

Battisford & District Gardening Club

Newsletter December 2016

Issue 40



# HAPPY 70TH BIRTHDAY BILL!





## The Barbecue

August 2016



Members who attended the BBQ at Paul & Ruth's on 14<sup>th</sup> August, were entertained by Paul's spinning sausages. These were twirling round on his BBQ at a rate of knots, whilst Paul, glass in hand, appeared to be mesmerised by them! It was such an enjoyable and relaxing afternoon (apart from the chefs) and everyone was able to chat with fellow members. Something we can't always manage to do at the meetings. The array of food, especially the desserts, was so tempting that most members went back for seconds! Bill thanked Paul & Ruth for their hospitality and everyone who helped to make the BBQ such a success. Those members who were unable to attend missed a delightful afternoon.

Jackie Collins



## The National Plant Collections—Suffolk

Maggie Thorpe

September 2016



There are 13 National Plant Collections in Suffolk and those who came to the meeting in September expected to learn all about them from Maggie Thorpe, the President of the Suffolk group of the NCCPG.

However after a brief mention of them she moved briskly on to what is her obvious passion and that is propagation, which is an important part of the group's work

We learnt with practical demonstrations about cutting, grafting, budding, division, layering, splitting and scooping. Their current project focusses on galanthus (snowdrops) and narcissus and involves work with some rare bulbs.

For more information and how to join the National Council for the Conservation of Plants & Gardens (NCCPG) Suffolk group please see their website

<http://www.suffolkplantheritage.com/>



Maggie Thorpe

# Suffolk National Plant Collections



Alpine Campanula - Mrs S Wooster



Perpetual Flowering Carnation—  
Mr J.M. Marshall



Perennial Erysimum— Dr Simon Weeks



Dianthus(Malmaison—Mr J.M.Marshall)



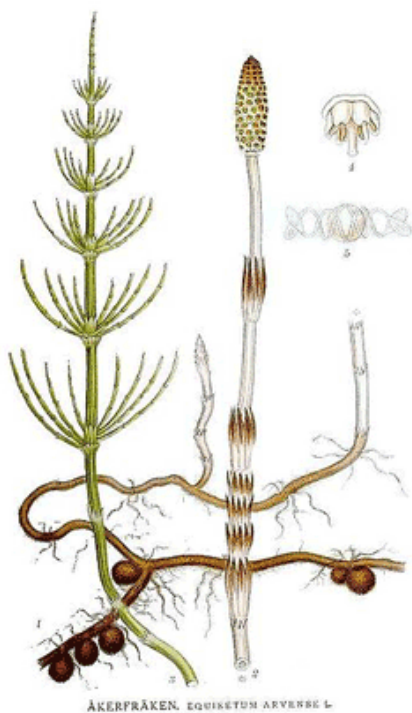
Dryopteris spp - Mr A. C. Piggott



Euonymus (deciduous) ~ Mr Rupert Eley



Syringa—Mr & Mrs Chapman



Equisetum ~ Mr A C Piggott



Hosta—Mr & Mrs Milton



Iris Sir Cedric Morrison collection

- Ms S Cook



Muehlenbeckia (New Zealand spp and vars) ~ Mr J Michalak



Aesculus—Mr R Grimsey



Thalictrum ~ Kim Forester

# Battisford Garage Trail

Over 50 sites for the Battisford Garage Trail this year. BDGC had their usual pitch outside the Punch Bowl. With numerous donations of plants from members and Paul's generosity, 5 tables of plants were up for sale. As it was such a beautiful day, the event drew large crowds, and anyone pausing at the plant stall was immediately persuaded to purchase by super salesman Jim Henson. The helpers were able to refresh themselves by nipping into the Punch Bowl, or purchase ice creams from Sue & John Budd, opposite. At the end of the afternoon a great number of plants had been sold, topping up the coffers of the BDGC. Some of the remaining plants are now growing in the Punch Bowl garden, and Anthea is planting more outside the community centre, whilst Tori very kindly took the rest to grow on for future events. An enjoyable and successful day when the magnificent sum of £211 was raised. This was the 150<sup>th</sup> event which the gardening club has either organized or in which it has participated. Not bad for a young club of 8 years.

Jackie Collins

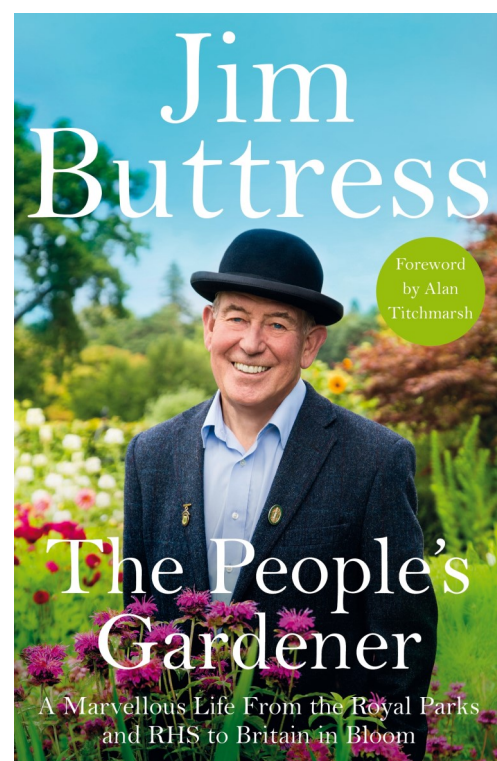


## *Book Review:* The People's Gardener: Jim Buttress *Michael Warren*



Jim deep in conversation with fellow judge Bill Simpson at the Tatton Show 2016

Written by the speaker who kept us entertained with his amusing tales from his life in gardening at our open meeting at Ringshall last Autumn. I have the good fortune to know Jim through my Horticultural work, the RHS and with the London Gardens Society. This made the book even more enjoyable. I couldn't put it down once I'd started reading and I enjoyed the smiles, laughs and the sad part towards the end brought tears to my eyes. Anyone interested in gardening and the life of someone who climbed the ladder from below the first rung to the top would enjoy this book, written as he talks and from the heart.



Published by Pan MacMillan

Available from Amazon at £8.49

## The AGM 2016

The AGM was well supported with 40 members and guests attending. The Club is very pleased that Bill has agreed to remain as Chairman for another year and Paul thanked him for his hard work and enthusiasm. The same Committee were voted in apart from 5 members who had stood down. Jeanne Lynch-Aird took over as Treasurer although Debbie McDowall will continue to sit on the Committee.

The Treasurer reported a healthy balance of funds and there are over 80 members.

A full diary of events for 2017 has been organised

The 2017 AGM will be held on Monday 2nd October, 7.30pm

## Paul & Ruth's adventures in Tanzania

People who came to the AGM were treated to an account of Paul & Ruth's trip to Ruaha National Park, Tanzania with some delightful pictures of the animals they encountered.



I don't think Paul got too close to this beautiful leopard

## Alan Shipp—Hyacinths

It was obvious that Alan Shipp, our speaker at the November meeting, knew everything there was to know about hyacinths. He has been custodian of the UK's National Collection since 1985, and grows 180 different varieties on his 2 acre farm. Since WW2 he has been the only propagator of hyacinth bulbs.

He reeled off so many facts, figures and names, that taking notes for this article became impossible. A few facts I did manage to note – records show hyacinths have been found growing wild in Iran, Iraq, Turkey and other surrounding countries since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. At one time hyacinth bulbs were prized and a period of hyacinth mania, (similar to tulip mania in Holland) took place with single bulbs selling for as much as £800.

An interesting fact was that it takes over 20 years to cultivate a new hyacinth for commercial sale. Alan gave us some cultivating tips, including planting bulbs in the garden 4" – 5" deep, as they send down roots that push the bulb towards the surface. If planting in bowls, leave in the dark for 3 weeks, to prevent the roots pushing the bulb out of the soil. He mentioned a white hyacinth Carnegie on a number of occasions, and as this is one I grow in my pots.

Alan concluded his talk with slides of his fields of hundreds of hyacinths in bloom. An amazing sight. He will be opening his fields to visitors on 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> March 2017. 11a.m. – 5p.m. The collection is located near Bottisham Lock, via Bannold Road, Waterbeach.

*Jackie Collins*



Alan mentioned a white hyacinth Carnegie on a number of occasions, and this is one I grow in my pots. (see picture left)



But he did seem to spend quite a bit of time sleeping—well he was on holiday!

Alan answering members questions

**Big thanks to**

Jackie who wrote up 3 events for me



# GIANT PUMPKIN SMASHES BRITISH RECORD

## Twins reclaim throne as Pumpkin Kings with 2,252.3lb record breaker



Ian and Stuart Paton have broken the British record for a giant pumpkin for an incredible 7th time at the annual Autumn Pumpkin Festival in Southampton. This year, the Paton's gargantuan pumpkin measured more than 19ft in circumference and during its peak period of growth, it piled on a staggering 57lb each day for 2 weeks. To match its rate of growth, the vigilant horticultural siblings, who run Pinetops Nursery in Hants, lovingly supplied over 100 gallons of water a day, plus a nutrient-rich fertiliser. The final weight of the winning entry is just 71lb off the world record.

Each time a record is broken at the annual Jubilee Sailing Trust Autumn Pumpkin Festival, show sponsor – seed and

plant mail order specialist Thompson & Morgan – takes the winning specimen back to its Ipswich HQ. The seeds are harvested, tested for viability and prepared for sale, so for any budding giant pumpkin growers inspired by this weekend's jumbo entries, Thompson & Morgan sell the seeds under the aptly named variety, Pumpkin 'Paton Twins Giant' and it retails at £9.99 for two huge seeds.

The brothers will be using seeds from this year's crop next year – which they say will bear the best seeds in the country thanks to careful hand pollination of their plants to cross two of their best ever performing plants. And with the world record now held closer to home (Swiss gardener, Ben Meier, took the title in 2014 with a 2,323lb monster) they say they are even more set on achieving the accolade themselves.

Stuart said: "We've always been confident of winning the world title eventually, and our new greenhouse has made a big difference with its better soil and light levels, an improved watering system and a larger growing area with a more consistent temperature. We're well prepared to take on not only the Swiss, but the Americans too."

T&M Horticultural Director, Paul Hansord said: "It used to be said that the world record would never leave the US, but if the Swiss can do it, so can we. Our seed quality just keeps getting better, thanks to the Patons' selective pollination, and UK growers are upping the game every year. I've every confidence the Paton boys can bring the world title to UK shores in the near future."

Having just handed over the £1,000 prize cheque and with a promise to pay £10,000 for a British world beater, he could be regretting that confidence in coming years!



**Taken from THOMPSON & MORGAN PRESS RELEASE 8<sup>th</sup> Oct 2016:  
Autumn Pumpkin Festival, Netley, Southampton**

### Did you know?

- Pumpkins are actually a squash—they are members of the Cucurbita family which includes cucumbers
- The pumpkin capital of the world is claimed to be Morton Illinois
- Pumpkins contain Potassium & Vitamin A and the flowers are edible
- They were once recommended for removing freckles & curing snake bites
- The tradition of carving pumpkins was started in the USA by Irish immigrants
- A pumpkin shot from a pneumatic cannon travelled 5545ft
- Pumpkins are 90% water



## From my garden—Helen Ashley

My 'Strawberry tree' has never been so good as this year! It must have enjoyed the early wet and later sunshine. It is a *Cornus Capita* or Himalayan Strawberry Tree, introduced to England in 1825 from Nepal by Nathaneal Wallich. It loves heavy clay soil!! I grew mine from seed, and has taken a while to grow, though has flowered and fruited most years, but never so well.



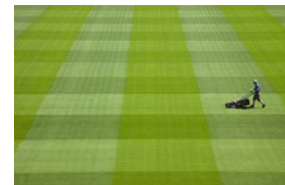
Aeonium Scharkopf looking great with dew on it

In the summer Helen plants them out in her garden—they look great in one of her borders

## A Few Home Truths

It was Benjamin Franklin who claimed 'in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes'. However, we gardeners know different!

- 'Annuals' mean disappointment once a year.
- Your lawn is always slightly bigger than your desire to mow it.
- Whichever garden tool you want is always at the back of the shed.
- The only way to ensure rain is to give the garden a good soaking.
- Weeds grow at precisely the rate you pull them out.
- Nothing ever looks like it does on the seed packet. (Only joking Paul).
- Autumn follows Summer, Winter follows Autumn, drought follows planting.
- The only way to guarantee some colour all year round is to buy a garden gnome.
- However bare the lawn, grass will appear in the cracks between the patio paving stones.
- Evergreens go a funny shade of brown in the winter.



## A true story from Jo Silburn

A friend had her son and his partner move in with her during the Spring. Keen to get them to earn their lodgings, she suggested to the partner that she might like to take over the vegetable boxes for the season. This was agreed upon and the young lady came home from her expedition to the garden centre armed with seeds and plug plants. My friend then suggested, helpfully, that it might be a good idea to get some Marigolds to help protect the crop. The following day the young lady said " Well, I've bought these two pairs of yellow Marigolds, but I don't see how rubber gloves will help." *I suppose all we gardeners started somewhere!*



?!



Thanks to Ian Clark

# Future Events

Monday 5th December; **7pm**

**QUIZ** with George Bethell

Free buffet

Bring your own drinks

Friday 20th January; 7pm for 7.30

**Meal at Alder Carr Farm**

2 courses £19

3 courses £24

For further details or to order your menu please contact Heather Quinn at [hq@captainfantastic.net](mailto:hq@captainfantastic.net)

Monday 6th February 7.30 pm

**The Dry Garden at RHS Hyde Hall**

Ian Bull ; Garden Manager

Monday 6th March, 7.30pm

**'Gardens of East Anglia'**

Barry Gayton

## Other dates for your diary

**3rd April (Village Hall)      8th May (garden visit)**

**5th June (Village Hall)      17th June (Trip to Hyde Hall)**

**3rd July (Visit)                  6th August (Village Hall)**

**1st July. Show in conjunction with Combs Fete**

## Special event

Monday 4th September

**Social evening and Mini-Show**

This replaces the BBQ as the Club's social event as the BBQ has not been well attended recently

More details to follow but the Mini-Show will include produce not ready for July such as tomatoes, runner beans, apples, pears etc.

Any suggestions as to what may be included welcome

## NEXT NEWSLETTER! ? March 2017

If I am to produce another newsletter I will need lots of contributions from you anything garden related is fine

Please also volunteer to write up talks and visits—with photos if possible please.

Thanks Ant : [anthej@btinternet.com](mailto:anthej@btinternet.com), 07958223265

## Back page puzzles



1.



2.



3.

What are they?

All found in Judith & Steve

Thompson's garden and

identified by their neighbour, a moth expert

*Thanks to Judith Thompson*

## Quiz: Gardens on Television

1. Name the cynical snail in The Magic Roundabout?



2. Alan Titchmarsh and Charlie Dimmock starred in Ground Force, along with who?

3. Who popped her head over the garden wall in Hector's House?

4. Name one of The Curious Gardeners?

5. Parsley the Lion starred in which children's TV programme?

6. Who was the first lead presenter of Gardeners' World?

7. Bill and Ben were flower pot men, but who was their herba-ceous friend?

8. Ann-Marie Powell co-presented with whom in Garden Doctors in the Nineties?

9. Who was Diarmuid Gavin's co-presenter on Home Front?

10. Name the garden that starred in the TV series presented by Dan Pearson



*Thanks to Ian Clark*

Answers next time

Thanks so much for all who sent me contributions!