

From the Chairman

Since I last communicated by electronic means we have had the remainder of our winter programme of monthly lecture evenings for 2014/2015 and have begun the programme for winter 2015/2016. Unfortunately, for different reasons, the originally planned speakers in September and October could not come and Gill Hadland, who now looks after our activities programme, had, at very short notice, to find alternatives. Those who came to hear the talks will, I am sure, agree that she did an excellent job. We hope that the rest of the winter programme goes smoothly and attracts good support.

Over the summer we held two of the outings out of the three which I wrote about in my previous communication to you in our new electronic newsletter, namely the day trip to gardens and a nursery in Worcestershire and the three-day visit to Essex, involving two overnight stays. The first organised by Mark Bird and Gill was greatly enjoyed by those who went and is written about in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter. The second, organised by Janet Rowe and Pat Woolston, was also very enjoyable although attracting only four other participants other than Committee members, who traditionally would have been able to go anyway. Again this event is described in more detail elsewhere. The third outing to the Harrogate Show did not in the end go ahead but could be included in a subsequent year if there is sufficient interest.

Our long established Plant Fair took place as usual in May and was a great success. Again we were lucky with the weather and numbers attending were substantial. Mr and Mrs Pettifer, our hosts, were only into their new property in March and worked very hard with their gardener to get the grounds ready in time to accommodate our Plant Fair in the new venue.



Perhaps inevitably there were a few minor shortcomings but these will hopefully all be ironed out for next year. We depend entirely upon the financial outcome of the Plant Fair to cover any shortfall on the other activities of the Group and this year we finished with a satisfactory surplus of £1456, thanks in no small part to the hard work of all those who helped out on the day and of the organisers, particularly Janet Rowe.

Finally, may I ask you to note in your diaries that our biennial Celebrity Lecture will be taking place next year on Saturday 23rd April in the afternoon. Our speaker will be Matthew Wilson, who has recently moved into the area, and the venue will be Brooke Priory School in Oakham in their new auditorium. The School is near the Station and has plenty of parking in its grounds. Apart from the new venue we have changed the timing in the hope that potential audience members will prefer a date later in the year when, hopefully, there is less risk of bad weather; and not going out in the evening is more attractive for some people. The format will not differ in other respects, in that the programme will break in the middle for light refreshments with the second part having a different topic from the first. We also hope to have a nursery in attendance selling plants. Matthew Wilson is, of course, well known from gardening programmes on TV and radio. For a number of years he was responsible for running the RHS gardens at Harlow Carr in Yorkshire and Hyde Hall in Essex. Further detail will be available in the New Year.

We look forward to another successful year.

Henry W.

Summer Outing to Worcestershire

Pat Woolston



The Group trip to Worcestershire provided us with three different hardy-planters' gardens on very different scales and a nursery of national renown in which to indulge and spend our money. Our first point of call was The Perennial Garden situated in Pershore College and maintained by the Worcestershire Group and other HPS volunteers. It was a delightful oasis inside the iron gates and well nurtured, with many herbaceous perennial delights as you moved round the paths. The garden is enclosed by tall hedging with a four quartered bed layout.

The second stop was at the garden of our former Chairman, Vivienne McGhee, and of her husband, John, which we were very privileged to see. It is always lovely meeting HPS members in their own garden and partaking of their enthusiasm and knowledge. A lovely time was had by all and refreshments were greatly welcomed. Two different *crambes* and the 'wedding cake tree', *cornus controversa* 'Variegata', were lovely focal points.



The third garden, Bretforton Manor, was a larger one of 5 acres and where the head gardener, Jon Heath, showed us round his extensive domain. A mixture of formal and informal areas included listed buildings in the form of a dovecote, cider press and the old village stocks!!



The sweeping lawns provided a wonderful view of the house and the walled garden. The colourful herbaceous borders contrasted magnificently with the box-edged formal long borders, accentuating the white flowers and standard topiary balls of bay. The border adjoined a long canal shaped pond. Exotic plants, including many *salvias*, contrasted with other areas where pastel shades were used. There was an overall feeling of high standard maintenance and of something for everyone to enjoy.

The large lily pond was a main feature with a backdrop of weeping willow and a small waterfall cascading down a small bank into the pond. A focal point was the duck house (not in this instance subsidised by the taxpayers!). The greenhouse sat in splendour in the newly created orchard with light pouring in and tender plants revelling in the situation. *Salvias* and *aeoniums* were a popular buy before we left this well managed and special garden.

I have heard recently that this wonderful property and garden is for sale. I do hope that it continues to be nurtured and developed by the new owners and that visitors will still be welcome.

Then we went on to Bob Brown's Nursery, Cotswold Garden Flowers, (without Bob) to see what delights were to be had. As the members wandered from greenhouse to greenhouse treasures were picked up on the way and refreshments were enjoyed by all before making our return to Uppingham after a full and splendid day. Our thanks go to Mark and Gill for organising the outing.



Make a Note!
Celebrity Lecture - April 23rd 2016 1-30 for 2-30pm start
Brooke Priory School, Oakham, LE15 6QW
Matthew Wilson
From Chelsea to Home - Bringing Chelsea Design to Your Back Garden
Plant Sale
Tickets £10-00 available soon



All members were offered a chance to go on a three-day tour to Essex this Summer and a good time was had by those who went and the weather was particularly kind after some rather disappointing weather beforehand.

The first point of call was Place for Plants which is more well known for its' springtime garden. It was very natural with paths wandering through the woodland and around the ponds. The owners held the national collection of euonymus and there were many unusual shrubs and trees, including *Stewartia* and *Davidia*. The cafe and plant centre was a popular destination and who should we meet in there but our friend, Tom Hart Dyke, purchasing a rare specimen for his garden in Kent.



Beth Chatto's was our next eagerly awaited destination and we were not disappointed. The garden had three main areas, the dry garden, the woodland garden and the pond and wet garden. Each part had some inspiring planting and views to be noticed. Water features do seem to make wonderful settings for some fabulous plantings and backdrops. All of the areas were well tended and looked good in July. The dry garden had *Agapanthus*, *Oenotheras*, *Alliums*, *Verbascums*, *Phlomis*, *Verbenas* and *Stipas* all looking magnificent. Walking along the lawns beside the ponds, which are fed by a natural spring, was lovely and peaceful with *Gunneras* and *Astilbes* used to great effect. The woodland area provided a contrast with an undercover of *Hostas* and ferns. Also worth a visit were the Scree

and Reservoir Gardens. The Nursery was well structured and laid out according to growing conditions so we were able to home in on the relevant section. If you have never visited do make the effort.



Our second day took us first to Chelmsford to see the garden of Sheila Chapman, a RHS gold winning gardener and famous for her *clematis* nursery. Here was a person who really loved plants and used varying height in every available space to produce a riot of colour. Roses and *clematis* adorned the walls and woodwork and *salvias* fared well here. The colour combinations were a joy to behold. This is another garden to visit via the NGS.

Just a short distance away we arrived at Margo Grice's garden, 'Dragons'. A keen hardy planter her $\frac{3}{4}$ acre garden was full of interesting plants and the borders were eye-catching. There was something for everyone from huge *Tetrapanax* to small *Sedums*. All

the plants were very lush and relishing the care given them. The hosts made us so welcome and shared their wonderful plant knowledge with us. We enjoyed the time over refreshments which they provided for us.

Then on we went to Hyde Hall, a garden I had not visited before. It was quite different to most RHS gardens with the main parts of the garden a long way from the facilities. There was also a Dry Garden here with a wealth of plants of different species featuring *Kniphofias*, *Verbenas* and



Liliums contrasting with the boggy garden, called the Robinson Garden and the Woodland Garden. Gradually, you make your way to the Hilltop Garden with wonderful views and nearby impressive colour coordinated herbaceous borders. The Farmhouse garden was more formal using low *Buxus* hedging. There is also an Upper Pond to investigate plus a Rose Garden. You could also view the Vegetable Garden, if you had the stamina. All in all there was something for everyone.



The final day saw us head for Mark's Hall very near to our base in Coggershall with a lovely tea room and reasonable little nursery!!! The walk to the walled garden was lovely and there were many unusual trees planted in areas matching their regions of the world. There was the largest planting of Wollemi Pine in Europe. The walk alongside the lakes led to the modern Walled Garden. We were lucky to visit when a sculpture exhibition was being set up which enhanced the setting.

The area along the walls was divided into several small gardens with different hedging and shaping surrounded different colour schemes, some of which were hot and some in more sophisticated cooler shades. It was a delightful change from the norm.

Having viewed many gardens we then headed for Langthorne's Nursery at Little Canfield, which is well laid out, reasonably priced and has good quality and unusual plants. Many of the group were tempted, as they were at our final stop at Beeches Nursery in Ashdon.

A good three days were had by all and we enjoyed each other's company at the White Hart and the Local Brasserie on our two evenings in Coggershall.

Next year's trip will be planned shortly and we hope some more members will take advantage of a longer garden visit further away from Rutland.

Just a Reminder!

**To remain a member of the Rutland Group of the Hardy Plant Society
it is a pre-requisite that you are also a member of the national HPS**

**If you have not already done so, please renew your national membership for 2016
It is now possible to join, renew or even order seed on the HPS national website
by Credit Card, Debit Card, PayPal or BACS Transfer
www.hardy-plant.org.uk**

Our 2016 programme is as follows

Jan 12th	Julie Ritchie	Hardy Geraniums
Feb 9th	Jeff Bates	The Garden in Winter
March 8th	Barry Gayton	Hardy Cyclamen
April 12th	Neil Timms	The World of Ferns
May to August		Summer Break
Sep 13th	John Page	Irish Gardens
Oct 11th	Michael Myers	Woodland Ranunculaceae
Nov 8th	Donald Everitt	Plants for a Long Season of Interest
Dec 13th	Jim Almond	The All Year Bulb Garden

Our annual plant Fair will be on Sunday May 29th 2016

Again at the home of Mr and Mrs Petifer in Ashwell

HPS Rutland Group Committee 2015-16

	Henry Woolston	Chairman	
Pat Woolston	(Secretary)	Mary Nourish	(Treasurer) Anne Godbolt (Membership Sec.)
John Dyson	(e-publicity)	Gill Hadland	(Programme Sec.)
	Steve Pole	Sue Graves	