



PRESIDENT – Will Parks, BSc (Hons), FdSc

Past Presidents: D.M. Ballard, NDH; T. Deans, NDH;
S.M. Davies, M.Hort. (RHS), DHE, Cert.Ed., MIHort.;
Dr. Susan V. Sherwood, BSc, PhD;
Anne Harrison, Kew Dip. Hort; David Black.

NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2020

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Editorial

Welcome to our Spring newsletter. These are certainly strange times we're living in with coronavirus. I hope you and your families are all keeping safe and well.

In this edition we are announcing our programme of outings organised for this summer. With coronavirus looming large we have had to scale back our plans considerably but currently have a couple of outings planned for later in the year when we **hope** things will have settled down. Please see the Summer Outings section for more details.

As announced at our February Study Day, our President, Dave Black, has decided to stand down due to health issues; our thoughts are with him and we hope he makes a full recovery. Our new President is Will Parks – please see the introduction below. We are sure he's going to make an enthusiastic and supportive President.

We are pleased to announce that we have a new committee member too. Paul Brickwood has volunteered to join us and we are delighted. Paul's already getting involved in lots of activities which is good news.

Finally – a date for your diary for 2021 – we are planning an extra Study Day for 2nd July 2021 and one of our speakers will be Chris Beardshaw. Make a note of that – it's one you won't want to miss.

Best wishes

Debbie Holden, THEA Chairman

Introducing our New President – Will Parks



Will Parks is one of the key lecturers in the Horticultural Department at Reaseheath College, teaching RHS Level 2 and 3, both Theory and Practical, in addition to Garden Design and Planting courses.

Will has a first-class honours degree in Landscape Design and Management from Harper Adams University. He has worked as a horticultural consultant and garden designer and is a highly experienced gardener and horticulturalist with many contacts within the industry. Will has a particular interest in Chinese architecture and garden design and has achieved a Silver-Gilt medal at RHS Chelsea.

SUMMER OUTINGS for 2020 – Register Now!

Below are details of our Summer 2020 outings

Our plans for this summer have been somewhat thwarted by coronavirus and some of the gardens we had planned to visit this summer will not now be open to visitors this year. With government restrictions on leaving your home in force, for now at least, it's hard to anticipate what might happen so we have cancelled/shelved all our plans until the end of June. We are hoping by the time we get to July and August things will have started to return to normal – you can't beat a bit of optimism!

Our visits may be subject to some changes or even cancellation depending on the emerging crisis and government advice. We will keep you informed as things progress. To this end, we are not asking you to send us the money for the trips, but if you could **REGISTER YOUR INTEREST** in a trip then that would be appreciated. We would contact you nearer the trip date to confirm the trip will (or won't) be happening along with any changes we need to make. At that stage we would ask you to confirm your booking and provide us with payment. **Registering your interest doesn't commit you** to having to come on a trip, but it's helpful to us to have a feel for interest from the membership

If you would like to register for any of the trips, please send an email to

horticultural.enthusiasts@gmail.com. Please use the name of the garden as the subject and in the body of the email, please let us know:

- 1) Names of people who would like to attend
- 2) Whether you'd want to go by coach or whether you'd prefer to self-drive
- 3) In the case of Wildegoose/Hampton Court Castle visit would you like to visit just one or both gardens

Remember – we don't want you to send us any money for the trips at the moment.

Visit 1 – Coach Trip to RHS Harlow Carr, Harrogate – Tuesday 14th July, 8am



Harlow Carr is a 58-acre garden. It was founded by The Northern Horticultural Society in 1946 with the objective of 'promoting and developing the science, art and practice of horticulture with special reference to the conditions pertaining to the North of England'. In 2001 the RHS merged with the Northern Horticultural Society when the RHS bought the garden.

Since the merger with the RHS there have been many developments at the garden including the creation of a Teaching Garden, Gardens Through Time and the Winter Walk. The Main Borders have undergone a stunning redesign and Annuals Meadows have been creatively themed using willow-woven sculptures. The Woodland has been regenerated and now includes a Rhododendron Glade full of spring-flowering bulbs. The Alpine House and £3.3m Bramall Learning Centre, one of the greenest buildings in the country, are the latest additions to Harlow Carr. Oh, and it has a Betty's Team Room (which will hopefully have reopened by July), need we say more.

Arrangements for the Day

We will be travelling by coach from Reaseheath College Campus, leaving at **8am** and there will be a pick-up option from Lymm services (time TBA). We are aiming to be at Harlow Carr for 10:30am.

Following a short refreshment/comfort stop, our group will split into two smaller groups and we will be given tours of the garden by two members of their horticultural team. After the tour you will then have time to get some lunch and explore the gardens at your leisure departing at 4pm.

Cost

The cost is £25 per person including the coach

Please email horticultural.enthusiasts@gmail.com if you would like to register for this trip. Please don't send us money at this time. Thank you.

Visit 2 – Coach Trip to Wildegoose Nursery & Hampton Court Castle – Thursday 27th August 2020

We are planning two visits on the 27th August. There will be a coach leaving from Reaseheath, **but** there is the option to **self-drive** if you would prefer to meet us there. The self-drive option might be particularly appealing for those of you who live well south of Reaseheath College.

In the morning we will be visiting Wildegoose Nursery in Shropshire and in the afternoon we will visit Hampton Court Castle in Herefordshire (not Hampton Court Palace near London before you ask!!).

Costs:

- For Wildegoose Nursery, the cost is £12 including tea & cake
- For Hampton Court Castle, the cost is £12 including a guided tour of the garden
- If you would like to join us on the coach, the cost will be an extra £18 per person

Please email horticultural.enthusiasts@gmail.com if you would like to register for this trip. Please don't send us money at this time. Thank you.

Wildegoose Nursery – Thursday 27th August 2020 a.m.

Following on from Jack Willgoss's excellent talk at our November 2019 study day, we have arranged a trip to visit his wonderful nursery. After hearing so much about it, how could we resist!



Wildegoose Nursery is set in the beautiful Shropshire countryside. It is a small independent nursery, garden and tearoom housed within the old redbrick walls of Millichope Park's former kitchen garden.

The kitchen garden lay abandoned since the 1960s but has been transformed into a new and exciting garden that celebrates its traditional roots alongside more contemporary plantings of perennials and grasses. The garden is divided into a series of rooms divided by newly planted hedging. There is a plum orchard, ornamental vegetable and cut flower garden, crab apple walk and a series of colour themed ornamental gardens and Floral Meadow. A network of paths leads you through the garden and brings you up to the Tearoom, with magnificent views over the garden and out into the surrounding countryside. Alongside the Tearoom are the newly restored range of Georgian curvilinear glasshouses which we heard much about at the Study Day.

Arrangements for the Day

For those taking the coach, we would plan to leave Reaseheath College at 8:30am, aiming to arrive at Wildegoose for 10am. There will be tea and cake, all being well. We would plan leave Wildegoose Nursery for Hampton Court Castle at 12:00.

For those who wish to drive themselves, they should also aim to arrive for 10am. Detailed directions and instructions for parking will be sent nearer the time.

How to Get There

Wildegooose Nursery
The Walled Garden
Lower Millichope
Munslow
Shropshire
SY7 9HE

Hampton Court Castle – Thursday 27th August 2020 p.m.



The gardens at Hampton Court Castle attract visitors from all over the country. They feature an abundant Kitchen Garden encased by original Victorian walls, stunning formal gardens, vast lawns and river walks. At the centre of the maze, the gothic tower offers panoramic views across the estate and a secret passage leads down to the Sunken Garden. It is a stunning garden at any time of year, but in mid-summer it is quite amazing.

The parts of the castle date back to the 15th century though there have been many additions to the building over the years. It has been restored and is open to the public however a tour of the castle is not included in our visit.

The Orangery Cafe serves delicious food and drink. It is located in the conservatory was designed by Joseph Paxton in 1846, six years before he went on to design Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition, and opens directly onto the South Lawns, providing an idyllic setting for a spot of lunch or afternoon tea.

Arrangements for the Day

For those taking the coach, we would plan to leave Wildegooose Nursery at 12:00, aiming to arrive at Hampton Court Castle for 1pm. For those who wish to drive themselves, they should also aim to arrive for 1pm. Detailed directions and instructions for parking will be sent nearer the time.

We would propose taking time to get some lunch, either from the Orangery Café or you might choose to bring a packed lunch/picnic. We would then reconvene for a garden tour at 2pm after which you would be at leisure to explore the gardens and woodland walks.

How to Get There

Hampton Court Castle
Hope under Dinmore
Herefordshire
HR6 0PN

Please REGISTER NOW by email to horticultural.enthusiasts@gmail.com

Reports from the February Study Day

Our February Study Day was very well attended with 65 members and guests joining us to hear the speakers. We were in a different lecture theatre for this meeting due to IT upgrades in our usual venue. Although slightly smaller, feedback on the alternative lecture theatre was quite positive.

Here is an overview of the two talks we had at the Study Day.

"Hardy Geraniums - the Good, the Bad and the Ugly" – Sue Clark

Member Sue Clark gave a fascinating talk about hardy Geraniums, using her garden in Wrenbury to illustrate the many different species and varieties with lovely pictures. Sue has a real love for this family of perennial plants and is a national plant collection holder for *Geranium sylvaticum*.

She showed examples of the different styles of hardy geranium, which vary with regard to plant size, leaf colour and shape, flower size and flowering period. Although their flower colour range is limited from white through pink, magenta, purple to blue – many varieties have darker coloured veins on the petals or different coloured centres to provide interest. Many do well in shadier conditions, even when dry, providing a real boon to the gardener for those difficult situations in the garden.

In Sue's 'Good' category were geraniums which produced nice clumps or foliage with reliable and attractive flowers which do not spread aggressively via self-seeding or rhizomes. Spring flowering varieties which were shown by Sue included *G. phaeum* 'Album' (good for shade), *G. sylvaticum* 'Ice Blue' and *G. maculatum* with its long-lasting flowers. Her summer flowering favourites included *G. pratense* 'Orion' with its blue flowers, *G. renardii* with its soft silver foliage, *G. 'Ann Folkard'* with yellow foliage and black-eyed magenta flowers on long stems and lastly *G. 'Rozanne'* - the RHS plant of the century with its sterile repeat flowering blue flowers.

Four of Sue's favourites



Geranium sylvaticum 'Coquetdale Lilac'



Geranium maculatum 'Christine's Smile'



Geranium renardii 'Zetterlund'



Geranium sylvaticum 'Lilac Time'

The geraniums which fell into Sue's (not so) 'Bad' category included varieties which were either a little less well behaved in terms of self-seeding or could swamp other plants but Sue felt they did have a place in the garden. So the large mound of foliage of *G. macrorrhizum* might be overwhelming in some situations but it offers good shade tolerant ground cover. Whilst *G. nodosum* varieties and *G. oxonianum* varieties, like 'Katherine Adele' have pretty flowers with good foliage their plentiful self-seeding will need to be controlled.

In her 'Ugly' category, Sue included species or varieties which either combined insignificant flowers and plentiful seedlings e.g. *G. robertianum* (the weed Herb Robert) and *G. pyrenaicum*, or else have over-vigorous rhizomes which can take over the garden like *G. procurrens*.

During her talk Sue set out how she mixed geraniums in her garden with other plants like Iris, Crocosmia, Euphorbia and Scabious and also the use of *G. 'Sabin's Blue'* as an alternative to a low lavender hedge. It was a fascinating talk showing the enormous choice offered to the gardener by this very important group of plants.

Paul Brickwood

"Barnsdale after Geoff" – Nick Hamilton

Nick entertained us with a talk on life at Barnsdale Gardens, starting with a summary of the origins of the garden and his father Geoff's time on the Gardeners' World programme. Geoff Hamilton joined the programme in 1979 and by the mid-80s its audience had grown to 4.5 million.

When Geoff died in August 1996, Nick was aware he needed to open Barnsdale to the public. Nick and the team worked through the winter and opened on 19 April 1997. He didn't want to change the garden too much so that visitors would still recognise it from the programme, but set up a memorial area for his father.

Barnsdale today is a set of smaller gardens within the larger garden. These include a seaside retreat garden, a Japanese garden (which was originally the conifer bed), a Mediterranean garden, an Elizabethan vegetable garden, a formal Italianate garden, a wildlife garden (originally the first-time garden), and a reclaimed garden (originally the paradise garden). He said their aims for the garden are that visitors enjoy themselves, that the style of planting is one that is achievable in a home garden and that everyone should go away with at least one idea for their own garden.



Nick at Reaseheath



The Cottage Garden

The garden has been organic and peat-free for more than 30 years. It has a lot of wildlife, and they keep hens and let them roam the garden in winter to get rid of pests. Nick's philosophy on organic gardening is that you need to be partially sighted, for example, if you have blackspot on roses, just enjoy the flowers, don't look at the leaves!



Artisan's Garden



One of the Courtyard Gardens

Barnsdale today offers a range of activities – they run horticultural courses, for example, rose pruning; events including cookery demonstrations and competitions such as a children’s garden; and weddings; as well as a nursery and tea room. They also show at the Gardeners’ World Live exhibition (Nick told us that Geoff was instrumental in getting this event off the ground). Barnsdale was voted ‘Best garden to visit 2018/19’ by Garden News magazine, and is open all year – it only closes on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Although many of the audience will always associate Barnsdale Gardens with Geoff Hamilton and the Gardeners’ World programme, by the end of the talk we could see that Nick’s stewardship of the gardens has ensured that Barnsdale continues to be not only a lasting memorial to his father but a ‘must-visit’ destination for keen gardeners in its own right. In fact, based on feedback after the talk, I strongly suspect Barnsdale could be a destination for one of our 2021 trips!

Helen Gardiner

THEA Dates for your Diary

The next Study Day at Reaseheath will be **Friday 30th October**. Speakers and the detailed programme will be announced in the Autumn Newsletter.

Our February Study Day will be **Friday 19th February 2021**. Speakers and the detailed programme will be announced in the Winter Newsletter.

There will be a special extra study day on **Friday 2nd July 2021** when our guest speaker will be Chris Beardshaw. The detailed programme will be announced in the Spring 2021 Newsletter.

Get those dates in your diary now!

Gardening Courses at Reaseheath for 2020

At this time all face-to-face teaching has been cancelled at Reaseheath college so it is unlikely that any of the planned short courses will run. If there is any change to the situation, we will let you know.

Horticultural Enthusiasts on the Internet

Just a reminder about The Horticultural Enthusiasts’ Association web site - please take a look at <https://horticulturalenthusiasts.org.uk/>.

The website contains a blog with the latest news from THEA. In addition, there are a series of other pages:



- ABOUT which gives you the history of THEA with details of how to join
- EVENTS which gives the details of study dates and other events
- GARDEN VISITS where all details of planned garden trips will be published
- NEWSLETTERS where all the newsletters and other publications will be stored for easy access
- Finally, there is a page PRIVACY where we have published our information privacy statements

Please take a look; we are always keen to hear your views. Any suggestions for improvements? Any articles of horticultural interest which you might like us to share with people?

Also, if you have an interest in web design or social media and you would like to give us a hand updating and improving the site, please get in touch. Just email us at horticultural.enthusiasts@gmail.com



And don't forget, for those of you who use Facebook, we have a Facebook group where we can share horticultural information, ideas, events and questions. This is a closed group so only THEA members will be able to see what we discuss. Search groups for "[the horticultural enthusiasts' association](#)" or click on <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1929657067361737/>