



Plant Heritage

**Surrey Group
Newsletter
Autumn 2019**

Chairman's Welcome...

Welcome to the Surrey Group Newsletter for Autumn 2019. What a year it's been!

Firstly, a warm welcome to all the new members who joined Plant Heritage this year. Without the kind support of our members we would be unable, both in Surrey and nationally, to undertake the important work that we do protecting and conserving our plants through our National Collections and our Plant Guardian Scheme. If you would like to know more, Vicki Cooke at Central Office has written us a lovely article about the Plant Guardian Scheme on page 15.

Surrey now hosts a new Plant Heritage National Plant Collection. Following our successful application to the Plant Conservation Council in June, our collection of *Chaenomeles* cultivars has been recognised as a National Plant Collection. I hope you enjoy the article about how the collection came about on page 8.

I had the pleasure of meeting Horticulturalist, Garden Writer and Surrey Group Member Beth Otway at her home earlier this year. She offered to write an article especially for us about Terrarium Gardening which I am delighted to see in this issue on page 4.

As your new Chairman, it has been quite a steep learning curve as I came to realise just how busy the Surrey Group's Annual Calendar can be. From supplying key volunteers to run the cloakroom at The Chelsea Flower Show and support our national presence at Hampton Court, to our Plant Fairs at Denbies, Plant Sales at RHS Wisley and the Berrylands Festival. Not to mention our meetings, talks, outings as well as our 'hands on' approach when helping care for some of the National Plant Collections in Surrey.

David and I also had the pleasure of hosting a very enjoyable Summer Social in August. We would have had some lovely photos to share from the day but someone forgot to put the memory card into the camera! I'll say no more....



Facebook users may have noticed more activity on Surrey Group's Facebook page recently. Our posts have been reaching a wider audience than we had anticipated with PH members and others from far and wide liking and commenting on them. If you have a good plant photo or a picture from the Group's activities, please send it to us. Search for Surrey Plant Heritage on Facebook.



Our new Facebook personality, Atticus the Horticultural Pussycat has also gained a bit of a following. You can see him inspecting the rhubarb on Page 3.

Additionally, I would love us to maintain an Instagram account. Please get in touch if you would like to volunteer to help with our social media presence.

A huge 'Thank You' to the whole Committee and all the very active Group Members who help make the Surrey Group so vibrant, successful and our activities so enjoyable. In addition, many thanks to the myriad of contributors to this Newsletter particularly to our Editor, my husband David, who has had to put up with my endlessly growing diary of events and various forms of interfering with the editorial process!

That is not to say we don't need more help. If you haven't been to one of our meetings before, or feel a bit overwhelmed at the prospect of helping at an event, please do get in contact. We would love to meet you.

Many thanks for everybody's help and support this year as I took over as Chairman, it is both a pleasure and a privilege.

Wishing you Happy Growing,

David Ford
Surrey Group Chairman
surreyph@gmail.com

Surrey Group's Year in Photos



1. The eager team await the public at the Denbies Plant Fair in May.
2. Atticus, the Horticultural Pussycat inspecting the Rhubarb for Denbies.
3. Flying the flag for Plant Heritage at the Plant Societies' Show at RHS Wisley.
4. Enjoying a brief moment of sunshine at Denbies in August.
5. Inspiring the next generation of plant fanatics at Berrylands.
6. Planting publicity for the Plant Fair.

Terrarium Gardening

Horticulturalist, Garden Writer and Surrey Group Member, **Beth Otway** holds the Plant Heritage National Plant Collections of Miniature *Phaelonopsis* (species) and Miniature *Aerangis* and *Angraecum* (species)



Are you looking for a simple yet effective way to brighten up your home?

Houseplants offer an affordable way of dramatically improving the look and feel of any room. However shaded or bright your rooms are, there are plants and growing solutions that will enhance your home. Houseplants turn rooms into refuges, making your home feel more welcoming, relaxing, and inspiring.

Terrariums make fabulous features. I simply love terrarium gardening; my home is jam-packed full of terrariums! I grow a wide range of plants, from ferns to miniature orchids, inside a variety of different terrariums and bottle gardens. My enclosures consist of a large number of glass terrariums but I've got few acrylic terrariums, too. I find glass vessels, vases, jars, carboys, and fishbowls. Then I set about turning these ordinary jars, bowls, or vases, into miniature plant filled oases. Terrarium gardening is so much fun!

If you're thinking of making a simple terrarium or bottle garden, first you'll need to find a clear glass receptacle. You might have seen terrariums made from lightbulbs, pictured online. While this is perfectly possible, you'll be creating an extremely fragile enclosure, that you'll struggle to find a plant which is tiny enough to grow inside. In all honesty, these types of terrariums won't usually become a lasting feature.

I've created hundreds of terrariums, using a wide range of different sized enclosures; the trick is not to use too small or fragile a container. Look out for a robust terrarium, made from fairly thick, clear glass, that ideally measures around 30cm, or 12 inches, in size, or larger. It's easier to garden inside an enclosure that has a wider opening, as you can fit your arms inside, to plant these terrariums with your hands. Terrarium tools are especially designed for gardening inside bottle gardens. These tools can be invaluable, as they feature long handles that can reach inside bottle gardens, to carry out tasks like trimming, weeding, and planting.

Around half of my terrariums are open, without a lid or cover. While the other half of my enclosures are closed terrariums that are sealed with a lid or stopper. Naturally, closed terrariums create a wetter, more humid environment.

It's easy to over water a terrarium, but it's not always easy to remove any excess water. You don't want to add too much or too little water. To avoid this, add water in small amounts, at regular intervals, every few days, until you have the balance right.

Once you've found the right balance, with the optimum amount of water; closed terrariums can become self-sustaining eco systems. They can be mostly left unattended, providing you have the right balance of moisture, inside your terrarium. Open terrariums are also very easy to care for, they don't need watering very often.

When you're choosing plants for your terrarium, it's important to choose plants that will flourish in the growing conditions found inside a terrarium; namely low light levels and high humidity. Cacti and succulents are often recommended as ideal plants for terrarium and bottle gardens, but in reality, these are the worst terrarium plants you can find. Cacti and succulents are suited to growing in light, bright, dry, arid conditions – the polar opposite to the conditions found inside bottle gardens!

Garden centres sometimes have a terrarium plants section. Sometimes I've seen cacti and succulents in these sections and I've yet to come across a terrarium plants area that hasn't included small pots of very young houseplants that will rapidly outgrow most terrariums. Many of these houseplants require brighter, less humid growing conditions. To take the guess work out of choosing terrarium plants, I've created a terrarium planting list that features hundreds of ideas of plants that are perfectly suited to growing inside a terrarium or bottle garden. You can see my terrarium planting list in full on my website, www.pumpkinbeth.com. But here are some planting tips to get your started: Fittonias, Begonias, Pileas, and many small and miniature sized ferns, all thrive inside terrariums.

When you're deciding which plants to choose, select terrarium plants in your favourite colours, or look for plants with coloured leaves that

co-ordinate with your existing home decoration, to create a terrarium that will really enhance your home. Whether you're interested in creating a jazzy and colourful terrarium, or a terrarium with a subdued plant colour pallet; choosing plants that are tailored to suit both terrarium growing conditions and your style, will help you create a fabulous and lasting feature.

If you're interested in starting your own terrarium or bottle garden, my website, www.pumpkinbeth.com is full of information on terrariums: from information about super terrarium plants, links to nurseries and specialist growers, alongside step-by-step instructions on setting up a wide range of enclosures. I've written about lots of houseplants, to help indoor gardeners. I've also written many articles to help outdoor gardeners interested in growing edible plants, plants for bees and butterflies, daffodils, cut flowers, and much more besides!

All Photos: Beth Otway



Terrarium Gardening continued...



Photo Above: Beth Otway

What a Bind... Not a Bind...

Or how **Wendy Bentall** got to grips with her Bindweed



"In previous years my garden has suffered from a surfeit of bind-weed, (convolvulus) with its moderately pretty white flowers blanketing everything within its grasp, however they are not the roses and peonies I planned to grow.

In the past I have tried spraying, but I can tell you that while one drop will kill a rose, several drops won't touch bindweed. My enthusiasm and energy levels are not keen to excavate the whole flowerbed, and at the risk of sounding like an advertisement, I turned to 'Roundup Ready to use Gel'.

Simply pump up the gel and paint it onto the leaves you want eradicated, one or two leaves will do the job, then sit back and wait and wait.

Finally, all of a sudden and most satisfactorily, the offending weeds simply shrivel up and die, though you may need to go back a couple more times to finish off the job.

I started my attack in May and it is now August and I just have three small wispy weeds left. The label says it kills tree stumps, ivy, brambles and nettles too, they await my attention - but that is next year's project."

“Plant Names Simplified Their Pronunciation, Derivation and Meaning”

by A.T. Johnson, H.A. Smith and A.P. Stockdale, published by 5m Publishing

ISBN: 9781910455067

If you are intimidated by the Latin names for plants and how to pronounce them, or interested in the meaning and history of some of those names then this is the book for you!

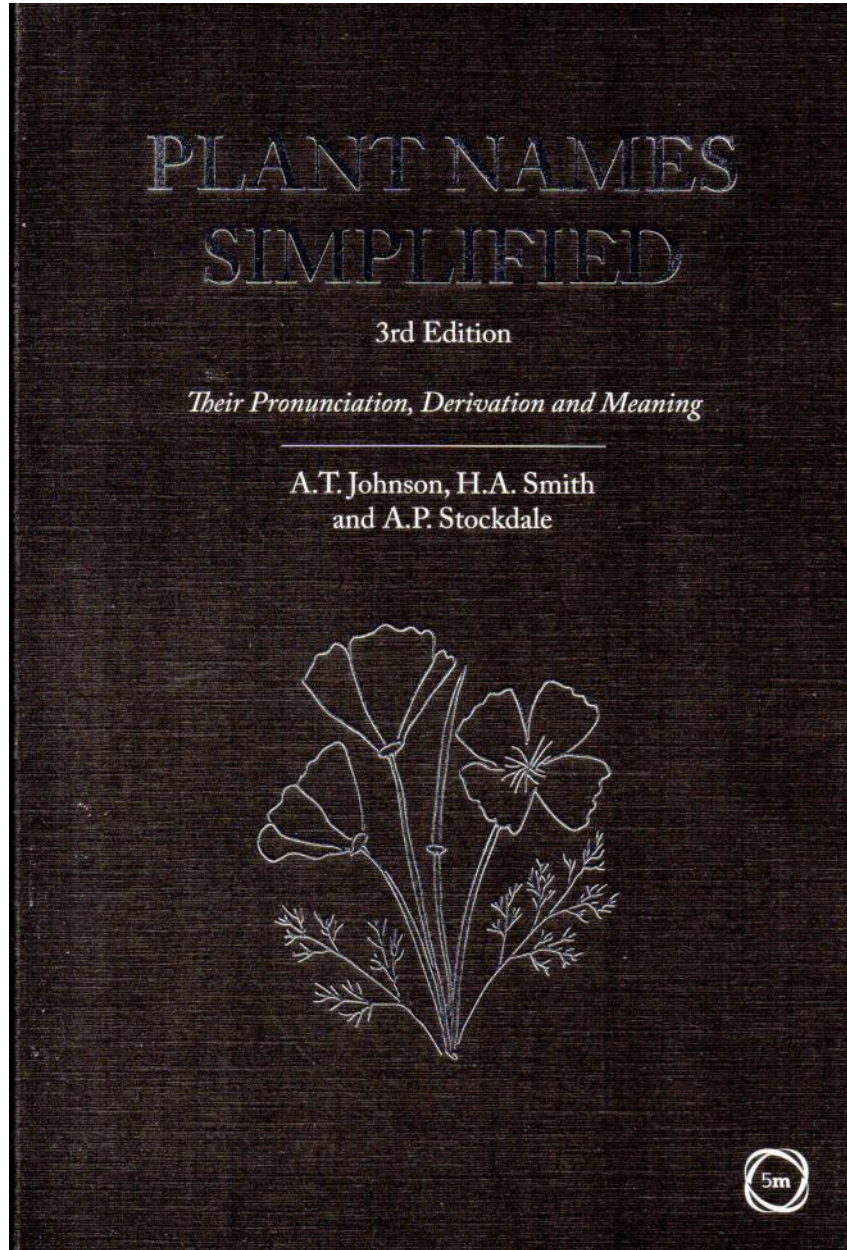
I was first introduced to this gem of a publication by one of my lecturers when I was studying for my City & Guilds Certificate in Gardening in the mid 90s.

It was first published in 1931 and underwent a considerable revision in 1972 and was subsequently reprinted every few years until the mid 80s. By the time I found a copy, in the book shop at Kew I believe, it was becoming hard to find. Bear in mind that this was before the internet made finding books a doddle.

I was absolutely delighted to see that it had been revised for a third time and was back on sale earlier this year.

I was particularly relieved since the splitting of *Chaenomeles* from the *Cydonia* genus had never made it into the second edition and I was hearing many different approaches to actually pronouncing the name. Should the *ch* be pronounced *k* as in *Chimonanthus* (kim-on-AN-thus), was it NO-meles or NOM-eles, I was in a terrible pickle. But now I can say with confidence *Chaenomeles* is pronounced sha-no-MA-leez and all thanks to this book.

Perhaps you would be interested to know that *Hepatica* (he-PAT-ik-a) comes from the Greek *hepar*, meaning liver, which the lobed leaves are supposed to resemble. Or that *Canna* gets its name from Latin, *cana* meaning cane.



This little dictionary of a book brings the names of the plants that you are familiar with, and those which you are not, to life and that all enables better memorisation of the names in addition to having the confidence to pronounce them! So, if you are stuck this year for how your Christmas stocking should be filled, I cannot recommend this informative and interesting publication more highly.

A Journey into the *Chaenomeles* Genus

Surrey Goup Chairman, **David Ford** explains how a small bungalow in Old Coulsdon became home to a Plant Heritage National Plant Collection



Chaenomeles speciosa 'Madame Butterfly'

Isn't it funny how sometimes our interest in a particular plant can gain momentum? Suddenly we find ourselves with a garden full of a plant of which, just a few years before, we had very little or none at all. This is what happened with my interest in *Chaenomeles*.

It all started way back when I was a child. My maternal grandparents lived in Nork in Surrey and we lived down the road in a house built in the early 1950s. We had a relatively mature *Chaenomeles* plant, probably twenty years old, trained against the wall under the hall window. It was quite a large flowered plant with single apricot/orange coloured blooms. A cultivar of *Chaenomeles japonica* I would guess, since it was suckering, thorny and had apple shaped fruits. Each year it would give a beautiful display of flowers followed by a large number of yellow fruit.

These fruits were harvested with relish by my Grandmother and my Aunt to make quince jelly. They are best harvested bletched (after a bit of frost) which makes them softer and a little less sharp to taste. Quince jelly is packed full of pectin and a spoonful can be added to fresh strawberries to help make jam become firm. Although pectin is more easily available in the supermarkets these

days, quince jelly still makes a useful addition to strawberry and other fruit jams. Used instead of lemon, it adds a depth of flavour and some acidic notes as well as acting as a setting agent.

The genus has been known by many names over the years; *Chaenomeles*, Japanese Quince, simply Japonica or, as my Grandfather called it, *Cydonia*. He wasn't mistaken as it has since been reclassified. Names aside, this beautiful plant was simply a part of my childhood. It would mark the changing seasons and I studied its progression throughout the year. Each day on my way to school, I would notice the first buds forming, then flowers bursting open, leaves developing, fruit forming, leaves yellowing and falling, the harvest of the fruit and soon after, next year's baby buds starting to form.

Some thirty years later, I found myself living at the bottom of Gypsy Hill, South London. Once again in a property built in the 1950s, a time when *Chaenomeles* were popular and planted in many ornamental gardens. There were plenty around and one in particular, growing in an elderly neighbour's garden, always struck me as unusual with its large, single beige/pink blossoms. It was quite a large, vigorous, upright plant and I kept meaning to take a cutting, but never seemed to quite get around to it.

This was partly because I wasn't quite sure that I had the room in the garden and partly because I have a habit of collecting large numbers of plants based on the premise, 'I don't know it, I'll grow it' And at the time, I felt I was familiar with the *Chaenomeles* genus.

When we moved to our bungalow in Old Coulsdon, suddenly I had the space to plant a large *Chaenomeles* and my thoughts turned to the one in my old neighbour's garden. I returned with secateurs in hand to obtain some cutting material. Shock, the plant had gone and in its place, a new extension. So I came home empty handed but determined to find the cultivar. 'There must be an RHS book on *Chaenomeles*' I thought.... No. 'There must be a National Plant Collection Holder who I could quiz'.... No.

I slowly began to acquire plants as I found them at plant fairs and at nurseries. What I discovered was that the story of my disappearing *Chaenomeles* cultivar is being played out across the country. The plant is not currently in favour with the public. It can be slow to grow, requires training as many of the cultivars can be straggly and/or suckering and many have thorns. In addition, to get a plant to bloom really well, it requires some pruning. These short-comings are surely compensated by its incredibly long-lasting crisp and colourful flowers. *Chaenomeles* makes a great cut flower with a long 'vase life' and I use the jelly from its fruits in the kitchen for sweet sauces and jams. In addition, its early blooming habit (I often have blooms on a couple of the cultivars in early December) makes it particularly useful to brighten the winter garden. There are typically blooms in the collection right into May with some of the cultivars producing a diminutive second or third flush in late June. As long as



Chaenomeles speciosa 'Geisha Girl'



Chaenomeles x superba 'Rowallane'

they survive any heavy frost, the earlier blooms provide an important source of nectar for those first bumblebees and other insects.

Nevertheless, leafing through old editions of '*RHS Plantfinder*' or studying plant lists from the twentieth century, you will see the slow loss of many of the *Chaenomeles* cultivars. Luckily, these plants are also long-lived and I have come across some specimens sitting forgotten at the back of nurseries' stock fields, often without their cultivar name. The demise of many of the cultivars listed in the mid part of last century seems certain. However, given their longevity, robustness and tendency not to freely self-seed, many probably still exist, unnamed, in gardens up and down the county.

There are three species in the genus; *Chaenomeles cathayensis* from western China, Bhutan and Burma, *Chaenomeles japonica* from (you guessed it) Japan, and *Chaenomeles speciosa* which is found across China and Korea. Over the years a number of crosses and tri-crosses were developed though sadly, the only cross I have managed to obtain is the very common *Chaenomeles x superba* (a cross between *C. speciosa* and *C. japonica*). In their native habitat, these plants vary hugely in terms of bloom colour and form and this has led to the large variety of blooms, forms and fruits in the cultivars I have managed to obtain for the collection so far. From the diminutive white/lime blooms of *C. x superba* 'Issai White' though large bloomed white, pink, bi-coloured white/pink, apricot, orange and the large deep red blooms of *C. x superba* 'Rowallane'. There are even some large flowered, thornless doubles in the most modern US 'Double Take Series'. These are usually sold in the UK as the 'Storm Series'.

And the cultivar that got me started with the collection? I have still not managed to find it, though there is a *C. speciosa* 'Sanguinea Plena' growing at Sissinghurst which may just fit the bill. I shall have to wait until next spring to view it. So, it would appear that my journey with *Chaenomeles* has only just begun!

The collection currently holds over fifty cultivars and will be open to view from 14:00 on Sunday 29 March 2020 at our home: 23 Shirley Avenue, Old Coulsdon, Surrey, CR5 1QZ.



Chaenomeles 'Orange Storm'



Chaenomeles speciosa 'Toyo-Nishiki'



Chaenomeles speciosa 'Friesdorfer'

All Photos: David Ford

Volunteering at RHS Wisley

One year on, Surrey Goup Committee Member, **Sue Davidson** tells us how it's been.

When I retired last year one of my goals was to spend more time in the garden, but not just my garden. I started coming to Wisley about 33 years ago and have always loved it regardless of the season. So I was keen to volunteer, not just out of the goodness of my heart, but in the hope of learning something. I didn't need more weeding opportunities, there are plenty at home.

Over the years I had attended several one day courses including pruning, greenhouses, stone fruit and my favourite, propagating.

The idea of making several plants from one at no cost appealed, particularly as I am married to a Yorkshire man!

Wisley advertise volunteer positions a couple of times each year. The application form didn't take long because I didn't have any relevant experience! Hope there would be no need for cardiopulmonary resuscitation in the glass houses!

I was duly offered an interview. The covering letter reassuring said that this was to give prospective volunteers and an idea of what they role would involve.

On the day, however, it was more structured than I had expected!

I was interviewed by 2 of the team leaders, both with clipboards!

It was a very long time since I had been on the receiving end of an interview. The first question took me by surprise, although it shouldn't have.

'What do you know about the RHS?'

After a bit of lateral thinking I came up with

'It stands for Royal Horticultural Society and they take money out of my bank account every year'.

Good work, but apparently not what they had expected.

We continued in a similar jovial fashion until they gave up half an hour later!

One of the horticultural students then showed me round the garden, not needed but very pleasant.

I guess they are looking for someone who has a genuine interest in horticulture, will fit in with a team and be reliable.

After a tense three week wait where I was starting to doubt the role of humour in horticulture, I was offered a place on the prop team. Boom!



Sue at work in the Prop Area at RHS Wisley

Since then I have been one of their 'Volies' most Thursdays from 10:00 'til 16:00.

I have a uniform (I think they may have chosen purple for volunteers on the basis of the poem 'When I am old I will wear purple!') and steel toe cap shoes so I'm ready for anything.

During this period the team move out of their old buildings to purposed built working glass houses just outside the garden in Wisley village. This was a massive undertaking.

I have learnt an enormous amount although it's just the tip of the iceberg.

I have legitimately taken cuttings from the new tropical garden (thought I had died and gone to heaven) as well as seed sowing, pricking out, repotting, weeding and watering.

The whole team have been incredibly tolerant. If there are boring jobs to be done such as pot washing everyone joins in. I have never felt used. I am included in their social events and take my turn with the dishwasher.

It has been a brilliant start to my retirement and I look forward to learning more in the years to come. Thanks Prop team.

My favourite motto (applied after any major intervention with a plant):

It's got two choices – Die or Survive!

Singapore Botanical Gardens

Surrey Group Committee Member, **Wendy Bentall** recalls the heat, humidity and amazing horticulture.



Etlingera Elatior (Torch Lily)

A visit to the Singapore Botanical Gardens has long been on my bucket list and when I was able to divert via Singapore for 24 hours, I was at last able to realise my dream.

Driving from the airport the roads are wreathed on all sides by flowers and trees. In the 60's the first Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, made Singapore a garden city, so successful is the programme that it has now become a city in a garden. A lesson that should be followed by other cities around the world.

The gardens, founded by Sir Stamford Raffles, a keen naturalist, moved to its present site 160 years ago. The style of planting is based on the English Landscape movement made famous by Capability Brown, thus as I wandered around I felt very much at home. Admission is free and it is popular with dog walkers, joggers, mothers with prams and I was also there early enough to witness the tai chi exercise classes in action.

The early years of the gardens concentrated on growing potentially useful plants such as rubber, which brought prosperity to the South East Asian region. From 1928 the orchid hybridisation

programme started using in vitro techniques and the range and beauty of these orchids can be seen in their orchid garden. Distinguished visitors to the botanical gardens get to have an orchid named after them. Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge had recently been there and I saw the vanda orchid William Kate.

Rather cheekily on arrival at the gardens I announced that I was from Plant Heritage UK and would like to meet Dr Nigel Taylor, the director of the gardens and an ex Kew man. It was somewhat of a surprise that while perusing the gingers – there are a lot of them – that a buggy arrived to take me to meet the great man himself. We discussed the coco-de-mer palm (*Lodoicea malivica*) which I had seen growing on the Seychelles. They have had some success in growing it, but the soil and air is too rich so it produces soft growth that is vulnerable to the palm beetle, which in turn brings in disease. They have grown a few coconuts, which are said to resemble a lady's bottom, but each time the trees have subsequently died. They are trying different areas within the 82-hectare gardens to see if they can find a suitable impoverished position for them. I asked about the war years when Emperor Hirohito, a keen marine



Above: One of many orchids developed at the Singapore Botanical Gardens

biologist apparently ordered the gardens and archives to be kept intact. Nigel directed me to a book called “My Father in a Suitcase”, which describes the war years from the point of view of E.J.H. Corner a dedicated scientist doing his best to keep things together during very difficult times. Nigel was directly responsible for making the gardens a World Heritage Site, the first and only tropical garden on the UNESCO’s World Heritage List. The third botanic gardens in the world following Orto botanico di Padova and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, which he was also responsible for registering.

I took far too many pictures but I share a few with you. If I look hot in the picture with Dr Nigel Taylor it is because it was hot, 38 plus degrees with 100% humidity. I strolled around the gardens admiring some of the 61 Heritage trees, towering palms, large lakes, sweeping lawns, strange birds, large butterflies, a monitor lizard and exotic tropical plants all of which seemed to have huge leaves. I left after 5 hours, I would have liked to have stayed longer, but it was just melt down....and no, I was not invited to name an orchid.



A view over the Gardens with *Heliconias* in the foreground

Singapore Botanical Gardens continued...

**HAVE YOU
BEEN TO AN
AMAZING
GARDEN?**
We always welcome
articles and/or photos
for our Newsletters



Wendy Bentall & Dr Nigel Taylor at
Singapore Botanical Gardens



Coryph umbraculifera, Talbot Palm from SW India and Sri Lanka

All Photos: Wendy Bentall

What is the Plant Guardian Scheme?

Plant Heritage's Plant Conservation Manager, **Vicki Cooke** explains .

What connects the Head Gardeners at Sissinghurst under Vita Sackville-West with Joseph Banks' voyages in the new world? Why plants of course! But in this case, specific plants that have a fascinating history but are unavailable to most gardeners as they have limited or no availability in nurseries. Their future as garden plants though is secured through our Plant Guardian scheme.

To date, we have 1374 plants in the scheme, covering 1187 taxa. *Phlox stolonifera* 'Violet Vere' is one of these. Named in the 1990s by the head gardeners at Sissinghurst, it went on to win an Award of Merit, before disappearing from nursery catalogues about 8 years ago. However, it has found its way into the Plant Guardian scheme and has also been offered through the plant exchange, meaning we now have 3 sites for this cultivar, so spreading the risk that it could be lost.

Another intriguing plant in the scheme is *Lambertia formosa*, also known as the Mountain Devil. It was one of the first Australian plants to set foot on British soil having been collected on Captain Cook's voyage to Botany Bay. Grown in London nurseries in the late 1700 it fell out of cultivation, though is clearly thriving in its Guardian's home in Wales.

How does it work?

When a plant is submitted to us for inclusion in the scheme, we would check the RHS horticulture database for suppliers and to verify the name, as well as botanic databases and the IUCN red list for threat status. If an average of less than 2 nurseries over the past 5 years are listed as selling this plant, then it would qualify and be registered into the scheme.



Once a plant has a registered location, we know that it is safe. Of course, we understand that plants are living things and as such, can die, which is why we send a re-registration email out each year to confirm that you still have them. This is also an extra incentive to propagate, share and register the location of these plants, so that if you do lose one, it is replicated elsewhere.

We would like to see this scheme grow, as it is a great way to play a part in the conservation of garden plants. Our recent TPP work on *Chrysanthemum* highlighted three cultivars being kept by Plant Guardians that weren't available in nurseries or represented in the National Plant Collection of hardy *Chrysanthemum*, so Plant Guardians are definitely playing their part in keeping cultivars going.

Not everyone has the space for a National Plant Collection and National Plant Collections don't have the space to contain every single garden plant in the UK. The Plant Guardian scheme could be thought of as one large, dispersed collection, making sure that garden plants are recorded in a living location and ensuring their survival long into the future.

Maybe you have a plant in your garden that you know is hard to get hold of now, or that you have got through the Plant Exchange or a rare plant fair and you think may be eligible.

Go to <https://www.nccpg.com/Plant-Guardians/Register-your-plant.aspx> or email collections@plantheritage.org.uk to find out how to get involved.

Surrey Group

Photographic Competition 2019

‘The Enchanted Garden’



Frances Griffiths with the alleged faeries. Photo: Elsie Wright (1917)

Later proved to be a hoax, The Cottingley Faeries (above) certainly had Sir Arthur Conan Doyle enchanted at the beginning of the last century.

The theme for this year’s Photographic Competition is **The Enchanted Garden**, fairies are not compulsory!

The Competition is open to all members of the Surrey Group.

Members can submit only one photograph each.

Prints must be no larger than A4.

Digital enhancement is permitted; we are Plant Heritage, not purists!

Entries will be displayed and judged by members at the AGM in February 2020.

The winner will receive a £15 Garden Gift Token and get to hold the Rachel Thomson crystal bowl for the year.

Entries may be reproduced in Surrey Group Newsletters.

Some of last year’s entries on the theme of ‘Wildlife in my Garden’ are reproduced opposite and you will see last year’s winning photograph on this Newsletter’s front cover.

Good Luck!



Surrey Group's Photo Archive

When he agreed to produce this Newsletter, Surrey Group Member, **David England** didn't realise he would inherit a stack of photograph albums going back nearly twenty years. Over the coming months, David plans to create a digital archive of these images. In the meantime, see if you can recognise any people and places from the selection shown here...





Dates for your Diary

2019

Thursday 10 October

Surrey Group Talk:

Nick Coslett - “Where are UK Horticulture & Landscape Industries Going?”

Former marketing director of Palmstead Plants, Wye, Kent, **Nick Coslett** will talk about his thirty years in the plant business - from landscaping to selling plants - and how Brexit might change things.

Saturday 12 October

Propagation Morning

10:00 - 12:00 at Wendy Bentall’s garden

A chance to help propagate plants to sell to help raise money for The Surrey Group. If you are able to help, please contact Wendy Bentall:

wendybentall@gmail.com

Thursday 14 November

Surrey Group Talk:

Dr Timothy Walker - “Seed Collecting in Japan”

Japan is a fascinating country for a plantsman: one in three of the 4,500 species growing there are unique to the country. Much of the land is mountainous and therefore rich in alpine species.

Dr Timothy Walker talks about an expedition arranged jointly by Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and the Alpine Garden Society during which seeds from 450 species were collected. Along the way, the group were treated to many of the unique aspects of Japanese life. Come along and learn about the state of plant conservation in Japan.

w/c 18 November

Summer Heather Cut Back

The opportunity for members of The Surrey Group to maintain and strengthen their relationship with an important Plant Heritage National Collection of Heathers that they helped to plant at RHS Wisley. Team Leader in charge of the collection, **Mark Tuson** would love some help with the cut back of the Summer blooming heathers. Volunteers will be met at the entrance



Photo: Wendy Bentall

at 09:50 and a demonstration and discussion of the work to be undertaken will take place at the Harry Pavilion situated near the heathers. No previous experience necessary. If you would like to help, please contact Suzy Hughes: suzy@suzyhughes.co.uk.

Dates for your Diary

2020

w/c 13 January

Epimedium Winter Thinning

The Alpine Team, led by **Peter Goodchild** at RHS Wisley, would love some help with the *Epimedium* National Collection held there. It is a Horticultural collection comprising of 31 species and 90 cultivars. The *Epimediums* require thinning at this time to improve the display of flowers for the Spring. Full instructions will be given. Another wonderful chance to work first hand with a collection held by the RHS. No previous experience necessary. Please contact Suzy Hughes: suzy@suzyhughes.co.uk if you are able to help.

Thursday 13 February

Surrey Group Annual General Meeting and Talk

Our AGM, presentation of Flower of the Meeting Prize, Photographic Competition judging and prize-giving plus two talks by RHS Wisley students.

Thursday 12 March

Surrey Group Talk: Steve Bustin - "Ghosts, Guns and Guerrilla Gardening"

Steve Bustin will talk about the life and times of Ellen Wilmot (1858-1934), a horticulturalist and influential member of the RHS. She was also the very first recipient of the Victoria Medal of Honour in 1897.

w/c 23 March

Winter flowering Heather Cut Back

Mark Tuson (Team Leader in charge of the Collection) would love some help with the cut back of the Winter blooming heathers. Details as w/c 18 November. No previous experience necessary. If you would like to help please contact Suzy Hughes: suzy@suzyhughes.co.uk

Sunday 29 March

Chaenomeles Open Day

Having had their collection of *Chaenomeles* cultivars confirmed as a Plant Heritage National Plant Collection, **David Ford and David England** welcome visitors to their garden to view these stunning plants in bloom. See Page 10 for their address.

Thursday 9 April

Surrey Group Talk: Geoff Hawkins - "Thirty Acres to Thirty Square Yards"

Seven years ago, **Geoff Hawkins** retired from his role as Head Gardener at Mill Court, a private estate near Alton. How did he cope with the very difficult job of downsizing, and what lessons can he impart?

Sunday 3 May

Plant Fair at Denbies Wine Estate

Specialist nurseries plus our own plant sale stand. If you can possibly help, either to provide plants, to help set up, break down or run the stand then please email surreyph@gmail.com

Sales to the public from 10:00.

Sat 20 & Sun 21 June

RHS Wisley Plant Societies' Show

The Surrey Group will once again be present at this popular Show. We will be championing our work conserving plants across Surrey and the whole UK as well as selling plants to raise funds.

Sunday 5 July

Berrylands Summer Festival

In previous years, Plant Heritage Surrey Group have had great success at Berrylands selling plants to raise funds. Open to the public from 12:00 to 16:00.

Saturday 18 July

Chipstead Flower Show

A new Show for us to attend in East Surrey and a chance to sell plants to raise funds and raise our profile.

Dates for your Diary

2020 continued...

w/c 20 July 2020

National Crocus Collection

Once again, Alpine Team Leader at RHS Wisley, **Peter Goodchild** would relish some help re-potting the National Crocus Collection. A Reference collection comprising 75 species including 193 cultivars. Full instructions and guidance will be given, as will a tour of the collections. Please contact Suzy Hughes: suzy@suzyhughes.co.uk if you are able to help. No previous experience necessary.

August (date tbc)

Visit to The Salutation

The Salutation is an Edwin Lutyens house and garden situated in Sandwich, Kent. It is also home to two Plant Heritage National Plant Collections of *Plectranthus* and Dark Leaved *Dahlia*. A wonderful and inspiring garden overseen by **Steve Edney**, a 2019 RHS Chelsea and RHS Hampton Court Gold Medal winner. In addition to winning Gold at Hampton Court, The Salutation received The Tudor Rose Award for Best in Show. We will be operating a car-sharing scheme in order to get to Sandwich. Full details will be communicated nearer the time.

Sunday 9 August

Surrey Group Summer Social

Wendy Bentall has very kindly offered to host our annual get-together from 14:00 at her home: Heneage Farm, Windlesham Road, Chobham GU24 8QR. All very welcome. Please bring a plate of nibbles or a tippie if you fancy. There will also be plants for sale.

Sunday 16 August

Plant Fair at Denbies Wine Estate

Specialist nurseries plus our own plant sale stand. If you can possibly help either to provide plants, to help set up, break down or run the stand then please email surreyph@gmail.com Sales to the public from 10:00.

Thursday 10 September

Surrey Group Talk:

Dr. Simon Charlesworth - "Lavender"

Dr. Charlesworth is the holder of a Scientific and Reference collection of *Lavandula* at Downderry Nursery, Hadlow, Kent. His talk will cover an overview of the genus, cultivation, breeding, showing, commercial production and distillation of the essential oil. Doors open at 19:00.

Thursday 8 October

Surrey Group Talk:

James Miller - "Creating a New National Collection at Wisley"

RHS Horticulturalist, **James Miller** will introduce the National Plant Collections held by RHS Wisley and describe the process of creating the *Astilbe* collection. The collection comprises of 23 cultivars bred by Georg Arends and was a new collection in 2019.

Thursday 12 November

Surrey Group Talk:

Neil G Miller - "The Secrets of Hever Castle Gardens"

Hever Castle Head Gardener, **Neil Miller** began his career as an insurance broker before following his passion for plants. He loves to share his enthusiasm and knowledge with others and will talk to us about the award winning gardens at Hever Castle and a 'good piece on roses'. A lively and engaging speaker, Neil has previously delivered a talk at one of our AGMs.

w/c 16 November

Summer Heather Cut Back

Another opportunity to help care for an important Plant Heritage National Collection of Heathers that we helped to plant at RHS Wisley. See w/c 18 November 2019 for details. Absolutely no previous experience is necessary. If you would like to help, please contact Suzy Hughes: suzy@suzyhughes.co.uk.

Surrey Group Talks

All Talks in 2019 start at 19:45 (doors open at 19:15)

In 2020, Talks will begin fifteen minutes earlier at 19:30 (doors open at 19:00)

All Talks include a Plant Sale, a Raffle plus our *Flower of the Meeting* Competition. Refreshments are provided at a nominal cost.

A suggested donation of £4 for non-members is requested at the door. All meetings are free to members.

Everyone is welcome.

Venue: St Andrew's Church Hall, Churchgate House, Downside Bridge Road, Cobham KT11 3EJ.

For full details of all events please refer to the Surrey Group Events page of the Plant Heritage website.

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Rosa "Lady of Shalott" Photo: David England