

SUFFOLK GROUP JOURNAL

Spring 2020



CONTENTS

Chairman's letter	3
Treasurer's report	4
Propagation report≈	5
New members	7
Collection holders report	9
Engleheart Daffodil Collection update	10
Programme of events for 2020	12
Free Plant at Helmingham	14
My day at Helmingham	15
Report on talks 2019	16
Quest for Suffolk raised irises	17
Iris Silvery Moon	18
A Botanical Art Commission	22
Columbine Hall and me	26
Autumn's Bounty	28
Rooftop gardening	31
Tribute to Tony Venison	32
Memories of Beth Chatto	33
Open gardens	34
Plants of Distinction	38
Suffolk Group Committee Members	39

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Cover Illustration Crocus tommasinianus at Gable House, Redisham, the garden of John and Brenda Foster. Photograph by Jacqui Hurst.

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

MAGGIE THORPE

I am happy to report on another very successful year, not just financially but importantly on the conservation front too.

We have again been able to send £10,000 to Central Office, made possible by the huge success of our Plant Fairs at Helmingham. Thank you all for helping there – we could not manage without you. It really is a very special event, growing year on year in popularity with the public and is the very best place for us to promote Plant Heritage. It is also the place where we are able to sell the plants propagated by Anne Tweddle and her team who have raised over £4,000 during the year. We thank all the team for this vital work.

I am so pleased to tell you that Rosie Ansell has agreed to take over the editorship of our Journal from Widget Finn. Please let her have articles for inclusion, places or plants of interest or special methods of cultivation.

The Journal helps us keep in touch with our members but we never meet quite a number of you who support Plant Heritage. However, we would like to be able to occasionally keep in touch, for example letting members know of special events etc. by sending out emails. (Sending out emails saves postage costs.). There are 55 members on our database without email – please make sure that we have the correct address for you so that you don't miss out.

Central Office is going through a restructuring process with a Board of Trustees putting in place a number of initiatives to keep all our members up to date with new developments. Check all details on the new Plant Heritage website.

There is to be a **Threatened Plant of the Year Competition 2020** in association with RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival. The competition is open to Plant Heritage members, National Collection Holders, Plant Guardians, exhibitors at RHS Hampton Court and specialist Plant Societies. Please consider entering if you have a named, garden-worthy cultivar grown or sold before 2005 that is not currently available commercially. Full details: www.plantheritage.org.uk/conservation/threatened-plant-of-the-year-competition/.

Finally, I thank each and every member of our Committee for all they do to oil the wheels of this, our very successful Group.

TREASURER'S REPORT

PAT STANLEY

Plant Heritage Suffolk Group has had another very successful year. Both plant fairs at Helmingham were very popular with gate admissions of 3928 in the Spring and 2902 in the Autumn, bringing us a total of £9,642 after costs. Thanks are due to the Committee and all the volunteers that make these such successful events.

Plant sales from material produced by the propagation team brought in £3,488 after costs. Again this is due to the hard work of Anne Tweddle and her propagation group.

We were once again able to make a donation of £10,000 to Central Office and we had a surplus for the year of £2,120 over and above that.



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PROPAGATION REPORT

ANNE TWEDDLE

2019 was another successful year for us, raising something over £4,500 from plants propagated and sold within the Suffolk Group. Almost all these plants are the product of our monthly propagation sessions.

We choose what we propagate with conservation and the aims of Plant Heritage in mind - good garden worthy cultivars that have become rare, and not easily available. The propagation sessions are open to members, and more about this below.

The National Plant Exchange

This annual event is once again underway, but it's not too late to join in. The exchange is open to all members and offers an opportunity to bid for many rare and beautiful plants. Should you like to know more please get in touch. You can read about it on the Plant Heritage website.

On-going Plant Projects

Snowdrops and Daffodils

In the propagation group we continue to twin-scale these bulbs, and will have quite a lot for sale in the early months of 2020. The group has received generous donations of bulbs from members, which add considerably to the range of what we have for sale.

Snowdrops are coming down in price, as more and more nurseries enter this market. New introductions can command higher prices, but if you are looking to start or add to your collection with good garden worthy cultivars that won't die-out in their first season, then we should have plenty for you to choose from.

Historic daffodils on the other hand are quite rare. We are always on the lookout for these old and stylish cultivars, and as we find them and reproduce them they are being made available to members

Hydrangeas

In 2020 we will have the first of these from our special conservation project for sale. The plants will be quite small still, but it is an opportunity to support the conservation work for this collection. There will be photographs and full descriptions at the point of sale, so you can see the colours and styles of each of the cultivars.

Hesperantha

We had a number of cultivars of these lovely autumn flowering bulbs from South Africa in 2019, donated by the National Collection Holder, which have almost sold out.

Chrysanthemums

We try to have a number of different cultivars each year, and will have new ones at the spring plant fair in May. The Collection Holder has published a little book with very good pictures called 'Hardy Garden Chrysanthemums' by Judy Barker. The book is published by Hardy Plant Society and is available from them.

The propagation group will be working on a few rare cultivars that will be sold at BBC Gardeners World in June 2020. This is a new venture for Plant Heritage, and Suffolk is pleased to be able to help with this trial.

Plant in Focus

Our plant in focus for 2020 is *Geranium sanguineum* 'Rod Leeds'

Rod Leeds is a Suffolk plantsman, author and long time friend and supporter of Plant Heritage. It was Rod Leeds who introduced us to twin-scaling daffodils and snowdrops, for which we owe him a great debt. This cultivar was found in his garden and recognised as something special and has only two suppliers, making it eligible for the Plant Guardian scheme. Plants will be for sale at our Helmingham Plant Fair in May.

Work is beginning on a group of plants from the *Erysimum* collection, which is held in Suffolk by Simon Weeks. These plants are often short lived, being very beautiful in the flowering, but not always long lived. To help with their conservation and wider distribution, we will be offering them for sale on a regular programme. Look out for these in the future.

Plant Guardian Scheme

We would like more members to be aware of this national scheme and to take part in it. It is a way an individual member can do recorded hands on conservation. You may not be a collection holder, nor want to be, but being a Plant Guardian is designed for individuals. Talk to anyone on the Suffolk group committee to find out more. Details of how to register are on the National website.

Propagation Group

We are making some changes to how this group works beginning in 2020. We are decamping from the church hall in Stowupland, which has been our home for a number of years as we need to produce more plants than my car will carry.

We will continue to meet one morning a month, but it will be at my house in Charsfield. It is simple logistics - if we work where all the plants are kept, I am hoping it will make life much simpler.

The sessions will begin in March. Should you like to come along, please let me or Maggie Thorpe know. Dates will be emailed to anyone interested, along with all the regular members of the propagation group.

Anne Tweddle anne@tweddle1.co.uk

Maggie Thorpe maggiethorpe37@gmail.com

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome six new members who have joined since our last issue.

Ms Sally Ackroyd Dereham

Tony and Margaret Wheal

Jan Wilson London/Local

Andrew le Sueur Borley

Sharon Markell Tostock

The committee and members look forward to meeting you at our Stowupland talks and events. Please introduce yourselves when you sign in at the membership table. If you would like further information please contact our membership secretary Isobel Ashton 01284 754993 isobel.ashton@btinternet.com

To advertise in Suffolk Plant Heritage Journal

Contact Nick Stanley, publicity@suffolkplants.org.uk

1/4 page	black & white	£20.00	colour	£25.00
1/2 page	black & white	£40.00	colour	£50.00
Full page	black & white	£60.00	colour	£75.00

SUFFOLK'S NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

Aesculus Robert Grimsey, 07747 160481	Framlingham
Dianthus (Malmaison) Dianthus (Perpetual) Jim Marshall, 01473 822400	Shelley
Dryopteris Equisetum Anthony Pigott, 01449 766104	Stowmarket
Erysimum (perennial) Simon Weeks, 01986 784348	Walpole
Euonymous Rhus Toxicodendron Rupert Eley, 01206 299224	East Bergholt
Hosta Melanie Collins, Mickfield Hostas, 01449 711576	Stowmarket
Impatiens Will Purdom, team.bortanico@gmail.com	Beccles
Iris (Sir Cedric Morris) Sarah Cook, 01473 822400	Shelley
Iris (Sir Michael Foster) Lucy Skellorn, 07730 507900	Stowmarket
Muehlenbeckia Jan Michalak, 01359 783452	Burgate
Narcissus (Rev.G.Englehart) Darren Andrews, 01473 822987	Dispersed
Santolina Jon Rose, Botanica, 01728 747113	Campsea Ashe
Suffolk Garden Plants Hayley Churchyard, The Suffolk Punch Trust, 01394 411327	Hollesley

NATIONAL PLANT COLLECTIONS REPORT

DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT

Good news – we have three new National Collections in Suffolk.

Rupert Eley has had his application accepted for his *Rhus* and *Toxicodendron* collections. Rupert already has the *Euonymus* collection and they can all be viewed at the Place for Plants.

Will Purdom has had his application accepted for his *Impatiens* collection.

When you say *Impatiens* most people think of Busy Lizzy plants but the collection has a lot more exotic plants. Will lives in Beccles and you can view his collection by appointment.

Collection Holders were busy at the Autumn Plant Fair at Helmingham displaying their plants and giving talks. Visitors showed a lot of interest in the collections and were pleased to have leaflets giving information about them.

Lucy Pitman from Head Office asked me to go over the border to Essex to write reports for the two applications being made there. So I visited Fiona Edmond at Green Island Garden to see her *Camellia* and *Hamamelis* collections. Her applications were accepted and so she now has two National Collections.

In Suffolk we still have some proposed collections - Jan Michalak's historical collection of Lady Byng Plants, Sara Sheldrake's *Scabiosa caucasica* collection, Helen Chen's *Disporopsis* collection and Nick Stanley's plants named after Miss Ellen Willmott collection. So we are looking forward to more National Collections in Suffolk.

Margaret Wyllie is no longer in charge of the Suffolk Punch Trust garden although she is still there as a volunteer. Her position has been taken on by Hayley Churchyard and she will be the person to contact about the Suffolk Garden Plants collection.

ENGLEHEART DAFFODIL COLLECTION UPDATE

ANNE TWEDDLE

The Dispersed National Collection of daffodils introduced by Rev. George Engleheart is held in our county by members of the Suffolk Group. The Collection is owned and funded by the Suffolk Group.

Over Autumn 2019 there have been a lot of bulbs added to the Collection, so come along and see what's been happening at our 2020 open day on Sunday 5 April from 1pm - 4.30pm at Columbine Hall, Stowupland. The event is being run as part of the St Elizabeth Hospice Garden Trail and the Hospice will be managing the gate and running the teas. We expect to have some historic narcissus for sale.

We added two new cultivars to our collection in 2019. They are N. 'Plenipo' and N. 'Dactyl'.

N. 'Dactyl' has come to us via The National Trust for Scotland at Brodie Castle. They had this cultivar in their own daffodil collection as it was used by Brodie of Brodie in his breeding programme of 1930-1940's.



N. 'Dactyl'.



N. 'Plenipo'. Photo from the American Daffodil Society website.

Dactyl falls into Division 9 in daffodil language which means it is a poeticus, often pheasants eye daffodils. These flower late, and are generally scented.

Our three bulbs will be grown on, then twin scaled so we can spread them more widely within the seven sites of the collection.

'Plenipo' has come to us via Croft16 who are National Collection Holders of daffodils bred pre 1950. They had been growing this cultivar for a number of years but had no idea what it was, until 2018 season, when it revealed itself more

clearly. It's a Division 4 daffodil, which means it's double. Very often double daffodils looked rather untidy, and don't sit easily against historic catalogue descriptions.

We are propagating most of the cultivars in the collection and we have some material being micro propped. Our plan is to have a good showing at Columbine Hall where we hold Open Days and after that make bulbs available to members and the public at large.

Collection Research

The research work going on behind the scenes centres round Ellen Willmott's garden at Warley Place in Essex. We are working our way through the garden notebooks Ellen Willmott left. These are providing us with an astonishingly long list of the cultivars she grew. She grew many bred by Engleheart but by no means exclusively.

All the important breeders of the time are represented. Our task of putting together what we knew she grew, with what we can find there begins in earnest once the flowering season begins.

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

To find out more about Suffolk Group activities - including details of garden events and openings visit <https://suffolkplants.org.uk/>

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2020 PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

JANUARY

Saturday 25th 2020: Talk “Peonies Wild and Tame”
Speaker: Gail Harland 2.30pm
Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

Gail is involved with several horticultural societies and is also the newsletter editor for the Peony Society as well as the Secretary for the Peony Group of the The Hardy Plant Society.

FEBRUARY

Saturday 22nd 2020: Talk “In the land of the Giants”
Speaker: Linda Heywood
Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

Linda, of Echium World, a specialist nursery in Nottingham holds the National Collection of Echium species and cultivars from the Macaronesian Islands.

MARCH

Saturday 28th 2020: Talk “Garden Chasing in Japan”
Speaker: Barbara Segall
Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

Barbara is an author and journalist, well known to our members. After an extensive tour of Japan, she will be giving us an insight into the extraordinary gardens which she visited.

APRIL

Saturday 25th 2020: Talk “Shade and Semi-shade”
Speaker: Colin Ward
Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

Colin, of Swines Meadow Nursery, grows a range of plants and exotics on the edge of the fens where he has created a microclimate to accommodate his palms and other unusual plants.

MAY

Sunday 24th May: Spring Plant Fair at Helmingham

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 20th Autumn Plant Fair at Helmingham

Saturday 26th 2020: Talk “The Late Show”
Speaker: Andrew Ward
Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

Dr Andrew Ward comes to us from Norwell Nurseries which is based around a 1 acre plantsman’s garden which holds over 2,500 different species. He will be discussing plants for the end of the season.

OCTOBER

Saturday 31st 2020: Talk “Garden Bugs – Cohabit, Conserve or Control?”
Speaker: Dr Ian Bedford
Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

Ian is a senior member of the John Innes Centre where he manages the entomology team and all of the facility’s work activities. He will be taking a look at your ‘pest-control’ options.

NOVEMBER

Saturday 28th 2020: AGM and talk “Growing a Productive and Healthy Garden With Nature and Wildlife in Mind.”
Speaker: Gabi Reid.
Stowupland Village Hall, IP14 4BQ

Situated in rural Gissing on the Waveney Valley, Gabriel’s garden, an organic cutting garden, was born of a lifelong passion for wildlife. Gabi has worked on creating the perfect soil.

FREE PLANT FOR HELMINGHAM HALL PLANT FAIR MAY 2020

ANNE TWEDDLE

Erigeron glaucus ‘Sennen’

Erigeron is a large genus of daisy like plants. The species *E. glaucus* is native to the coastline of the West Coast of the USA, where it grows on beaches, dunes and coastal bluffs. It's moderately low growing with branching stems, and produces rounded spoon shaped leaves. The cultivar ‘Sennen’ we assume has occurred from Sennen Cove in Cornwall.

The original plant material came through the National Plant Exchange and I have grown it for some years finding it attractive, easy to grow, and a pleasing addition to the garden. It is currently listed in the Plantfinder with two suppliers, giving it Plant Guardian status.

The flowers are quite large, maybe two inches across with layers of fine rich blue/purple petals. It would be happiest in sunshine and reasonable drainage. It flowers for a long period over the summer, and slowly spreads outwards. It keeps a rosette of green leaves through the winter.



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We have 17 National
Collections in Suffolk,
with more on their way.
Most can be visited by
appointment and the
collection holders will be
delighted to show you
round.
Contact details are on
page 8.

MY DAY AT HELMINGHAM

AMANDA CLOWE OF WILDCARROT PHOTOGRAPHY

I was delighted to be asked by Maggie Thorpe, President and Chairman of Suffolk Plant Heritage, to take photographs at the Autumn Plant Fair in September.

A wonderful array of plants and garden accessories was on show, together with glorious September sunshine – all against the wonderful backdrop of Helmingham Hall, owned by the Tollemache family since 1480, with its gabled, red brick facades and grand drawbridge across its wide moat.

One of the main aims of Suffolk Plant Heritage is to rediscover and reintroduce cultivated plants that are under threat of extinction – and there were many examples of such at the fair.

There were 800 paper bags containing bulbs of *Tulipa linifolia* (Batalinii Group) ‘Bright Gem’ distributed to eager visitors as they arrived at the Suffolk Heritage Marquee. The marquee also had examples and information about some of the rare plants as well as listing the important National Plant Collections. There were also a number of informative talks throughout the day.

Lady Xa Tollemache is responsible for designing the present gardens and conducted a special tour of them for a small number of visitors. It was extremely interesting to discover the reasons behind her design choices, both creative and practical.

As well as ‘everything garden’, there were stalls selling vintage collectibles, clothing, bags and hats. I was one of many happy customers at the Fair– I had a fabulous day, surrounded by happy visitors and friendly stallholders.

More of Amanda’s photos of the Plant Fair are included on centre pages



REPORT ON TALKS IN 2019

ROSIE ANSELL

As usual with Suffolk Plant Heritage we had a year full of excellent talks. In January Jan Michalak described his involvement with the Essex garden of Lady Byng at Thorpe le Soken and plans for its restoration. Lord and Lady Byng bought the estate in 1913 and she collected plants on her travels and then introduced many more after 1926. Many famous guests were entertained at Thorpe Hall, including Queen Mary. Jan has had his application for a new National Collection of Lady Byng plants accepted so we look forward to hearing more about that in the days to come. <https://www.lifehouse.co.uk/about/gardens/history-of-thorpe-hall-gardens>

In February Tommy Tonsberg came to talk to us about his Norwegian garden and the surprising range of things that he could grow in his area of Norway, despite the cold climate. He also described what conditions were like in other areas, based on the Plant Hardiness map for Norway, and talked of the Botanic Gardens in Oslo and Tromsø. <https://frozengardener.com/>

March saw our special guest speaker, Anna Pavord, who came to talk to us about bulbs for all seasons, and the room was naturally packed. She described the huge range of bulbs that are now available for all times of the year, and described the best growing conditions for each of them. As she gardens on heavy clay in Dorset she is slightly envious of those of us in Suffolk that have lighter soils.

Our April speaker was Sally Kington who used to be the RHS International Daffodil Registrar and has forgotten more about daffodils than most of us will ever know. She concentrated on the vast range of daffodils suitable for an English garden.

After our summer break we welcomed Alun and Jill Whitehead, a double act, to talk about beardless irises. We are well acquainted with bearded irises in Suffolk Plant Heritage but Alun and Jill introduced us to the many different varieties of beardless irises, including *iris sibirica*, *iris ensata* and Pacific Coast hybrids. They hold a National Collection of the former, some rescued from a neighbouring nursery field that had been abandoned. All of them looked like an excellent addition to any garden – if you have the right conditions. <http://auldenfarm.co.uk/index.html>

October's talk was given by Jeff Hutchings of Laneside Hardy Orchids, who emphasised that he was talking about hardy native orchids and not the tropical incomers. He described the groups which are suitable for growing outdoors in this country and the conditions they need to thrive. He also talked about orchids in the wild - their surprising survival, but also careless destruction, and his involvement in projects to reintroduce native orchids into meadows. <http://lanesidehardyorchids.com/>

QUEST FOR SUFFOLK RAISED IRISES

STEVE BAKER

Having had the idea planted in my mind recently, no prizes for guessing by whom, I have decided to undertake the challenge of collecting irises that were hybridized here in Suffolk. I am sure everybody is aware of the fabulous work done by Sarah Cook with her collection of irises by Sir Cedric Morris, but there are others also that deserve to be collected and preserved alongside these.

This is the very beginning of the quest to find not only the irises but also to gather information about the men who created them to complement the plant collection. They were Mr G H Chadburn (1870-1950 Saxmundham) and Mr B R Long (1890-1962 Boxford) who both raised a number of irises in the county, Mr Long after moving to Boxford in 1951.

As it stands the irises I have are those of Sir Cedric, 21 cultivars in total and, with the generosity of Sarah, I should also be able to add a small number of those from Mr Chadburn and Mr Long soon. My appeal is that should anybody reading this have any information on either of these two men or have any contacts that might be able to help I would love to hear from you. Naturally if anybody has any of the irises that they raised and are willing to share them it would be fantastic and I hope to be able to offer other historic irises in exchange very soon. The best way to make contact with me would be via email "Steve_Baker@hotmail.co.uk".

Once I have built up my knowledge and hopefully a starting point for the plant collection I will share this progress with you all in the hope it is of interest and might inspire others to consider collections of their own.

IRIS ‘SILVERY MOON’

SARAH COOK

Anyone who has visited our garden at Hullwood Barn will have seen **A**irises growing in rows in almost every available space. An area is dedicated to the National Collection; others contain ones which might be Morris irises (came from Benton End, look as if they could be and aren’t anything else I know) and so on down the level of likely hood. In iris parlance these are called NOIDS (No Identification)

Occasionally I have to have a clear out of what I think are unidentifiable, and unlikely to be a Morris anyway. (I now regret one or two of these clearances!)

This year two strokes of luck, arriving via the internet, have given me probable names of two irises which I had been toldt were Morris’s although neither of which exactly matched any of the 96 Morris irises descriptions which I had.

I may never be able to prove it, but it seems very likely that one of my many ‘unknown, possibly Morris’ irises is ‘Silvery Moon’, one of about 15 Morris irises without the ‘Benton’ prefix, so not immediately identifiable as one he named. It is unregistered as a Morris iris, (presumably because an American breeder registered the same name for a different iris in 1952).

The information came to me in the form of page photocopied from a 1952 Croftway Catalogue sent to me by an employee who worked there in the 1960’s and 70’s.

The catalogue lists 8 cultivars, including ‘New Cedric Morris Cultivars’. I was very pleased to see a listing for ‘Silvery Moon’ a name I had not come across before. The description is a ‘good fit’ for an iris I was given by Elisabeth Wakeland Smith nearly 10 years ago. She told me it was a Morris iris, but she did not know the name.



Iris ‘Silvery Moon’

The second, equally useful but less pleasing in some ways, were pictures, followed by rhizomes of three irises, given to my correspondent as Morris irises. They were bought from Gwendolyn Anley in the 1970's: 'Arabi Pasha', an iris she bred and, very important as it won the Dykes Medal in 1953 but which is not now available; 'Victor Hugo' (Cayeaux 1930) and 'Watermeads' (bred by Louisa Pesel). Morris would have known Miss Louisa F Pesel.

Pesel—Miss Louisa F. Pesel, The White House, Colebrook St., Winchester, Eng. Iris Breeder and authority on Embroidery.

Left: Louisa Pesel's details from the 'Alphabetical Iris Check List 1939' published by the American Iris Society.



Iris 'Watermeads' bred by Pesel 1937.

The photograph I was sent shows 'Watermeads' to be very like an iris I have here, which was thought be a Morris, but here again I have no description of a Morris iris which matches the plant I have. The iris may have been a parent of 'Benton Olive', as it predates Olive by about 10 years.

I now have to wait until they all flower, then I will know if 'Watermeads' is the same as the iris I already have. I should know if 'Arabi Pasha' is correct – my correspondent dug it up from a house he had lived in several years ago - which seems a bit 'Pot Luck!'

The life of a 'Historic Iris Hunter' is full of ups and downs. At best I have two more interesting irises for the Suffolk historic project, at worst one or more irises to add to my huge collection of NOIDS.



SUFFOLK GROUP
AUTUMN PLANT
FAIR
SEPTEMBER 2019
HELMINGHAM HALL





PHOTOS BY AMANDA CLOWE OF WILDCARROT PHOTOGRAPHY



A BOTANICAL ART COMMISSION

SIMON WEEKS

Have you ever thought about commissioning a botanical painting – for an anniversary perhaps, or for a public space, or just for private enjoyment? Well, I hadn't, until 2017.

Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker – renowned botanist and Director of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew – was born in Halesworth in 1817. To celebrate the bi-centenary of his birth, the town put on a splendid exhibition of botanical art by students and alumni of the Chelsea School of Botanical Art (CSBA). I was deeply impressed by the quality of the paintings on display and enchanted by their beauty, as objects. Some, though not all, of the paintings were of *Hookeri* species, but I came away with a sensational painting of *Acanthus spinosus* by Candida Groom (image right). This now hangs in pride of place in the garden room, opposite my John Gould original print of Fieldfares (for the ornithologists amongst you).



It was a few weeks later that I started to think how wonderful it would be to have a painting or two of some of the wallflowers in my National Collection. I do collect 'Erysimum art', but what's available is mostly small, Victorian prints of obscure species. There is virtually nothing depicting modern or rare cultivars (other than photos). So I contacted CSBA, who kindly passed on my request to Candida, who agreed to the commission.

But my own commission also set me thinking about botanical art more broadly. Who are our botanical artists? How many are there? What sort of work do they get? Can they make a living from it? Helen Allen – owner and principal of CSBA – provides an overview.....

“Botanical art is the perfect marriage of science and art, intent and purpose guiding the artist to create an aesthetically beautiful painting or a scientific illustration for information and documentation.

From its foundation in 2014 the Chelsea School of Botanical Art was based in historic Chelsea Physic Garden. However, with the welfare and education of our students in mind, CSBA has relocated to its studio in Ham. 2019 will be an exciting year for us. Later in the year the Diploma

course will be replaced by two new independent courses that may be taken separately or in sequence. In addition to these two courses the big change will be an ADVANCED course for artists who want to take their work to an even higher level. Short courses will also continue at www.chelseaschoolofbotanicalart.co.uk.

We are all aware of the influence of the internet on teaching in general and botanical art techniques in particular, with courses starting to move out of the classroom and onto the web. I still firmly believe that the value of face to face learning in small groups cannot be underestimated. The classroom environment, with the benefit of group discussions and personal feedback, remains the most effective way for botanical artists to learn and grow with confidence. Under the leadership of its owner and principal, Helen Allen, students are guided through the intricacies of botanical art with a team of visiting botanical artists/educators, a botanist and an illustrator from Kew.

CSBA graduates work extremely hard to achieve the high standards expected of them and go on to do many things. Some become teachers, our graduate group Amicus Botanicus hold exhibitions, several illustrate for botanical journals and books, others illustrate for packaging and the media, some have small businesses creating art and crafts and many paint for pleasure.

Creating a botanical artwork is as much about the growing of and caring for plants as being proficient in the requisite skills. It is painstaking work, each painting taking many hours and days to complete. Whatever the price, the buyer will have a bargain.

Florilegium Societies are present at the Chelsea Physic Garden, Hampton Court Palace, the Eden Project, Sheffield and Oxford Botanic Gardens, Nymans and Cliveden. Groups of artists meet regularly to conserve and preserve as artworks important plants in those gardens for posterity. Each member will contribute a painting every year as a gift to the 'garden' whilst enjoying the plants and access to some wonderful and historic houses, gardens and palaces.

It is hard to estimate the numbers of botanical artists in UK today. Botanical painting enjoyed a revival in the early 90's due to the philanthropy of Dr Shirley Sherwood and the teaching of Anne Marie Evans. Today the genre is as popular as ever with many groups studying the various aspects of botanical art and illustration, serious and recreational. There is also a growing number of on-line and distance learning courses available. CSBA receives many enquiries for artists to take commissions in many areas and we are happy to arrange introductions as well as advising artists and potential patrons."

Candida came to Walpole in early May 2018, to carry out her observations, to make sketches and take photos – the 'inputs' (below). She took these, and some live plant material, back to her studio in Hampshire, where she carries out most of her work. This is Candida's own description of how she goes about it

“Before I pick up my pencil I spend a while just looking, studying the plant’s character. If possible I will look at where it has been growing and other examples of the same plant. I may cut it open and inspect the structure and I will do some research either on the internet or in one of my many books; it’s helpful to understand the growing cycle of the plant and see which botanical family it is part of. I also look for pictures to see how other botanical artists have tackled the same subject, both contemporary artists and those long dead. And I take photographs. Whilst I never work directly from photos it’s helpful to have them for reference, especially if I know it’s going to take me more than a day or two to do the painting.

While the subject is fresh I will do some colour matching, making notes in my sketch book and jotting down the colours that will work best. Watercolours have wonderful names: ultramarine finest, oxide of chromium, quinacridone violet, Hooker’s green to name but a few.

I will then start sketching on rough paper, paying attention to the particular detail I want the viewer to notice, deciding what aspect of the plant to emphasise and which details don’t need so much attention. I draw life-size and I take measurements to check that my



drawing is accurate, and I consider the composition. When I feel really familiar with the subject I will draw, very lightly, directly onto Arches hot press 300 gsm paper, then pick up my Kolinsky Sable brush and begin.... “

It was very exciting to receive progress reports and photographs from Candida over the summer, so I could see her paintings 'emerging' bit by bit. The finished paintings arrived in August, and are everything I had hoped for. The whole project was interesting and a pleasure, at the end of which, I have a unique and lasting representation of some of my favourite *Erysimum*s in the National Collection.



COLUMBINE HALL AND ME

KATE ELLIOTT

I have been a member of Plant Heritage for ten years now and am very much enjoying being part of the team who holds the dispersed National Plant Collection of Engleheart Narcissus, of which all cultivars are held at Columbine Hall.

For the past 22 years, I have been lucky enough to work as gardener at Columbine Hall, a 14th century moated manor house in Stowupland, Suffolk. Starting with only the most basic knowledge, hard but enjoyable work, and the love of what I do has led me to become head gardener of this famous garden, designed by George Carter.

I started working at Columbine Hall when I was just 16, straight from school, having heard about it from the local post-mistress who had spoken to the owners Hew Stevenson and Leslie Geddes-Brown on a village garden open day, cheekily suggesting that they needed a gardener! She knew I longed for such an opportunity, so I immediately made the phone call. It was the best phone call I ever made.

The grounds cover 29 acres, five of which are cultivated garden, including a bog garden, Mediterranean garden, ponds, orchards and herb garden. My great passion, however, is the walled kitchen garden inspired by the one at Chateau de Bosmelet in Normandy. Ours is not only productive but ornamental. There are four large rectangular beds, each colour themed: one is red, another blue and purple, a third brown and amber, the last yellow and green. I grow unusual varieties of vegetables to get these colours.

These include cabbages and kales of all sizes, such as 'Black Tuscan' and 'Redbor' and artichokes, which help make up the colours of the blue/purple section. The red section is planted with tomatoes, rhubarb chard and 'Bull's blood' beetroot. There are lettuces, Turk's Turban squashes and bronze fennel in the brown/amber bed. Last of all, yellow and green courgettes, white stemmed Swiss chard and salads feature in the remaining bed.

I have a large lean-to greenhouse, which I fill to bursting every spring, as nearly everything is raised from seed. Inside I grow cucumbers, chilli peppers and lots of rare tomatoes such as 'Black Krim', 'Matt's Wild Cherry' and 'Green Sausage'.

The parterre, which is a part of the platform area within the moat, has eight formal beds filled with cubes of planting such as box, Geranium



'Johnson's Blue', *Helleborus argutifolius*, Iris 'Deep Black', Liriope, *Stachys Byzantina* and Lavender 'Hidcote', designed for year round interest.

Cardoons, figs and vines surround the house. We work to an overriding principle that there should be subtle but never garish colour to stay in character with the house. Beyond the moat it is less formal and here you will find the bog garden, with plants including *rodgersias*, *gunnera*, ferns and of course *columbines*, growing by a stream. The idea is that this area is natural, where plants are left to self-seed.

Of course, no garden is ever finished, it never stands still. We are planning a new wildflower and cow-parsley meadow as our next project.

I am so incredibly lucky to have been part of the creation and development of the gardens almost from the very beginning - we have grown up together. For me, the gardens are a pure labour of love and I can't imagine being anywhere else.

The gardens will open on:

Sunday 5th April 2020 1-4pm - Plant Heritage Engleheart daffodil day in aid of St. Elizabeth Hospice.

Sunday 19th April 2020 2-5pm - all in aid of St. John Ambulance

Sunday 24th May 2020 1-5pm - all in aid of St. Elizabeth Hospice.

Also open by appointment and with house and garden tours given through Invitation To View - www.historichouses.org/tours/html

AUTUMN'S BOUNTY

DARREN ANDREWS

This year, autumn has returned to being a season 'of mists and mellow fruitfulness'. Over the last decade we have become used to an athletic autumn, sprinting to reach winter; a brief few days of leaf fall between the end of summer and the sharp, cold nights of December.

2019's autumn has been lazy. Summer yawned its way into a damp, fungi-filled expanse of russet and gold. The Nerines have been in flower for weeks, their happy, not-quite-bubblegum-pink firework displays have been exceptional and I am looking for good cultivars to plant next year. The hardy fuchsias have adored the cooler weather and the dancing, ballerina blooms have remained large and numerous. In the lawn, eruptions of colourful aliens appear; evocative names such as 'Amethyst Deceiver' and 'Devil's Bolete' compete with the more mundane grey-white forms of the fairy-ring mushrooms.

Leaves have clung to their branches for much longer than previous years, no strong winds and some early frosts have meant a prolonged sunset rather than a brief blaze. The Oak is now bare, but as I write this in late November, the buttery yellow of the field maple gives a warming blush to the hedges around my garden. The plum leaved hawthorn has reached a burning beacon of scarlet and orange outside my window, after slowly changing its coat over a period of weeks. Even some of the asters are still refusing to dry up their bruised, plummy daisies.

This has been a feast for the eyes, but I have been left wondering how the other residents of my garden have been appreciating the changeable weather. On the Saturday of Remembrance Weekend, there was a brief but brilliant warm spell. The sun shone and to my amazement, a Hummingbird Hawk moth flitted between the last of the struggling blooms on my potted geraniums. I wondered how it had survived the previous frosts and endless rainy days of October to still be on the wing. The answer, of course, is hibernation. Like the Small Tortoiseshell, the Peacock and Red Admiral butterfly, the Hummingbird Hawk moth takes refuge in a cold outhouse to see out the winter. The arrival of a bullish sun, like a prince's kiss, awakes our sleeping beauties.

Bumblebees also fly around the garden; burning up the valuable calories they have stored to protect them from the cold. These Queens should be dormant in abandoned mouse nests and bird boxes, ready to propagate a

whole new family in the spring. On waking next year, Her Majesty will have used up all the nectar from the summer glut, and be forced to seek fresh reserves. So an early foray on a warm autumn day may spell disaster if there are no blooms to call in on.

I have an outside flower-pot store, essentially a roof with three sides, the opening being north facing. The design was deliberate to encourage roosting of hibernating insects. In a large flower pot I found 12 Peacock Butterflies. To ward me off they open their wings and flash their eyes, they also perform what in text books is described as hissing. In truth, it sounds more like an emery board being dragged slowly across a fingernail. I carefully replace the pot to where I found it and bid them goodnight.

It is increasingly obvious to me that, with the changes in our weather, birds and insects are struggling. In an attempt to offer help, I try to have nectar sources available throughout the year: as a gardener this is an opportunity and a challenge. Winter stalwarts such as Ivy, Mahonia and Winter Honeysuckle are joined by Daphne, Sarcococca and Chimonanthus.

A progression of spring bulbs, starting with snowdrops and the cyclamineus narcissus cultivars, will supply flowers from January onwards. But it has been the late summer and autumn plants that I have been experimenting with: Salvia, Cosmos and Amaranth species all last until the first frosts, in shelter, a little longer. My Nerines and Asters have all been a feast for the eye this autumn, but a feast for nature is just as important.

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ROOFTOP GARDEN EXPERIENCE

DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT

Friends and relatives were very surprised when my husband and I moved to a sixth floor flat on the waterfront in Ipswich when they knew we liked gardening.

However, the flat's French windows open onto a rooftop garden. The garden is about 34 x 24 feet, has a wooden decking area, a gravel area, three raised beds and plenty of space for pots. There were not many plants when we arrived so there were lots of planting opportunities.

But at that height plants are exposed to lots of hot sunshine, strong winds and heavy rain so it has been a challenge to find out what plants will survive and thrive. We found tall plants like gladioli get blown over when in flower and large leaves get blown off shrubs.

Tall tomato plants did not do well, getting blown over and dropping their fruits. However, tomatoes intended for hanging baskets love it when planted in tall pots. Alpine plants love the gravel area including Dianthus, Campanula and Mimulus. Geraniums and begonias are happy in pots in the sun. Bidens are happy in a trough around a holly. Euryops grow well in pots and produce lots of flowers.

So, it has been a great learning experience for us and we are still trying out more plants. We did keep our allotment so we are not short of fresh fruit and vegetables!



TONY VENISON –

A PERSONAL MEMORY

JIM MARSHALL AND SARAH COOK

Tony had an encyclopaedic knowledge of both plants and gardens. I (Jim) have known him for over 30 years. He would ring the National Trust Gardens Advisory team to check up on a particular plant and garden – “Jim there’s ‘such and such a plant’ in the walled garden at Nymans”, and expect me to know if it was still growing there”, and this was at a time before the National Trust had catalogued all its gardens.

Usually this would be a Friday afternoon, just before it was time to go home, always urgent as he had to complete the copy by Monday morning; however our friendship grew during these phone calls.

I lost touch with him when he retired from the post of Gardens Editor at Country Life. However he wrote a letter to us both when we retired in 2003/4, welcoming us to Suffolk and in particular wanting us to join the East Anglian Garden Group, advice we duly took.

As soon as Sarah decided to start collecting Morris irises I told her he was one of the most important people for her to go and see, as I knew he was a friend of Morris and had frequently visited Benton End.

Tony was very generous with all his knowledge, memories of Benton End and plants. He gave me (Sarah) the five or six Morris irises which he had been growing as well as other plants. My interest in Cedric Morris rekindled Tony’s memory and affection for Benton End, subsequently writing five articles for Hortus. I have always used these, and the knowledge they contain, as one of my prime sources of information.

I occasionally took Tony out for the day which was an education, he always wanted to go on the ‘Wiggley Woggly’ (minor) always returning a different way. We usually held two or three conversations at once, as the route was punctuated by information about houses and their



Photo of Tony Venison courtesy RHS.

inhabitants. It was fascinating, and I wish I had had a tape recorder with me, as there was so much that I could not possibly remember it all when I got back home.

Tony was a wonderful writer and was given several awards for garden writing. In 1994 he was presented with the RHS Veitch Memorial Gold Medal, which is awarded to “persons of any nationality who have made an outstanding contribution to the science and practice of horticulture”.

We will always remember afternoon teas with him in Sudbury, cake or buns were a major feature, as he caught up with the latest garden gossip, and passed on yet more information about Cedric. His mind was so lively and full of knowledge.

A dear friend to us both, he died on November 14th.

MORE MEMORIES OF BETH CHATTO

Joyce Harris, a long-time member of Suffolk Plant Heritage, worked with Beth Chatto for several years helping to look after her two little daughters in the early fifties. Joyce has a clear memory and, when taken to meet Julia Boulton, Beth’s granddaughter, she recounted some wonderful little snapshots of life before Elmstead Market when Beth was busy growing the plants she wanted for her flower arranging with Colchester Flower Arrangement Society.

People would ask Beth where she got her flowers and foliage which led to her setting up ‘Unusual Plants’ and selling them to other arrangers. Joyce remembers the incredible mud as Beth and husband Andrew set about carving out the new garden from Andrew’s apple orchard, creating first the stream and ponds and planting trees amongst the existing oaks, all of which we now enjoy in their full splendour.

She remembers Beth coming back from walking holidays with wet socks full of plants gathered in the Dolomites and then helping her to create a rockery in which to put them - not something we would attempt today of course.

One Christmas Beth gave Joyce a handwritten cookery book with favourite recipes, some containing notes in the margin about right and wrong methods. Joyce presented this to a delighted Julia who felt it was a great treat to hear first hand stories of her grandmother as a young mother and gardener before becoming so famous. She was also thrilled to hear a little about her own mother, Diana, the older of Beth’s two little girls.

OPEN GARDENS AND EVENTS 2020

1st February Talk “Gardening and Climate Change” by Jim Paine. East Anglian Garden Group at Bildeston.

16th February Gable House Redisham open for NGS, 11 am – 4 pm
£4.50. Snowdrop day, snowdrops for sale soup lunches and home made teas

18th February The Place for Plants, East Bergholt, 11 am snowdrop and garden walk led by Rupert Eley. £10 includes garden entry and coffee. Stout outdoor shoes essential.

7th March Talk by Nigel Dunnett. East Anglian Garden Group at Bildeston

28th & 29th March The Place for Plants, East Bergholt, annual open weekend. 11 am tour with Rupert Eley, free but must be booked. Stout outdoor shoes essential. Café open.

4th April Talk “Geraniaceae” by Andrew Ward. East Anglian Garden Group at Bildeston.

4th April Thornham Walled Garden, Eye IP 23 8HA open for NGS
11 am – 4 pm, £5

5th April The Place for Plants, East Bergholt open for NGS 2 – 5pm

5th April Columbine Hall open day, part of the St Elizabeth Hospice Great Garden Trail 1 – 4.30 pm, and showing our Engleheart daffodil collection

25th April **Essex Plant Heritage Spring Plant Fair at RHS Hyde Hall**

26th April The Place for Plants, East Bergholt open for NGS 2 – 5pm

2nd May Plant sale outside St Cuthbert’s Church, Thetford in aid of St Nicholas Hospice

3rd May Rosedale, Bures, CO8 5AE open for NGS 12 – 4 pm, £4

3rd May Finndale House and Grundisburgh House IP13 6UD open for NGS 11 am– 5 pm. £6 for both

3rd May Woottens of Wenhaston Spring Fair on the nursery 10 am – 4 pm

10th May Fullers Mill Garden, West Stow, IP28 6HD open for NGS
11 am – 5 pm £5

10 May The Place for Plants, East Bergholt open as part of the St Elizabeth Hospice Great Garden Trail 2 – 5 pm

17th May The Priory, Stoke by Nayland, CO6 4RL, open for NGS 2 – 5pm £5, children free, teas and plant stall

24th May Lavenham Hall, Lavenham CO10 9QX open for NGS 11 am – 5 pm £5

30th May Toppesfield Mill House, Hadleigh, IP7 5NG open as part of the St Elizabeth Hospice Great Garden Trail 1 – 5pm. A one acre garden, managed with wildlife in mind. Tea and cake available.
www.stelizabethhospice.org

31st May Freston House, Freston, IP9 1AF open for NGS 12 – 5pm £5

31st May Ousden House, Ousden, CB8 8TN open for NGS 2 – 5pm £6

6th June Hadleigh open gardens 11 am – 5 pm, over 30 gardens open ranging from large established gardens to small courtyard gardens. Lunches and refreshments in St Mary's Church.
www.hadleighgardens.co.uk

7th June Lavenham hidden gardens 11am – 5pm

7th June Boxford Open Gardens 11am - 4pm

7th June East Bergholt Open Gardens 11am - 5pm

7th June Somerleyton Hall NR32 5QQ open for NGS 10am – 5pm £6.95, child £4.90

13 & 14 June Hidden Gardens of Grundisburgh, Burgh & Culpho. IP6 6TA 2 – 6pm

14th June The Priory, Stoke by Nayland, CO6 4RL, open for the Red Cross 2 – 5 pm £5, children free, teas and plant stall

20th June Holm House, Drinkstone, IP30 9FH open for NGS 11am – 4.30pm £5

20th & 21st June Wickham Market and Pettistree open gardens 11am – 6pm £5. 30 gardens open, open studios, Foliage Festival in Pettistree Church, refreshments in both village halls. Parking IP13 0HE

21st June Bury Hidden Gardens 11am – 5pm in aid of St Nicholas Hospice, including our own Isobel Ashton's garden at 6 College Lane, a walled garden in the former workhouse exercise yards. Summer roses, trees, sun and shade planting

- 21st June** Hillside, Semer, IP7 6HN open for NGS 11am – 5pm £5
- 21st June** Heron House, Aldeburgh, IP15 5EP open for NGS
2 – 5 pm £5
- 28th June** Thetford Open Gardens 11am – 5pm in aid of St Nicholas Hospice
- 28th June** Chelsworth Open Gardens 11am – 5pm
- 2nd August** Rosedale, Bures, CO8 5AE open for NGS 12 – 5pm £4
- 23rd August** Pentlow Mill, Cavendish, CO10 7SP Mid Anglia Alpine Garden Society bulb sale
- 6th September** Gable House Redisham open 11am – 5pm Salad lunches and home made teas. Free admission.

The Bishop's Gardens in Norwich (seen on Gardener's World) are open several times a year for different charities see <https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/about/bishops/norwich/gardens/open-gardens>

Remember you can also attend Plant Heritage meetings in other counties - check out the websites for Norfolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire.

Also check out local gardening clubs and societies:

<https://www.boxfordsuffolk.com/boxfordGardeningSociety>

<http://www.battisfordgardeningclub.org.uk/>

<http://hartestgardeningclub.onesuffolk.net/>

<http://horringer-gardening-club.co.uk/>

<http://lavenhamvillagehall.com/gardening-club/>

<https://www.cockfield.org.uk/clubs-societies/thorpe-morieux-district-gardening-club/>

<http://www.wmgardenclub.btck.co.uk/> (Wickham Market)

Let us know about YOUR local gardening club or society.

There will be an expanded list of garden events and openings on Suffolk Plant Heritage website: <https://suffolkplants.org.uk/>

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Seasonal opening times:

1 Apr – 30 Sep 2020
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Sun 11am – 5pm

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- Group visits welcome by prior arrangement



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