



# Battisford & District Gardening Club Newsletter

## July 2023

Issue 59

Mon 6th February 2023

Charlie & the Dig: Charlie Haylock

The village hall was packed to the gunnels for this popular talk by Charlie Haylock. It was great to see members and guests enjoying Charlie's humour and stories. He has a wide knowledge of the history of Suffolk dialect and the pronunciation of Suffolk words, linked into Suffolk's early history and the rich cross section of settlers into this region from the Germanic states and Scandinavia. Half his presentation focused on teaching the actor Ralph Fiennes how to talk Suffolk for his role as Basil Brown in the film *The Dig* and the other half on Suffolk dialect and its partly Anglo-Saxon derivation. Refreshments were served in the interval and thanks go to Caroline for the lovely cakes. The raffle raised funds for the Club and we were very pleased to sign up some new members, some of whom have already joined the talks and outings.



## Monday 15th May. Visit to Pulham Cottage, Wetherden

Despite the uncertain weather during the day, 16 members ventured out to Pulham Cottage and were rewarded with a beautiful soft, sunny evening and a gorgeous, varied and interesting garden. The owner is the 1.5 acre garden's hard working designer, with just two helpers to cut the box and hornbeam hedges. After 4 years renovating the cottage followed by a garden design course, she has spent 6 years restructuring the garden, retaining the lovely long rose arbour. The garden is divided into rooms using mixed hedging, hazel fences and old iron gates and fencing. There is a box parterre, a kitchen garden with an interesting mixture of vegetables, salad plants and flowers for cutting, an orchard and wild-flower area. A newer bed with mixed grasses provides winter interest. Areas are left for re-wilding to encourage bees, butterflies and moths. Part of the meadow is designated for the all-important cricket nets and future pitch, because this is also a family garden. The design also allows for pretty vistas of the surrounding countryside. We were able to ask questions and share enthusiasms for the various plants. The tour ended with home made cakes and hot drinks. Pulham Cottage opens for the NGS and is well worth a visit.



June 3rd 2023, Car boot sale, Needham Lake

Paul Hansord



Yesterday morning a small team of gardening club members attended the Needham Market Car Boot sale with a van load of plants to sell.

We managed to sell £238 worth of plants to help boost garden club funds.

I'd like to thank everybody who donated plants and a particular big thank you to those members who helped to price and load them on Friday and managed to heave themselves out of bed early on Saturday morning to help out on the stand. The surplus plants have been delivered to Jackie Collins for her to sell for the Papworth Hospital charity.

Once again thank you to all who helped, an excellent team effort.

## Tuesday 13th June: Visit to John Innes Centre

The Centre is on the Norwich Research Park and is an independent, international centre of excellence in plant science, genetics and microbiology. Their goal is to research fundamental questions in bio-science, with the aim of translating their findings into uses for growers, fellow scientists and society in general, in the UK and around the world. It is a fascinating and eye-opening place and this is a brief overview of their work.

Tours are restricted to 16 people, just the right number for a minibus, kindly driven by club member, Helen Seymour. We were guided by Communications Officer James Piercy on an excellent 1.5-hour tour of the site. He told the history of the Institute and pointed out that it does not make compost! John Innes developed the growing medium and then donated the formula to the producers. So, what do they do? Scientists and PhD students research plant diseases, new medicines and work on developing new strains of plants, for example drought resistant wheat. There are many strains, but we currently use very few, which is risky as the climate changes. The researchers look back into earlier species using the seed bank on site and share their findings with other institutions. The genome of wheat is 5x bigger than the human genome by the way!

We were shown some of the laboratories and the amazing microscopes the bioimaging teams use. Slices of samples are so delicate they use eyelashes to pick them up. We looked at the greenhouses, some built when the Institute moved from Kent to Norfolk in the 1930s, containing tomato and potato plants in various stages of ill health. The Centre is shortly to receive millions in investment for new buildings and equipment to help them expand their work, for example research into the leaf cutter ants who are busy in the Insectery, helping the scientists find new antibiotics (choose your own puns!). Their research has shown that plants can be used to grow vaccines on their leaves and plastic can be made from peas.

John Innes is keen to encourage future young scientists and they promote STEM subjects through running courses and events at the Centre. It was pointed out that agricultural East Anglia is also home to scientific research at the Norwich Research Park, Cambridge Science Park and Suffolk's BT site and University. An interesting and thought-provoking visit.



Monday May 15th 2023

## Visit to Fullers Mill

Fullers Mill Garden is an enchanting 7 acre creation on the banks of the River Lark. It combines a beautiful site of light dappled woodlands with a plantsman's paradise of rare and unusual shrubs, perennials, lilies and marginal plants. Bernard Tickner, the founder, has spent over 50 years designing and creating the garden, working particularly with plant form and texture in addition to colour to build a garden of truly year round interest.

Fullers Mill are proud to have been voted as the RHS Partner Garden of the Year in the Midlands and East of England, for the second year running.



### Benton Daphne



I was given a 'Benton Daphne' by Sarah Cook when we visited her collection of William Morris Irises back in 2014. It thrived and bloomed for several years but had then failed to bloom for a few years. So the year before last I divided it and put it in various places in the garden (and gave some away.)

This one seemed to be happiest in the front garden



Jeanne's irises



## Future events

Weds 2nd August

Visit to RHS Hyde Hall Flower—  
Show—free as we are Affiliates of  
the RHS

Friday 8th September

Ringshall Village Hall

The Future Role of the RHS

By Clare Matterson, Director  
General of the rhs

£5 for BDGC members and £10 for  
Guests

Mon 2nd October

AGM with talk by Paul Hansord on  
the flora & fauna of New Zealand

Mon 6th November

Creating a Wildlife Pond

Karon Saunders

Mon 4th December

Annual Quiz

**GEORGE IS BACK!!**

Future role of the NHS



**September 8<sup>th</sup> 2023 – 7.30pm (?) at Ringshall Village  
Hall, Lower Farm Road, Ringshall, IP14 2JB**

**£5.00 for BDGC members & £10.00 for guests**

“The future role of the Royal Horticultural Society” –  
by the new RHS Director General, Clare Matterson

Clare took up the role of Director General of the RHS  
in June 2022 and has been an RHS member since  
1994. As a passionate gardener, she was excited to  
join the RHS as they play their part in the recovery and  
longer term growth both for people and for nature  
through the inspiration, the science and the beauty of  
gardens. Clare was previously Executive Director of  
Engagement at the Natural History Museum. She was  
awarded a CBE for services to public engagement, a  
Fellowship to the British Science Association for out-  
standing contributions to public engagement and was  
one of GQ’s top 100 influential women.

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