



# The HPS Hertfordshire Group Newsletter – Autumn 2018



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### Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the second Newsletter of 2018.

In last Autumn's Newsletter my intro was all about the preoccupation gardeners have with the weather. How relevant was that, bearing in mind the summer we have just had. Now the rain has come, and in reasonable quantity, it is difficult to recall how desperate we all started to feel as week after week passed with non-stop sun and no rain. I felt particularly vulnerable trying to care for plants in a newly planted garden. With their limited root structures in free draining chalky soil I was full of envy for neighbours and friends with mature gardens better able to withstand the drought. I counted and, daily, it took 70 cans to water the plants, even in my very small garden – was I relieved when the rain came, as I am sure every gardener was!

One interesting effect of the heat and the drought, that has only just become apparent to me as a bee-keeper, is that whilst bees had a lot to forage on during the hot, dry period, the nectar they were collecting had a lower water content than normal. Most beekeepers are finding that their recently harvested honey is more viscous and darker in colour than normal and on analysis the honey being spun now has about 15% less water than in 'a more average' year.

Let's hope that as we move into the Autumn we'll find that nature has been more resilient than we feared and that not too many of our precious plants have been lost.

I do hope you will find the articles in this issue of interest - thank you to those members that have volunteered to contribute. Do keep them coming!

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## Chairman's Report

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What a year this has been!

Autumn is a good time for reflection and, as your new Chair, I am privileged to share a few memories with you all; those occasions that have brought such pleasure to me and many other members. First, will any of us have failed to notice the bizarre seasons we have enjoyed (endured?) this year? I thought that the cold spell, in what we sometimes think of as early spring, would have killed some tender plants. If it did, we hardy planters always see that as a planting opportunity. But, as we all discovered, that long hot spell turned out to be more challenging. In my garden watering became a daily job that was measured in hours not minutes, which in our shady garden has never been the case before in over 15 years. It wore me out, and one of my ancient watering cans gave up the ghost with the effort involved. However, all that watering and feeding has produced an interesting effect; plants I thought long dead have perked up remarkably and are producing a second crop of flowers better than the first. A very welcome sight and a prolongation of the season.

One of the pleasurable duties the Chair has, is to thank those kind members who open their gardens for us all to enjoy. Leo Vaughan started the season for us with her lovely garden in Radlett, which was springing in to life in May. Like many of us, Leo gardens on a slope and her clever use of terraces, each with a different planting scheme, was admired by all of us there.

Our next treat was to visit Roger and Patt Trigg's garden on a very hot August day. The garden was a cool and shady retreat and exemplifies what can be done with plants in the shade. The beauty of the garden was almost eclipsed by the gorgeous tea Patt provided. Like many of us, I came away with some very well raised plants to fill the odd gap in my own garden.

One of the other annual treats we have is the Seedling Swap, and earlier in the season John Rowe kindly hosted; welcoming us on a chilly day in March.



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## Chairman's Report

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Not many seedlings had been foolish enough to show themselves; we had done our best but the weather (again!) was not conducive to growth. It was, as always, a lovely friendly occasion to compare notes over a cup of tea and commiserate over the lack of seedlings. If you haven't taken advantage of these occasions yet, do make a point of coming in 2019. It would be lovely to meet more of you in an informal setting. Visiting large gardens, as we mostly do on our annual coach trip, is undoubtedly inspiring, however, members' gardens, with their environment that is common to us all, can so often provide helpful local knowledge of what will and won't 'go'.

Thanks also to Maggie Lacey for another successful July coach trip to Stone House Cottage and Ashwood Nurseries. Unusually I was unable to go and am very sorry to have missed out. I always enjoy these trips, it's so great to have nothing to do but sit back and enjoy what has been organised so well by someone else.

We are not looking forward to winter perhaps, but a new season of interesting and varied speakers has been planned by Ali King, to whom we owe our thanks. The speakers provide entertainment when we are in the 'no' gardening months. O.K, I admit I am a fair-weather gardener, but of course the truth is that I do not want to compact the soil by walking on it in the cold and the wet! These high-quality speakers are affordable because of the hard work put in by members at the Annual Plant Sale; you donate plants to sell, prepare and clear up the hall, sell plants, publicise the event and serve tea - all these elements come together under Beryl's efficient organisation. Thank you to all involved.



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## Chairman's Report

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Looking back at the themes chosen by my predecessors I am struck by the repeated request for members to step up and join the committee. Committees in general get a bad press but can anyone think of a better way to keep a society like ours going? We are a friendly co-operative team who only meet when necessary. The individual roles are important but if all posts are filled then the jobs are not onerous and can be tailored to suit the individual concerned. So, for example, Susanna Geoghegan has been carrying a double load in the Refreshments team with Penny Bennetts, as well as Newsletter Editor. This situation is unfair to her so thanks Susanna for your uncomplaining cheerfulness in the two roles.



Our final and heartfelt thanks go to Heather Osborne for her long service on the committee, latterly as Secretary. We will miss her and of course the tea, coffee and biscuits provided at the meetings in her welcoming home. I know I shall miss her experience in the role; she has been much appreciated by many Chairmen down the years as she is always been there to provide help and support and we have all benefitted from her experience. All the committee join me in thanking her; she has been a pleasure to work with and is, of course, leaving the post in great shape for someone to take over. Heather's way of keeping the

committee organised has been to do it 'her way' and so if you are someone who would like to take on the role of secretary and do it 'your way' please get in touch, Heather's final generous gift to our Society is her kind offer to mentor her successor in the role. Heather, if there was such a thing as a long service medal for service to the HHPS you deserve it.

Unsurprisingly, the theme of my report is one of thanks; highly appropriate when one thinks of all those individuals who make up the Hertfordshire HPS committee and membership. All the extra that those people do to keep everything running smoothly. Being a member is always an interesting way to spend time (of course when not in the garden); we make new friends, catch up with old ones, learn new skills. All accompanied by the lovely cakes our members so generously provide. Gardening and cake, what's not to like!

I wish you all the very best for the coming season and look forward to seeing you at the wonderful events on offer for the upcoming year, something for everyone I think you'll agree.

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## Stone House Cottage/John's Garden Coach Trip

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After an early start, we arrived at Stone House Cottage Garden where we were greeted by Louisa the owner; an incredibly knowledgeable plantswoman. Set in a 3/4 acre old walled garden it was divided up into smaller 'rooms' providing different aspects and enabling many shade plants to be grown. Many unusual brick follies had been built, giving the whole garden a very theatrical feel.

I had been there twice before, the first time the wild flower lawn was an amazing sight but this time it was still interesting with many unusual small trees and shrubs. The shady areas of the garden contained an amazing array of interesting plants, most of which were labelled and the walls were covered with unusual climbers and twiners. The drier areas featured alpiners and other plants and shrubs, including wonderful dieramas all self seeding where they liked. The double herbaceous border was a riot of colour and the white garden very cool and peaceful.

We couldn't leave without a visit to the nursery area where a huge selection of plants and shrubs were awaiting us, most of which were propagated from the garden by Louisa herself.

Next stop Ashwood Nursery where we had lunch and then our visit to the garden of John Massey, the nursery's owner, which sits alongside. Our guide Mike explained the history of John's garden which has been developed since 1998. It is bordered by the Staffs-Worcester Canal and therefore enjoys both damp and dry areas. Many trees give it shady areas which ferns, John's latest passion, enjoy. John is well known for his hybridisation of hellebores, evidence of which could be seen throughout the garden, as well as many different hydrangeas and salvias. Just looking at the labels of different bulbs now under the soil showed what the garden would look like in the spring with cyclamen being another of John's passions, Peeping into one of the shaded greenhouses we saw hundreds of small clay pots containing, we think, his famous hepaticas and other bulbs.

It is a three acre garden with many large beds and borders but also grassed areas, giving the whole garden a very tranquil air. Trees and shrubs are pruned and canopies lifted to give an airiness to the garden and many trees have clematis trained up them to bring interest to eye level. There are also some very interesting sculptures and plant supports. A canal-side bed was full of colourful astilbes and a terrace by John's home held a great display of tender plants. Obviously we ended the day with a visit to the nursery for a bit more retail therapy and a cup of tea before the journey home. Apparently John was once asked what was his favourite time of the year and he answered 'Today, because I'm alive'. I would have answered the same that day as I have never before enjoyed two such wonderful gardens in one day.

Beryl Davis

## From Deluge to Drought - Gardening with no rain

After the terribly wet spring, the almost scarily hot and dry summer proved to be a wake-up call for us all, but the evidence has obviously been there for many years that our own climate, and that in all parts of the world, is changing and at a pace. As gardeners with mostly mature gardens our immediate response is to try to mitigate the effect of drought on our existing plants and to keep praying that hosepipe bans are not imposed.

However, maybe we should adopt a two-pronged approach and alongside our traditional gardening also take Beth Chatto's very intelligent lead by



actually embracing the increasing temperatures and possibility of future droughts. One wonders, how did Beth know what to plant and where, in her particularly challenging garden (much of it too dry, too wet or too shady for conventional gardening)? The answer was that Beth relied heavily on her late husband Andrew's research and knowledge of plant ecology. Based on their understanding that plants thrive best in situations similar to their original natural environment, Beth's mantra was 'plant the right plant in the right place' and in Essex this required her to think 'dry' as her garden is in one of the driest parts of the country.

Beth Chatto's Gravel Garden

Much has been written by gardening journalists this summer about drought and I have gathered together some of the best suggestions about approaching what may become a regular 'phenomenon'.

**Celebrate shade** by introducing shrubs and small trees that create canopies and underplant with dry shade loving perennials like euphorbias, ajugas, heucheras and lamiums, avoiding the use of any grass.

**Carefully prepare beds** before planting with drought in mind by eliminating compaction and adding liberal quantities of organic matter which will retain moisture.

## From Deluge to Drought - gardening with no rain

**Study Mediterranean-style gardens** in books and magazines (or for real!) and select plants that are adapted to drought: silver foliaged plants such as sages, lavenders, santolina or those with fat leaves which store water such as sedums and sempervivums.

**Apply a Chelsea chop** (cutting off a third of early summer growth before a perennial starts forming flowers) to your later flowering perennials to reduce their volume of foliage and need for water.

**Sow annuals in autumn** rather than spring so that their root structures are well established by late spring reducing their vulnerability.



Find ways to divert and **use grey water** and, when watering, always target really thirsty plants rather than trying to water everything.

**Water with a can** rather than a hose & give plants a serious soaking once a week which is better than scatter-gun, daily watering. This will encourage downward root growth rather than roots rising to find shallow water.

Scrunch up a lot of newspaper and put it over the soil in the pots around potted tomato stems if you can't water due to holidays.

If you absolutely have to put new plants in during a dry period **add water retaining crystals** in the planting hole.

Also **line terracotta pots with old black plastic** or compost bags to stop moisture loss.

**Abandon small pots** and move to much bigger planters with water saucers with plants densely planted to avoid evaporation.

Hope these these tips help should we need them! Susanna Geoghegan

## Postscript

In the Spring issue of the Newsletter I wrote an article about my new garden entitled 'Starting from Scratch'. The title was, frankly, something of an understatement – it should have been 'Starting from Minus Scratch'. You might be interested in a progress report.

I planted my new garden (that had not one single plant in it) about the third week of November 2017. We then had snow and rain, and then more rain and then cold and then more snow – the horriblemst Spring in living memory. Even my poor well insulated bees died of cold.

Eventually the chill passed and warmth came & I wondered which of all my new 'babies' would shoot and prove their resilience. Amazingly most did and the miraculous flowering of my new garden in late Spring seemed almost biblical.

Just as things seemed to be going too well the sun set in and didn't blink for 6 or 7 weeks – not a drop of rain and searing heat, day after relentless day, bearing down on my chalky garden where water disappears as soon as it touches the earth. I watered morning, noon and night but nothing grew – the plants mostly survived, clinging onto life but not flourishing.



Oct 2017 - preliminary stages



As I said, it could have been worse – a biblical plague of locusts might have done more damage but it was a challenging summer for a gardener with a new 'patch' of so carefully selected and sourced baby plants. As I write, we have just been enjoying late August rains and I am just hoping that they have come in the nick of time and that next year my new garden will flourish unhindered by such extreme conditions. Gardening is so often about hope over experience.

August 2018

Susanna Geoghegan

## Gardening on a Slope

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Standon Open Gardens (annually on the second Saturday in June) is always a highlight in my garden visiting year. Plots vary from small courtyard to grand country house garden. A steep escarpment rises immediately behind houses on one side of the village green. I'm fascinated by how different gardens have been created here and I shall describe how two gardening couples have tackled this challenge, in totally contrasting ways, both in design and planting.

At 'The Old Windmill', Gerald and Diana Dale were faced with a very narrow north-facing strip surrounded by high walls, immediately outside their sitting room. The main garden was covered in ivy and pink geraniums, with a small lawn and a diagonal path leading up the steep slope. There were one or two shrubs worth keeping, e.g. a vibrant pink shrub rose. It is now a densely planted, floriferous, intensely romantic garden in the English style. There is a sense of enclosure in some places, then surprises and views.

Next to the house, Diana has created a white garden, using many perfumed plants which thrive and light up the shade. Climbers include roses e.g. Mme Alfred Carrière, white clematis, pale honeysuckle. At ground level are ferns, *Alchemilla mollis* and hostas, white dames violet (*Hesperis matronalis*), foxgloves, Solomon's seal and campanulas.

Behind the house, the lawn has been enlarged, and is retained by a brick wall, topped with very low cottage planting like pinks, London pride and helianthemums. Standing beneath the wall one can enjoy the flowers close up, while from the lawn, there is a feeling of space. Sweeping around the back and side, and rising high up the slope, varied species of euphorbia plus *Alchemilla mollis*, provide the eye with a restful sweep of green, enlivened by sweet Williams, lupins, geraniums and delphiniums in deep shades of ruby, purple and magenta. Diana kept the diagonal path leading up from the lawn, which enables an easier climb up the slope, with time to admire the enveloping planting, especially roses, mostly in shades of pink. Diana has planted old favourites such as 'Zéphirine Drouhin', as well as many David Austin roses, including 'Gertrude Jekyll', and her



## Gardening on a Slope

favourite 'A Shropshire Lad', of which she has planted three. The sloping bed to the right is mainly shrubs and clipped conifers. Diana has subtly used variegation to break up this mass, with white variegated willow '*Salix integra* 'Hakuro-Nishiki', cornus, philadelphus, euonymus and grasses like gardeners garters (*Phalaris*). This creates effects of light and shade, recession and progression.

Climbing roses and clematis cover boundary walls, making it hard to see where the garden blends into the next. Close to the top, one realises a secret path leads to a bench in a circular area in the shrubbery, ideal for sipping a glass of wine in the evening, enjoying the view! At the very top is a magnificent, 'Paul's Himalayan Musk', rose and one realises the significance of the house name, gazing out over the village to the hills beyond. The garden meshes beautifully with its setting. The boundary trees reflect local field hedges, but are unusual species with a lightness of foliage and size fitting the garden. The maple is *Acer nikkoensis*, the ash a Manna Ash (*Fraxinus ornus*), the hawthorn a *Crataegus prunifolius*.

At 'Middle Bear' the garden was so overgrown that it was only when completely cleared that the new owners, Michael and Stephne Whittles, realised how wide it was. They commissioned Jan Adams of Hopleys

Nursery to design and plant the garden, completed in 2005. The style is quirky and playful, with a mastery of hard landscaping. Jan has maximised the apparent width of the garden with a series of shallow terraces, each completely different in character, rising up the slope, unified by a water feature which runs from top to bottom of the garden. Generally planting is low, rarely more than the height of the next retaining wall, so the feeling is spacious and open. From alongside the house a



path leads upwards, close to the left boundary. It's impossible to resist following this to find out what is at the top. The climb is rewarded by a comparatively extensive open area surrounded by small trees with a wildflower meadow, full of ox-eye daisies in June. There are superb views to the unusual church, and over the Rib valley, with an attractive summer house enabling the owners to enjoy the views, whatever the weather. A slate-based waterfall and stream drops diagonally down through informal

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## Gardening on a Slope

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planting of pulmonaria, hosta, heuchera, prostrate cotoneaster and hebe. Now the visitor can't help lingering to enjoy the details of planting and design, as each level uses different materials to great effect. An informal pool is surrounded by lush planting of ligularia, miscanthus, ferns, achillea, *Veronica* 'Trehane' and buddleias. Now the stream plunges through cool planting of philadelphus, white foxgloves, ox-eye daisies and flag iris down the slope to a formal, demi-lune pool with raised brick and slate wall, the whole sheltered by a high curving brick wall. Planting here is minimal, inviting one to sit on the pool edge and enjoy the views. The water drops again to bisect gravel beds edged by wooden sleepers planted with colourful alpinists: thymes, campanulas, sedums, phlox, helianthemums, pulsatilla, *Euphorbia myrsinites* and pinks are eye-catching in June. This is Stephne's favourite part of the garden.

The rill ends, dropping into a projecting half-circle pond, mirroring the recessed demi-lune higher up the garden. Planting is more vibrant with colourful alliums, gladioli, campanulas, centaureas, and nepetas with heucheras and hostas providing foliage colour and solid form. Skirting the right hand boundary, a bed of hostas in the shade of a tree leads to an extensive paved terrace with ample space for eating and sitting out. Planting here is bold, for example a deeply coloured phormium is fronted by an amsonia with unusually large blue flowers (*Amsonia tabernaemontana* 'Blue Ice'). Not to mention a highly unusual feather duster plant! Michael and Stephne found this south-facing area trapped so much heat, that they added an unusually high pergola curving around the south side to provide shade. The height allows for full enjoyment of the extravagant racemes of '*Wisteria floribunda multijuga*' and '*Longissima alba*', with varied clematis lengthening the seasonal interest. Children love to explore this garden, following the water and enjoying the quirky garden ornaments.

The cottages and houses clustering along the green, seem a typical 'chocolate box' picture, with roses climbing walls and colourful cottage planting. Nothing can prepare you for the surprises behind these homes, as each owner (I have only described two) has tackled that slope in a way which reflects their personal interests, likes and needs. Think you couldn't fit a swimming pool or a productive vegetable garden into such a steep slope? Think again.

Thank you to all the keen gardeners who welcome visitors to their gardens annually to raise money for St Mary's Church, Standon. I hope this will encourage some Hardy Planters to discover this wonderful event, with excellent lunches, teas and ultra-tempting plant sale.

## In the Pink

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Two of my favourite three pink plants are really quite tender but I think if you haven't already acquired them you might like to give them a go. So a small apology.



### ***Dodecatheon pulchellum* 'Red Wings'**

is a hardy perennial plant in the family Primulaceae originating in North America. The common name for the genus *Dodecatheon* is American cowslip or shooting star.

They prefer a moist retentive soil and flourish in woodland with some shelter from the sun.

From the centre of the basal clump of leaves, the bright magenta flowers are borne in clusters on tall stems about 20cm high. The flowers are pendant with the stamens pointing downwards and the petals acutely reflexed giving the appearance of a small shuttlecock. The flowers appear in early spring and by midsummer the plant is

dormant. Pollination is by bees that vibrate the flowers thus releasing the pollen. The bees are known as buzz pollinators.

I obtained this delightful plant from Daisy Roots Nursery some years ago and have grown it in a pot ever since. I didn't realise it was hardy and could have found it a shady spot in the garden, but it might have succumbed to the ravages of our large dogs. It stays in the greenhouse in winter and in spring we enjoy it on the shady side of the patio.

***Anisodonteia capensis*** is of the family Malvaceae, native to South Africa. Its common name is African or Cape mallow.

It's a small upright evergreen sub shrub with hibiscus-like five-petaled soft pink flowers. Each petal has darker pink lines radiating from the centre. Presumably these are bee guide lines. On a warm day, many bees can be seen feeding on the flowers. The central anthers are a dark grey that contrasts well with pink. Both stems and leaves are a little hairy.



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## In the Pink

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Despite the bees, *Anisodonteia* seems not to set seed, but propagation by cuttings is easy. It prefers full sun. Unless the winter in the UK is exceptionally mild and the garden very sheltered the plant will not survive in the ground. A frost-free greenhouse is the answer.

Again, it was a long time ago that I saw the plant in a large garden in Chipperfield and asked the gardener what it was and he kindly gave me a few stems. His was in the ground and tall. Mine in large pots, reach about 60cm but then I prune them because they become leggy if left to themselves.

My third 'pink' bloomer is my absolute favourite.

***Impatiens kilimanjari x pseudoviola*** is a tender perennial from the rainforests of Mount Kilimanjaro. A member of the family Balsaminaceae, a genus with 850 to 1000 species and a common name Busy Lizzie. An apt name as it has a long flowering period. The flowers are a vibrant pink with a hood curving into a long pale-yellow spur. Inside the hood are a series of yellow and white blotches. The prominent labellum may provide a platform for pollinators. The leaves are glossy with a fine-toothed edge.

My original plant came from Derry Watkins at Special Plants Nursery. She had a huge plant filling a half barrel in deep shade. She warned me that it hated the sun and it could only be grown from cuttings. Mine is in a shallow terracotta pot and has grown to 60cm diameter, 15cm high. The pot is perched in the top of an old chimney pot so it can be admired at a higher level. It gets a few hours of early sun. It overwinters in a frost-free greenhouse and is never without some flower. Come the spring with warmth and feeding it is a cheerful sight. I watch the night temperature forecast without fail, ready to whip it under cover. Of course, there are the little cuttings in the greenhouse but I would be very sad to lose the mother plant.



The usage of the phrase 'in the pink' has altered often since Shakespeare's time, Mercurio: 'Why, I am the very pinke of curtesie' Romeo and Juliet, 1587

It is now taken to be in the pink of condition and healthy. It takes a little effort to keep these three 'in the pink'!

Madeleine McCormack

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## Roses, Rust and Rrrrrrrabbits

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My job – for which I was ‘recruited’ in January 2016 – is to develop and to maintain a six acre garden attached to a large Georgian property over a period of between 3 and 5 years. It is a private home and, as such, I will keep details concealed for the present. At the time of writing I am in my third year. I say ‘I’ but it is actually ‘we’; my husband and I. I like to think he’s the brawn and I am the brains but he may think differently about that!

Situated in East Hertfordshire, surrounded by farmland and small pockets of woodland, the garden can be dry and exposed to the worst of the weather but, equally, we can sometimes miss much of the bad weather affecting the rest of the country.

The house and garden are surrounded by mixed and hornbeam woodland and a mixture of arable and livestock fields. Sheep bbbaaaa ALL night long! Life can be trying! The soil here varies but is largely thin and chalky with the occasional area of chalky boulder clay.

As always, there are many gardening challenges. Most specifically this garden is FULL of wild rabbits and oh, how visitors love to see them scampering over the patchwork quilt of a lawn! There is no option of fencing the garden off – that has already been considered and abandoned. There is no hideous gas that I can throw down the burrows – that is not an option, even if it were available. No, we must live with the dear little creatures and work everything around them and with them in mind at all times.

I am a horticulturalist first and foremost. I enjoy re-design and renovation, but I am NOT a garden designer. That said, I am enjoying the challenge of this quite unique situation. In what is the third year of my tenure the WIP includes a number of projects from ‘sexing-up’ ‘The Wilderness’ (next instalment) to creating a 12m ‘Reflecting Pool’ but I’m going to limit this article to the establishment of the ‘Tripod’ borders on the south west of the house.



This is a sunny situation with well-drained but quite poor soil. A box hedge serves as a lovely back-drop to plants. Rabbits live under the hedge so these borders are going to be a tempting larder!

## Roses, Rust and Rrrrrrrabbits



We began with measuring and marking out; lots of discussion to and fro with the garden owner about what works, what doesn't, the whys and the wherefores until we all felt happy. Our plans were going to be a major change to the appearance of the garden so it was very, very important that all options were thoroughly examined.

My employer gave us a beautiful book which he said could be used for reference – *The Private Gardens of England* by Tania Compton – anyone familiar with it? P55 shows hazel tripods with old fashioned roses and this was shown to me as a starting point for these borders. Blatant theft!

That done, time to remove the turf. Husband did an excellent job and stacked it all nicely for future use. What a poppet.

Once we had our borders cut out and had decided on the roses - *Chapeau de Napoléon* and *Madame Hardy* - we then got hold of some well-rotted horse manure plus home-made compost and chucked it on and left it for a year. I wanted to see if there was going to be any bindweed or other perennial weeds to tackle before planting. There was of course!

So – choosing roses. Colour, scent, habit all came into the mix. So did disease resistance but that hasn't stopped our little French Hat being susceptible to rust. This is a lovely moss rose, very fragrant with a lax habit suitable for being trained around the tripods and combines so well with *Clematis texensis* 'Princess Kate' which I absolutely adore! I will keep Napoleon's Hat well-fed with plenty of good compost in late winter and probably a liquid feed



## Roses, Rust & Rrrrrrrabbits

of seaweed through the summer too just to try to keep it healthy and the rust at bay. I haven't used chemicals yet but may be forced to plan a regime. Is anyone dealing with this problem?

The other rose we chose is Madame Hardy and, true to her name, she really is. No problems whatsoever – unless you include lots and lots of new growth, much of which will be cut out on an annual basis with the longest, freshest stems tied-in to replace last years. She is not going to need the attention that *Chapeau de Napoléon* looks like needing. The colour scheme is muted soft tones – as close to white as is possible! I might have veered off slightly; ahem but the garden owner has been pleased so far!



The roses were planted in March 2017 – three at the feet of each hazel tripod and, since then, the additional planting has been rather piece-meal fashion so that I can continue with other garden projects and maintenance. All survived the Beast from the East but I have only recently planted the Artemisia and the Perovskia, the colours of which have really lifted the borders again after the roses finished. I'm really excited to see how they develop in another year.

The Anemones have struggled in the heat of this scorching Summer, so I will be more generous with mulching those in the Spring. The Lupins have been great, but I have now cut them hard back as they were looking very tatty. The Nepeta

has also had a hard hair cut but is flushing out again at the time of writing. The recent rains have been SOOOOOO welcome!

I absolutely LOVE the un-planned combination of *Digitalis mertonensis* with the *Lychnis chalconica* 'Pinkie'. I didn't know how 'Pink' Pinkie was going to be, but I love it. So, I'm sort of scattering it through the borders like a little drizzle of 'jus' through a warm duck salad! I know what I mean!!

## Roses, Rust and Rrrrrrrrabbits

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I wanted to give everything a good start, so these borders have been protected from the rabbits by a low mesh fencing. I clamber in and out when I need to get things done. The fencing will come off next year and only then will I know if my choice of plants have been well-chosen.....or not. The clematis are the only thing I am planning on protecting further.

Here is a list of rabbit-unfriendly plants that I am using. I plan to take the fencing off in Summer 2019. Fingers crossed!!

- *Anemone x hybrida* 'Andrea Atkinson'
- *Aquilegia* 'Munstead White'
- *Artemisia* 'Powis Castle' – only recently planted. Will it survive the Winter?
- *Campanula persicifolia* 'Alba'
- *Digitalis mertonensis*
- *Echinacea purpurea*
- *Eryngium giganteum* 'Miss Wilmott's Ghost'
- *Gaura lindheimeri* 'Whirling Butterflies' – I just hope that by the time this gets up and going the rabbits will be gorging elsewhere.....
- *Lamprocapnos spectabilis* 'Alba' – or as we know it: Dicentra
- *Lychnis chalconica* 'Pinkie' – courtesy of HPS seed swap
- *Lupin* 'Chandelier'
- *Narcissi* 'Petrel' and 'Elka'
- *Nepeta* 'Six Hills Giant'
- *Paeonia mlokosewitschii* & *Paeonia lactiflora* 'White Wings'
- *Perovskia atriplicifolia* 'Blue Spires'
- *Primula vulgaris* 'Drumcliffe'
- *Pulsatilla vulgaris* 'Alba'
- *Scabiosa* 'Fama'
- *Sedum telephium* 'Purple Emperor'
- *Veronica spicata* 'Icicle'

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## **AGM 2018 Agenda**

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### **THIRTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

To be held on Saturday 3rd November 2018 at 2.00pm  
at the Memorial Hall, Wheathampstead.

### **AGENDA**

Apologies for Absence

1. To approve the minutes of the 29th AGM held on 4th November 2017
2. Matters arising
3. Chairman's report
4. Treasurer's report and approval of accounts for the 12 months ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 (to be laid round).
5. Election of Chairman, Membership Secretary and Treasurer for the ensuing 12 months (en bloc).
6. Election of Secretary, for which there is a vacancy. Nominations would be welcome.
7. Election of Committee for the ensuing 12 months.  
Six committee members are standing for re-election and there are three vacancies. Nominations would be welcome.
8. Election of Examiner of the accounts.
9. Any other business

Please submit NOMINATIONS for members of the Committee in writing to the Secretary by Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2018  
(20, St Stephens Avenue, St Albans, AL3 4AD)  
Prior permission of any person nominated must be obtained.  
Heather Osborne, Secretary

The AGM will be followed by a talk  
'Our Garden Compost – Make Friends with the Worms  
by Peter Osborne

## **AGM Minutes 2017**

### **MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-NINETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE HERTFORDSHIRE GROUP OF THE HARDY PLANT SOCIETY**

Memorial Hall, Wheathampstead on Saturday, 4th November 2017

**Present:**

Irene Cowan  
Elizabeth Egré  
Heather Osborne  
Mary Robey  
Alison Tracy

**Committee Members**

**Officers**

*Chair*  
*Vice Chair*  
*Secretary*  
*Treasurer*  
*Membership Secretary*  
P Bennetts, S Geoghegan, D Singleton,  
A & E King, M Lacey and 47 HHPS Mbrs

**1 MINUTES**

The minutes of the 28th AGM held on Saturday, 5th November 2016, which had been circulated, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

*Proposed by Linda Williams; seconded by Derek Kerner*

**2 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**3 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chair thanked everyone who had made the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party such a success, and also the Herts group members who had opened their gardens for charity as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. She thanked the Committee for all their hard work and reminded members that we need replacements for the roles of Vice Chair, Speaker Booking and Publicity. She thanked Mike Crabb who as Web master sends out the very useful email reminders about our meetings and updates the website. He would welcome photographs of group events to add to those on the website. The Chair urged anyone who has experience of social media such as Twitter or Facebook to volunteer to help keep the group up to date. A 'Sailflag' will be purchased to put outside our events for publicity purposes. This year's coach trip was brilliant and next year's to Stone House Cottage and Ashwood Nursery with a tour of John Massey's garden looks equally exciting. A very long standing member, Angela Wimpenny, is moving to Sheffield to be near family and we wish her all the best.

*Proposed by Mary Martin; seconded by Diana Barry*

**4 TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Treasurer reported that it had been a successful year for the group and referred members to her report and the detailed accounts which had been laid round. At the end of the current financial year there was a surplus of £635.01, the Plant Sale being our major source of income to fund speakers and hall hire costs.

*Proposed by Dennis Sandor; seconded by Judy Barker*

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## **AGM Minutes 2017**

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### **5 ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Elizabeth Egré was elected as Chair

*Proposed by David Singleton; seconded by Lesley Hopkins*

### **6 ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Heather Osborne, Mary Robey and Alison Tracy were re-elected en bloc to serve as Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary respectively.

*Proposed by Margaret Bardell; seconded by Mary Martin*

### **7 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Penny Bennetts, Susanna Geoghegan, Beryl Davis, Maggie Lacey and David Singleton were re-elected, to serve respectively as Refreshments Coordinators, Newsletter Editor, Plant Sales Coordinator, Coach Trip Organiser and Hall Manager.

*Proposed by Judy Barker; seconded by Rita Woodward*

### **8 ELECTION OF EXAMINER**

Michael Foers was re-elected as independent examiner of the accounts

*Proposed by Bryan Stutter; seconded by Liz Klir*

### **9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Secretary reported that the Hardy Plant Society is doing well. Although national membership had been declining, that has levelled off and HPS is now the largest specialist plant society in the country. The Open Gardens had been a great success and raised £9000 for charities. Links are being forged between HPS and other organisations such as the RHS, NGS and Plant Heritage.

The retiring Chair Irene Cowan, who had served on the Committee for 17 years, first as Secretary, then Newsletter Editor and finally Chair was thanked for all her hard work and dedication to the group and was presented with a token of thanks.

The AGM closed at 2.21pm and was followed by a talk on 'Late Summer Colour' by Adrian de Baat.

Post AGM addendum:

The Treasurer wishes to correct a figure in her Report which stated that the Coach Trip had made a surplus of £358. In fact this figure should read £318.60, as the driver's tip and cost of flyers had not been deducted.

The Accounts are correct.

Chris Carnaghan proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee.

The meeting closed at 2.21pm.

All talks are held at the **Memorial Hall, Marford Rd, Wheathampstead AL4 8AY** at 2.00 pm and they are followed by tea & cakes.

### **Saturday October 6th**

#### **Marcus Dancer - Scented Plants throughout the Year**

Marcus runs a nursery in Hampshire specialising in Clematis and is a lecturer at the English Gardening School. His talk will focus on shrubs, perennials and climbers that will bring fragrance to your garden all year round. Plants for sale. [www.clematisplants.co.uk](http://www.clematisplants.co.uk)

### **Saturday November 3rd**

#### **Peter Osborne - Composting - Make Friends with the Worms**

Those of you who have been to Heather and Peter Osborne's garden, which is regularly open with the NGS, will have marvelled at the system they have for producing perfect garden compost. In this talk, which will follow the AGM, Peter will 'show and tell' how he does it!

### **Saturday December 1st**

#### **Bob Brown – Geraniums - Restraint and Discrimination**

For our last meeting of the year we look forward to a return visit from Bob who needs little introduction. A visit to his famous Cotswold Garden Flowers Nursery is on the wish list for all perennial gardeners. Given the vast array of geraniums available it will be interesting to hear which have his seal of approval. [www.cgf.net](http://www.cgf.net)

The December meeting will also be the occasion for our **Christmas Party** – members are invited to bring savoury or sweet nibbles and this usually results in a magnificent spread.

## **2019**

### **Saturday January 5th**

#### **John Tyler - World of Fungi**

John trained as a zoologist and conservationist and spent much of his working life developing and running wildlife reserves in London and Kent with a particular interest in introducing children to the natural world. Based in Buckinghamshire he now gives talks and runs guided walks and has for many years studied glow-worms Today's talk explores their lives and how they impact on ours.

### **Saturday February 2nd**

#### **Alun & Jill Whitehead**

Alun and Jill run Aulden Farm Garden and Nurserv near Leominster in

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## Looking Ahead

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Herefordshire, a damp site which they have developed from scratch they hold the National Collection of Siberian Irises. The garden was developed both wildlife and humans in mind and is described as quirky and romantic.

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

### **Saturday 2nd March**

#### **Ingrid Millington - Primulas & Auriculas**

The Millington family runs Hillview Hardy Plants in Shropshire and has a particular interest in Primulas and Auriculas as well as other hardy plants and bulbs. [www.hillviewhardyplants.com](http://www.hillviewhardyplants.com)

### **Saturday 6th April**

#### **Dr Brenda Harold - Wild Flowers of the Canadian Rockies**

This is a return visit for Dr Harold; you may remember the entertaining and informative talk she gave last time about plant defence mechanisms. This time she will talk about Wild Flowers of the Canadian Rockies which no doubt many members will have seen for themselves. [www.identiplant.co.uk](http://www.identiplant.co.uk)

### **Saturday 25th May**

#### **HHPS Annual Plant Sale - United Reformed Church Hall**

### **Saturday 5th October**

#### **Tony Goode - A Crocus for All Seasons**

A keen Alpine gardener, Tony will in his talk today cover the genus Crocus, his specialist subject and will look at the botany of both wild and cultivated plants. Find details in the list of speakers on [www.alpinegardensociety.net](http://www.alpinegardensociety.net).

### **Saturday 2nd November**

A member of Mid Bucks Beekeepers will give a short talk about honey bees after the AGM

### **Saturday 7th December**

#### **Helen Yemm**

Another returning visitor, this popular speaker is well known for her column "Thorny Problems" in The Telegraph and other writing. She describes herself as a "passionate muddy-gloves-and-wellies gardener blessed with the gift of the gab". The subject of Helen's talk is under wraps but we can certainly look forward to an entertaining afternoon to round off the year.

Role	Name	Contact
Chairman	Liz Egré	01727 857727 / malandlizegre@sky.com
Vice Chairman	VACANT	
Treasurer	Mary Robey	01727 858360 / maryrobey6@gmail.com
Secretary	VACANT	
Newsletter	Susanna Geoghegan	07799 038833 / susanna.geoghegan@btinternet.com
Membership Sec.	Alison Tracy	020 8440 8671 / alison.tracy@btinternet.com
Refreshments	Penny Bennetts/ Leo Vaughan	01442 391432 / pbpenben@gmail.com 01923 854650
Plant Sales	Beryl Davis	01279 898413 / berylpdavis@talktalk.net
Coach Trip	Maggie Lacey	01727 569286 / maggielacey99@gmail.com
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Conservation	Malcolm Stodell	01582 840059 / m.stodell@btinternet.com
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Publicity	VACANT	

Please Note: Committee members' email addresses are private and must only be used on a one-to-one basis, not in open multiple address lists.

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## Obituaries

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I am very sad to report the loss of a number of HHPS members over the last 12 months. Some of them were members of very long standing and who made significant contributions to the group.

We would like to extend our deep felt condolences to their family & friends

Carole Garman

John Garner

Robert Jones

Peter Tomson

Christine Viollet

Vivian Weeks

Rita Woodward