

# NEWS

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JULY 2021

# *letter*



**HPS**  
HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

Gardening with hardy perennials

- The Hardy Plant Society is a registered charity. No. 208080  
President: Roy Lancaster CBE VMH
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- **Front cover photo:** *Dicentra 'Amore Pink'* by Marian Goody, a Shropshire member. Readers are invited to submit their photographs for consideration as future front covers of the newsletter. Please send jpg files with plant names to the contact email address in the second bullet point above.



To be honest with you, I'm starting to feel a bit braver.

I can cheerfully walk along pavements without a mask. I've even been for a pub lunch with friends not seen since 2019 – a lovely couple of hours after so long apart.

Are things slowly opening up? That seems to be what's happening across our lovely plant society as well. Face to face meetings may be only a few months away.

One local group asked its members how they were feeling about restarting proper meetings – with about half being content and the rest a little more cautious. Even with double jabs, quite a few still seem worried about being out and about – and concerns about new variants don't exactly help.

It's fingers crossed that confidence will pick up and that autumn will see a resurgence of real meetings – with real tea and real cake.

But, on top of Covid, what liberties has the weather been taking with our gardens? It's been dry, dry, dry, then cold, cold, cold and for a long while, that good old favourite, wet, wet wet.

Finally, before I go, I want to be honest with you again. Several more errors crept into the last issue – and they're corrected elsewhere in this edition. My sincere apologies are offered and I hope they'll be accepted.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mick'.

Mick Dunstan, Newsletter editor

## JOURNAL ADVERTISING

Do you have sales experience? Could you help us to sell advertising space in *The Hardy Plant*, the Society's Journal, published twice a year?

We already have a good relationship with some key businesses that routinely advertise in HPS publications and maintaining contact with them would be part of this role. It would involve a few telephone calls before each publication and all expenses would be paid. You would work closely with Souren Ala, the Journal Editor and have the support of Clare Powell, the HPS Administrator.

If you think you may be interested and would like more information, please contact Helen Curtis: [hchonsec.hps@gmail.com](mailto:hchonsec.hps@gmail.com)

## NEWS *inside*

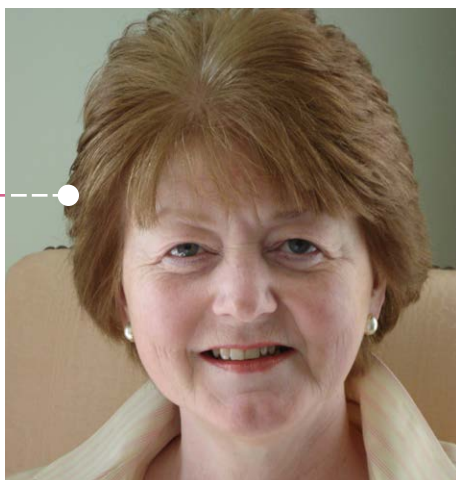
### Added value

Thousands of old picture slides have been scanned and saved as new digital files in the society's photo library. **page 14**



### What made me a gardener

Meet the society's vice-chairman, Pamela Clark, up for re-election at the AGM **page 12**



### Plus...

- Chair Jan Vaughan signs off **page 4**
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# NEWS

## update

Chair **Jan Vaughan** signs off after three years...



An uncertain spring: the anticipation of venturing forth to reconnect with each other as an anxious wait for vaccinations finally offers hope of release, and the weather equally hesitant as a few early promises of a warm spring were interrupted by biting cold, snow, hail and torrential downpours. Most meetings will not start until the autumn, but garden visits and open air plant sales in the summer months will allow us to meet friends, socialise and buy new plants.

Not all HPS activity stopped over the winter and I would like to draw attention to the task of converting a large number of photographic images from the old Slide Library to digital format undertaken by Brian Hackett and the Web Team making them available once again.

HPS booklets have been selling well after the feature in the February Newsletter and I'm delighted that Don Witton agreed to update his excellent 'Euphorbias', adding a number of new images; it will be published this summer.

Sadly, the Trustees and North East Group have decided not to go ahead with the planned Annual Lecture Day and AGM in September as the chosen venue would not be suitable if any social distancing or travel restrictions remained and we could not know whether enough members would be willing to travel. Instead the AGM will be held online on Wednesday 29th September

at 7:30pm; full details are in this Newsletter and once again every member will be given the opportunity to vote with a ballot paper to be sent in early September.

May I remind everyone that my term as Chair comes to an end this year and we don't yet have a volunteer to succeed me. I have enjoyed the many and varied experiences over the 3 years and it has brought me into contact with so many wonderful people; I'm only sorry that the coronavirus pandemic has prevented me from visiting more Groups, but throughout it has been a privilege to work for the Hardy Plant Society. The national HPS is like the hub of a wheel, providing structure for activities such as Conservation, the Seed Distribution and Bursaries and all the Groups. The Chair is well-supported by the Officers and Trustees and I would like to ensure a smooth transition, so if you or someone you know would be interested please contact me.

New Trustees are needed too and if you would like to know more about what is involved, then please contact me or Helen, our Hon Sec. We have recently co-opted Graham and Heather Farquhar as new Trustees prior to election at the AGM and look forward to working with them. Local and national committees rely on volunteers and new faces and new ideas are always welcome so make this your year to get involved.

I would like to thank Anna Peacock, who comes to the end of her term as a Trustee and as Co-ordinator of the Kenneth Black Bursary Fund. Anna has been very successful in making the bursaries better known, increasing both the number of applicants and variety of projects that we have been able to support, and we have been able to read many of the reports from those who have benefitted in the Journal and on the website. Of course the pandemic has severely curtailed opportunities for travel and study, but we are ready to resume when circumstances allow and have continued to provide support for those in horticultural education in this country.

Thanks also to Marian Goody who has been a volunteer with the Seed Distribution for a number of years providing technical

support. Seed donations were slightly down last year although the distribution was managed very successfully by Diane and her team in spite of the numerous difficulties posed by lockdowns and social distancing measures. This year donors will be offered 15 extra packets of seed and I hope that this will encourage new donors as well as those who send seed every year.

As this is my final report I could end with a long list of thanks. I will simply say that I am grateful to the Officers and Trustees, our Ambassadors and of course our President, Roy Lancaster, who is always an enthusiastic supporter of the HPS as “the friendly society”; we should all be very proud of the HPS, it is a wonderful society and I will continue to enjoy my membership.

## AGM NOTICE

### Here's how this year's AGM will operate...

- Holding an AGM online provides a great opportunity for members of the HPS to attend and give support to those who are responsible for running the Society.
- There are many benefits to being a wider community of hardy planters and the Local and Special Interest Groups are linked with other members through the activities of the national society such as the Conservation Scheme and Seed Distribution.
- There is a central Office where subscriptions and sales are managed and Clare is on hand for advice. Officers and Trustees are HPS members, volunteers who run the Hardy Plant Society on your behalf, and they warmly invite you to join them for this short but important meeting. The Agenda is printed in this Newsletter and each member will be sent a ballot paper to register their vote.
- Nominations are invited for the Chair and Trustees; the Officers of the Society are elected annually and become ex-officio Trustees, the normal term of office for Trustees is four years. I have reached the end of my three-year term as Chair and am required to stand down.
- The current Vice-Chair, Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer are all willing to stand for a further year.
- Nominations may be made by e-mail or post to the Hon Sec or Administrator. The proposer must ensure that their nomination includes the name of the proposer and seconder, a statement which confirms the willingness of the nominee to stand and a brief statement of relevant experience of the nominee. This may include such things as committee work or business involvement as well as garden and horticultural experience.
- Nominations must be received by July 31, 2021.

# The 64th Annual General Meeting of the Hardy Plant Society

The 64th Annual General Meeting of members of the Hardy Plant Society will be held as a virtual meeting at 7:30pm on 29th September 2021

## Agenda

- 1 To approve the minutes of the 63rd Annual General Meeting.  
This meeting was cancelled due to the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic with restrictions on holding meetings and travel.  
The business of the meeting was set out in the July 2020 issue of the national newsletter with a ballot form allowing all members to vote.  
Results of the ballot were published in the November 2020 newsletter.  
The Hon Secretary did not receive notice of any matters to bring to the Trustees and there was no Open Forum.
- 2 To receive and adopt the Chair's Annual Report
- 3 To receive and adopt the Hon Treasurer's Financial Report  
The accounts are published on the HPS website  
[www.hardy-plant.org.uk/For Members/Report and Accounts](http://www.hardy-plant.org.uk/For%20Members/Report%20and%20Accounts).
- 4 To elect a Chair of the Society: nominations invited
- 5 To elect the following Officers of the Society:  
Standing for re-election as Vice-Chair: Pamela Clark  
Proposed by: Jaime Blake    Seconded by: Linda Hall  
Standing for re-election as Honorary Treasurer: Stuart Senior  
Proposed by: Roy Stickland    Seconded by: Lady Rosemary Fitzgerald  
Standing for re-election as Honorary Secretary: Helen Curtis  
Proposed by: Jan Vaughan    Seconded by: Mick Dunstan
- 6 To elect the following as Trustees of the Society:  
Graham Farquhar  
Proposed by: Jan Vaughan    Seconded by: Helen Curtis  
Heather Farquhar  
Proposed by: Jan Vaughan    Seconded by: Helen Curtis  
(Both were co-opted by Trustees at the meeting on 18th May 2021)  
There may be additional nominations as the Constitution provides for a maximum of 12 elected Trustees, each for a period of office of 4 years.
- 7 Formal vote of thanks
- 8 To approve the appointment of Haynes Watts as the Independent Examiner of the Society's accounts.



## Open Forum

There will be no Open Forum this year. Any matters put forward for consideration of the Trustees at the AGM must be received by the Hon Secretary by 31st July.



The meeting procedure will be as follows:

You will be able to join the meeting by emailing the Hon Secretary (honsec@hardy-plant.org.uk) no later than 31st August.

Joining instructions will be sent out 1 week prior to the meeting to those who have requested to attend.

There will be no opportunities for questions during the meeting.

If you wish to submit questions concerning the Reports or any other relevant matters, you may do so by emailing the Hon Secretary no later than 31st July 2021 and these will be addressed during the meeting.

## Brief Biographical Statements

Members standing for election who are new to the Board of Trustees have written short biographies which are shared below. Any member wishing to refer to biographical statements of other Trustees will find them in the Newsletter copy of the minutes for the year of their election.

### Graham Farquhar

Retired Director of IT and Data Strategy. Ran own Garden Design and Landscaping business.

Past Trustee of Girton Conservation Trust (registered charity).

Chair of Girton and Meering Parish Meeting.

Committee member of Friends of Trent Vale Trail (not for profit community organisation).

Ex Chair of Lincolnshire Group HPS.

Promoted HPS with stands and displays at regional garden events (eg Belvoir Castle Garden Festival)

Designed and built HPS stand at RHS Chatsworth 2019, assisted with design and build at Malvern 2019 and assisted with build at RHS Chelsea 2017.

### Heather Farquhar

Retired embroidery designer and Lecturer. Ran own Garden Design and Landscaping business.

Trustee of Girton Village Hall (registered charity).

Ex Publicity & Communications Officer for Lincolnshire Group HPS.

Promoted HPS with stands and displays at regional garden events (eg Belvoir Castle Garden Festival)

Designed and built HPS stand at RHS Chatsworth 2019, assisted with design and build at Malvern 2019 and assisted with build at RHS Chelsea 2017.

# Introducing...

## our new Trustees

**Heather and Graham Farquhar** have been co-opted as new HPS Trustees and need to be elected as such at our virtual AGM in September. Here's what they've told us about themselves...

Living in a small village near Newark and Lincoln, we have been active members of the Lincolnshire Group since 2014 and Nottinghamshire Group since 2017, joining after Graham retired early after the sale of the business in which he was IT director. We joined the Shade & Woodland Group in 2018 to discover more treasures to populate our shady spaces and Heather has now joined the committee.

Previously committee members of Lincolnshire Group, we have also enjoyed helping Worcestershire Group with the build of stands promoting the HPS at shows such as Chelsea (2017 – the rotating stand) and Malvern. With this experience, we went on to design and build stands at Belvoir Castle 2018 and RHS Chatsworth in 2019 with the majority of plants used coming from our own garden.

We are lucky to have a large garden which keeps us busy but we're also interested in art, history and food and frequently combine these interests on our camping trips which inevitably comprise visits to gardens, historic properties and plenty of dining out opportunities! Graham is also a keen musician having played keyboards and/or guitar in numerous bands and theatre productions since an early age and is enjoying reliving his teenage years as part of his retirement.

We are strong believers that what you get out of something depends on what you put in and we look forward to contributing further to the HPS if we are elected as Trustees.



Graham & Heather at RHS Chatsworth 2019, on the HPS stand with the Silver medal

### Our Garden

We are fortunate to have a fairly large garden, which can be a challenge as it regularly floods when the Trent overtops. The latest incident was in late January, 2021 when most of





Flooded garden – view from the house showing the main lawn area under water in January 2021

the garden was underwater for three weeks and, for part of the time, an ice sheet! We are building a knowledge of what plants can survive these conditions but it's not been without some frustrating and expensive mistakes. Our garden borders a water meadow owned by Notts Wildlife Trust so we have a wonderful influx of dragon flies during the summer but a whole world of weed (sorry wildflower) seeds is brought in by every flood. I think we would

describe our gardening style as being on the wild side, certainly it would drive a neat gardener mad! We have mature specimen trees with a lot of

shade, which has fuelled our interest in the delicate and fascinating plants that thrive in woodland conditions and we are building our collection of epimediums, ferns, hostas, disporopsis etc.

The most low-lying area is designated as ‘The Jungle’ and is where we grow large leafed damp tolerant plants such as rogersia, ligularia, rheum and gunnera combined with flag iris, astilbe and shuttlecock ferns.

We have developed an area with a Japanese style with a moon gate – constructed from an old cart wheel rim – and cloud-pruned box partners bamboos, azaleas, camelias, acers and yet more of our shade loving favourites such as erythronium, paris, trillium and arisarum. Heather is still waiting for the Tea House to go in – definitely a future project!

When we moved in we did have a sizeable lawn area – this part used to be a horse paddock, around which the previous owners had planted many specimen trees including several flowering cherries, purple beech, acers (Crimson King, globosum, brilliantissimum, drummondii).

We love our trees but the lawn didn't and, combined with the flooding, we decided several years ago to turn it into a meadow – gosh, how trendy! This is still a work in progress as we gradually replace dandelions for a more varied mix of wildflowers, but we have already noticed a massive increase in the number and variety of butterflies, and with no longer having to be a slave to the mower, we now have more time to enjoy them.



*Epimedium Spine Tinger* – one to the star plants in their shade garden

Honorary Treasurer **Stuart Senior** guides us through this year's figures...

# NEWS

## finance

### HPS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2019	REVENUE ACCOUNT	2020
£		£
<b>SURPLUS</b>		
88,098	Subscriptions	83,436
22,842	Net Gain on investments	25,110
11,257	Gift Aid	10,985
4,949	Investment income	6,764
988	Booklets	3,728
801	Donations	968
4,356	Advertising	598
1	Cornucopia	470
107	Enamel badges	52
<u>133,399</u>		<u>132,111</u>
<b>DEFICIT</b>		
20,481	Administration services	19,969
20,141	Journal	18,333
10,913	Newsletter	12,906
22,318	Bursaries	8,960
6,433	Office rent, heat & light	7,320
5,518	Printing, postage & telephone	4,827
3,927	Software & IT support	3,662
3,358	Insurance	3,495
3,790	Legal & professional	3,004
133	Historic seed expenses adjustment	2,675
0	New Systems Project	2,564
785	Publicity	2,105
(821)	Seed distribution	1,912
6,489	Trustees' meetings	1,464



- The pandemic, not surprisingly, made a mockery of our carefully crafted 2020 budget and many areas of expenditure (for example, shows and bursaries) were significantly underspent.
- On a brighter note, the extensive use of Zoom meant that the travel costs associated with our normal round of Trustee, Postholder, Group Secretaries and Conservation meetings were dramatically reduced and yours truly had significantly fewer expense claims to deal with! This was most welcome because during the year we upgraded our financial and membership systems to more modern cloud-based apps offering remote access: Xero for financials and Infoodle for membership. We took the opportunity, as we moved data from the old to the new systems, of doing a bit of much need tidying-up.
- One area where the pandemic had an adverse

2019		2020
£	<b>DEFICIT (continued)</b>	£
982	Website	912
256	Sundry expenses	787
1,267	Bank charges	781
775	Independent examination	775
245	AGM/ALD	665
321	Photo competition prizes	306
103	Meetings	138
155	Depreciation of equipment	116
228	Banners	108
1,879	Shows & Events	72
1,895	Conservation	50
2,844	Group support	50
148	Equipment rental/leasing	0
<u>114,563</u>		<u>97,956</u>

18,836	<b>NET SURPLUS</b>	34,155
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2019		2020
£	<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>	£
	As at 31 March	
498,347	Balance at beginning of year	517,183
<u>18,836</u>	Plus surplus for year	<u>34,155</u>
<u>517,183</u>	Balance at the end of year	<u>551,338</u>

*Represented by:*

243,921	Bank balances	274,029
299,663	Investments at cost	284,773
4,584	Booklet stock	5,329
464	Fixed assets	348
11,887	Debtors & prepayments	6,948
<u>-43,336</u>	Creditors	<u>-20,089</u>
<u>517,183</u>		<u>551,338</u>

impact on our costs was the 2020 seed distribution. To comply with lockdown and social distancing restrictions, additional costs for a village hall hire and some extra transport and courier costs were unavoidable. The successful completion of the scheme for 2020 is solely due to the commitment and enthusiasm of the teams of volunteers who have handled seed in Norfolk, Southern Counties, Lincolnshire and Shropshire under the leadership of Diane Puncheon.

- But now, some disconcerting news. Take a look at the top line of the Revenue Account, subscription income, which fell by five per cent in 2020: this is entirely in line with the fall in memberships. The impact of the pandemic on membership is unclear. Received wisdom suggests that people spent more time in their gardens during lockdown and enjoyed the physical and mental health benefits of so doing. The substantial increase in booklet sales would tend to support this and one might, therefore, have imagined an increase, rather than a decline, in membership. The lack of events, both nationally and locally, may have been a contributing factor.

- Finally, you will note that, like last year, we benefitted from a buoyant stock market. Our overall surplus was £34,155 of which £25,110 was due to the gain in the value of our investments. So, our financial position remains strong but, as I've said at AGMs in the past, we're not here to build up piles of cash and the sooner we can get back to spending our money on our charitable objects the happier I'll be!

- The full 2020 Report & Accounts may be downloaded from the website (see the For Members/Official tab).

Meet HPS Vice Chairman **Pamela Clark**, who is up for re-election at this year's AGM. She tells us about her family's rhubarb patch, why she joined the HPS and her latest garden project...

## What has made me a gardener?

We bought a garden with a house in it almost 30 years ago. I say a garden, but what sold it was a huge Nottingham medlar big enough to shade a table and chairs. There was also a high wall facing the lane in which the house and garden sat. Just what was needed to keep the world at bay after our weekday working lives in the UK and overseas.

But let me start at the beginning.

I was born in a small coastal town in North Ayrshire where I spent the first 20-odd years of my life. The family home was an old house with a reasonably-sized garden looked after almost exclusively by my father. My memories are of it as a playground, with occasional forays into the rhubarb patch to eat freshly-pulled stalks dipped in sugar. My days were filled with school, dance, piano, Guides, sports, riding – but no gardening.

Then university, and I was away! First to France to teach English in a lycee. Then, back to the UK to get married and to work initially as a librarian in Scotland and in industrial research in Durham, followed by a move to London as a research director in a number of financial services' companies. At S.G. Warburg, I travelled mostly in Europe and, later, at AIG, I got the opportunity to move to New York where I worked until I took early retirement.

After our move back to the UK, gardening became the third phase in my life. I knew very little, despite having a father who was a keen gardener. An article by Val Bourne, now an HPS Ambassador, was my prompt to join the HPS in 2012: to be with real gardeners who would share their expertise and knowledge – I didn't realize that they'd be so generous in sharing plants too. I spent a short time on the Norfolk & Suffolk committee as an ordinary member and then as speaker organiser.



*Dianthus* 'Dad's Favourite' ... for personal reasons I'll choose *Dianthus*. Thanks, Dad



Throughout my life I've had the opportunity to serve on many national and international work and professional committees and so applying to become an HPS Trustee seemed an obvious step to take. Last year, I was proud to accept the nomination as the society's Vice Chairman and I'm currently working on a publicity strategy and overseeing the risk management profile.

But back to the garden. How to describe it? You know about the medlar, regrettably now a large stump due to age, wind, and storm damage. You know about the wall. The rest is about an acre of mixed borders, orchard, pond, vegetable and soft fruit garden. We've added the last four to the original 1970s garden, laid out by the previous owners, and we've doubled the borders, both by creating new ones and by digging out part of the front lawn to increase the depth of a 70-foot long border from 3 feet to around 6 or 7 feet.

Being in the southernmost part of Breckland district means our soil is dry and stony, although the stream on the southern boundary means we are a bit more alluvial here. However, I don't try to grow many, if any, moisture-lovers as the whole garden is bone-dry in summer.

Our key successful plants include hellebores and flowering shrubs in spring, aquilegias, salvias, and hebes in summer, and asters and grasses in autumn. But each year we try something different: a gravel garden is slowly in the making and a foray into summer plants in lots of pots is a sure way to guarantee a hot, dry summer with the resultant constant watering. This year it will be pelargoniums, mostly species, in as many terracotta pots I can lay my hands on.

I don't have a favourite plant: it's usually what's looking good at the time you ask me. But for personal reasons I'll chose dianthus. They were a constant in the family garden and I recall my father doing something fiddly with them. I only learned, just before his death, that he was breeding them and had created at least one new one. Too busy at the time to pay attention, it was only once my mother had thrown everything out that I realized what we might have lost.

So what has made me a gardener? I can't point to anything specific, but maybe it was the subliminal influence of a quiet, gentle, man seemingly doing nothing much in his greenhouse. Thanks, Dad.

• *This article originally appeared in the Norfolk & Suffolk Group's newsletter earlier in 2021*



HPS Dropbox Manager **Brian Hackett** tells the captivating story of how our photo library has just suddenly grown by 2,800 new pictures...

## Well, just look what we've added...

In 2017, the Trustees agreed that the Slide Library should be closed; no slide had been borrowed for over a year and no slide added to the collection since 2005. However, some felt that the collection should not be simply thrown away. Many of the images depicted plants which were not represented in the Image Library. Some might show plants which have been widely forgotten and of interest to the Conservation Project.

Also, slides don't last forever – those family heirlooms you packed away in your loft may no longer look the way they did when they were put away. Heat, light, cold, mould and sometimes even dark, can cause slides to deteriorate, depending on the brand. The colour cyan was particularly unstable, up to about 1990, which means that many slides will have turned a funny orange colour over time. Kodachrome has stood the test of time better than most.

Given that the clock was ticking, it was necessary to do something soon when a plan to hand the slides to the RHS ran into difficulties.

The obvious option is, of course, to digitise them – which sounds simple, but isn't.

The physical process of creating a digital image of a slide is fairly straightforward, but it's what happens afterwards that complicates things. Images have to be assessed to see if they have changed colour, or developed mould spots. The new digital image has to be re-matched to the correct slide, the name of the plant checked (many have changed of course) and the details of the donor or photographer found.

The HPS slide library is recorded in two hand-written ledgers; besides a name, they show when the slide was added to the library – not when it was taken. It is likely that many slides were handed to the collection after the death of the original photographer. The first slides appeared in 1966, but there were few additions until the 1980s and '90s, which was the heyday of the slide library.

In order to assess the size of the problem, Colin Doughty, the HPS Web Manager, created some programs which compared the contents of the Slide Library with the Digital Image Library, to see what overlap there was. Further routines were created to identify name changes.

Surprisingly few of the plants in the slides were already in the Image Library, so the task could be a large one – perhaps half of the approximately 8,000 slides of plants might not be in the Image Library.

In autumn 2020, it was suggested to the Trustees that we should carry out a conversion trial, which might lead to a project, possibly involving a team who could work on it over a few winters, when, as gardeners, we tend to have more time available.

It was agreed that a small trial should be carried out, involving myself, John Dyson, the





Some of the new plant pictures  
in our photo library... Top right,  
*Iris* 'Cliffs of Dover'. Bottom  
right, *Pleione bulbocodioides*.  
Bottom left, *Plumeria rubra* f.  
*acutifolia*. Main picture *Salvia*  
*chamaedryoides*



Web Content Manager, and Matthias Dejaegher, the Photo Librarian.

Several things rapidly became apparent:

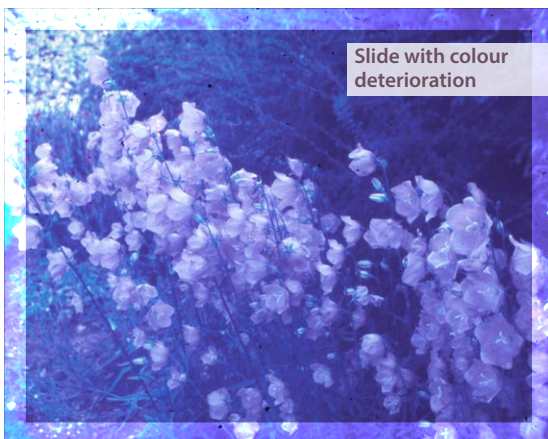
- Some slides had already deteriorated, but not a massive number
- There were plenty of good quality images in the Slide Library, making a conversion project worthwhile.
- The overlap with the Image Library was better than first thought because there were many duplicates of the more common plants, which were not separately recorded.
- It was essential to use a high resolution scanner, if the output quality was to be good enough for publication.
- It would be very difficult to carry out the work using a team, because of the need for the right equipment and the fact that there was only one copy of the Accessions Registers.

Some of the images were not in focus. Today, we are spoilt by cameras and phones which auto-focus for us, so that for most people, it isn't something that is thought about at all. That was not so when these slides were taken; not only was focussing not automatic, but the resulting picture couldn't be seen till it came back from the chemist. As a rule of thumb, large plants which flower in bright sunlight are pretty much always in focus. Tiny blooms which prefer the shade and flower in darker times of the year were very often not!

As a result of the trial, I proposed to the Trustees, that I should undertake to digitise the Slide Library as time allowed, over several winters. I would convert all slides for which there was no image in the Image Library, provided they were of a reasonable quality. Where deterioration is minor, some corrective work could be carried out. Images of plants which were not in the RHS Database would be forwarded to National Chairman Jan Vaughan for further investigation by the Conservation team.

Since this proposal coincided with the third Covid-19 lockdown, and the winter was sufficiently unpleasant to prevent work outside, I was working on slide conversion pretty much full-time for nearly three months. As a result, the job was more or less done by mid-March this year.

Once the pictures arrive with Matthias, every picture undergoes extra checks to make sure the name corresponds with the name approved by the RHS. Thumbnails are created with an HPS water stamp, which are then copied onto the website, together with a name



for every picture that can be read by the website, the original pictures are renamed in a consistent way and then sent back to myself to be added to Dropbox. Finally, all the details are added to the master database.

In total, over 500 hours were spent by everyone involved and approximately 2,800 new images have been submitted to the Image Library, which has grown by 30 per cent in just a few months.

One of the services Hardy Plant Society provides to members is its photo library. **Matthias Dejaegher**, who runs the service, has been telling us how it works, the size of the operation and what's on offer...



“I cannot tell you enough how amazing a service this is”

**Hi, Matthias. You've been our photo librarian for a while. Can you tell us how you became involved?**

I started about two years ago. In these strange times, you only seem to remember 'was it before Covid, or was it after?' It was certainly before as I remember meeting up with Brian Hackett (my predecessor) in a beautiful cafe in Bath. At that point, I had been an HPS member for only a year. I found out about the HPS while on a visit to an aunt in Belgium who's a gardener. She has come to a point in life where she won't be able to stay for much longer in her house, so she gave me a box full of HPS magazines. I thought it was a very interesting magazine so became a member as soon as I got back in the UK. I was at a point where I had been volunteering as a swim and synchronised swimming coach for 10 years and my children had just left the club so was looking to volunteer somewhere else. That's when I spotted the vacancy for photo librarian and I thought that this sounded interesting. I work in IT and the majority of my career was in computer graphics so the technical side of the job didn't scare me. I always enjoyed photography so never doubted that I would enjoy it.

**How many pictures do we have in the library?**

We currently have 11,813 images on offer – 1,051 different genera, 8,273 unique plants. The majority of pictures are high resolution and the full resolution pictures without a watermark can be obtained on request since only the low resolution pictures are available online which all have an HPS watermark. The older pictures are high resolution as they mainly come from DSLR cameras as are the more recent ones as most people take photos with their mobile phone with phenomenal high resolutions. The ones in the middle tend to be lower resolution as early mobile phones didn't have as high a resolution. While the resolution is not that important if viewed on a screen, it is if the images are to be published. We don't charge anything for the service, which is available to members and non-members. All we ask is if people publish the pictures they acknowledge the HPS.



## In Matthias' own garden...

On a personal note, Matthias, tell us a bit about your own garden. Where are you based and what are your favourite plants?

I am based in Bristol and as I type this, it's the usual downpours... I have a small suburban garden but it's big enough to fit a good number of plants considering the time I have with a full-time job and puppy. We had a puppy this year which means we now have holes all over the grass, no more plant labels to be found, chicken wire to try to protect my plants everywhere and somehow he's showing a liking to pulling out Kniphofia, so that's gone too. I am not that keen on 'showy' plants so I often look at leaf shape, texture and colour. I like my ferns and I'm fascinated by Rodgersia, if only I could figure out how to make them produce flowers reliably, and it goes very well with the leaves of tree peonies. I am always impressed by small plants producing unusually shaped flowers like epimediums. I do have a number of roses but I prefer them to be fragrant.



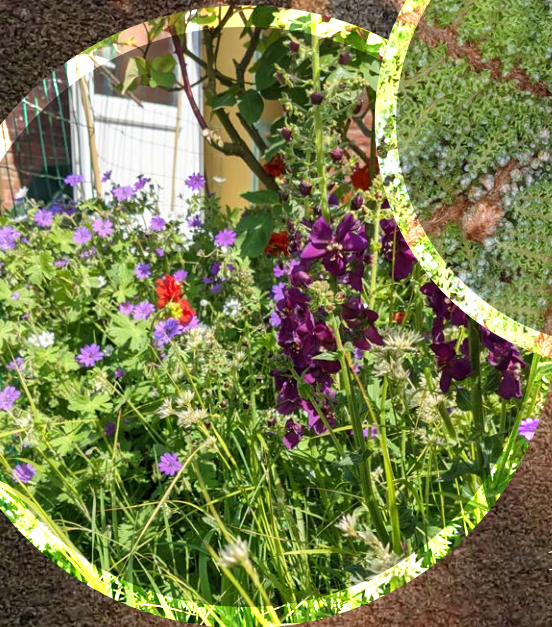
*Epimedium grandiflorum*



*Rosa 'Gertrude Jekyll'*

Some of Matthias' pictures of plants in his own garden, many grown from HPS seed...

*Polystichum polyblepharum*



### **Do our members make much use of the service? Do you know what kind of things it is used for?**

I do get a steady stream of requests, mostly from people writing articles who want accompanying pictures. For obvious reasons, I haven't had any requests for pictures for lectures lately but I'm sure that will return soon. I sometimes get requests from people selling some plants e.g. for the church they're involved in and would like to show people how their plants will look like which we happily provide. The requests I'm getting aren't only from the UK. The furthest request was from New Zealand! It's rare where we have to decline a request but we obviously have to say 'no' to people who want access to everything or for commercial enterprises who will clearly make money out of our pictures. To be honest, I think the vast majority of the service is 'invisible', i.e. where people don't request images but still use the library online. For example, I often find myself looking up a plant on the website while reading a book about plants when no pictures are provided.

### **Is there a copyright aspect? Can members just email you a picture file of any plant pictures they have?**

The copyright issue is complex and we're reviewing it right now. To keep things simple, it basically comes down to when you send us pictures for the library, you allow us to forward them on without charge for the promotion and enjoyment of hardy plants in general and the HPS in particular. I cannot tell you enough how amazing a service this is, thanks to the generosity of all of you. People often can't thank us enough and are amazed that everything is provided free of charge.

I would also like to reiterate, please, keep sending those pictures! It doesn't matter if we already have lots of pictures of that particular plant. Your picture may provide some detail other pictures don't show or maybe we don't have high resolution images of that plant yet. There are also still large gaps we would like to fill including ferns and aquatic plants.

### **We're carrying information in this issue about a huge amount of work put in to turn slides into digital files – and a big rise in the number of plant pictures we have to offer. How much difference do you think that will make?**

This year in particular has indeed been extremely busy. Brian managed to digitise all the remaining slides we had which was a gargantuan task and the library has grown by 30 per cent since January (2,800 new images, 2,352 new unique plants, 166 new genera). All this thanks to not only Brian, but also the 188 people who donated their slides. Please note that we no longer accept slides!

### **We've had chance to see the lovely pictures in the 2020 HPS photo competition. Can you remind us about what you're looking for this year, deadlines, details and what prizes are on offer?**

The deadline for the 2021 HPS photo competition is December 6. The three categories are 'Individual plants', 'Borders' and 'Pictures taken by children'. This year, we would particularly like to see more entries in the children's category. We especially like pictures that can tell a story or can evoke a feeling.



# It's competition time...



## Niwaki®

Great stuff from Japan



**Two prizes are up for grabs in this issue's competition – courtesy of Niwaki, makers of fine garden tools.**

And the British company which specialises in Japanese tools and equipment, is also offering a 10 per cent discount to all HPS members from now until the end of October for online purchases of products on their website, [www.niwaki.com](http://www.niwaki.com)

Our two prize winners will each receive a pair of

Niwaki GR Pro secateurs and a tool care bundle, including a Crean Mate tool cleaner and rust eraser, a Sharpening Stone and Camellia Oil to keep your tools clean.

In total, they are worth £220.

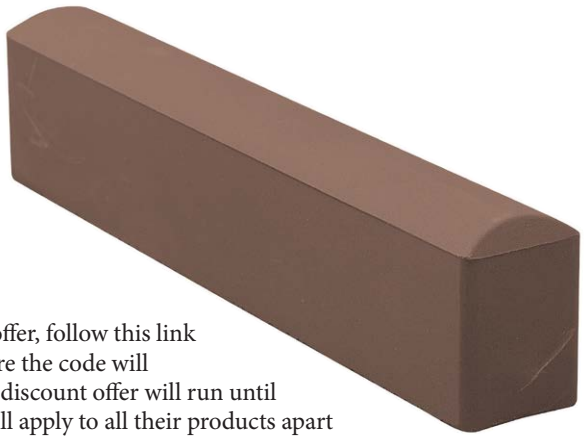
Over the last 10 years, Niwaki has built up a loyal following, based around their main core products – the Niwaki Tripod Ladder, hand forged secateurs and shears and the mighty Hori Hori garden tool. They also produce a range of Kitchen Knives, woodworking tools and outdoor gear. Find out more at [www.niwaki.com](http://www.niwaki.com)

The secateurs are drop forged and hand finished in Sanjo, in the north of Japan, and are referred to as the double yellows, after the two grips on the secateurs. The KA70 carbon steel holds a mean edge, there's a chunky catch at the bottom and the strong spring gives a reassuringly simple functional feel. The yellow grips show up when you've left them somewhere in the garden. The tool care bundle part of the prize will ensure they stay in the best condition.

All you have to do to enter is to write no more than 200 words on the subject of "Gardening when I was growing up." The deadline for entries is July 23 and winners will be notified during the following week. Please send your entry to [newsletter@hardy-plant.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@hardy-plant.org.uk) Winners' contact details will be sent to Niwaki who will arrange delivery of the prizes.







To use the Niwaki discount offer, follow this link – [www.niwaki.com/hps10](http://www.niwaki.com/hps10) where the code will automatically be activated. The discount offer will run until midnight on October 31 and will apply to all their products apart from trees and workshops.

OK, so it's now time to put on your thinking caps – make it as emotional or as factual as you like – and remember no more than 200 words! We look forward to reading your recollections.

## And here are last issue's winners...

Three members have taken delivery of their prizes from the competition we ran in the last issue of the newsletter.

We asked readers to write a maximum of 200 words on the best thing to come out of the last year of Covid-19.

Gary Carroll, from Cranesbill Nursery in Walsall, provided each of them with eight hardy geranium plants. Many thanks, Gary.

First up in the winners' parade is **Mel Crann**, who lives near Holmfirth in West Yorkshire. The date he joined HPS is lost in the mists of time, he says.

"The peak of my gardening mania was the 70s and 80s. For some years, I was secretary of the Trees, Shrubs and Hardy Plants Group at Harlow Carr and wrote a booklet on hardy geraniums for them – hence the attractions of this prize. I was on the committee of the Yorkshire Society for the Conservation of Garden Plants (later Plant Heritage) The HPS West Yorkshire Group meetings, visits and wonderful plant auctions gave me a great deal of pleasure and plants.

Later, time pressures and other interests led to the garden becoming rather neglected. Last year a new garden, resulting from a house move plus the spare time arising from lockdown have re-booted my gardening mania. I really do read every word of *The Hardy Plant*; I was thrilled when my HPS seeds arrived; I've bought and ordered so many plants. I told my wife recently, "I'm not buying any more this year" – famous last words because the irresistible David Austin catalogue has just arrived.



Here's Mel's entry...

*Has anything good come out of the virus?  
Did we discover some things to inspire us?  
Yes,  
The leisure to gaze on the silver-leafed Pyrus,  
To dwell on the plant list that make us desirous*

*(I ordered a dahlia flushed tangerine  
And a spurge that deliciously flowers lime-green).  
I've devoured every page of Hardy Plant magazine.  
Oh joy! and now I've had the vaccine.*

*So the misery visited by the pandemic  
Is dulled by a love of plants that's systemic,  
And spirits are raised that, in process alchemic,  
Puts a smile on my face that's cheerfully comic.*

*Now let's look for a year that good fortune will bless  
With enjoyment of company and, of course, HPS.*

Next up it's the turn of **Rosemary Lindsay**, another long-standing HPS member. Rosemary is an award-winning botanical artist, a member of The Society of Botanical Artists and the Chelsea Physic Garden Florilegium Society. She exhibits her watercolour paintings widely. She publishes her work as postcards and greetings cards which are regularly ordered by a large number of local Hardy Plant Society groups to sell at their events. See [www.rosemarylindsay.com](http://www.rosemarylindsay.com) for her paintings and her south London garden, open each year for the NGS and for group visits.

Here's Rosemary's entry...

*On Friday 13th March 2020 – moi, superstitious? – my husband woke up with a fever, cough and shortness of breath; yes, we had an unwelcome visitor: the coronavirus. A few days earlier, we were in London, on an outing to an exhibition, a concert and dinner in a restaurant, using the tube and trains, unaware of the looming risk. At home, we are fortunate to have space to keep well apart, and I was draconian about hand washing etc while looking after my husband. Our garden was my refuge, keeping me active, and helping to allay the fear. It was warm and sunny and the garden was never so well weeded, the roses so tidily pruned, and I pushed all the spent herbaceous stems through the shredder for composting. Our old narcissus varieties – 'White Lady' and 'Elegance', fritillaries, and species tulips *T. Sylvestris* and *T. turkestanica* – were flowering. The scent of the daphnes and the viburnums wafted around while I worked.*



Rosemary and her husband Crawford in their garden

*Quite the best thing in 2020 was my husband's recovery from Covid, the kindness of family and friends, and the garden, which contributed enormously to my coping with a dark time.*

And finally, **Myfanwy Baines** who received news of her win as 70mph winds threatened her house and garden on the coast at Penmaenmawr in North Wales. She too can no longer remember when she joined the HPS but guesses it was during a visit to the first Tatton Park Show.

"I do know it was my beloved husband's idea. There is no group nearby. One did start in what was Clwyd but it was just that little bit too far to travel. Maybe others felt the same because it no longer exists. So it's just the publications that keep me in touch.

"You will have gathered I am 'of a certain age' plus a bit more. My garden is about quarter of an acre. It's a gently sloping site. My parents bought the house in 1952. It was my mother who got me interested in gardening. Many years ago, I worked at Bodnant Garden as a secretary to Charles Puddle. So, it's no surprise that I grow quite a few camellias and rhododendrons!"

Here's Myfanwy's entry...

*For 30-plus years, my husband and I were a team in the garden; I did the plants, he carried out my schemes with the hard-landscaping. Then, seven years ago, he died and I was paralysed with grief. The garden meant nothing to me, it suffered from neglect. It's surprising how quickly nature takes hold. About two years ago, I sought help with at least cutting the lawns, pruning the roses etc.*



*Then along came lockdown and, mercifully, wonderful weather. On the first day I decided, if I couldn't go out I would do at least an hour a day in the garden. Days passed into weeks and weeks into months. Suddenly, I found myself enjoying the, now, reclamation task. With such sustained effort – that hour morphed into two and more – I could see the garden coming alive.*

*It happened at the best time of the year; first the snowdrops, then crocus and daffodils, then camellias and rhododendrons, the weather and the colour spurred me on.*

*The garden contractor hired to do the basics caught my mood. We would discuss plants and improvements to layout. I was hooked again. My garden gives me so much pleasure now – which just goes to prove that it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good!*

And as we end this listing, I have been struck by a small pang of guilt. One of the previous competition winners, Jenny Duncan, saw just very brief mention of her winning entry, which had to be cut because of pressure on space in the last issue. So, to make up for that – and with even more apologies to Jenny – here is her entry for the competition which had the theme of 'What the Hardy Plant Society means to me'.

*"Bog garden."*

*"A what garden?"*

*"You could make a bog garden", she smiled.*

*I had shuffled around the stuffy marquee at Chelsea Flower Show to be drawn to a green oasis on a table-top labelled the Hardy Plant Society.*

*But didn't perennials languish in just about every suburban garden – golden rod, harsh*

*pink phlox and mildewy Michaelmas daisies? On this table, though, plants were displayed by where best to grow them – hot and dry, cool and shady and even wet, wet, wet places. And such plants!*

*I joined The Hardy Plant Society. The bog garden thrives, even though we Hardy Planters do relish those leafy beauties adored by slugs. I've battled against these and to find a parking place on dark winter evenings. Not every speaker has been inspirational, but so many members are and that's the joy of it.*

*In a hall by the Brompton Oratory we waited for an AGM to begin. Leaning conspiratorially towards me, my neighbour whispered, "You know, it is worth the subscription just to be called a Hardy Planter!" I knew what she meant.*

That's all for this issue. I really enjoy the stories our members share in their entries.

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

# Diana's three-acre treat...



Diana Garner... "Anything with rare or unusual on the label is a must."

There's a garden, just over three acres in size, in Cholesbury, Hertfordshire. It's the home of Diana Garner, secretary of the HPS's Shade and Woodland Group.

She opened it to group members in May – and nearly 30 came from a wide area to sample its delights, which include three acres of woodland. They were formerly part of Dunton's brick-making area and now contain more than two dozen tree types.

"When we bought the house in 1995, we were warned that nothing would grow because of clay and stone," says Diana. "The house was surrounded by grass and trees. After removing many trees to let light in and adding much organic matter, we created the garden around the house planting every shrub, bulb and plant ourselves trying to create an area where birds would feel safe and have plenty of living space."

She and husband John, who sadly died in 2018, spent hours at Westonbirt Arboretum admiring trees and shrubs. "I aimed at different leaf shapes and colours and anything with rare or unusual on the label is a must!"

The three acres of woodland were bought in 1999. Thousands of daffodils have been



added along with a selection of rhododendrons, acers and unusual trees. A large fernery in one of the clay holes in a back corner of the woodland is charming 12 months of the year, says Diana.

She has four hours' garden help a week plus two teenage Saturday boys who deal with firewood, compost heaps and the kitchen garden.

"I like a lived-in garden so visitors are told not to expect a manicured garden," she says. "As I go out to do something, another hundred jobs distract me along the way."

A plant list of more than 200 varieties in the garden was provided along with a map of the garden. Refreshments were served in the small barn in the garden, which helped provide shelter during the odd rain shower. The whole visit really did feel like a step closer to normality!

- Membership of the group runs from January to December and is open to all HPS members. The annual fee is £5 or £6 joint at a single address. To join, contact Diana on [montana@cholesbury.net](mailto:montana@cholesbury.net) or visit the group pages on the HPS website [hardy-plant.org.uk/meet-us-at/specialist-groups/shadewoodland](http://hardy-plant.org.uk/meet-us-at/specialist-groups/shadewoodland)

- The group's latest newsletter carries a wonderful piece from Bob and Ann Armstrong about their love for *Cypripedium*, the Lady's Slipper Orchid, along with news from Walt Bubelis in Seattle – extensively illustrated – about his garden, where a magnificent *Magnolia laevifolia* can be found in "the rear yard" and where the weather has been short sleeves one day and "downright frigid" the next!



Plants in Diana's garden including *Rhododendron* 'Horizon Monarch', left, *Rhododendron* 'Loderi King George', bottom left, and, below, *Persicaria bistorta* 'Superba'



## GALANTHUS

Covid restrictions meant the Galanthus Group was unable to hold its planned AGM and Study Day in Wiltshire in mid February. However, two excellent Zooms were provided for members and guest HPS members to watch in the comfort of their homes, complete in some cases with a glass of wine and ever growing wish-list! Our very grateful thanks to Anne Repnow and Jim Almond for presenting two excellent talks, judging by the feedback received

these were well and truly appreciated.

It is hoped that our planned day will now take place in February next year but the group hopes to arrange further snowdrop Zooms talks for the benefit of our members, not all of whom would wish to travel long distances in mid-winter....

Annual membership is £5 single, £6 joint. Please contact Lyn Miles – [galanthus@hardy-plant.org](mailto:galanthus@hardy-plant.org) – to join or for further information.

## RANUNCULACEAE

It's been a busy year so far for the Ranunculaceae Group – two Zoom talks, two newsletters and by the time you read this, another Zoom and a garden visiting day, says secretary Susie Mitchell.

Due to Covid uncertainties, our formal AGM and Timothy Walker's lecture on Ravishing Ranunculaceae were changed to Zoom to enable as many members as possible to take part, no matter the current rules. Our annual gathering was changed to an outdoor meet up and then visits to two nurseries and gardens.

Copious cake was also in order. Fingers crossed for a more usual day in Kent in 2022 when our speaker will be Colin Moat of Pineview Plants.

Our first Zooms were well attended and Dr Andrew Ward of Norwell Nurseries enlightened us about the propensity of Ranunculaceae to form doubles and so much more.

Many of us found out the simple reason why we have been unsuccessful growing delphiniums, thanks to Mark Lyman of the Delphinium Society – and it's not

slugs and snails!

We are now putting together a programme of Zoom speakers for winter 2021/2 on more Ranunculaceae topics. The only difficulty is choosing the topics from this extensive family – clematis, hellebores, aquilegias and anemones. They will be available only to members, so do come and join us. Membership is £4 pa. Details from Vivienne McGhee, Membership Secretary at email – [v.m.mcghee@icloud.com](mailto:v.m.mcghee@icloud.com) or from the HPS website.



*Anemone nemorosa Vestal*



## HARDY GERANIUM

The HPS Hardy Geranium Group is delighted its 2021 Geranium Day on June 26 went ahead, albeit in a different format this year, says membership secretary Alistair Hodge.

“We met at Wrest Park, near Silsoe in Bedfordshire, in the morning, and moved on to nearby Clophill for our plant sale and to visit Trevor Hards’ beautiful garden. Great to see old friends and meet new ones!” In the meantime, the group had an enjoyable Zoom presentation – by Julie Ritchie of Hoo House nurseries on

‘Geraniums and Friends’ – and are planning more for later in the year.

“I’m also pleased to report that in the last year we’ve gained several new members,” says Alistair. “Our seed exchange is excellent and helps preserve scarce but beautiful varieties. And we are very fortunate in the range of contributors who have written for our newsletter.

For information on how to join us, please see the ‘How can you join?’ section of the Hardy Geranium Group page on the HPS website.

## New booklet on the way

After the last newsletter, which reminded members about our range of HPS booklets, our administrator Clare Powell has had a rush of orders, writes Booklets editor Jan Craig. Do keep them coming! We have had additional copies of Ferns and Peonies printed.

We have also asked Don Witton if he would be willing to update his Euphorbias booklet, last published in 2010.

Don has been hard at work rewriting some sections and adding new varieties. The new edition will have lots more lovely photographs which really illustrate the enormous range of Euphorbias, from *Euphorbia capitulata* at 8cm tall to *Euphorbia nereidum* which can grow to 2.3m.

There are lots of good garden-worthy plants in the 60-100cm range with a much wider range of colour than one would first imagine. As Don points out, many Euphorbias are evergreen so provide colour and shape through the winter and look wonderful with an edging of frost.

If all goes well, the new booklet will be available in July so keep an eye on the website. If you can’t wait until then, you might consider visiting Don’s National Collection of Euphorbias near Sheffield. You can email: [donshardyeuphorbias@topenworld.com](mailto:donshardyeuphorbias@topenworld.com) or look at the website: [www.donseuphorbias.webador.co.uk](http://www.donseuphorbias.webador.co.uk)

We are also hoping to update one of the other booklets and are considering a proposal for a new one. The title of that is secret until it has been agreed!

● **Spotted on Amazon...** Jan has mentioned the reprint of our Peonies booklet, above, but an eagle-eyed member saw this profit-making idea. If you type in the name Gail Harland into the browser search bar, among the books that come up is Gail’s HPS booklet on Peonies. The sale price for this used copy of this lovely booklet, first printed in 2013, is £61.79. Or you could just order it from the society for £5.50!

Gail combines work as a paediatric allergy dietitian with freelance writing and photography. She is the author of six horticultural books including *Photographing Your Garden*.

# How to help the seed scheme

Seed Distribution Coordinator **Diane Puncheon** looks ahead and advises on how you can help this year. . .

## How we did this year

- About 35,000 small, glassine envelopes were filled
- Seed was donated by 209 HPS members
- A total of 1,653 different plant varieties were offered – 408 of which were new
- About 55 HPS volunteers were involved – Norfolk/Suffolk group for receiving the seeds, merging and labelling, Lincolnshire and Southern Counties for glassine packing and Shropshire for order picking and posting
- A total of 1,324 orders were placed, 49 from overseas including 30 from Europe
- Some of the remaining seed goes to charities. So far, 49 charities have applied after reading about it on the website.

How soon the time comes around for the new year of seed distribution. After last year's difficulties, we are hoping for a less challenging season.

The Seed Distribution team will be delighted to receive your donations and now is the time to be considering collecting seed. By sending at least five different packets of seed, you will be entitled to an extra 15 packets from the seed list when you send in your order.

Collect seed in paper bags or envelopes, dry it, then remove as much of the chaff as possible. Seed should be kept in a dry, cool environment such as a plastic container in the bottom of the fridge. The seed section of the HPS website, [www.hardy-plant.org.uk/seed](http://www.hardy-plant.org.uk/seed) has more advice on collecting and cleaning seed.

Please send your seed to the seed receivers as follows;

- If the initial letter of your surname is from A to F, send your seed to: Sandra and Roy Mellor, 4 Welsford Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 6QF  
[mellor459@btinternet.com](mailto:mellor459@btinternet.com)

- If the initial letter of your surname is from G to N, send your seed to: Linda Hall, Birchwood, Snow Street, Roydon, Diss, Norfolk, IP22 5SB  
[mjichall@btinternet.com](mailto:mjichall@btinternet.com)
- If the initial letter of your surname is from O to Z, send your seed to: Ray and Coral 'Magpies', Fen Street, Hopton, Nr Diss, IP22 2RF  
[crassula01@gmail.com](mailto:crassula01@gmail.com)

If you require a supply of small manila envelopes to send your seed to your receiver in, please send a large letter stamp with a request to your receiver – depending on your surname's initial letter – as set out above.

Remember, that even a very small quantity is welcome.

Please help our seed receivers by listing your seed in alphabetical order, include your name and address, and email address if you have one. If you can send your seed in batches, or singly, as soon as it is ready, this helps our seed receivers by minimising the huge rush against the clock at the end of October, as we work to get the seed list ready for the printers.

Please make sure you have the correct postage as receivers are not required to pay any surcharges.

Preparations have begun for the new season – with one major change.

Marian Goody, who, with Judi Deakin, carried the scheme through so successfully after Pauline Cooper's death and who has guided and supported me through my first two years, is standing down. Her involvement has been invaluable, and the scheme owes her a great debt of gratitude.

We have found a replacement within the existing team – Peter Lyle from the Norfolk/Suffolk group, who was a receiver last year, will take over her role in IT. Marian will be supporting and guiding Peter in his new role. Receivers to replace Peter have been found within the Norfolk/Suffolk group. All other existing volunteers have agreed to continue through the 2021/2022 season.

- The last date for seed for the 2022 list is October 29, 2021



# New plants join conservation listing

The Conservation Scheme has been simmering under its Covid lockdown blanket for the last several months, but now with the country opening, and summer here, it's starting to wake up, says Conservation Scheme coordinator Sally Adams.

I can see by the Conservation Facebook activity that our conservation plants are beginning to put out new leaves, Epimedium 'Milky Way' is blooming and I'm potting up new chrysanthemum cuttings to introduce into the scheme.

The Conservation Scheme Facebook page is a good place to see and to share photos of conservation plants. We've opened this up now so that all HPS members can enjoy the show and see what is happening with conservation.

You will have to request access the first time you try to use it, but this is a one-off. As long as I am reasonably certain that the request comes from a genuine HPS member, you will be accepted. You can find the Conservation Facebook page by searching for 'HPS Conservation' on Facebook. There is also a link on the national HPS website [www.hardy-plant.org.uk](http://www.hardy-plant.org.uk) in the Conservation section, under 'About Plants'.

Penstemon 'Pensham St. James' was introduced into the scheme last year, but without a national exchange meeting there was no chance to pass this around the growers. Jan did get a plant and has promised to propagate it, so there will hopefully be several plants to give to local groups. You can see from the photo what a striking plant this is. It should be a nice addition to the Scheme.

We will also have some new chrysanthemums in the scheme this year. One of three National Collection Holders and HPS member Judy Barker has kindly donated cuttings for the scheme. These are plants which are not widely available from nurseries, but are good plants that should be more widely grown and appreciated. I'm looking to introduce the three cultivars 'Beechcroft', 'Lindie' and 'Penny's Yellow' at the autumn meeting.

When I met with the Conservation Co-ordinators over Zoom in March, they were eager for me to book an 'in-person' meeting in the autumn, if at all possible.

The Annual Exchange Meeting therefore, will take place on Saturday 25th September 2021. More details will be shared with Co-ordinators nearer the time, but provided there are no new restrictions, and in line with government Covid-19 guidance, this will be the date for our annual meeting.



*Penstemon Pensham St James*

# Phlox appeal

One of our Conservation Scheme growers is building up a collection of Phlox, in memory of her mother, who grew and passed on her love of this beautiful plant.

She is looking for *Phlox paniculata* 'Hampton Court' – purple – and *Phlox paniculata* 'Rapture' – pink. They are both late-flowering cultivars, growing to 80 cm, and last listed in the RHS Plant Finder in 2003.

Are you growing either of these? If so, could you spare a cutting or division for Edwina? Or, if you know of someone who has either or both these Phlox, please contact her direct on [cobblehey.aol.com](mailto:cobblehey.aol.com) or on 07805 251376.



*Phlox paniculata* 'Rapture'



*Phlox paniculata*  
'Hampton Court'

# Holiday scheme

Plans are underway to help HPS groups around the UK to organise garden holidays for their members.

The idea is the brainchild of Dorset Group Chairman Debbie Steel who has been given the go-ahead by Chair Jan Vaughan to get the scheme off the ground.

Debbie says, "This all started because we regularly organise holidays – we are going ahead with number 11 as long as the planned lockdown roadmap continues – and along the way, we have had problems with certain aspects of the trip. On the positive side we have improved our ways of getting reduced rates and "free" places at the hotels and/or gardens.

"We felt it would be good to share these experiences, whilst drawing on other Groups' successes, and avoiding any potential pitfalls.

"As more groups are organising trips, I wondered if we could create a database so that all of us can find out where people are travelling to, or where they have been, so we can draw on their knowledge, via a named contact at that group, for both experienced and new organisers.

"As I recall, this can be a complicated

thing to organise and daunting for someone who's never done it before. But we, at Dorset, know how much the members have enjoyed our holidays over the years, so it is always worth all the trouble."

If you would like to be a part of this, or would be interested in helping put this into practice, please contact Debbie via email [Debbie.steel@outlook.com](mailto:Debbie.steel@outlook.com) or call on 01202 877390 or 07709 308002. We shall come back to you by the end of the year to let you know about the response.



Debbie Steel

## ALBA UPDATE

Derbyshire member Ann Franks, whose idea to set up a new Special Interest Group for white flower enthusiasts – The Alba Group – was featured in our last issue, has been in touch again.

She says, “Many thanks to those members who contacted me by phone to express an interest in the Alba Group, I will be in contact very soon.

“For anyone who tried to e mail me, please accept my apologies for my error my email is afranks700@gmail.com, not the email shown in the last issue of newsletter. I look forward to hearing from anyone in the group at both membership and committee level.”



Ann Franks

## CONSTANT PLEASURE

Hampshire member Becky Getgood brought her local members up to speed with her lockdown reading in the group’s recent newsletter.

“Amid the Covid 19 restrictions, I’ve found the time to relook at many gardening books,” she says. Among her favourites is *The Well-Tended Perennial Garden* by Tracy DiSabato-Aust, a book once recommended by Beth Chatto in a newspaper article many years ago.

Two others get a mention. *A Chalk Garden* by F.C.Stern has given Becky the confidence to try some lilies in her garden and *A Beautiful Obsession* by Jimi Blake and Noel Kingsbury. “I am constantly dipping in and out of the plant lists in this book as well as enjoying the superb photographs.”

# NEWS

## round-up

## ART WINNERS

A new exhibition of botanical art – *Botanical Treasures* – has opened at the Museum of Royal Worcester.

It comes after the Gloucestershire Society for Botanical illustration won the Botanical Art Award last year from the Finnis Scott Foundation, which is funding the new exhibition that runs until October.

Rachel Needham, GSBI secretary, says winning the award is a dream come true. “We’ve been welcomed behind the scenes to explore the museum and its glorious archive of art works. We have created new work inspired by all we have seen too.”

A programme of workshops, demonstrations and talks is lined up – and details can be found on the website, [www.museumofroyalworchester.org](http://www.museumofroyalworchester.org)



Sally Rolls’  
Peony painting  
from the  
exhibition



## HELPING HANDS

Two charities will benefit from donations totalling £500 recommended by the committee of the Nottinghamshire Group.

First up is Rainbows Hospice in Loughborough – which cares for children and young people with life-limiting illnesses. The charity was nominated by member Karen Gimson, who is also an HPS Trustee.

And the Mencap Me Time Garden Project, nominated by member Linda Phillips, is the second recipient. The West Bridgford-based charity started about 12 years ago and involves a gardening programme for adults with learning disabilities – typically up to 12 working or visiting the garden every day.

## EATEN AWAY

South Pennine Group member Toni Frascini has been growing *Aquilegia* ‘Lime Sorbet’ – and watching them disappear as well!

In the group’s May edition of KIT – short for Keeping In Touch – Toni, the group’s plant sale organiser, tells how she grew the plants from seed last year and planted out

half a dozen in various locations about her garden. “It’s not slug damage but something larger,” she says. “Perhaps whatever it was read the label and thought Lime



Sorbet sounded delicious! Other aquilegias and surrounding plants have not been affected.”

She shared a photo with friend Barbara Dygnas, who, it turns out, suffered similar damage to her *Ficaria* ‘Brazen Hussy’ – and thinks badgers may be the problem. Toni suspects wood pigeons.

## SCENT HEAVEN

East Yorkshire member Cate Scott says she loves the smell of eucalyptus – with cut stems lasting for ages in a vase of flowers and smelling wonderful.

But she told her local group members that the large size to which the trees grow has meant it’s never been a practical option.

Now, though she’s discovered a tiny mutation of the usually huge *Eucalyptus gunnii* – *E. gunnii* ‘Franc Bleu’ – which was ordered and has now been delivered to her home. “And very beautiful it is too,” says Cate.

It grows to just 2m in height, gets quite bushy, is ideal for cutting and takes a well-drained sunny spot in the garden or large pot. Fingers crossed, Cate!

## HE’S A FERNATIC

Scottish and Northern Borders Group member Anthony Brown has been cataloguing his unfolding interest – not to say obsession – with ferns in the group’s bumper 72-page May newsletter.

“I admit to an obsession with ferns – not a big one like the Victorians, just a wee one,” he says. It all started with a neglected soft-shield fern – a *Polystichum setiferum* *Divisilobum* Group – in an office garden in Glasgow. Eventually, the Plant Finder and Google opened the floodgates to temptation.

A real extravagance, he confesses, was



'Crispum Bolton's Nobile', which he says sounds and looks like a Cruff's champion. It cost £20 but he has no regrets. "It nestles at the garden door, softening a sharp corner, cuddling in its folds a sequence of little flowering gens."

He ends "Obsessions, however wee, can be chronic. Did the HPS really have to visit the Benmore Fernery and introduce me to *Arachniodes simplicior*?"

## PLANT BARGAIN

Details of planning a new garden at a new home have been shared by North East member Dot Patterson in her local newsletter.

She and David left their home of 26 years with its steep, shady, secluded position for a fresh start with great views over Morpeth Common, south-facing and heavy clay. After a year sorting out the house, attention switched outdoors – and Covid provided much time to deal with that.

Lawns have been reshaped, over grown shrubs removed and hard landscaped circles added. Other additions include more space for hostas and building a tomato shelter from old dining room doors and bubble wrap. This year, a new greenhouse has been installed and more reshaping is on the cards to accommodate more plants.

Dot says, "The best bargain last year was a Radio Times offer for 36 free perennials – just pay postage." For £5.99, 34 survived and have grown into garden-ready plants.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

Cumbria Group member Ros Hoggarth used part of recent lockdowns to sort out many of her old photographs.

And that activity brought back memories of a fantastic trip she and husband Peter made to Sikkim in north eastern India, to celebrate their silver wedding in 1987. Ros recalls the tour leader, botanist David Lang, made them record every plant they'd seen every day before they went to bed – quite a task! David, who wrote the book *Sikkim Holiday*, died recently.

"It was incredibly exciting to see plants we'd never seen before in the wild and to learn their names," Ros said. In Darjeeling, they stayed at the Hotel Windamere with views from the balcony of Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world, 50 miles away. The three-week holiday involved 11 days of trekking from Yoksum, which included seeing many rhododendrons of all colours.

During their stay, they saw arisaema varieties for the first time and, at around, 12,000ft, many primulas. Heavy snow meant they were unable to reach the intended



*Arisaema griffithii*



*Coelogyne nitida*



*Rhododendron barbatum*



*Datura sauviolens*

high point of their trip.

“Although it was 34 years ago, we will never forget our first view of Kanchenjunga. The mist rose and there it was above us. Unforgettable!” said Ros.

## A MASS OF GLASS

A tale of three greenhouses has been related to Kent Group by members Ian and Kathleen Stoddard in the Spring newsletter.

In the 1987 ‘blow’, their greenhouse door took off, never to be found. They say “We were tempted by an advertised cedar greenhouse to replace it, but the wood was not sufficiently seasoned and it rotted away. Now the tale begins.

“As a replacement greenhouse we ordered a 13ft x 8ft ‘Rhino’ and it is now full of overwintering plants, including two Aeonium ‘Zwartkop’, both 5ft tall.”

“However, before the Rhino arrived, a friend rang to see if we would like his 8ft x 6ft greenhouse free of charge, and if we could dismantle and move it immediately. This we did.

“No. 3 came from a friend who had an aluminium greenhouse (6ft x 6ft) in pieces, but wanted to clear out the clutter. It is now home to cacti and succulents – a new Covid-19 project. We have become a sanctuary for unwanted greenhouses!

## STONE ME!

Plastics in our gardens has become a big irritant for Lincolnshire member Jane Kirk.

In her local group’s newsletter, she recounted the trials of finding increasing amounts of plastic as she worked in her garden – including old plant labels.

“Last year I experimented with charming copper plant labels instead and some little wooden ones, both of which can be written on and are technically biodegradable. Sadly they were also completely illegible after one winter.

“My solution was to use flatish stones. I decided that once plants matured, the stones would be hidden. If I didn’t like the look of the writing I could just turn them over and, being relatively heavy, they wouldn’t be easily lost or tossed aside by blackbird hooligans.

“My trial attempts were a simple splash of black with white writing. The acrylic paint dries quickly and I gave them a quick spray of yacht varnish to protect the writing from winter attack. I was so pleased with the results I’ve invested £7 in a set of acrylic paint pens, which will be easier to use. The only problem is I have had to add another trug to my army as I collect suitably shaped stones for future use!”



# Car park plant sale raises £370

Different Groups' comments in recent newsletters have been reassuring to Dorset HPS chairman Debbie Steel. "It's good to know that we are all doing the best we can and so I felt it was time to share how we have been faring in **Dorset** since lockdown.

"Having spent two years of planning, we felt we had last year's National Annual Lecture Day and AGM pretty much sown up, only to find Covid-19 got the better of us. It was such a shame but these things cannot be helped. The rest of the year was spent sending out refunds for the five day trips we had almost filled, postponed the holiday in Cheshire to July this year, refunded all the tickets to our Celebrity Lecture later in the year, and of course cancelled any speakers.

"On the plus side, we "beefed" up our

*The rest of the year was spent sending out refunds for the five day trips*

Newsletter – the "Hardy Times" sending it monthly to members, as opposed to just handing out a two-side offering at our speaker

meetings. It went into details of where to get Click and Collect compost, where to pick up seeds and anything else to enable us to keep the gardens going. We had a photo competition, like many other Groups. Looking back on all those photos on the website, they provide a wonderful reminder of how nature just carried on doing its thing. We all had great gardens with all the time and good weather we had to help us. No excuses! Responses to Newsletters were many and showed just how much everyone missed that little bit of

human contact.

"We looked into Zoom, and the numbers were split right down the middle. Some were keen, some just wanted to get back in the Hall and socialise, buy plants, eat tea and homemade cake, no matter who the speaker was! Sorry speakers! Instead we publicised every Zoom Meeting we knew about on our website and in our Hardy Times, and continue to do so. I know from various feedback that many of our members have been joining you, especially Monmouthshire, where I believe one of our members has won the raffle on more than one occasion.

"We always have a Plant Fayre on the second Saturday of May (except last year) so we were keen to do it this year, if we could. Instead of using the Hall, we used its Car Park, and members sold their plants from their car boots. The weather forecast was horrendous, but we were lucky and had no rain at all. No rush at the start as people strolled in and Covid rules were maintained. It was so lovely to see everyone just standing apart chatting as if nothing had happened. We were all just relieved. From only eight tables, plus donations, we raised £370 – far more than expected. However most important of all, we all got to smile and say hello – we shall keep the hugs for later.

"We are looking at meeting one another soon. Our Cheshire holiday in July (11th-14th) is ready to go. We have 45 people desperate to just get out and see gardens. So, if any Cheshire members would like to come along and say hello, we shall be staying at the Macdonald Craxton Wood Hotel near Ness. Just contact me via the website."

# AGM set for October

**Cambs and Beds** Group is on a summer break and is to resume its Biggleswade meetings in September.

Some members are opening their gardens, by appointment, to other members through the summer, some all year round.

Chair Sandy Monk said “We were not able to do this last summer but it is something we have done in the past and is very popular. We are also organising a car

sharing visit to a local garden in July, open in aid of the Red Cross.

“We were unable to hold our annual plant sale for the second year running as the Weatherley Centre was being used as a vaccination centre. Hopefully we will be able to have one next year as it is our main fundraiser. We may be able to have a mini plant sale before our September meeting. Our postponed AGM will be held now in October.”

# Troy date for meetings kick-off

It's been a different but busy time for **Monmouthshire** Group, says Jacqui Warren. Their last Zoom of the season was with head gardener Nigel Hopes on 'Ashwood Specialities', from John Massey's private garden at Ashwood Nurseries.

“An Open Gardens and HPS Plant Sale afternoon was planned for mid-June with a chance to visit the beautiful gardens at Highfields Farm, home of members Jenny and Roger Lloyd. We also expect to have a stand again at the Gardeners' Market at Usk Open Gardens in late June and a Summer Tea afternoon in mid-August.

“We aim to have a full set of visits next year and we look forward to visiting an RHS garden then, perhaps the new RHS Bridgewater in Salford.

“Our new season of talks starts on Saturday, September 4, featuring head gardener Troy Scott Smith on a 'Tale of Three Gardens'. One of the country's leading head gardeners, Troy is currently at Iford Manor and was previously at Bodnant and Sissinghurst.”

Further varied talks are also being arranged for every month through to May 2022.

# Fingers crossed for Jimi

Undaunted by the cancellation of its plant sale in March, **Somerset** Group is inviting HPS members to its July sale instead.

It's being held on July 4 – that's a Sunday – at Lower Severalls, Crewkerne – postcode is TA18 7NX. Fourteen of the South West nurseries will be there – along with other stalls. Admission charge is £3.50 for HPS and RHS members, £4 everyone else. Booking is essential and can be done on

[somersethps.com](http://somersethps.com)

Elsewhere, the group secretary Jane Hunt says they're planning to meet in their usual hall in September.

“We're lucky to have Bill Hodgson as our webmaster and resident Zoom expert. We have Jimi Blake coming all the way from Ireland to speak to us so we have our fingers crossed that we won't have to cancel.”



# Call for poetry pleasures

The Hardy Plant editor Souren Ala wants readers to help him find elegant pieces of garden writing.

In the last edition, he asked for any short passage of garden-related writing that they knew of – perhaps a favourite piece of prose or poetry – for him to consider publishing in the next issue.

“This was inspired almost by accident by Gay Murton, one of our authors in the autumn 2020 Journal, who quoted a line from *The Seed Shop*, by Muriel Stuart,” says Souren. “I was intrigued and looked up this exquisite poem.

“I’ve had a small number of contributions since but would welcome more. Even better if they come with photographs or drawings. But they can’t be too long, or I’ll have difficulty including them.”

The deadline for contributions is July 7, so time to get your thinking caps on.

## From the Administrator’s Office

All enquiries concerning Hardy Plant Society matters and membership renewals should be addressed to the Administrator during office hours (Monday to Thursday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, Friday 9.00am – 1.00pm), please note there is only 1 telephone line into the office, therefore, if I am already on the telephone your call will go straight to answerphone, so please leave a message and I will call you back as soon as possible: 01386 710317. You can also email: [clare@hardy-plant.org.uk](mailto:clare@hardy-plant.org.uk)

### Subscriptions

Subscriptions are due by 1st January each year, however, renewals may be sent from 1st October, the annual subscription rates are £17.00 for single membership or £19.00 for two members at one address (joint membership), with an optional charge of £10.00 for overseas members outside Western Europe, who wish their mailings to be sent by airmail. If you wish to subscribe to *Cornucopia* please add £3. Subscriptions should be sent to The Administrator, 3 Basepoint Business Centre, Crab Apple Way, Evesham, WR11 1GP. Please note slight change to address! To save on admin costs you are encouraged to pay your future subscriptions by Standing Order through your bank or building society. You can request a form from the Administrator, by email or post, or download it from the website (Join the HPS on the Home Page).

Please note as of June 2019 we are no longer able to accept telephone card payments.

### HPS Booklets

Please order from the web: <http://www.hardy-plant.org.uk/publications/booklets> or use the order form in the newsletter.

### • Bed and Breakfast List • Gardens Open List • Register of Lecturers

These lists are all available on the website using the following link:

<https://www.hardy-plant.org.uk> or from the Administrator, please email your request to [admin@hardy-plant.org.uk](mailto:admin@hardy-plant.org.uk)

*Clare Powell, Administrator*

## Contact Information

For all email addresses insert hardy-plant.org.uk after @

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**HPS**  
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Gardening with hardy perennials

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- Please print this form out and fill in the fields below
- Post it to the HPS Office (address below) with a cheque if appropriate

Title	Price	Number Required	TOTAL
Ferns	£5.50		£
Geraniums	£5.50		£
Peonies	£5.50		£
Chrysanthemums	£5.50		£
Pulmonarias	£5.50		£
Euphorbias	£3.00		£
Penstemons	£3.00		£
Border Phlox	£5.50		£

ORDER TOTAL £

Postage and packaging is free to members

Name -----

Membership Number (6 Digits) -----

Address -----

Postcode -----

Tel No (for queries) -----

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- Make payment to "The Hardy Plant Society"
- Account number: 30212407
- Sort Code: 40-11-60
- Use the first 4 letters of your surname with your 6 digit membership number as a reference
- Post this form to the office (address below) advising that payment has been made by online transfer & include the date of the transfer

The Administrator: 3, Basepoint Business Centre, Crab Apple Way, Evesham, Worcestershire. WR11 1GP.

Payment by cheque should be made out to "The Hardy Plant Society"

Queries? Please call the administrator on 01386 710317 Mon – Fri 9am – 1pm.