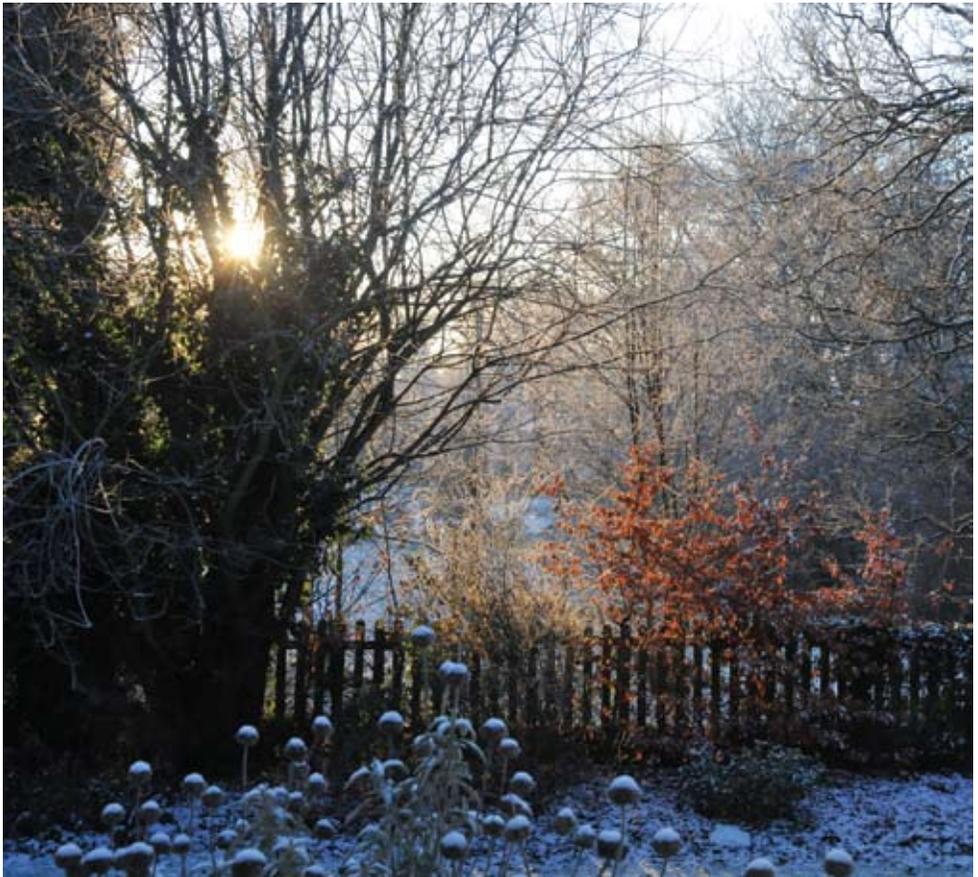


West Yorkshire Group Newsletter



Snowy Phlomis fruticosa (Jerusalem sage) waiting for the winter sun to reach it

Winter 2013–14

Welcome to the Winter 2013/14 Newsletter

Gardening is a great hobby/passion/obsession not least because, even at this time of year when we endure shorter day length, variable weather and the cold, there is the promise of spring. Choosing seeds from catalogues, coaxing hyacinths into bloom for Christmas or concentrating on houseplants are all part of the gardening cycle that has us hooked. Web browsing is another activity to help indulge your gardening passion in winter.

Your WYorks group has now got its

own website, thanks to Chris Platt with help from Wendy Platt, Pat Inman, Ruth Baumberg and myriad others who have contributed information and photos. View the new site at – www.wyhps.co.uk

Another of this season's pleasures is remembering the visits made to fabulous gardens in the company of fellow HPS members through 2013. This issue of the newsletter will help you do that, but you can also re-live 2013 highlights at the slide show being held at Paxton Hall, Headingley on Friday 10 January 2014.

Until then enjoy a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



WYorks Group AGM – Friday 10 January 2014

It's that time of year again – Christmas and New Year will come and go, and then what do we most look forward to? Yes, you're quite right – the HPS West Yorkshire Group AGM!

No, I haven't completely lost my marbles (at least I don't think I have), but as we are required to hold an AGM, we might as well make it as pleasant an experience as possible. It is the opportunity to review, both in words and pictures, the many events of 2013 and to look forward to 2014. It is also the time when the officers of the Group are elected. May I remind you that the officers – Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer – are annual appointments, so if you wish to nominate someone for any of these roles, please seek their agreement and then let Pat Inman or me know by 3 January 2014.

There are some changes to the committee that we already know about which will result in there being at least one vacant seat. If you feel that you would like to be more actively involved in the group and would be prepared to join the committee, again please let Pat or me know by 3 January. After the business meeting there will be a photographic account of the Group's activities throughout 2013, which we hope will rekindle happy memories of the year gone by. I look forward to seeing you on January 10.

Sue Gray, Chairman

Summer Garden Visits: Part 2

One of the first gardens we visited last summer was that of member Carol Newbould. Carol has been gardening on the edge of Otley for 15 to 20 years and says her garden has 'just evolved'. I hope mine 'evolves' in the same way!

Carol's garden is small but perfectly formed: jam-packed with exquisite plants and combinations. She went through a phase of winning 'Otley in Bloom'; this lasted quite a few years, but the challenge of priming the garden for judges who appeared just one day a year eventually lost its appeal.

Winning garden competitions does take a huge amount of effort and plantsmanship. Carol obviously spends time nurturing her plants to keep them in tip top condition. She is not afraid to experiment either and is constantly trying new plants and groupings. Plants in pots were much in evidence and every space was utilised, including the vertical.



Carol in her front garden, which was awash with spring colour.



A sidepocket in the garden uses surrounding trees to expand the vista.



Looking back towards the house gives an idea of the lushness of the planting. Colour is provided by foliage as well as flower

James and Freda Fonquernie's garden was similarly a suburban paradise. It's a 'standard' one-third acre level plot overlooking fields at the rear, but over the years the Fonquernies have added features, some of which were major landscaping undertakings, and many of which were major DIY projects.

James is an enthusiastic and prolific DIY-er and the garden is full of seating areas. He's also a collector of artefacts, who delights in sharing facts and figures. He has built a 'garden shed' collection of household appliances from bygone years. It was fascinating to look at them in the company of others who were remembering items they'd not thought of for years: 'my mother/grandmother/auntie had one of those' was heard a lot.

One of my favourite spots was at the field boundary, where the garden level has been raised, with two sets of steps up to elevated seating areas from which a waterfall melodiously fills a pond below. Completely built by the couple, it is a great spot to sit and eat cream scones.



Photo courtesy Pat Inman

This is the cake-eating seating area



Looking towards the cream tea-eating seating, above the waterfall constructed by hand by Freda and James

Going on a Summer Holiday: Part 2

The Group's 2013 Summer Gardens Tour was based in Canterbury, at the comfortable and peaceful university campus up on a hillside overlooking the town.

Highlands, Canterbury by Ruth Baumberg

This garden was an interesting contrast to the previous rather confined (some said 'claustrophobic') small town garden that afternoon. It was large – two acres – on a sweeping hillside adjoining the university campus boasting immaculate lawns with stripes apparently visible from the air on GoogleMaps. There was shade and sun, and the whole flowed gracefully with large island beds à la Alan Bloom of Bressingham Gardens and it had a period 1970's air. Appropriate for a 1960's house!

Not that there weren't some modern plants too – a *Crinodendron hookerianum* AGM in full flower and a similarly luscious *Cornus* in bloom, *Erysimum* 'Apricot Twist', but there was a heather garden, conifers, a rose bed of hybrid teas all neatly pruned, an azalea bed and plenty of traditional herbaceous perennials, though not particularly colour-coordinated. There

was also an elaborate pond and waterworks with neat hard landscaping around it, including an alpine border with a bright blue *Sisyrinchium bellum* (blue eyed grass) in flower.

Some of us even saw

a fox on one of the outer paths apparently encouraged by the owner to keep down the rabbits which were such a feature of the university campus. We even passed a bees' nest in a tree on the boundary and the bees and hoverflies (my especial interest) were there in droves. From the top path there was a distant view into Canterbury and a glimpse of the cathedral.



Sisyrinchium bellum, the 'blue eyed grass'



Form and Function - sweeping lawns, flower beds and the compost heap, deliberately placed in a central spot for ease of use

Photo courtesy Ruth Baumberg

Photo courtesy Ruth Baumberg

Mounts Court Farmhouse, Acrise by Frances King, Gloria Downey and Maggie Sugden

Having visited Mounts Court Farmhouse six weeks previously in late spring, we were looking forward to the changes in the season and were not disappointed. On arrival we were greeted with a wild flower meadow, the ox-eye daises floating in the breeze. The garden had grown and blossomed in all areas. There wasn't anywhere that we didn't rave over. As you arrive at the garden you are ushered into a neat and well-designed courtyard facing the front door. A standard *Photinia x fraseri* 'Red Robin' AGM was placed either side, rather an unusual choice for a standard but executed beautifully, as was all the other topiary in the garden. The planting was very formal but with some very interesting plants that billowed over the paving squares.

You then moved into the garden where Mrs. Fish likes to talk to the group visiting, but on the way passed a grass path with herbaceous either side. We would have liked to explore there really, but it had to wait, and as polite gardeners, followed Mrs. Fish where she gave us a very informative and interesting talk about how she arrived at the farmhouse from Australia over 30 years ago and began making a garden out of a farm field.

The garden was not divided into rooms as such, but there were several very distinct areas that flowed from one to the other, so you did not miss anything. The area in front of the french windows was paved and had a *Clematis* 'Kingfisher' in a pot and flowering profusely which we all admired. In front of this was a pair of frames



One of the most important areas of the garden – the plant sales area.

supporting new wisterias which will be spectacular in time to come.

You could then move onto a wilder area where there was a natural pond which was planted accordingly and a beautiful purple *Iris ensata* AGM which caught our attention.

Moving back towards the house, there was another courtyard area where we could sit to have our refreshments, surrounded with very interesting plants especially a clematis growing up a trellis by the gate;

it turned out to be 'The President'. By the steps was a vivid blue plant which we all debated and finally Mrs. Fish told us it was a *Cynoglossum nervosum*, another plant on the wish list.

It was a garden filled with special and interesting plants, and Mrs. Fish was in great demand identifying them for us. I think everyone enjoyed this visit and especially those who had been on the National HPS trip earlier in the year.

Goodnestone Park Gardens, Kent by Sally Robinson

Lady Fitzwalter met us at the gates and gave a very brief outline of the garden, so we had maximum time to enjoy the grounds. Setting off to the woodland area, the variety of trees was fantastic and the *Cornus kousa* were in full bloom, as was the tulip tree. I could have spent all day wandering in there but dragged myself out to the herbaceous garden. Before you get through the small gate your nose knew there were roses. When you moved

through they were in abundance, along with the peonies and herbaceous clematis. The central section has a rill, which is positioned perfectly to reflect the village church on a still day; some people just have vision when planning a garden.

Back to the stable block for tea and an excellent shortbread, with a vow to tell everyone about this overlooked garden and to return.



The famous view of rill and church

Sissinghurst, Cranbrook by Annie Hales

So much has been written about Sissinghurst, and now the daunting task of finding even more words to describe our visit falls to me. The history has been well-documented and it's quite true that the gardens are simply spectacular. The superlatives I've heard are: 'fabulous', 'superb' and 'wonderful' (to quote just a few), accompanied by an awful lot of indrawn breath, especially on viewing the White Garden for the first time. Regrettably the sun let us down on this day and we narrowly missed a shower just before our arrival, also it was a little cooler than we'd become used to, so perhaps not the very best of viewing conditions. But this was well worth putting up with as we had the whole place to ourselves – what a treat. However, it was straight down to business and off to the Plant Sales. What a choice; not many of us managed to escape with the contents of our purses intact. Another treat for some of our number was that the new

Head Gardener (Troy Scott Smith) came out and generously gave us some of his time. All this, and we ended our day with a superb meal of salmon, finishing with a choice of meringue with fruit or strawberry shortcake – both with the obligatory cream of course. What a lovely way to spend our final evening in the delights of Kent. If you've never been there, next time you're within 50 miles of Sissinghurst it's a 'must' for your diary.



Photo courtesy Sue Grey



Photo courtesy Wendy Platt

Bromley Hall, Standon, Ware by Christine Perkins and Carole Vernon

Our final day: The coach is packed with more plants than luggage – the back seat has been transformed into a mini garden. A dull start with a little drizzle which changed to lovely sunshine as we arrived at Bromley Hall, a sixteenth century farmhouse set in 4.5 acres.

We were warmly welcomed by Julian and Edwina Robarts who have been gardening here for almost fifty years. The garden is the highest point in Hertfordshire and trees have been planted and walls built to provide shelter. A gravel drive softened with plants around troughs of flowers opened up into a beautiful traditional English garden. The curved sides of the semi-walled garden had borders filled with shrubs, perennials and annuals and threading through them, a tapestry of poppies in delicate shades of pink and lilac with a sundial placed in the centre of the lawn. Beyond the walled garden was a row of yews with an amazing bed of yellow hues, which left Sally lost for words. Opposite was an orchard leading

to a vegetable garden, immaculate and obviously very productive.

Tea and cakes were served in the old barn, which featured wonderful timberwork on the inside and a luscious pink rose framing the doorway. Roses and flowering shrubs were in abundance and there were pots around the house bursting with agapanthus covered in buds. Clever planning ensured that no plant was vying for space.

The garden was very peaceful, with the only sounds coming from the bees and the birds. As we reluctantly left the garden, the last treat was the heavily-flowered variegated tulip tree. Thanks to Sally for arranging a great trip once again.



The Elms, North Leverton, Nottinghamshire by Margaret Hayton

The last day and our last garden but first we have to thank our nearly new (and hopefully permanent) coach driver, Andy, by presenting him with an *Iris siberica* appropriately called 'Andy Dandy'. Andy responded by saying, 'If you ever meet my wife, she thinks I work really hard driving when I'm away, so don't tell her I enjoy these holidays!'

The description of 'The Elms' in the Yellow Book had us all expecting a jungle densely packed with musa, cannas and palms proliferating. We were wrong! The garden was very open with lawns predominating, upon which had been built decking and paved areas in a Mediterranean style, with hammocks, large ceramic urns and just a few specimen pots tastefully arranged. It seems it all started because the owner's son asked his father, Tim, to build a barbecue. Then it grew like

Topsy – all constructed by Tim, who is not a builder. Memo to self: Find a man who can do these things!

The atmosphere was very relaxing and reminiscent of holidays in the sun. Palm, yuccas, an ancient olive tree, etc grow outdoors all year and have survived the last two bad winters. The cannas however are removed to a warm garage for winter storage, along with tender plants in pots such as plumbago, which go in a greenhouse. Tim said he now has fewer plants than he did, not through losses from the weather but because he feels it makes a more dramatic statement with fewer pots and a more minimalistic style. I agreed.

Finally, thanks must go to Sally for organising yet another wonderful garden tour with super accommodation. Roll on next year.



Cheshire Day Trip by Pat Inman

First stop at Cheshire, HPS members Elaine and Martin Land, who made us most welcome at Hill Top Avenue in Cheadle, Hulme. Elaine is what we most enjoy, a plantaholic like the rest of us. It's always amazing just how many plants we manage to fit in, and her one-sixth of an acre had some beauties! A lovely wall basket greeted us on entering the fairly narrow but long back garden, lime petunias, purple and lilac verbenas and crimson geraniums harmonised beautifully. Shrubs, roses and clematis mingled with herbaceous plants, filling every inch of space.

Especially admired was a luxuriant *Diascia personata* hovering over a super *Agastache* 'Raspberry Summer' (from Dove Cottage) whilst nearby a large clump of *Delphinium* 'Alice Artindale' looked most statuesque. Originally discovered by one Ted Baker, who worked on the nursery of William Artindale and Son of Sheffield (nurserymen, florists and floral decorators) in the first half of the 20th century, he named it after Alice, wife of John Artindale. Further down, the garden ended in a shady area with a well-placed arbour in which to escape the sun that had by now broken through. Carl and Margaret Denton had a lovely surprise on discovering that one of Elaine's friends, wielding the teapot, was none other than Carl's sister! Delicious cakes with our cuppas were thoroughly enjoyed.

On to Arley Hall where we all enjoyed lunch, the magnificent garden and well-stocked

nursery, before heading a few miles to Chris and Maurice Everett's lovely garden at Wood End Cottage, Northwich – a delightful sloping garden of about half an acre leading down to a natural stream, backed by mature trees. By the stream was a wonderful deepest pink *Filipendula rubra* 'Venusta'? amongst the astilbes; Chris said it was in the garden when they moved in. The mixed herbaceous beds were a riot of colour, backed by statuesque delphiniums (Maurice takes charge of these). The *Salix exigua* was much admired and Chris says it never suckers (I wish mine didn't!). Delicious refreshments again, three lovely gardens and we were on our way back to Leeds.



Photo courtesy of Pat Inman

Riotous colour at Wood End Cottage

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Next Issue:

More photos of our June visit to Great Dixter and the Secret Gardens of Sandwich