a magnificent 30 acres, filled with rare and exotic plants from all over the world, many specimens being discovered by plant hunting descendant of the Countess. They hold the National Collection of *Hoheria* (Lacebark).

Steve took us on an illustrated tour of the gardens, plants and seasons. This included early site photos on the screen adjacent to 21st century photos, the differences were fascinating. Steve had set the scene perfectly. Thus, as we retired to our rooms after a long day, we looked forward to exploring Abbotsbury for ourselves.

Saturday allowed time for us to view the NCH displays and check out the plant exchange before attending the AGM. Then we were on our way to the Grade 1 listed gardens at Abbotsbury - and they did not disappoint.

First an early light lunch in the The Garden Pavilion, then we divided into groups for our tour. Even then the groups were too large, on narrow paths it was difficult at the back to hear, but we managed. I could not resist taking far too many photographs, but the Camellia Groves, first introduced in 1792, rhododendrons and other exotic plants were far too tempting. Taking advantage of the newly established walk, some of us climbed the very steep hillside to the view point to be rewarded with magnificent views of the Jurassic Coast and Chesil Beach.

Time to visit the nursery and tearoom, then all too soon we left, stopping at Holme Farm Gardens near Wareham, before returning to our hotel. Holme Farm Gardens are largely still in their infancy. Nevertheless it was interesting to see the progress already made and envisage future developments. The layout has been influenced by gardens such as those at Hidcote Manor. It has distinct 'rooms' separated by hedges and areas of taller plants but linked by walks, all leading us on to discover what was round the corner.

After dinner on Saturday evening we listened with interest to our final speaker, Jennifer Trehane of Trehane Nursery, Wimborne. In 1957 Jennifer

started to help her father in the nursery and so 'The Wonderful World of Camellias' became her passion and life. The nursery is now run by her family, but Jennifer still takes a keen interest.

Jennifer is now a world authority on camellia cultivation and has published two books - sadly I did not win one in the raffle! She has been the Vice President of the International Camellia Society and, although retired, she still travels, regularly giving talks around the world. In Japan she has become involved with the development of producing camellia oil, alongside her interest on the conservation of wild japonicas (*Camellia Japonica*). She told us tales from China, Oporto in Portugal and of WW2 graveyards which have become camellia conservation areas.

Her talk was beautifully illustrated by her own photographs, plus a wonderful potted camellia. There were also various flower stems on the sidetable for us to examine and admire. In addition there were her artefacts, including a message carved on the fruit of a camellia.

Sunday came, all too soon it was time for us to depart - only I stayed on for a few more days to explore Dorset. This included Minterne Gardens, 'A Corner of Paradise', to see Victorian Plant Hunters' Legacies. Athlehampton, described as 'The Quintessential English Manor House', with its world famous gardens dating from 1891, was simply delightful. Plant Heritage hold their Annual Plant Sales there in May and September.

The experience of the Members Weekend, AGM and time in Dorset was truly memorable. I enjoyed meeting other delegates and hearing about their groups. Finally a thank you to the weather for being kind!

BOX TREE MOTH CATERPILLAR ALERT!

The box tree moth *Cydalima perspectalis* is a recent alien import and a serious pest of *Buxus* plants. It's very active in the London area but is now spreading. Eggs are laid by the brown-margined white moths and the resulting green-and-white caterpillar devastates plants within days. Pheromone traps and garden pesticides are inadequate. The only effective cure is *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *Kurstaki*, now widely available online and sold as Di-Pel or Topbuxus XenTari. Follow instructions and repeat fortnightly through the season to break the cycle of new hatchings. Your box plants will recover rapidly.

Fullers Mill Garden - a waterside gem in the heart of Suffolk



Fullers Mill Garden is an enchanting and tranquil waterside and woodland garden, situated on the banks of the River Lark at West Stow in Suffolk.

Fullers Mill Garden combines a beautiful site of light dappled woodland with a fabulous collection of rare and unusual shrubs, perennials, lilies and marginal plants, collected over the course of 50 years by the creator of the garden Bernard Tickner MBE. In 2013 the garden was gifted to Perennial, the only UK charity dedicated to helping all those

who work in or are retired from horticulture, in times of need.

Private visits from groups are welcomed by prior arrangement, with guided tours available from staff and plenty of parking for coaches. Tea, coffee and delicious home-made cakes are available to purchase from the Bothy. Plants propagated from the garden are available for sale.

Open April-September 2019
Weds & Fri, 2.00pm – 5.00pm | Sun, 11.00am – 5.00pm

West Stow, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP28 6HD



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A LOCAL PLANT HERO

SUE WOOSTER

Last October I visited plantsman Tony Venison who has lived in Suffolk for twenty-something years. I look forward to seeing this generous octogenarian and hearing his stories, full of famous names from the world of horticulture. We always have a chuckle about his name-dropping.

A couple of times a year, Tony will ring me to offer me a little gem from his enchanting Suffolk garden. Usually it is a campanula – in 2016, he gave me huge clumps of *Campanula lactiflora* ‘Prichard’s Variety’ AGM, which, excitingly for me, really is the true form. Tony got his original stock from its raiser, THE Maurice Prichard at Riverslea, back in the day.

On this visit I carefully lifted *Campanula latiloba* ‘Hidcote Amethyst’, and when I asked Tony about his history with this plant, he mentioned John Sales. Yet another garden legend in Tony’s circle...

In exchange I took Tony two (very humble) harebells and planted them for him in two gaps he assured me were made for these little native campanulas. As we continued our walk round, he pointed with his walking stick at a small and weathered clay pan on his garden bench. ‘You can have that pot on loan – keep the contents. It’s *Anemone nemorosa* ‘Cedric’s Pink’. Tony told me he often gifts this to friends who regularly advise him that, when it starts to flower, it is in fact a white form of wood anemone. ‘Just wait for a day or two, then you’ll see where it gets its name,’ he chuckles.

Sitting in Tony’s kitchen with a steaming mug of Earl Grey tea (first ever tried by him at Marjorie Fish’s home...), I feel extremely privileged to have met and become a ‘plant friend’ of this unassuming, warm-hearted plantsman and horticultural genius.



James Hall, head gardener at Myddelton House Gardens, the former home of E.A. Bowles, will be speaking to Suffolk Plant Heritage on Saturday October 29th about the eminent plantsman, author and gardener.

MR. BOWLES AND HIS GARDEN

JAMES HALL

“...for me, the very inmost cockle of whose heart glows more for a Crocus than for the most expensive Orchid, every cockle in me (though I haven’t a notion what portion of my internal anatomy is meant by that borrowed appellation of marine molluscs) is full of searchings and divisions how to do justice to my first garden love and avoid wearying and driving away readers to whom my raptures may appear the vapourings of a love-sick monomaniac.” My Garden in Spring, 1914

E.A.Bowles’ playful and poetic use of words can’t help but delight. In his seasonal trilogy of books, he takes the reader on an imaginary tour of the gardens; recounting amusing anecdotes and talking about the plants as if they were old friends.

Born in 1865, Edward Augustus Bowles was destined for the clergy but returned to his family home from Cambridge following the deaths of two of his siblings. His interest in the natural world grew and he dedicated the rest of his life to horticulture and creating the gardens surrounding Myddelton House in Enfield.



Mr. Bowles with a lead ostrich next to the Wisteria Bridge at Myddelton, taken in 1946 or 47 (making him about 81 or 82)

Early work on the garden began by stripping away great swathes of shrubs to reveal the bare bones of the garden, which he could fill with choice plants. At the far south-west of the estate he was given permission by his father to start his first big project, the rock garden, later to become the jewel in the crown of Myddelton. It was constructed to create a variety of habitats to allow the cultivation of a wide selection of plants. An unusual feature of this was the cactus bank, where he grew a selection of hardy succulent plants.

Cacti were a great love of Bowles and they spilled out of the glasshouses in summer onto

the terraces and into flower beds to create unusual bedding schemes. Cold frames were built in the kitchen garden to house his crocus collection and he filled the gardens with an abundance of snowdrops, daffodils, colchicums and other bulbous plants. The long beds adjacent to the New River (that flowed through the garden at that time), were filled with bearded iris and a sight to behold in May and June.

An area he called the 'Lunatic Asylum' was originally planned to house a collection of Japanese plants but when Japanese gardens became rather too popular, he began to fill this area with a collection of plants with unusual forms that he referred to as his 'lunatics'. The first occupant was a contorted hazel but many more were soon committed.

Bowles transformed the gardens at Myddelton and filled them with an inimitable collection of plants, ranging from rare bulbs and mutated shrubs to hardy cacti and exotic palms. Very often, the cold dry climate and poor soil was not suitable but, whenever possible, he would try a plant in three different positions before admitting defeat. He gathered plants from all around the world, selecting and breeding them in his own garden and sharing them with his friends and peers. Some of his namesakes include *Carex elata* 'Aurea' (Bowles' golden sedge), *Milium effusum* 'Aureum' (Bowles' golden grass), *Vinca minor* 'Bowles's Variety' and the ubiquitous *Erysimum* 'Bowles's Mauve', named in his honour.

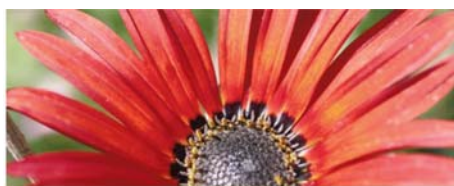
Following periods of neglect, the gardens have undergone extensive restoration and refurbishment. In 2011, following a two-year Heritage Lottery Fund enabled project, a newly restored garden was unveiled.





Today the eight acres of gardens are home to several national plant collections, a range of climatic zoned glasshouses, a working kitchen garden, productive peach house and a growing collection of curious plants. Now in its third century, Bowles' garden continues to be maintained and restored in the true spirit of this great man.

www.visitleegardens.org.uk/myddelton-house-gardens/



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We have 14 National Collections in Suffolk, with two more on their way. Most can be visited by appointment and the collection holders will be delighted to show you round.

Contact details on page 12.

A HIDDEN SUSSEX GARDEN

ROSIE ANSELL

Sussex has many great gardens – Wakehurst Place, Nymans, Great Dixter, West Dean, Pashley Manor and Borde Hill, to name but a few. However on a recent visit I was introduced to a garden I had never heard of. Highdown Gardens, on the outskirts of Worthing, have been owned by the local council for 50 years and are free to visit.

They were established from 1919 by Sir Frederick Stern and his wife, making use of an old chalk pit on the South Downs looking towards the sea. The soil is very thin so the emphasis is on Himalayan plants, and the gardens hold a National Collection of plants which Sir Frederick introduced.

Sir Frederick bought the estate in 1909, when he was only 25 and in possession of a considerable fortune. After his experiences in World War I, and his marriage in 1919, he turned his attention to horticulture. Initially he was told that nothing would grow on chalk so he determined to find species that would.

The leading plant collectors of the day, Frank Kingdon-Ward, Reginald Farrer and Ernest Wilson, contributed plants from their expeditions, and during the 1920s and 1930s many visitors came to see the growing collection of rare and exotic plants. These included Queen Mary, who planted a tree, the Prince of Wales and Queen Elizabeth (later the Queen Mother).

Sir Frederick rose to be vice president of the RHS and received his knighthood for services to horticulture. He and his wife had no family so he left the gardens to the council on his death in 1967; Lady Stern died in 1972.

To the right of the entrance is the old orchard, now planted with many varieties of ornamental berries, and also the tranquil Millennium Garden. A cherry tree avenue leads to the Chalk Pit Garden, an open area surrounded by trees and shrubs and including a rock garden. There is also a pond created on the site of an old lime kiln. Sir Frederick used to have a summer house high up the cliff with a panoramic view of the garden, but this fell victim to a storm and has not been replaced.

There are two rose gardens before you reach steps leading down through the Beech Wood, badly damaged during the great storm of 1987, but now



replanted, and also home to a carpet of spring flowers. Below this are the middle garden, devoted to trees and shrubs, laid out in island beds, and lower again the herbaceous garden, where the soil is deeper and allows a wider range of plants to thrive.

The Middle Garden includes some raised acid beds to allow camellias and rhododendrons to be grown, and the Lower Garden also contains a lawned area where open air performances take place. The southern boundary of the garden includes a rose walk pergola

In the spring there are many bulbs to be seen, and also paeonies and bearded iris, many of which Sir Frederick raised himself. Later varieties include hardy geraniums and Japanese anemones.

Highdown Gardens has been awarded lottery funding of £100,000 to help preserve its future. A new plan for the 8.5 acre gardens will include a project to stop extremely rare specimens becoming extinct and a visitor centre to tell the story of the gardens and its originator Sir Frederick Stern.

www.highdowngardens.co.uk

BETH CHATTO OBE VMH

JUNE 1923-MAY 2018

In the Spring 2018 edition of the Suffolk Group Journal we included an article about Beth Chatto, her books and her archive by Catherine Horwood Barwise, a Plant Heritage member who is Beth's official biographer. It was with great sadness that the gardening world heard of Beth's death in May at the age of 94. She was one of the greats of horticulture, influencing styles of planting and a new way of thinking about 'the right plant in the right place.' Despite her fame she had the gift of making everyone she met feel that they knew her, and even when immersed in working in her garden would always have time to chat to visitors.

Here are two memories of Beth, from a regular visitor and from one of the team of volunteers who contribute so much to maintaining the nursery and garden as a very special place to visit.

MEMORIES OF A VOLUNTEER

JUDE LAW

When I was asked to contribute a few lines in commemoration of Beth I felt a trifle uncomfortable for I have no special story to tell but, as a volunteer at her garden, I have been privileged to work with her staff, lots of whom have worked with her for many years, and be welcomed into the wider Beth Chatto 'family'.

I first came across her wonderful garden at Elmstead Market some 30 years ago. We had just moved into a little cottage on the Kent/Sussex border next to the village of Northiam. As I was a novice gardener, my neighbour, with a mischievous gleam in her eye, offered to take me to 'a little garden up the road'. The 'little garden' turned out to be Great Dixter and from there I soon made my way to Elmstead Market and came under the spell of Beth's wonderful planting.

Over the years I made many trips to the garden, often taking my mother with me. Mum was enthralled by the garden, especially the shady areas and one day we came across Beth working quietly in the woodland. I tried to hurry my mother past for fear she would interrupt, but Beth looked up and spoke first, willing, as always, to share her knowledge and love of plants and the image of them chatting is one that is very dear to me.

Beth's work and writings have continued to be an important influence, not only directly in her garden teachings and writings but in the way she cared about the world and closer to home, her staff and family. Since working in the garden I have learnt that it owes its genesis not only to Beth, but also to her husband, Andrew, whose theoretical studies in the field of botany and natural plant habitats formed the cornerstone of the 'right plant, right place' mantra. The garden that evolved is the product of two complementary minds working together.

As volunteers, we spend happy hours working alongside the gardeners, or on the stock beds or in the nursery. Gradually as the months have gone by

we have become versed in Beth's methods and ethos. Many of the tasks are still done in the way that Beth performed them and the secrets passed down by a staff that are fiercely loyal - if you could cut them open, like a stick of rock, they would have 'Beth Chatto Gardens', imprinted in the middle.



Beth and her good friend and fellow gardener, Christopher Lloyd. Photograph courtesy Jerry Harpur.

As we weed in the various areas of the garden and follow the rhythm of the seasons, we have come to know almost by osmosis, what plant associations are fostered in each area, which plants are allowed to self seed and which self seeders are then selectively weeded to leave the right density to mature and flower. This is an exacting task, particularly in the Gravel Garden, which is by no means a 'low maintenance garden' but, true to Beth's experiment, I can vouch for the fact that, even in this most testing of summers, it is never watered.

Beth would venture into the garden on a fine day and, finding a toiling band of volunteers, she would stop to chat, to thank us and to discover what we were doing. Woe betide anyone who didn't also know why they were doing it! She was an exacting taskmaster but a committed educationalist always eager to spread the word of ecological planting. Her garden remains a place of pilgrimage for students and horticulturalists

from all over the world and at the end of August, The Beth Chatto Education Trust hosted a two-day symposium which brought together an international cast of eminent plantspeople, designers, gardeners and nursery owners, many of whom cite Beth and Andrew's work among their primary influences, to discuss the future of ecological gardening in the 21st century.

In Beth's own garden new areas, such as the new Reservoir Garden, are being developed, with an eye to the changing climate and the modern palette of plants that are available; her ideas are being carried forward. The questions remain the same, which plants are suited to the natural conditions of soil, climate and micro climate. Which will thrive, which will outcompete others and ultimately from that list, which will complement each other and create the visual tapestry of foliage and form that has always been the signature of Beth Chatto.

The garden is now being managed by Beth's granddaughter, its future is secured and we have time to pause and say a thousand thanks for Beth's life and work.

MEMORIES OF A GARDEN VISITOR

DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT

I have always regarded Beth Chatto as an inspiring example of a female gardener. I first visited her garden over 25 years ago when my mum lived at Walton on the Naze. In those days you parked your car in the area which is now the dry garden and entered the garden through a gate which had an honesty box attached for you to pay your entrance fee. Often Beth Chatto would come up to visitors and talk to them about the garden.

At a time when most gardens you saw were filled with colourful bedding plants her garden was quite different. You could see unusual plants which had been chosen for that part of the garden which would thrive in the soil and light levels there. Right plant, right place.

I remember when the dry garden was added – a new concept at the time and showed what plants could be grown in a dry area without any additional watering. When I was a volunteer at Hyde Hall and the garden team were planning to start a dry garden area there they went to view Beth Chatto's dry garden for inspiration. Over the years new areas have been added to the garden, a plant sales area and a café but it has always felt like Beth Chatto's Garden.

GARDENERS' DIARY

Sep 22/23	Essex Plant Heritage Plant Fair at Hyde Hall
Sep 22/23	Parham House Plant Fair
Sep 29/30	Holkham Hall Plant Fair
Oct 5 Fr	Keukenhof Bulb Market
Oct 6 Sa	EAGG, Val Bourne talk 'Paeonies'
Oct 6 Sa	Norfolk Alpine Plant Society Conference
Oct 6/7	Gt Dixter Autumn Plant Fair
Oct 7Su	Fullers Mill Garden open for NGS
Oct 13/14	Gt Comp Autumn Plant Fair
Oct 13 Sa	Alpine Garden Society Mid-Anglia, talk by Bob Brown
Oct 14 Su	Suffolk Wildlife Trust Apple Day & Autumn Plant Fair, Lopham Fen
Oct 14 Su	Essex Hardy Plant Society talk 'Plant Hunting in Peru'
Oct 14 Su	Fullers Mill Garden open for Age UK
Oct 21 Su	Norfolk Plant Heritage, talk by Val Bourne
Oct 26 Fr	RHS Urban Garden Show London until 28th
Oct 27 Sa	Suffolk Plant Heritage James Hall talk 'Bowles & Myddleton House'
Nov 3 Sa	EAGG, AGM & Razvan Chisu talk 'Transylvanian Gardens'
Nov 3 Sa	Alpine Garden Society Mid-Anglia, Gail Harland, 'Paeonies'
Nov 10 Sa	Norfolk & Suffolk Hardy Plant Society Richard Mabey, Roydon Norfolk
Nov 17 Sa	Suffolk Garden Trust talk 'Marianne North'
Nov 18 Su	Essex Hardy Plant Society talk 'Hyde Hall'
Dec 1 Sa	EAGG, Christmas Wreath making Chamberlin Hall, Bildeston
Dec 2 Su	Hardy Plant Society Essex talk 'Bulb breeding in Holland'
Dec 21 Fr	Bildeston Waytes Carol Concert, Chamberlin Hall, Bildeston

SUFFOLK PLANT HERITAGE

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