

Plant Heritage

National Council for the Conservation of Plants & Gardens



# SUFFOLK GROUP JOURNAL

Spring 2011



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*Front and back page photograph of Whatfield Gem kindly provided by Whetman Pinks.*

*Cover design by Sally Geeve, [www.sallygeeve.com](http://www.sallygeeve.com).*

*Thanks to Nicola Hobbs for layout.*

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

*MAGGIE THORPE*

I write this from my desk on a very wintry day at the end of November, locked in by deep snow and it makes me long for the sight of those bulbs planted only a week ago.

The bad weather caused the cancellation of our much-looked-forward-to AGM and Christmas party to be held in Nick Cook's lovely barn at Worlingworth, a venue in the east of the county to make it easier for members in that part of Suffolk to get there! The business of that meeting will now take place at the end of our first meeting in January (29th) when Joe Sharman will talk on 'Finding Plants in the Wild' and 'Snowdrops for Galanthophiles' at Stowupland Village Hall.

Two of our committee's oldest supporters are retiring this year: Robert Shepperson, our Propagation Officer and Christine Mole, our Collections Co-ordinator. Robert richly deserves his retirement after many years (nobody can remember exactly how many but at least 15) of looking after plants at his allotment and trudging along there in all weathers to care for them. Christine too has been our Co-ordinator for a long time looking after our 11 Collection Holders and keeping them in touch with national matters.

Robert's job will be taken over by a team of propagators headed by Anne Tweddle. Please contact Anne if you would like to be part of the team - you might like to take one of our stock plants and each year the team will propagate from it. Or you might prefer to come along to the propagation sessions and just help. We need you! But we still need members to bring along their own contributions to the Plant Stall at Helmingham on Sunday 29 May.

We have appointed Dorothy Cartwright to be our new Collections Co-ordinator and Christine will take her along to visit Collections and introduce her to the Holders in the New Year. We sincerely thank both Robert and Christine for their wonderful help.

Our two Plant Fairs at Helmingham have both been highly successful raising more money for our Group than ever before. As part of our effort to bring nearly lost plants back into cultivation, this year we shall promote Dianthus at each Fair. At the spring fair as usual we shall give away 800 plants, two varieties of 'Whatfield Can Can' and 'Whatfield Gem' pinks which were originally bred in Suffolk by Mrs. Joan Schofield. Added to

this, we shall be selling many other varieties including one named after our Plant Heritage president, Alan Titchmarsh, white flushed with pink (the plant, not our president!). We shall raffle a beautiful watercolour painted by Brenda Green and signed by Alan, and there will be cards and prints of the painting for you to buy.

Please let Annabel Thorogood have any pictures you have taken at Helmingham, especially movies. These can be uploaded onto our website along with suitable captions or stories. [www.nccpgsuffolk.org](http://www.nccpgsuffolk.org)

I am still hoping that someone will come forward and offer to organise our events - please let me know if you think you could undertake this task. Help will be given and Stowupland Village Hall can be booked so it is a matter of writing to would-be speakers, a list of which will be supplied.

I wish you all a very Happy New Year and look forward to meeting you at our events.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

LYNN CORNFORTH

The accounts for the year ended 31st October would have been presented at our AGM on the 29th November but owing to very bad weather the event was cancelled. The accounts will be presented at the end of our January 29th meeting.

Both the spring and autumn Plant Fairs at Helmingham Hall were a huge success, together earning £10,000 for the Suffolk Group which enabled us to pass £6,000 to National Office. We have also been able to fund this year the purchase of new display stands for collection holders costing £1,662.

The surplus of funds generated for the year, after allowing for the above payments, amounts to £1,727 and has increased the total funds held at the end of the year to £15,933.

We aim to keep in hand a balance in our reserves. This is in case we have bad weather or other problems at our Plant Fairs which require substantial payments in advance. Our speakers and halls are all costing much more these days and of course so too are printing and postage.

# NEW PLANT PROJECT

ANNE TWEDDLE

As many of you know, Robert Shepperson has stepped down from running the group's plant table at our plant sales. This has left a big hole to fill with plenty of anxiety attached. Robert has done it all almost single handed for many years. He has raised large amounts of money for the groups activities, and is a very hard act to follow. He still plans to help out which considering how much he knows is just as well. Maggie Thorpe and I have stepped rather gingerly up to the plate with the following ideas in hand.

We started by making a long, in fact very long, list of plants we thought suitable. Robert has given us plenty of ideas too. We then sat our list alongside what we could buy from the wholesalers. Initial orders were put in and we took delivery of our first load. We propagated what we could, and also kept aside sufficient material for a stock plant.

This is where we would love members to be involved. Would you like to have one of our stock plants in your garden? All you need do is grow it. Every couple of years we will contact you at the right time for propagating it, and we can do this together. The new small plants will then be grown on by another member and brought back for selling at meetings or plant sales. Knowing how to propagate plants is a certain step towards conserving them.

Growing on small plants is the next area of involvement. Can you help by taking on 10 to 20 plants already potted up (1.5 litre – 3 litre) in crates, and tend them for a few months over spring, and bring the crate of plants back to us at either the plant sale or our meetings.

We appreciate all your own contributions as well. These have always been a huge part of our plant sales table and we hope very much you will continue with these.

Another idea we are trying is a Plant theme for each sale. As this is our first attempt I plan to keep the trumpet voluntary fairly low key. We will select and offer just a few cultivars and species of the themed *genus*. We hope to be able to introduce you to rarely-offered and good varieties. These varieties will be written up in the journal prior to the sale, so you will know what to look out for.

The spring 2011 theme plant is Dianthus. This compliments our free plant which is also a dianthus. The four cultivars we will offer are:

D. 'Alan Titchmarsh' - 30cm double frilly white flowers, soft pink blush in the centre

D. 'Haytor Rock' – 40cm double blooms with scarlet streaks on pale pink background. AGM 5 suppliers

D. 'Monica Wyatt' 30cm double lavender with a magenta eye. AGM 11 suppliers

D. 'Dedham Beauty' raised by Alex Pankhurst in Essex. Currently with two suppliers listed in the Plantfinder

I mentioned above having a plant table at meetings. We would very much like your contributions for this too. If you are short of pots, labels or compost, we can help out. In the autumn our theme is Asters. Maggie and I visited the Collection Holders earlier this year and have some very interesting plants in the pipeline. More about that later, including pictures.

It's early days with all our plans, so we shall have to see how things work out and make changes accordingly. But be sure, if you would like to help, we would love to hear from you.

Please contact Anne Tweddle ([anne.tweddle@onetel.net](mailto:anne.tweddle@onetel.net), 01473 737337) or Maggie Thorpe ([smece@aol.com](mailto:smece@aol.com), 01787 211346)

## HELP NEEDED!

for our Spring Plant Fair  
at Helmingham Hall  
on Sunday 29 May

*Volunteers are needed at the gate, free plant table,  
questionnaire desk and members' gazebo.*

*If you can spare an hour or so please  
contact Pauline Byford 01284 762628, [pabyford@btinternet.com](mailto:pabyford@btinternet.com)*

*Helpers get free entry to the sale and Helmingham Gardens*

# POTS AND PANS – AND HOPEFULLY NO MORE OF THE OLD TIN CANS FOR THE ALPINE CAMPANULA COLLECTION

SUE WOOSTER

It was fantastic to hear the news from Maggie Thorpe that the Suffolk Group Committee had agreed to fund the purchase of pots for the National Collection of alpine campanulas. In late September, the most wonderful consignment of Yorkshire Pottery frost-proof terracotta alpine pans was delivered to the Walled Garden at Langham Hall – forty in all, in two sizes.

Stacked on a shrink-wrapped pallet and carefully off-loaded by a cheery bearded and tattooed driver (who turned out to be an avid gardener and bee-keeper), the pans were moved down to the Walled Garden, ready to be planted with homeless campanulas from the National Collection.

A winter of snow and nights of minus 5°C was the last straw for the old frost-resistant pots I had used since 2001.

The painstaking process of re-housing the collection in the new pots began in November with a view to having the campanulas settling in by the spring. My sincere thanks go to the committee for their financial support of a vital component of this National Collection.

The gardens of Langham Hall are open for the NGS on Sunday 27 March, from 2 till 5pm. Do come along to see progress on planting up the campanulas and of course visit the three-acre walled garden and extensive grounds of the Hall. Bellflower Nursery will be freshly stocked with spring perennials, shrubs and bulbs. Refreshments and plants will be on sale.

If any Plant Heritage members like to become a volunteer in the walled garden, they are always most welcome - tea and biscuits supplied!

Bellflower Nursery is open Thursdays and Fridays 10-5, Saturdays 10-1 March till November, in The Walled Garden, Langham Hall, Langham,



Sue Wooster put  
*Campanula poscharskhyana*  
Stella AGM in this Yorkshire  
Potteries alpine pan.



Bury St Edmunds, IP313EE. Telephone 07879 644958 for details and directions.

Gardeners' Fridays begin again in April. Four beautiful Suffolk gardens can be visited on Fridays, with no need to pre-book.

This year we welcome Bernard Tickner at Fuller's Mill in West Stow, who will join Lucy Redman, Wyken Hall and The Walled Garden in opening his stunning garden to visitors on Fridays.

## Coulson's Bridges

Tel: 01206 262387

[www.coulsonsbridges.co.uk](http://www.coulsonsbridges.co.uk)



## Fullers Mill Garden at West Stow

### **OPEN DAYS 2011**

Wednesdays, Fridays & Sundays  
1st April to end of September  
2pm to 5pm

WEST STOW IP28 6HD  
[www.fullersmillgarden.org.uk](http://www.fullersmillgarden.org.uk)  
email: [bernard.tickner@fullersmillgarden.org.uk](mailto:bernard.tickner@fullersmillgarden.org.uk) Tel: 01284 728248  
(Registered Charity No 1106265)



# MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*PAULINE BYFORD, SUFFOLK GROUP MEMBERSHIP OFFICER*

**O**ur present membership is 256, with only two new members since the last Journal was published. We know it is a very difficult time to recruit but please look around and actively approach likely neighbours, acquaintances and members of your local gardening group. If you are a member of a gardening group ask the chairperson to announce our next event and say that guests are welcome.

When you are coming to an event try to fill your car with guests and members. Our winter talks are aimed at a wide audience of gardeners and plant-lovers.

The general public still know very little about Plant Heritage and what our aims are. We need to advertise our work in conservation and why we do it, and encouraging people to come to our talks and events is a good way of getting the message across.

## **HYACINTH COLLECTION**

### **2011 OPEN DAYS**

Saturday 26th March

Sunday 27th March

11 am – 5 pm

**WATERBEACH**  
near **CAMBRIDGE**

Use A 14 and A 10,  
Turn into Waterbeach  
Follow Hyacinth arrows  
Signposts Bottisham Lock

For further information

01223 571064

Alan.shipp@virgin.net

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# PLANT HERITAGE SUFFOLK GROUP EVENTS

## JANUARY

Saturday 29      Talk 'Finding Plants in the Wild and Snowdrops for Galanthophiles' by Joe Sharman and Annual General Meeting. 2.30pm. Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4AL \*

## FEBRUARY

Saturday 26      Talk 'The Scented Garden' by Caroline Holmes, 2.30pm. Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4AL \*

## MARCH

Saturday 26      Talk on 'Ornamental Grasses' by Richard Ford 2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4AL \*

## APRIL

Sunday 17      Study Day 'Magnolias' by Brian Humphrey  
Morning talk at The Riverside Centre, Stratford St. Andrew followed by afternoon visit to Brian's garden to view magnolias. £10 per person including light lunch (guests welcome). Booking necessary 01787 211346

## MAY

Sunday 29      PLANT HERITAGE PLANT FAIR. 10.30am - 4.00pm Helmingham Hall

## JUNE

Sunday 12      Garden Visit, Marks Hall, Essex IP13 7NJ. £3 per person. Meet at Visitor Centre, 2.00pm

## **JULY**

Saturday 30      Talk 'Garden Photography – Getting the Best Using Photoshop' by John Metcalf. Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4AL

## **SEPTEMBER**

Saturday 3      Talk 'The Restoration of the late H. Avray Tipping's garden' by Mrs Helen Gerrish. Tipping dominated the pages of Country Life in the early 20th century, writing learned articles about houses and gardens which he later turned into influential books. 2.30pm Stowupland Village Hall IP14 4AL\*

Sunday 18      PLANT HERITAGE PLANT FAIR 10.30am - 4.00pm Helmingham Hall

Wednesday 28      Study Day 'Irises – cultivation and propagation' by Sarah Cook at Hullwood Barn, Shelley.IP7 5RE  
Booking necessary 01787 211346

## **NOVEMBER**

To be arranged      Suffolk Group Annual General Meeting and party

*Lectures marked \* are free to members, with £3 entrance for non-members*

### **CDs and DVDs to raise funds**

We will have a box at each meeting where you can leave your old unwanted CD's and DVD's. Plant Heritage will receive 50p for each.

# MEMBERS' GARDENS OPEN

GABLE HOUSE Redisham, Beccles NR34 8NE

Sunday 20 February. Snowdrop and Hellebore Day 11am - 4pm

Sunday 5 June for the National Gardens Scheme 11am - 5pm

Sunday 4 September 11am - 5pm

SMALLWOOD FARMHOUSE

Smallwood Green, Bradfield St. George, near Bury St. Edmunds IP30 0AJ

Sunday 19 June 12 – 5 pm. Entry £3 in aid of the National Gardens

Scheme. Other times by appointment. Phone Widget Finn 01449 736358

FULLERS MILL

West Stow, Bury St. Edmunds IP28 6HD

Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays from 1 April to the end of September

2 – 5pm Admission £4

01284 728248

THE LUCY REDMAN SCHOOL OF GARDENING

6 The Village, Rushbrooke, Bury St. Edmunds IP30 OER

01284 286250

Fridays till the end of September as part of the Gardeners Fridays scheme

11am – 5pm Admission £2 (children free)

BELFLOWER NURSERY

The Walled Garden, Langham Hall, near Bury St. Edmunds, IP31 3EE

07879 644958

Thursdays and Fridays 10am -5pm, Saturdays 10am -1pm.

## DO YOU OPEN YOUR GARDEN??

Please let us know if you are opening your garden for charity, a good cause or even just for the enjoyment of others, so that we can publicise it in the Suffolk Group Plant Heritage Journal. Send details before 1 August and 1 December to [widget.finn@gmail.com](mailto:widget.finn@gmail.com)

# OPEN GARDENS EVENTS

## THE HIDDEN GARDENS OF BURY

Sunday 19 June 11am - 5pm

Around 30 gardens in Bury Town Centre. Tickets with programme £5 from the Tourist Information Centre, Angel Hill, Bury St. Edmunds. Further information: Isobel Ashton 01284 754993

## HIDDEN GARDENS OF GRUNDISBURGH, BURGH & CULPHO

Saturday 18 June and Sunday 19 June 1pm - 6pm

Wide range of gardens open in the three villages between Woodbridge and Ipswich. Programmes from Grundisburgh Green £5 admit to all gardens over both days. Pub lunches, home made teas, plant and cake stalls. Further information Nicola Hobbs 01473 738267 or nicola@nicolahobbs.com

## BOXFORD OPEN GARDENS

Sunday June 5th 11am – 5pm

Over 20 gardens large and small including cottage, courtyard, riverside and contemporary styles. Morning coffee, home-cooked lunches and afternoon teas in beautiful surroundings. Tickets £4, children free. Further information Angela Tolputt 01787 212264 or angela@zinniadesign.co.uk

# NEW NATIONAL WEBSITE

*RACHEL SLATER*

Open Gardens, a website launched in August 2010, was conceived by two keen gardeners who organised open gardens in their own village for a number of years. We hope that our website can help organizers of town and village open gardens to publicise their own events.

We are neither a large company nor a corporate body, just two amateur gardeners who occasionally swap the potting shed for the keyboard. We appeal for open gardens organisers to provide details of their local events - and so gain valuable publicity and be a part of a nationwide movement that raises money for good causes across the UK.

Community events can be listed for free at [www.opengardens.co.uk](http://www.opengardens.co.uk). For more information me via the website.

## SUFFOLK GROUP TRIBUTE:

### FAREWELL JENNY ROBINSON 2 SEPTEMBER 1916 - 27 AUGUST 2010

*MAGGIE THORPE*

All who knew Jenny Robinson will be very sad at the news of her death. She was born in 1916, and in 1939 moved to Chelsworth with her mother. In 1958, after her mother's death, Jenny moved to Chequers in Boxford.

Gardening was her main passion and music came a close second. After at least six hours in the garden she would rush in, change, and set off with her many musical friends to nearby concerts and particularly those by the Suffolk Villages Festival.

Jenny's other interests were history, literature and authorship. She conceived the idea of writing a history of Boxford, spending a great deal of time pouring through old manuscripts in Record Offices, learning medieval script and 'Clerks Latin'. In 1997 she published her findings in "Boxford - a Miscellany", 800 copies of which were sold in aid of The Boxford Society.

She persuaded many of us to join Plant Heritage (then the NCCPG) having been a founder and President of the



Right: Jenny Robinson in Hullwood Barn gardens with Sarah Cook.

Suffolk Group and was unstinting in her gifts of plants to be sold for the cause. For many years Jenny kept the National Collection of *Muscari* in her garden and had one named *Muscari* 'Jenny Robinson' which she discovered in Cyprus. Two other plants from her garden she gave to us for distributing amongst members, *Narcissus* 'Osborne's Grey' and *Narcissus* 'Jenny's Little Sister'.

Her garden was a triumph and was still being opened to the public right up to the spring before her death in August, four days before her 94th birthday. Her memory will live on as a wonderful friend, gracious, hospitable, strong willed, fiercely independent, quietly spiritual, and full of fun. Now I will not have the pleasure of her company on the way to meetings, although at least I will be able to travel the route I choose!

## MORE MEMORIES OF JENNY ....

### *WIDGET FINN*

As a young woman during the Second World War Jenny Robinson was recruited to work at Bletchley Park, the government's code-breaking establishment.

Always something of a rebel, she related how in the evenings she would frequently climb over the perimeter fence and catch a train to join her friends and party in London's night spots – often returning on the milk train. So much for the high security at Bletchley!

Jenny's garden at Chequers, Boxford, were featured in Alvide Lees-Milne and Rosemary Verey's book 'An Englishwoman's Garden', published in 1980.

Lilies were among her plant passions, and she was a member of the RHS Lily Committee, then the Lily Group Committee from 1976-89. Many friends will remember being summoned to her 'Lily-sniffing Parties', held at short notice on the summer evening when she judged the lilies in her garden to be at their best.

## PLANT HERITAGE NEWS

For an update on what's happening at National Office visit the current issue of Newslines on the website [www.nccpg.com](http://www.nccpg.com)

To find out more about the Suffolk Group's activities visit [www.nccpgsuffolk.org](http://www.nccpgsuffolk.org)



# FRUIT TREES IN THE WALLED GARDEN AT ICKWORTH HOUSE 1893 - 1929

*DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT*

When the gardeners at the National Trust property Ickworth House discovered the Gardener's Notebook recording fruit trees planted in the Walled Garden between 1893 and 1929 (see Sean Reid's article in the Plant Heritage Journal Spring 2010) it was very exciting.

I was very pleased when Sean asked me to look at a copy of it and produce a map of where the fruit trees were planted. I had already done a map and plant list of the walled garden as it is now - so I had some knowledge of the area. However, there was no map in the notebook and first of all I had to establish which walls were meant by the descriptions eg 'west wall - east side of Lord's Walk', 'south wall of Farther Garden' and 'Green Walk from Late Peach House to Canal'.

Sean obtained a copy of the Ordnance Survey Map 1880 and this showed a glass house along one wall which tied in with the 'Late Peach House' and the gardeners told me about the Lord's Walk from the Church through the Walled Garden to the Canal. In this way I was able to identify all the walls and found the notebook was put together in a logical manner. There were also some old fruit trees still in existence with old metal labels attached to the wall behind them which matched the names in the notebook for those walls. I could then produce a map with all the walls numbered as in the notebook.

The next challenge was to read the lists of fruit trees for each wall. The notebook gave the variety name for each tree but did not always state if it was an apple, pear, plum, apricot, quince or cherry. So I had to check lists of fruit trees in other National Trust gardens in the region (kindly provided by the head gardeners), RHS Plant Finder and other books.

When I could not find the variety I moved on to the internet. I came across a nursery near Maidstone called Keepers Nursery ([www.keepers-nursery.com](http://www.keepers-nursery.com)), which featured in an article in *The Garden* by Roy Lancaster. The Nursery has a very useful website where you can type in a tree name or part of a name and they will list possible varieties that match. If you click on one of the names in the list more information about the plant is shown. This enabled me to check if that variety was around at the time it was planted at Ickworth.

In this way I have managed to list the fruit trees for each wall and, as the notebook stated the order of planting eg as north -south or east-west, the maps show fairly accurately where they were planted. It was noted that some trees were replanted 20 - 30 years later.

The Farther Garden has been identified as the first area to be replanted with the same fruit tree varieties which were planted in 1893 - 1910. A sponsorship scheme is being set up and Cath Mobbs, one of the gardeners, has done a lot of work finding possible suppliers, including Keepers Nursery. Some are unusual trees so may have to be propagated on request as stocks are not held. The fruit trees are listed below.

Pears: Duchesse d'Angouleme, Glou Morceau, Beurre Rance, Princess, Doyenne Boussoch, Conference, Charles Earnest, Passe Crassane, Marechal de la Cour, Chaumontel, Emil d'Heyst, Durondeau, Beurre de Archon, Winter Orange, Bergamot Esperen, Josephine de Malines, Beurre Clairgeau.

Apricots: Moorpark, Hemskirke

Plums: Goliath, Orleans, Kirke's, Primate, Green Gage, Jefferson, Cox's Emperor

Apples: Hector MacDonald, Charles Ross, Mon Incomparable, Rival, Hawthornden, Bramley's Seedling, Blenheim Orange, Lord Burghley.

We are all looking forward to future tastings!





Clockwise from top left: Whatfield Anona, Whatfield Cancan, Whatfield Dorothy Mann, Whatfield Gem, Whatfield Joy, Whatfield Magenta, Whatfield Pretty Lady, Whatfield Ruby, Whatfield White, Whatfield Fuchsia. (See article on page 24).





Top left: Pelargonium More's Victory from 'Sweet's Geraniaceae'.

Top: White Unique;

Top right: Pelargoniums in Gail Harland's garden.

Below right: Pelargonium Crimson Unique.

(See Pelargonium article on page 20)

Below: visitors exploring one of Bury's hidden gardens. (Page 13).



# UNIQUE PELARGONIUMS

GAIL HARLAND

There was a fad in schools a few years ago for promoting the philosophy that every child is special. At the time it amused my somewhat cynical son to say, "I'm unique; just like everybody else." Transpose this thought to the world of plants and it is easy to see that whilst at a DNA level every species and cultivar of plant is indeed unique, some look more unique than others.

In the genus *Pelargonium* the word unique has been applied to a group of shrubby plants with generally brightly coloured flowers. The name comes from an old cultivar called 'Unique' but it is a source of some controversy which plant this actually was. Many of the group have scented leaves. The scent is not as easily recognisable as those of plants in the popular scented-leaf group such as the rose geranium but it does add to their appeal.

Many Unique cultivars date back to the early 19th century when new species pelargoniums were being introduced from South Africa and much hybridisation work was done.

The species *P. fulgidum*, which has bright scarlet, bird-pollinated flowers, is thought to be involved in the ancestry of many of this group. 'More's Victory' for example was raised from seed in 1823 by John More who had a nursery in Markham Street, Chelsea where he bred a number of pelargoniums. 'More's Victory' with its vivid red flowers was beautifully illustrated in Sweet's *Geraniaceae*, a work that did much to popularise pelargoniums.

This plant was listed in the 2009/10 RHS Plantfinder by one nursery down in Kent but when I contacted them they said they had lost their stock over winter. Fortunately Fibrex Nurseries in Warwickshire who have a National Collection of Pelargoniums still have a plant so I have ordered one from them and will be interested to see how it compares with that old illustration.

Unique pelargoniums can be grown in small pots of 15cm (6in) or so and will flower profusely on a windowsill or on the patio in summer. If however they can be planted in a large tub or bed in a conservatory some, such as 'Purple Unique', can grow to as much as 3m tall, making an imposing specimen against a wall. 'Crimson Unique' is a particular favourite of mine with its softly hairy leaves and cheerful deep red flowers blotched and veined in wine. It produces generous flushes of flowers all

through the summer until I cut it back before bringing it inside to avoid the first frosts.

I live just a spit and a jump from Shrubland Hall and so was intrigued to find that Donald Beaton who was head gardener there until 1852 had a notable role in the development of bedding pelargoniums. Beaton corresponded at length with Charles Darwin on the subject of variegated plants and was quoted by Darwin as saying he had raised over 20,000 seedlings from the 'Punch' pelargonium. Plants raised at Shrubland included 'Shrubland Superb' which was a zonal type pelargonium, the bright pink 'Beaton's Perfection' and 'Shrubland Scarlet', of which Beaton wrote in the periodical *The Cottage Gardener* that it was “the strongest of them all and has the largest truss.”

'Shrubland Pet' was named by a lady visitor to Shrubland Hall and plants with this name are still sold today. I bought one at the National Trust garden shop at Stourhead where they are putting together a collection of old and species pelargoniums in honour of Sir Richard Colt Hoare who had a collection of some 600 varieties there in the early 19th century.

The incorrect naming of plants exasperates many gardeners today and it is a problem which has been around for years. Beaton reported in the 1860's



Stourhead Pelargonium house

that, “four distinct plants go under the name of Shrubland Pet. The true one is a rosy-purple small flower.” The plant seen as 'Shrubland Pet' nowadays (which seems to be the same as the one sold as 'Shrubland Rose') is usually described as having rose-red flowers and I think it is unlikely to be Beaton's rosy-purple one.

'White Unique', as grown today however, could well be the plant that was encountered by Beaton growing on a cottage windowsill in the 1840s. It has bright green leaves and snow white flowers with the top two petals lightly blushed pink and marked with deep rose-pink veins.

Unique pelargoniums went out of fashion in the late Victorian period when gardeners fell in love with the zonals with their colourful leaves and many were lost during the wartimes and periods of austerity in the 20th century but 'White Unique' was rediscovered in 1957 growing in a derelict greenhouse by the scented pelargonium enthusiast Peter Abbott. I love the thought that this plant has been grown and enjoyed for so long and it is certainly a plant with a unique history.

*More photos on centre pages*

## A RARE SORBUS FROM MADEIRA

*IVAN DICKINGS*

**I**n September 1985, Brian Halliwell, who was then assistant curator at Kew, gave me seed of *Sorbus maderensis* BH541, which he collected whilst on a collecting trip to Madeira. From that seed I planted one in our garden which grew to quite a large tree, so large that it was crowding out several other plants so it had the 'Dickings hack-back.'

To my horror, some of you will know what I mean by horror if you know Brian of old, he asked me in 2009 how my plant was growing! Luckily it was growing well and was producing berries. These I gathered and squashed them to pulp to separate the seed from the flesh and sowed them directly in week 40 2009 and placed them in an open frame open to all weather. The seeds germinated this spring and the seedlings were pricked out and during early summer were potted on. They are now up to 10” in



height. I will pot them during early spring and have some ready for our Spring Plant Fair at an enormous price!

This Sorbus is very rare on Madeira and is not available in The Plant Finder. In various literature it is described as a slow growing shrub which is due to the exposed conditions on the high mountains but in more favourable conditions it grows into a sizeable tree. The fruits are deep orange and about 1/2" in diameter.

PS. Hardy tree and shrub seed is best sown ASAP after collection and placed outside to have a cold period and germination will be good the following spring. Just follow nature. Berries should be squashed and washed to get rid of pulp and other debris which will float leaving seeds at bottom of container.

Or you can give the berries a quick whiz in the food blender which I have done - but don't tell the wife!



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*Eight hundred of the Dianthus Whatfield Cancan and Whatfield Gem will be given away at the Helmingham Spring Plant Fair. We are grateful to Brian Yates for this account of the remarkable person behind these delightful plants. A full list of Joan Schofield's pinks can be obtained from Brian Yates, and also will be part of a display by Sarah Cook and Jim Marshall at the Spring Plant Fair. Photos of some are included in the centre pages of this issue.*

## **JOAN SCHOFIELD AND HER WHATFIELD PINKS 1916-2007**

*BRIAN YATES*

**M**ost garden centres in the United Kingdom stock at least two Alpine Dianthus and the name Whatfield is prominent. Among the most popular are Whatfield Cancan, Whatfield Gem, Whatfield Pink and altogether there are 34 Alpine Dianthus listed with the prefix Whatfield.

Due to the large amount of Whatfield pinks you might think that they were raised by some very large commercial nursery or a team of professional hybridists, dedicated to the excellence of the Alpine Dianthus. But how wrong can you be. I would like to share with you the life path of this genius who, even to this day, has more Alpine Dianthus named after her on sale in garden centres than anybody else in the country or even the world.

Joan Schofield was raiser, hybridizer, grower, introducer, propagator and registrant of all Whatfield Dianthus. She was born in 1916 and raised in the small hamlet of Benhall, near Saxmundham in Suffolk, the eldest of five children. Her father worked as a master shoemaker. When Joan was 13 her mother died of tuberculosis and she had to leave school to take over the role of mother, cook, housekeeper and role model for her four siblings.

There was very little time for any pastime or leisure but any time she had to herself she was engrossed in the garden, planting vegetables for the table. It was then that she took a few cuttings from the lavender bushes that her mother grew, to eventually make lavender bags to sell, to make ends meet. She just stuck the cuttings into the border along the pathway and watched as they grew into a beautiful lavender hedge. This was the start for Joan on the road of propagation.

Joan met her future husband Jim Schofield during the war, and they were

married in 1945, moving to Jim's native Yorkshire where he became a school teacher. Joan, who had known nothing more than the flat and level regions of Suffolk, was completely awestruck at the rugged hills. She set about constructing, in miniature, a rockery, with large and small boulders gathered from the hillside, mimicking the surrounding area and planting it with delicate alpine plants.

Hence her love of alpines grew and, as time went by and the 1950s arrived, she turned her attention to *Dianthus Alpinus*, starting with 'Little Jock' *A. Deltoides* and an unnamed double pale pink coloured garden pink. She later acquired 'Pike's Pink', 'Highland Fraser', 'Blue Hills' *A. neglectus*, *A. erinaceus* and an unnamed deep red seedling, to produce a race of floriferous, dwarf, hardy, long-lived pinks for rock gardens. So Joan set to work creating her masterpieces.

In 1968 Jim was offered a teaching job at Hadleigh High School so the Schofields moved to Whatfield and purchased Whatfield Hall, a fourteenth century manorhouse. It was here that Joan once again set to work building her rockery, with a moat around it for what she called her drainage system. Joan now had more time for her passion of growing and raising new varieties of Alpine *Dianthus*. She always explained to her friends that her pinks were very promiscuous and she never had to do anything to create a new variety. "The bees always obliged and did a much better job than she ever could."

We now have some 34 varieties that Joan Schofield grew and, who knows, there may be a lot more still unnamed and happily growing in Bildeston or Whatfield.

Joan named many of her Pinks after her friends. Whatfield Dorothy Mann was named after the wife of Donald Mann, the well-known propagator and nursery man. Whatfield Elizabeth Hart and Whatfield Hart's Delight were named after Lewis Hart, a well-known plantsman from Hadleigh. Whatfield John Turk was named after Professor John Leslie Turk MD, DSc, FRCP, FRCS, FRCPath, who was a friend and regular visitor to the Schofields.

Joan, who died in 2007 aged 89, left us a lasting legacy of a host of plants that will be grown and admired for many years to come. It is sad to report that I can only find some twenty varieties still in cultivation, but if anybody out there has an Alpine *Dianthus* that they think may be one of Mrs Schofield's, then please take a photo and send to me as it may be one of the lost varieties.

In the eve of Joan's life, she said she wanted to place on record her achievements in the world of the *Dianthus* and had asked Heather Fripp to

write a couple of letters for her about her discoveries and developments in the Dianthus world. Her anxieties were unfounded, as her plants live on, and will do for many a year to come.

I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to Charlotte Ashley-Cowan, editor of the Bildeston Bugle, and also Heather Fripp, editor of Roundabout for all their help in collating the information about Joan Schofield. Without their help this tribute to a quiet, unassuming lady who gave so much to the world of the Dianthus, could never have been written.

*Brian Yates can be contacted on 02380 779399,  
brianyates44@yahoo.co.uk*

## **MASTER GARDENERS**

A project to support people to grow their own food is hoping to expand into Suffolk. Master Gardeners – launched in 2010 by organic growing charity Garden Organic – offers practical food-growing advice to communities under the supervision of a dedicated Master Gardener mentor.

Within five months of its launch the project has reached out to thousands of individuals, helping them built their gardening skills, and encouraging them to grow their own organic fruit and vegetables.

The scheme has been piloted in Warwickshire, south London and Norfolk, and the organisers are now looking for volunteers in other parts of the country.

To find out more about the project, find a Master Gardener near you, or even volunteer as a Master Gardener mentor yourself then visit [www.mastergardeners.org.uk](http://www.mastergardeners.org.uk) or call Garden Organic on 02476 217718

### **VISIT THE PLANT DOCTORS .. at the Spring Plant Fair**

Do you have some plant problems or problem plants?  
Then bring them along to the Plant Heritage Plant Fair at  
Helmingham Hall on 29 May, and our team of  
expert plant doctors will be there to help.

# THE GREAT BRITISH ELM EXPERIMENT

The Conservation Foundation is attempting to unlock the mystery of why some trees survived Dutch elm disease which wiped out over 25 millions trees in the UK.

Cuttings taken from mature parent trees found growing in the British countryside - which appear to have resisted Dutch elm disease for over 60 years - have been skilfully micro propagated. The resulting saplings are being distributed to schools, community groups, local authorities and private landowners who have signed up to take part in the 'Great British Elm Experiment' .

Participants in the experiment are being asked to log their tree's progress over the long term (up to 15 years) on the foundation's specially developed 'elm map'.

Height, girth, biodiversity and any signs of disease are being recorded and The Foundation hopes that - with time - and good luck - a new generation of elms will become established throughout the country and a new generation of young people will be encouraged to have an interest in elms and biodiversity. The project also heralds hope for the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly for which elm is the sole food plant.

Seventeen trees have been planted in Suffolk so far.

Jeremy Quinlan, who is parish tree warden at Dallinghoo near Woodbridge, applied for a sapling which was planted on land farmed by neighbours Kate and Jonathan Pirkis. Saplings have also been planted at nearby



Bridgett Quinlan, Kate Pirkis and elm sapling.

Valley Farm Pony Club, one each by private landowners near Eye and Saxmundham, six near Haverhill and at seven schools.

There are still opportunities for local organisations, schools and private landowners to apply for an elm sapling and take part in the experiment. More information from [www.conservationfoundation.co.uk](http://www.conservationfoundation.co.uk)

## THE SHOWING TRADITION

*NICOLA HOBBS*

I became fascinated by horticultural shows when I was cajoled onto the committee of our local show. Grundisburgh Burgh & Culpho Horticultural Society show's history goes back at least to the early part of the last century. It has had its ups and downs over the years but happily seems on the rise again with entry numbers up among most age groups.

Although the number of flower and produce shows in Suffolk has declined over the years, many are still flourishing, with probably one in five towns and villages still having some sort of show. The struggle for some to keep going arises from difficulty in attracting younger members with their increasingly busy life styles. But the heightened interest in growing vegetables is having a beneficial effect for some clubs.

Entries are by no means limited to flowers, fruit and veg. For example our classes also include flower arranging, baking and preserves, handicrafts, and art and photography. It is usually the latter section that is best supported, closely followed by the sloe gin, the men-only Victoria Sponge and special children's classes

Most of the societies and clubs that run the various events around the county belong to the Suffolk Horticultural and Produce Association, commonly known as SHAPA, to take advantage of its team of experienced judges, advice and access to a good value insurance scheme. SHAPA was originally founded as the Village Produce Association in 1941 to support the war effort when people at home were being encouraged to "Dig for Victory".

Some shows can be entered only by the members of the particular societies





Top: Visitors in the exhibit marquee at Grundisburgh Village Show.

Below: SHAPA judge marking flower entries at Grundisburgh.



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running them, others are open to all-comers. But at all the shows visitors are very welcome to come and admire - or criticise - the exhibits and hopefully be enthused to take up exhibiting themselves. The shows are held in a range of venues including schools, churches and community halls. Very few are under the traditional canvas now because of the high costs - we have only managed to continue this at Grundisburgh show by fund raising and sponsorship.

The 'bible' for show organisers, judges and exhibitors is the Horticultural Show Handbook published annual by the RHS which sets out in detail how entries should be displayed and what factors gain the most points; similar guidance for baking and preserves, comes from the Women's Institute handbook 'On with the Show'. These publications help judges all work to the same standard - although there are often differences of interpretation and there can be some vigorous discussions! Most of the judges provided by SHAPA have been long term exhibitors themselves, and new ones 'train' by working alongside an experienced judge.

Among the 60 societies supported by SHAPA which are running thriving shows are Leiston Allotment & Garden Holders Association, where vegetable entries in particular are getting stronger and stronger, Felixstowe which boasts three generations of families as exhibitors, and Nacton Flower Show which holds two events a year, a spring and a summer show. Laxfield, which is also still under canvas, will be holding its hundred and first show this year, while Wangford is a mere 25 years old.

I should be happy to send details of all the SHAPA supported shows to anyone interested in finding ones near them.

*Nicola Hobbs is secretary of Grundisburgh Burgh & Culpho Society and press officer for SHAPA, and can be contacted on 01473 738267, nicola@nicolahobbs.com.*

*Grundisburgh Village Show is on Saturday 16 July on Grundisburgh Playing Field. Entries from people outside the three villages are very much encouraged.*

# INTRODUCING DOROTHY CARTWRIGHT – OUR NEW COLLECTIONS CO-ORDINATOR

I have been interested in gardening and plants since I was a child but went into Occupational Therapy as a career. I have always enjoyed visiting gardens both in this country and abroad. Once my children had left home, I followed my husband into early retirement and took horticultural courses at Otley College and passed the RHS General Examination.

While taking these courses, I thought I needed more experience of gardening than our small garden and allotment in Ipswich so I volunteered at RHS Hyde Hall. At first I did general maintenance work and later helped Alison Clarke mapping the garden and recording the plants on the RHS Database.

After 5 years at Hyde Hall I decided to volunteer at a garden nearer home and found that Sean Reid at the National Trust's Ickworth Hall wanted someone to help with mapping the gardens and keeping plant records on the National Trust Database. I have been doing this for the last five years.

At the same time I have been a volunteer at the Children's Hospice in Ipswich for ten years looking after their garden. This has been very interesting as the garden has to be child- safe and so a careful choice of plants is needed. It has been good to experience how generous people and organisations are in providing plants for the garden.



*Dorothy's article about her research on historical fruit trees at Ickworth House is on page 16.*

*Suffolk's National Collections are listed on page 34*

## **NEW MEMBERS**

**W**elcome to these new members who have joined the Suffolk Group since our last newsletter. Please introduce yourself to committee members when you come to our events. If other members live nearby do get in touch to see whether you can share a lift to our talks and visits.

Mrs Jennifer Ayris, Pettistree, Woodbridge  
Mrs Caroll Wallace, Felixstowe

## **WANTED ....**

### **YOUR EMAIL ADDRESSES**

**S**ending our members information and reminders about events is quicker, easier – and cheaper – by email. If you have an email address please send our membership secretary Pauline Byford an email NOW, even if you think she already has your details, so that she can ensure that your contact information is up to date. [pabyford@btinternet.com](mailto:pabyford@btinternet.com)

### **AN EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR**

**W**e need someone to join the Suffolk Group team as events co-ordinator. This involves booking Stowupland Village Hall and organising the annual programme of speakers and visits using the official Plant Heritage speakers list and suggestions from members. If you think you might be interested please contact Maggie Thorpe on 01787 211346 or email [smece@aol.com](mailto:smece@aol.com)

### **CATALOGUES FOR ASTERACEA**

**D**r. Margaret Stone, who holds the National Collection of Asters, is keen to find old catalogues from Rougham Nurseries which list the asters bred by them. If you have any copies which she could borrow or photocopy please contact her on [dickstonebrockamin@tinyworld.co.uk](mailto:dickstonebrockamin@tinyworld.co.uk)

### **ADVERTISERS FOR THE JOURNAL**

**Y**ou will have noticed that this edition of our Journal includes advertisements for the first time. The Journal is widely distributed (and, we hope, widely read!) as it goes to every Plant Heritage county group as well as to Suffolk members, and is available at all our meetings

and plant fairs. If you would like to advertise in the next edition or know of a business which might be interested please contact Ann Somerville on 01284 728622 or email [annatalder@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:annatalder@tiscali.co.uk)

## **NEWSLINES FROM PLANT HERITAGE NATIONAL OFFICE**

### **Camera ready?**

'My favourite plant' is the subject for the 2011 National Plant Heritage Photography Competition organised by the Surrey Group, and the closing date is 5th March. Our chairman Maggie Thorpe was runner up two years ago and won the prize in 2010 , (a crystal bowl and £50 gardening vouchers) so get out your camera, start snapping and ensure that Suffolk Plant Heritage makes it a hat trick!

### **Threatened Plant Project (see Suffolk Group Journal Autumn 2010)**

Over 70 genera are now in the process of being listed by volunteers from groups around the country. Several workshops are planned for 2011 but for those who are unable to attend a workshop Sarah Barton is working on the option of completing the work remotely.

### **Calling all National Collections holders**

The data for the 2011 National Collections Directory is currently being collated. If your details need updating please contact us urgently!  
[joanna@plantheritage.org.uk](mailto:joanna@plantheritage.org.uk)

Also .....

Your chance as a National Collection holder to apply for a bursary of £400. Brother UK are sponsoring their bursary scheme for the third year with four grants of £400 each. These are available to National Collection holders who can demonstrate how the grant will be used to benefit their collection. Full details, together with the application form, are on the website [www.nccpg.com](http://www.nccpg.com)

### **Find us on Facebook!**

Plant Heritage now has an interactive discussion forum where you can share your plant news, photos, videos and gardening tips. It costs nothing

to sign up. Contact [http://en-gb.facebook.com/pages/Plant - Heritage/111404628924592](http://en-gb.facebook.com/pages/Plant-Heritage/111404628924592). You can start and take part in discussions and perhaps even find old friends. It's easy to do and a powerful way for us to reach out to a wider audience and spread the word about Plant Conservation.

**2011 AGM 27-29th May in Worthing**

A reminder to all members to book their places for the 2011 AGM on the Sussex coast. Further details on [www.nccpg.com/events](http://www.nccpg.com/events)

*These extracts are from Newslines, the on-line newsletter published quarterly on the Plant Heritage website [www.nccpg.com](http://www.nccpg.com)*

**SUFFOLK'S NATIONAL COLLECTIONS**

AESCULUS	Bury St. Edmunds	Robert Grimsey, 01728 685203
BUXUS	Bury St. Edmunds	National Trust Ickworth Park, 01284 735819
CAMPANULA	Bury St. Edmunds	Sue Wooster, 07879 644958
DIANTHUS (Malmaison)	Ipswich	Jim Marshall, 01473 822400
EQUISETUM	Stowmarket	Anthony Pigott, 01449 766104
ERYSIMUM	Walpole	Dr.Simon Weeks, 01986 784348
EUONYMUS	East Bergholt	Rupert Eley, 01206 299224
HIBISCUS	Woodbridge	John Woods Nurseries 01394 386914
HOSTA	Stowmarket	Mickfield Hostas. 01449 711576
IRIS (Sir Cedric Morris introductions)	Ipswich	Sarah Cook, 01473 822400
SYRINGA	Stowmarket	Norman's Farm, 01449 781081

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