



Battisford & District Gardening Club

October 2023

Monday 2nd October. Annual General Meeting

Apologies received:

Steve Perry, Sheila Baldwin, Jean Hawkins, Denise Crozier, Jim Henson.

Present:

Denis Wicking, Caroline Wicking, Paul and Ruth Hansord, Jeanne Lynch-Aird, Jane Pope, Teresa and Keith Wagland, Daphne and Bill Baldry, Debbie McDowall, Alison Clark, Mike Warren, Anthea Howard, Linda and Ian Clark, Jo Belton, Marion Davey, Jackie Collings, Sandra Henson, Helen Seymour, Sally Winter, Stephanie Samuels, Alan?? Neighbour to Caroline, Christine Harvey and Jackie Crame.

Minutes of 2022 AGM and matters arising:

The minutes were agreed. There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report:

Denis thanked people for attending tonight and supporting the Club through the year 2022 to 2023. He noted that it had been a busy year, during which the Committee had endeavoured to provide a varied programme. He thanked Paul and others for their hard work. Like other clubs, it had not been easy to get everything back on track after the Covid breaks. He ran through the events, beginning with the outings; the visit to Hyde Hall, which was a real success despite the rain, the very interesting tour round the John Innes Centre in Norwich, the very beautiful gardens at Fullers Mill, West Stow and Pulham Cottage, Wetherden. Denis thanked Helen Seymour for driving the buses on two of the outings.

The interesting talks were on snowdrops, caring for the soil and tree planting and why we really need wasps! The Charlie Haylock talk was very popular and attracted guests from outside the Club. Denis took the role of Quiz Master at the December Quiz and was very pleased to announce that George will be returning as Quiz Master this year. The committee organised a table at the Needham Car Boot Sale in June. Denis thanked Paul and the team who organised it and any club members who contributed plants. The sale raised £250 for Club funds. Sadly, the September talk from the CEO of the RHS had to be cancelled at short notice because of an unexpected sudden family bereavement. Clare Matterson has confirmed a new date of 22nd March 2024.

Denis asked members for any ideas they may have for future programme topics and noted that the current programme runs until 29th October 2024. He asked members to look at the attendance lists for the outings which Paul had at the back of the hall.

Denis noted that there had been no horticultural show in 2023 because the fete will now be biannual. He is waiting to hear the date of the fete in 2024.

Treasurer's Report:

Jeanne provided the printed annual report and spoke to this report. The Club made £400 over the year, made up of £100 from Charlie Haylock, £250 from the Car Boot Sale and the remainder from the raffle. Expenditure was on the RHS membership and card and the speakers. We lost the £35 deposit for Ringshall Village Hall for the cancelled RHS talk. Jeanne also emphasised that the Club lost £30 on the Fullers Mill trip because 7 signed up members did not attend. Some of the trips require a minimum number and so the Committee has decided to ask members to pay at the time of signing the list. The trips are popular, so it can mean that people miss out if someone does not go without notifying the organiser. Jeanne confirmed that we have 55 paid up members and we are pleased to have welcome new members, some of whom joined at the Charlie Haylock talk.

Newsletter and website:

Anthea has produced the Newsletter. She would very much like some help editing it and any contributions are welcomed. This could be a photo of your garden, your favourite flower or vegetable, a few lines about and a photo of a trip out to a garden or maybe some gardening tips. There have not been many visits to the BDGC website, but it is still available.

Events:

Paul is taking the lead in organising the 2023 to 2024 programme. The wreath making will be on Saturday 2nd December and still costs £15.00. Denis read through the programme, which will be emailed to members. He repeated Jeanne's request for members to pay for trips at the time of signing up. He reminded everyone to bring a bottle and a glass to the quiz! Snacks will be provided as usual.

Election of Officers:

The committee members present agreed to stand again and were elected by vote.

Chair Denis Wicking (Nominated Jane Pope, Seconded Helen Seymour)

Treasurer Jeanne Lynch-Aird

Minutes Secretary Jane Pope

Denise Crozier, Sheila Baldwin, Anthea Howard, Paul Hansord and Caroline Wicking.

Next AGM:

Monday 7th October 2024 7.30 p.m. Battsford Village Hall.

Monday 2nd October 2023

A New Zealand holiday: Ruth & Paul Hansord

After the AGM Paul & Ruth told us about their recent New Zealand holiday, illustrated by some beautiful photos.

We landed in New Zealand and picked up a car in Auckland on the North Island. We first headed to Russell and the Bay of Islands where we saw a pod of dusky dolphins. Our next port of call was the Kauri coast and a fantastic twilight tour of the tree forest. Here we came face-to-face with a Kauri tree between 2 to 3000 years old. It had a girth of 16 feet and was so majestic. Unfortunately, only 2% of the original forest still exists today.

Our next stop was the Coromandel peninsula, where we visited a creek railway built by Barry Bricknell, a very eccentric man. He extracted clay to make the railway and then used that clay to sculpture with. However he made sure that he returned the landscape to its original once extraction was finished.

Next we made the long drive to Lake Taupo and the amazing thermal park, Orakei Korako, an area of bubbling hot springs and muddy pools. Lake Taupo was the result of a volcanic eruption and it measures 36 km in length and 33 km wide.

In Napier we experienced glamping. Napier was destroyed by an earthquake decades ago. Next on to Wellington, where we visited a wildlife sanctuary which aims to save wildlife at risk. Here we heard but did not see the elusive kiwi. The visit to the Te Papa museum was incredible, it was so impressive and a must to visit. Finally, we left the North Island by ferry to Picton on the South Island.

We thoroughly enjoyed the North Island but the South Island was going to give us the most incredible and amazing sights and adventure.

We started in the Marlborough region and enjoyed the wineries at Blenheim which we explored on our bikes. Our next stop at Kaikoura will forever be in my memory, as we saw a fin whale, a sperm whale which was 14.65 metres long and a pod of dusky dolphins.

On reaching Christchurch, we saw the reality of the earthquakes in 2010, and 2011. Still today you can see the damage it caused.

We caught a train to do the Tranz Alpine ride across the South Island to Greymouth. What spectacular views! Our next stop was the Franz Joseph Glacier, where we stayed in a treehouse with the glacier in our sight

Our trip to Queenstown took six hours, an amazing journey. With the blue water against the green forests, it was so picturesque. Here we picked up a campervan and drove to Milford Sound, another amazing drive with glacier landscape and had a very peaceful picnic beside the lake, just the two of us!

The cruise at Milford Sound included some breathtaking views, another must visit. We travelled around Lake Hawea, Lake Tekapo and Lake Wanaka. The lakes were as blue as blue and the beautiful lupins at the waters edge were very photogenic. Our visit to Mount Cook to see the Tasman glacier was quite mind provoking as the glacier is retreating. In 1990, it was 27 km, 2011 24 km and is expected to be only 20 km in 2027.

We were very sad to get to Christchurch then and leave the incredible South Island landscape behind.

However, New Zealand gave us some fantastic photos and many great memories.



NORTH ISLAND NEW ZEALAND

2nd December 2023

24 Members and others enjoyed the Wreath making workshop on 2nd December organised by Caroline.

Jonathan Pope and Denis Wicking provided refreshments and entertainment!



Monday 6th November

Karon Saunders Creating a wildlife pond

Karon described how she and her husband created a large wildlife pond on their 10 acre Stackyard nursery in Mendlesham. They started with a dead pond which was full of old debris and detritus of all kinds, a huge project, needing a digger and months of work. As they got deeper into the silt, the smell grew stronger and the spoil heap grew larger, but eventually they found the clay bottom and puddled it to ensure a watertight base. Karon shared advice relevant to garden ponds as she talked. First, check the base, is it clay, or does it need a lining? Get a good digger driver if it is large and do your planning before you start. Use rainwater runoff to fill (be patient) because mains water is too alkaline. The best barrier around a pond is dogwood, cut it down by a third each year. The biggest mistake for any pond is to plant bulrushes, as they found to their cost, because it takes over, can damage a liner and is very difficult to remove.

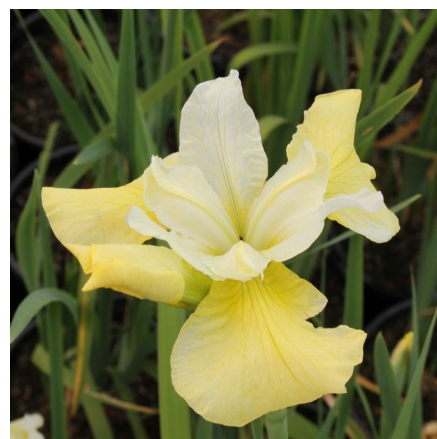
They preserved the native pond plants and added to them. Very soon the wildlife came back, including great crested newts, water voles and dragonflies. When tidying up a pond each year, leave any plants on the edge of the pond so that creatures can crawl back into the water. Think about the siting and size of your pond. Keep clear of trees because of leaf litter. Should it be still or filtered? Filtered helps the balance of the pond but be careful about frogs and other creatures. Mosquitoes and gnats will breed in a still pond, which are a food source for frogs, but may not suit you! Various pond liners can be used if clay puddling is not an option and are fine for wildlife, but do not put fish in a wildlife pond because they eat the larvae. It is a good idea to use a specialist underlay in our area because of the flint in the Suffolk soil. A minimum depth of 2' is advised in a larger pond but any size of pond in any container will attract and support some wildlife, so even the smallest garden can have a pond.

Karon gave some ideas for planting. Astilbe is good as a marginal, along with flag iris. Dragon and damsel flies climb out on the blades when they change from their larval stage. Lilies are beautiful and give good surface cover to help the pond balance, but they can also spread so it is important to choose the right one for your size pond from the many British native varieties available. Pond plants can be split and separated, so are often given away to other gardeners, but be careful what may come with them. Oxygenators are also important. Karon advised to plant up a pond slowly, don't over plant, because there are so many to choose from. She promoted the use of small plant suppliers, mentioning, as well as themselves, Perfect Perennials, Roots and Shoots and Nareys in this area. Although Karon's talk related to a very large pond, the advice given was useful for all pond owners.

Jane Pope



Astilbe



Iris

Monday 5th February

Getting the best out of your roses— Ian Limmer

Ian has worked for Peter Beales' Roses in Attleborough, for 45 years. His knowledge and great delivery made for an excellent talk. Ian was looking forward to the prospect of new roses to come, after the family business was sold last year and the new finance put towards the production side. Peter Beales carries over 800 varieties of roses, with 40,000 plants in containers and 3000 in the display garden. The nursery has spring bulb displays and a wildlife garden, as well as the beautiful rose gardens in June. Ian has been involved in all the 29 Gold medal winning displays at Chelsea. Ian talked about varieties of climbers and ramblers and how to prune and care for them. He illustrated his talk with many of the roses they stock.

Climbers

Climbers usually have larger, single flowers and repeat flowering. They flower more at the top of their height and not low down. Consider this when planning where you will grow them. They can be under planted, particularly with clematis. Some illustrated were Aloha (1949) Breath of Life (1981) Sombreuil (1894) and Gloire de Dijon (1853). Climbers want to go up! If they are pruned low down and hard, they may send out only 2 or 3 new stems. Pruning should be staggered.

Ideas for a north facing wall are Awakening (pink) and Leverkusen (yellow) which is a modern, fragrant rose. Mme Alfred Carriere is very popular and a very good rose. Ian recommended Mme Gregoire Staechelin (1927) (pink) which has big flowers over 4 weeks, with a good scent and hips in the autumn.

An older variety, it does get blackspot. Uetersen (1939) (dark pink) has 2 flushes of large unscented flowers and is a healthy rose. Blush Noisette (18th Century) (pale pink) has a nice fragrance and is happy on a north or south facing wall. It grows to only 7 – 8 'and is a very good rose. Alchemist (1956) (golden yellow) unusual and medium growing, it has clusters of flowers. Compassion (apricot and yellow), can go in a pot or on a large wall. Paul's Scarlet (1916) (red) semi double flowers, clusters and flowers in late June. Can get powdery mildew. Ian does not recommend putting climbers up trees. It's not good for the rose or the tree.

Ramblers

Ramblers can be cut hard down at any time, but don't be too hard on them! They have clusters of flowers and flower once. They have only 3 to 6 weeks in flower, but they are tougher than climbers. Ramblers work very well for swags and horizontals or pergolas. They grow over sheds and through trees. Ian said they use string to tie the roses and occasionally cable ties, but not wire. Train a rambler's new stem horizontally along a supporting wire and leave about 2" of upright shoots for the next year's growth. They grow well on arches. If building a pergola or long arch, make them 8' apart for walking through the middle and maintenance. Dead head to encourage reflowering. They usually have good hips.

Ian recommended the following ramblers:

Souvenir de Docteur Jamain(1865) Because it is an old variety, it is susceptible to rust, blackspot etc, but the scent is amazing. Treat the soil in December with a spray of weak Jeyes fluid (nb this isn't recommended by all gardeners) and clear the old leaves from the soil. Give a good mulch in spring and in the summer. It can be cut back if needed.

Some recommended roses:-

Francois Juranville (1906) This is easily trimmed, City of York and Rosa Helanae, Paul's Himalayan Musk (late 1800s) Penelope Hobhous. (2003) Good scent, continuous flowering and a smaller Rambler.

Cornelia, Prosperity and Penelope all recommended.

Bonica. This can be a standard, shrub or climber, so versatile. A beautiful pink.

Buff Beauty (1939) A lovely creamy/caramel pale rose moving through different shades.

Autumn Sunset and Westerland : also shrub roses and repeat flowering. Very good over walls and pergolas-

Sanders White (1912) Flowers from 4th July onwards, very good repeat flowering.

Chevy Chase (1939) Red.

The Seven Sisters & Rosa Multiflora platyphylla. Purple Skyliner (2002) Repeat flowering and grows to 8', so not too big. Rambling Rosie (2006) Repeat flowering, grows to 20 -25', so needs plenty of room, unless it is cut back regularly. Little Rambler(1994) Very good and a smaller rose. Ghislaine de Feligonde (1916) Very good on north or west wall. Open Arms – small with a second flush of flowers.



City of York



Penelope Hobhouse



Chevy Chase

Clare Matterson: The RHS – A Vision for the Future

Clare gave a talk which ranged over the history and future of the RHS. She made what could have been a dry, corporate presentation into an interesting and thought-provoking talk, as she was approachable, open to questions and clearly cares about the future of horticulture. The RHS began in London in 1804, with just 7 very influential members, such as Joseph Banks and John Wedgwood. Its aim was to develop horticulture with a scientific approach and to share the knowledge gained. In the 1820s it had a garden in Chiswick and commissioned plant collectors to bring back specimens. Many of the plants in our gardens today come from the collectors of this period. The Society expanded when Prince Albert granted a Royal Charter in 1861. In 1903 the RHS was gifted 60-acre Oakwood in Wisley, Surrey by Sir Thomas Hanbury and the first garden outside London was born.

There are now 5 gardens. Rosemoor in Devon (40 acres) was gifted in 1988, Hyde Hall in Essex, our local garden, (340 acres) in 1993 and Harlow Carr in 2001. This garden existed from 1950 as a botanical garden and joined with the RHS in 2001. The fifth garden is Bridgewater, Salford (154 acres) which opened in 2021. The aim is to continue the mission from 1804 to encourage the science, art and practice of horticulture. The emphasis is on sharing knowledge and encouraging particularly the young, but also people “through the seven ages of man” and of varying backgrounds into horticulture.

The message I took away was that the RHS is looking to the future with an urban show, developing outreach to communities, sustainability (eg the lake at Wisley and the water tanks at Bridgewater), making the collections and research more available to the public, (eg digital collections) encouraging a wide range of people into horticulture, partly through apprenticeships and “learning with pleasure”, despite the acknowledged low levels of pay. The RHS has connected with the National Trust, English Heritage and others with an interest in horticulture and sustainability, which seems a positive move for the future.

It was an interesting and enjoyable evening, with good questions from a knowledgeable audience and excellent brownies and lemon drizzle cakes!

