



Battisford & District Gardening Club

July: Hampton Court...

By Lucy Skellorn

On a grey, not-so-warm Friday morning we gathered outside Stowmarket station to be picked up by a very jolly bus driver. By the time we arrived at Hampton Court the weather was starting to cheer up. Keen to see the show gardens, I made this a priority for the day. *Essence of Australia*, designed by Jim Foggarty certainly stood out from the crowd with its glorious Australian native plants in glaucous greys, spiny silvers, injections of hot red, and bright whites against a sea of burnt orange sand.

The conceptual gardens are always fun and this year they were based on the seven deadly sins. *'Sloth, Quarry of silences'* included 150 spades and forks placed climbing up one side of a cone of sand (photo opposite). Each tool represented a person whilst the climb represented individual hopes and ambitions. However, some of the spades had fallen on the other side of the cone into a 'graveyard of lost dreams and ambitions'. The spectacle of this installation was great, and it seemed to be a much photographed exhibit - although little can be said of the planting!

Away from the open air displays lay the *RHS Invisible Garden*, highlighting the microscopic life forms that make up our gardens. This was great fun for adults and children alike, as visitors were encouraged to interact with the garden wildlife.

Another great display was on the *Ocean Spray* stand. It showed how cranberries are harvested by flooding the fields in autumn. This separates the berries - which contain an air pocket - from the vines. The result is a sea of floating red berries. Yes, this display was a bit of a corporate stunt - but also a fascinating insight into an unconventional harvest method.

The flower marquee was stunning, with huge-headed Hydrangeas and Agapanthus stealing the show. There were plenty of opportunities to purchase and many of us came away with a memento of a lovely day at Hampton Court.

Text and photos by Lucy



Left: 'Sloth'

(I would have written a longer caption but I couldn't be bothered. Ed.)

Below: Man standing in a pool of cranberries. What does it feel like? The face says it all!



So you think you know about gardens... (Answers at foot of back page.)

1: Which poet asked Maud to join him in the garden?
A Byron B Tennyson C Keats

2: Where did Vita Sackville-West create her iconic White Garden?
A Wisley B Great Dixter C Sissinghurst

3: In which English county would you find the RHS garden 'Harlow Carr'?

A Devon B Essex C Yorkshire

4: Which of these characters does not live 'In the Night Garden'?

A Tinky Winky B Makka Pakka C Upsy Daisy

5: What was Percy Thrower's garden, the first 'BBC Gardeners' World' location, called?

A Clack's Farm B The Magnolias C Barleywood

6: Where would you find the oldest botanic garden in England?

A Chelsea B Kew C Oxford

7: Which Beatle wrote and sang about an 'Octopus's Garden'?

A Ringo B George C John

August: Magical Mystery Tour

By George Bethell

August's visit was shrouded in mystery with directions being circulated on a 'need to know' basis only. Undeterred, a large number of club members found their way to Thompson and Morgan's secret trial ground to hear our own Paul Hansord talk on 'what's hot and what's not' in the field of commercial plant growing. And it was a truly educational experience with Paul covering the full school curriculum: Geography (the socio-economic benefits of rose growing in East Africa); Biology (the potential of selective breeding and micro-propagation); the Mathematics of large numbers ("If I can't sell a 1/4 million then I'm not interested."); Cookery (jam from fuchsias?) and Paul's strongest subject - Economics. Who can forget the light in his eyes as he talked of a licensing deal which brings T&M 15p a plant "for doing nothing"?

But it wasn't all dry facts - there was also great passion, especially as Paul introduced us to planters, pouches and baskets full of vast, luminous begonias. Clearly hugely popular with a British public having a seemingly insatiable thirst for the big, bright and blowsy, begonias are not everyone's cup of tea. Slowly but surely a small group of dissidents congregated at the back quietly mumbling their heresies, but none was brave enough to let 'Big Paul' hear!

As the Suffolk sky darkened, quick trips to the trial beds and the greenhouses (Does the world really need a *TomTato*® plant?) brought a most enjoyable and enlightening evening to an end.

Many thanks, once again, to Paul and T&M.

George



Above: Paul waxes lyrical on begonias in baskets. (Photo: George)

Below: Being lectured in the trial gardens. (Photo: Mike W.)



September: Climbers, Creepers and Crawlers

By Sandra Henson

September 1st was our first meeting back 'inside' since April. It was well attended and 43 members and guests gathered to listen to fellow member Mike Warren talk and show photos on one of his many 'topics of conversation'. Mike showed us several of his own climbers and creepers as well as those he took a fancy to on his many visits to other gardens and nurseries - including a special mention for the garden of members Stuart and Jackie Collings.

Clematis for all seasons appeared to be his favourite climbers especially as they are easy to care for if you "keep their feet cool and their heads in the sun". We were amazed at how many types of clematis there are and gained lots of inspiration.

Ivies and succulents were some of the creepers Mike favoured and, just to keep the alliteration going, he included some 'crawlers' such as earwigs and caterpillars!

Bringing a light hearted and informative talk to a close, Mike spoke of the plants he is never successful with and said that, like many of us, he could give a long talk on 'Plants I've Grown and Lost'!

Following his excellent talk, Mike went on to judge the six baskets of garden produce brought along by members to show what was still available in their gardens at the tail end of summer. 1st was *Judith Thompson*; 2nd *Jo Pepper*, and 3rd *Davina Gillings*.

Sandra

Right: Judith's amazing, prize winning cornucopia.

(Photo: Mike W. with Sandra's camera!)



September: Battsford Garage Trail and Plant Stall

By Michael Warren

On Sunday 14th September, blessed with favourable weather, members set up tables and loaded them with plants raised from the plugs generously donated by Thompson and Morgan at the Club BBQ earlier in the year. Early visitors, many looking like hardened 'car booters', were more interested in the garage sale items. However, as the morning progressed plant-oriented gardeners appeared and a steady trade ensued with advice being given where needed and sought.

The Punch Bowl appeared busy with customers attracted by the appetising aroma of bacon butties early on, followed by baps filled with roast beef and horse radish sauce or roast pork with apple sauce - both of which I can confirm were delicious! The new Manager of the community inn had, in my opinion, got it just right for the visitors to Battsford.

Returning to the subject of the plant sale, Anthea reports a profit of £126 - a splendid result. I should add that the warm camaraderie enjoyed by BDGC members on the stall was an added bonus to an enjoyable day.

Text and photo by Michael



Above: Healthy plants evoke healthy interest at our plant stall.

October: AGM

By George Bethell

The fine weather of late summer/early autumn finally broke to ensure that the AGM was held on a dismally wet evening, but BDGC members are a hardy lot and attendance was good. The main attraction was a talk by the ubiquitous Mike Warren who gallantly stepped in to fill the breach created by the unavailability of the advertised speaker. Mike spoke with charm and humour (and, of course, great photos) on his exploits as a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners and his other roles that have brought him into contact with the often unnoticed flowers and gardens of the City of London and beyond. He also lorded it over us with pictures of the sumptuous dinners held in even more sumptuous halls which he is forced by his official duties to endure. In addition there was a great deal of barely disguised name dropping with Masters, Lord Mayors and major royals in much evidence. Mike's talk and pictures provided a fascinating glimpse into another plant-filled world. Who knows, it may even tempt some of us poor rural folk to risk a trip to 'that London'.

After refreshments, it was down to the official business. Abandoning his usual circumlocutory style, Bill guided us swiftly and sure-footedly through the business of the reports and election of committee members and office holders. Along the way, one message was very clear - the Committee, under Bill's leadership, has provided members with yet another excellent year of speakers, events and activities. *Thank you all for your efforts on the Club's behalf.*

George

Committee Members from 7th October 2014:

- ♦ Bill Baldry (Chairman)
- ♦ Daphne Baldry
- ♦ Paul Hansord
- ♦ Jim Henson
- ♦ Anthea Howard (appointed at the AGM, 2014)
- ♦ Debbie McDowall
- ♦ Jo Pepper
- ♦ Caroline Wicking
- ♦ Denis Wicking

September: Charitable Donations

By Bill Baldry

Debbie, Daphne and Bill had great pleasure in attending the September meeting of the Stowmarket Group of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) to present a cheque for £275 as the Trust's share of the proceeds from the Gardening Club's Summer Draw. This was gratefully received by Carolyn Thompson, Stowmarket SWT Chairman, (see photo) and will be passed into the SWT fund where each £1 donated can generate up to £9 of external funding. This could help to finance the purchase of new reserves such as the 76 acres of rolling countryside alongside Arger Fen & Spouse's Vale nature reserve in the south of the county.

An equal donation was sent to East Anglian Air Ambulance whose fund raiser, Kara Newman, sent a message of thanks: *"Dear Mr Baldry and Members of Battsford & District Gardening Club, I wanted to write and thank you all for the recent and very generous donation of £275, raised during your Summer Draw. On-going public support is essential to enable us to continue offering this vital service and we are very grateful for your kind donation. Many thanks once again to you all for supporting us in this way, it really is greatly appreciated."*

Many thanks to Paul for the donation of the prizes, Denis for arranging the necessary licence and to you all for selling and buying the tickets!

Bill



Coming events...

Monday 3rd November: *Speaker Ken Abel*

Ken Abel's long list of national prizes and awards testifies to the fact that he is one of the best pelargonium growers in the land! He will talk to us on "*Pelargoniums Explained*". 7:30 pm at the Battisford Community Centre.

Friday 14th November: *Roy Lancaster*

Roy Lancaster CBE, popular broadcaster, plantsman extraordinaire and modern day plant collector will talk on "A Plantsman's Garden", all about the making of his garden.

Ringshall Village Hall starting at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £10 each and are available from Bill and Daphne on 01449 672168 . Book now to avoid disappointment.

T&M Seeds and Plants Order *Urgent!*

T&M's 2015 Seed Catalogue (see opposite) is out now and, as in the past, orders placed through the Club will attract very generous discounts - *50% on seeds and 15% on everything else.*

Tori wants to place a bulk order by mid-November so that seeds are received, with any luck, by Christmas. So, all orders (together with cheques made payable to Thompson and Morgan) must be handed in at the meeting on Monday 3rd November or be with Tori by *Friday 7th November*. Don't delay!

Orders can be dropped off in Tori's famous white bread bin (really!) at Poplar Cottage, Moats Tye, IP14 2EY.

Orders can be submitted on the official order form to be found in the T&M catalogue or on paper provided you list:

- ♦ product code (e.g. TM38788) ♦ product description
- ♦ page number ♦ quantity ♦ unit cost ♦ total cost.

If you have any queries, Tori's e-mail is:

whitehead380@btinternet.com

Monday 1st December: *Quiz Night + Free Buffet*

The Club's end of year fun quiz and buffet (bring your own drinks!) 7:00 pm at the Community Centre - *note early start.*

Saturday 6th December: *Christmas Workshop*

Come and make a wreath for the front door and "a Christmas scene on a log slice" !!! Coffee, tea and good company will be provided. From 10am till 2pm at the Battisford Community Centre. Tickets (£12) and full details will be available at the Club meeting on November 3rd.

Alternatively contact Caroline Wicking 01449 770980.

Monday 5th January: *Speaker Hilary Thomas*

Hilary Thomas, is a vastly experienced and well-respected garden designer who also lectures and writes on the subject. She will talk on "*Design with Plants*".

7:30 pm at the Battisford Community Centre.

Friday 23rd January: *New Year Meal*

An annual favourite to mark in your diary - the Club's New Year Meal at the Barn Café, Alder Carr. (Menu and details to follow)



50% off seeds

15% off the rest

Order now!

No catalogue?

Contact Tori or Bill and they will do their best to find one for you.

A Gardener's Question Time #1: Our illustrious Chairman *Bill Baldry*

Q1: *What is your favourite plant to grow and why?*

"Being a fruit and veg man rather than a flower person, I have to say that I get great satisfaction from the taste of fresh carrots, a plateful of young runner beans, the first strawberry and a ripe Discovery apple. If I had to choose a flower, I would say Sweet William of course!"

Q2: *What plants would you like to grow but which, in the past, have defeated you?*

"Radishes! Every garden programme or magazine says to plant radishes as a catch crop to mark where you have planted other seeds. Mine always grow plenty of top but rarely any bottom to eat. The same applies to celeriac - how do the professionals get theirs to fatten up into something edible?"

Q3: *You are off on a long space mission to colonise a distant planet and you are allowed to choose ONE plant to grow in the space station's biosphere (all conditions available). Which plant would you choose and why?*

"Peas. Firstly they would be something easy to grow and tasty to eat along the way and secondly, because it was peas that Mendel used in his 19th century plant genetic research, it would be appropriate to take them into the future."

Thanks Bill for starting the ball rolling with some excellent answers. However, I'm somewhat surprised to see that you didn't opt to take *Daphne odora* with you on the space trip! **Ed.**

Brain Teasels Answers

1: B
2: C
3: C
4: A
5: B
6: C
7: A