

West Yorkshire Group Newsletter



The group's first 2014 summer evening visit was to the stunning Bridge Farm House garden, which radiates around these impressively wide borders adjacent to the house.

Summer 2014

Welcome to the Summer 2014 Newsletter

A Quick Look Back at a Busy Spring

There was a busy start to the year with the Group participating in a promotional event held at RHS Harlow Carr in April. It ran over 3 days and was supported by a range of specialist gardening societies. The Group was cheek by jowl with sweetpea, hosta, day lily, and dahlia experts so as well as an opportunity to promote the HPS those who attended were also able to boost their own knowledge.



Sally Robinson and Pat Inman alongside the Group's display

Next on the events programme was the Harrogate Spring Flower Show, always a super event but of course it requires a lot of forward planning and plant tending. See pages 3, 4 for photos of the award-winning stand. To support attendance at promotional events the Group raises funds through the Plant Auctions. Wowing the crowd and encouraging the bargain hunters to part with their cash at the Spring Plant Auction in May Alan Wilson did another sterling stint as auctioneer. The Group raised over £900 - and your next-buying opportunity will be the Autumn Auction on Friday 10 October.



Alan Wilson does a super job as auctioneer at the Group's Spring and Autumn Plant Auctions, which are vital fundraisers.

A sneaky preview for next year's evening garden visits when we hope to view longstanding member Gill Evans' gorgeous spring garden, here at its peak.



Spring Lectures

The programme of speakers over the winter and into spring was lively, with lots of practical advice about good growing and beautiful hardy plants.

In March Bob Brown and his son drove up from their Worcs nursery, Cotswold Garden Flowers, to entertain and entice us. They brought a range of interesting plants for sale, which disappeared over the course of the evening.



Photo courtesy Pat Inman

The sales table was busy in all the breaks

Bob is one of the RHS plant trial experts and he willingly shares his knowledge and opinions. He spoke to us about geraniums, advocating restraint and discrimination. He reeled off lists of geraniums - smallest flowered, sparsest flowered, those with least impact, least hardy, most weedy growth - all illustrated with photos. Although there are many geraniums for varied situations he made a plea to restrict your garden choice to 5 geraniums, 'five is enough even in a large garden'.

He does have a favourite - Geranium 'Rozanne', because it's least pink! But also because its growth season allows the space to be utilised by spring flowering plants alongside the summer-flowering Rozanne, which doesn't start into growth till mid-May. No wonder it's the RHS's Best Plant of the 20th Century.



Photo courtesy Sandra Tesseyman

One of Sandra Tesseyman's five geraniums has to be Geranium palmatum, which has glorious foliage as well as flowers that stand above the foliage when blooming.

In April we met the new curator at Harlow Carr, Paul Cook. He moved to Harlow Carr from Ness Botanic Gardens, Cheshire where he was curator for 11 years. His knowledge of the history of Ness and its plants was phenomenal. After hearing his talk I feel sure his appointment to Harlow Carr bodes well for future development there.

Another Cracking Stand Loved by Visitors

The educational theme for our stand at Harrogate Spring Show was 'pH and Garden Practice'. There were items on display to show how the pH of the soil can be affected by various preparations and mulches.

The main stand had a display of spring flowering



The Spring Flower Show team for 2014

and foliage plants, with collections of plants grouped to show those that thrive in acid or alkaline conditions. The colour palette of plants on display within each section was extraordinary in its breadth demonstrating that beauty does not have to be sacrificed whatever the pH of the soil.

The team was led by Allan and Shirley Mitchell, with Brian Denison, who worked on and set up the scientific and educational display. The supporting team members were Gloria Downey, Colin and Rena Gutteridge, Elizabeth Hall and Frances King.

The judges awarded a Silver Gilt Medal for the stand. Many thanks for the support of all members.

Shirley and Allan Mitchell



Many visitors to the stand gazed in awe.



The acid to neutral half of the flowering display.



The educational display was vibrant.



The neutral to alkaline half of the display.

Summer Evening Visits

Our first summer evening visit was to the absolutely inspiring Bridge Farm House near Selby. It's a very large garden that's been developed over just 12 years by Barbara and Richard Ferrari. There's excellent use of hedging to divide the flat site into a garden of many beautiful surprises. Here is a selection of members with plants they found particularly engaging.



Liz Hall was not the only one to enjoy these captivating orchids.



Maggie Youdan loved the giant Heuchera 'Harry Hay' particularly in combination with the knautia and Gladiolus byzantium.



Kate van Heel was a big fan of the orlaya.



Brian Denison enjoyed the vibrant colour combination of the physocarpus and the geum.



John Kenny is in a euphorbia phase and thought this clump of Euphorbia wulfenii was terrific.



Jill Lister was impressed with the gorgeous colour of this iris. Fantastic cornus in the background too.

The second summer evening garden visit was to The Old Vicarage in Whixley, home of Bridget and Roger Marshall. The Marshalls have lived here since the mid-60s when they bought the property in a derelict state. Over the years they rebuilt the house and outbuildings and constructed a glorious garden, full of roses and numerous other delights on the evening of our visit.



Ruth Baumberg and the Dianthus carthusianorum with it's glowing flower colour.



Geraldine McHugh and husband found a quiet corner at Bridge Farm House.





Stars in My Eyes by Pat Clarke

Here are some of my garden stars, plants that I could not do without, which have impact on the garden, have stayed with me for many years ie they are not iffy and are not too hackneyed.

Cornus 'Norman Hadden' AGM. I bought this on the WYG trip to Wales in 2001. The bus drew up at what proved to be the magical garden of ninety year old Miss Brown. She was travelling in Canada but had left the housekeeper to welcome us. The garden sloped down from the road to the sea: first impression was gazing down at the breathtaking pink bracts of the cornus in the foreground. Next day we visited Aberconwy Nursery and there discovered that cuttings of the cornus had been propagated. I wasn't the only one who clutched a little plant to my bosom. Now 15ft high it never fails to perform with real wow factor that lights up the garden.



Rosa x odorata 'Mutabilis'



Abutilon vitifolium 'Tennants White' towers above the arch.

Abutilon vitifolium 'Tennants White' AGM is next on my list. For 6 weeks it is thickly covered in large white blossoms. It has grown to 14ft, and is the brightest star in my firmament. It is the most undemanding of plants, it needs no pruning, no feeding, no watering, and the blooms drop off instead of turning brown and clinging on.

Cercis canadensis 'Forest Pansy' AGM. The only fault that I can find with this beauty is that it is late into leaf, not getting going until May. The wait is so worthwhile though as the dark purple heart-shaped foliage is a delight all summer and then it turns a stunning scarlet in autumn before leaf drop. A slow grower, quite a bonus when your garden is over planted, and it has real poise.

Rosa x odorata 'Mutabilis' AGM. A healthy rose, lovely foliage, really floriferous, the colour of the flowers is remarkable. They open from slender pointed buds of vivid orange opening to a pale chamois within while the flame of the bud continues on the outside. After pollination they change to coppery pink, which changes to crimson. A first flush at the end of May and through June, another flush in August, and from mid-September there is another flush with intermittent flowers until winter sets in.

Omphalodes cappadocica 'Cherry Ingram' AGM. I love this plant to bits, it thrives in my heavy clay. It produces great pools of blue flowers for a good six weeks in April/May, will take shade, is easy to propagate and all it ask for is the removal of the over-wintering leaves to show off its beauty.

Deutzia setchuenensis var. *corymbiflora* AGM. This shrub is the epitome of elegance. It waits till the other deutzia have finished flowering before the clusters of unopened white buds come into bloom, the blossom lasts through July into August. It isn't the easiest plant to propagate but if you see it for sale don't hesitate.

Paeonia suffruticosa 'Renkaku'. No AGM for this treasure, perhaps because, this oh so beautiful tree peony with its large, semi-double white tissue paper petals surrounding a mass of golden stamens is somewhat allergic to rain. Also known as 'Flight of Cranes' its long awaited blooms are simply breathtaking with their foil of dark green copper burnished foliage, but come a heavy shower and the petals start to go brown and you have to look forward to next May.

Art in the Garden



Denise Dyson and husband Paul opened their garden to members 2 years ago and last summer they allowed the Newsletter a return visit. Although small, the garden is home to a veritable army of plants that all do their duty most admirably. The colour and range of plants is magnificent. Another of Denise's hobbies is painting and it is clear that her artistic skill is used in the garden, placing plants of form and colour that work beautifully together.

The couple moved to the garden, close to Harrogate town centre, in 2007. A lot of renovation was initially required with large fir trees to remove. Denise replanted, carefully choosing a number of small trees including 2 apples and a plum, for height. Height is also gained through the careful siting of arches, while a clever narrow pergola built on to the side of the garage adds another interesting dimension and an opportunity to focus on white flowering plants and variegated foliage.

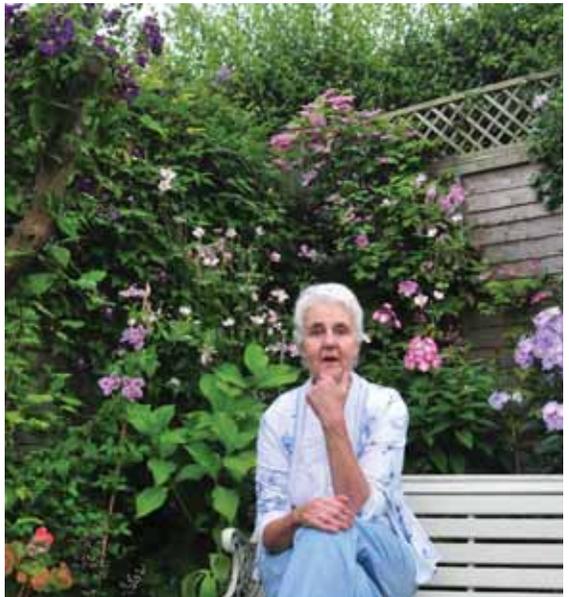
Clematis is a passion with 32 labels ‘collected’ by Denise. ‘Prince Charles is a great specimen but Princess Diana won’t flower’, states Denise, keeping a straight face. A clever gardener has clear objectives - sometimes known as likes and dislikes. Denise is not a fan of grasses but ‘I’ll go as far as hostas’. She has restricted the colour palette in the back garden allowing more freedom - including orange - in the front garden.



Pots are used to great effect all around the garden with an interesting collection at the front entrance to the house. This is partly for practical reasons - previous occupants laid a very stout crazy paving that’s not easy to remove - but pots are also exciting, giving Denise the chance to experiment with colour and shape.



Since our visit Paul and Denise have moved, so Denise has gained another exciting development opportunity with a new garden on the opposite side of Harrogate on which to work her artistic magic.



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