

# SUFFOLK GROUP JOURNAL

Spring 2021



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*The cover photo is of Engleheart Daffodils at Columbine Hall.*

# CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

*MAGGIE THORPE*

When I wrote in our Autumn Journal I never expected this beastly Covid disease to last as long as this and I sincerely hope that you have all managed to stay safe.

We are keen to keep in touch with you all and are missing the opportunity of seeing each other at Stowupland. Darren Andrews books all our speakers and Central Office assists by making their talks available on Zoom. We have just had a wonderful zoom talk on “Butterflies” by Peter Eeles, their life cycle and their food plants. To book any of these Zoom talks, go to our website [www.suffolkplantheritage.com](http://www.suffolkplantheritage.com) for the link or, alternatively, go straight to Central Office website [www.plantheritage.org](http://www.plantheritage.org) Some of the talks will be free to members and a few will have a small charge of £4/£5. Rest assured we shall be back to our regular meetings just as soon as possible. Do make sure you book to see Alan Gray talking on 'Plant Combinations' on 27 March.

Our Plant Fair is scheduled to take place in May, (30th and 31st) this time for two days with entry only by ticket. Of course this is dependent on Government guidelines nearer the time. Two days will make it possible for more people to obtain tickets for different time slots on each day enabling social distancing. Do book your tickets early (from April) by going on line to Helmingham's website [www.helmingham.com](http://www.helmingham.com)

We shall need many helpers to cover both days so would welcome your offers. Free passes will be issued to helpers. To volunteer please contact: Linda Weeks [linda.weeks2@aol.co.uk](mailto:linda.weeks2@aol.co.uk)

If you have photos of your garden, do send them to our Journal Editor, Rosie Ansell. She might like to use them in future journals. [rosieansell@aol.com](mailto:rosieansell@aol.com)

## **GARDENERS QUESTION TIME**

**W**e have set up a panel so that you can send in your gardening questions for advice and help. Just email me or write and I will forward your question to the member of the team best suited to help. See back page of Journal for my address and email.

## **MESSAGE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

*ISOBEL ASHTON*

We have missed our talks and being able to meet you at Stowupland, though there is much going on at Plant Heritage.

I trust you are managing to keep an eye on events and webinars from emails sent to members nationally and from me ([secretary@suffolkplants.org.uk](mailto:secretary@suffolkplants.org.uk)); also through the National website, and those at Suffolk Plant Heritage and other county groups. Many excellent county organised webinars are available to all members.

If you are not receiving Plant Heritage e-mails, please do check we have your latest address and, because they are usually sent out to multiple addresses, you may wish to check your e-mail preferences. Thank you those who have recently provided an up-dated e-mail address.

We welcome several new members: Ron and Gina Fryer in Eye, Penny Price of Britten-Pears Arts, Naomi Kilby - Capel St Mary and Sarah Castle, Framlingham.

**Contributions for the Autumn  
Suffolk Group Journal wanted by  
31st July 2021. Please send to  
[rosieansell@aol.com](mailto:rosieansell@aol.com)**

# COLLECTION REPORT

Suffolk Collection Holders have all managed during this difficult time and have kept their collections going.

## SUFFOLK'S NATIONAL COLLECTIONS 2021

Aesculus Robert Grimsey, 01728 685203	Framlingham
Dianthus (Malmaison), Dianthus (Perpetual) Jim Marshall, 01473 822400	Shelley
Disporopsis, Disporum & Prosartes Helen Chen, 07805 238680	Bures
Dryopteris, Equisetum Anthony Pigott, 01449 766104	Stowmarket
Erysimum (Perennial) Simon Weeks, 01986 784348	Walpole
Euonymus, Rhus, Toxicodendron Rupert Eley, Place for Plants, 01206 299224	East Bergholt
Hosta Melanie Collins, Mickfield Hostas, 01449 711576	Stowmarket
Impatiens Will Purdom, team.botanico@gmail.com	Beccles
Iris (Sir Cedric Morris) Sarah Cook, 01473 822400	Shelley
Iris (Sir Michael Foster) Lucy Skellorn, 07730 507900	Stowmarket
Narcissus (Rev. G. Engleheart) Darren Andrews, 01473 822987	Dispersed
Plants named for Ellen Willmott Nick Stanley, 01473 757585	Witnesham
Santolina Jon Rose, Botanica, 01728 747113	Campsea Ashe
Suffolk Garden Plants Hayley Churchyard, Suffolk Punch Trust, 01394 411327	Hollesley

# SPRING PLANT FAIR IS LATE MAY BANK HOLIDAY SUNDAY 30 AND MONDAY MAY 31



Helmingham Hall and Suffolk Plant Heritage have decided to trial a 2 day Plant Fair over the late May Bank Holiday. The Spring Plant Fair attracts a large number of visitors, and running the event over two days will enable us to keep to social distancing regulations at the same time as ensuring as many people as possible are able to attend. Entry will be by pre-booked tickets only, bookings will commence in Mid April, and will be advertised on the Helmingham website: [www.helmingham.com](http://www.helmingham.com)

We look forward to seeing you at our conservation island there.

## PLANTS OF DISTINCTION

Plants of Distinction is a local family run seed company based at Framsdon near Stowmarket. Members of Suffolk Plant Heritage can order seeds from them at a 50% discount on the catalogue price.

Catalogues can be obtained by calling the Order Hotline and Customer Service No. 01449 721720. Seed orders can be posted using the order form in the catalogue and applying a 50% discount to the seed price, but the postage and packing cost is **not** discounted. The website has a greater selection of seeds than can be found in the catalogue together with a selection of bulbs and plants.

The discount code shown below must be written on the order. Orders may be placed on the hotline number shown above and again the discount code must be quoted when placing the order. If you place your order via their website [www.plantsofdistinction.co.uk](http://www.plantsofdistinction.co.uk) and enter the discount code the discount will be applied automatically.

The discount code, **for seeds only**, is SPH50 and can be used until 31/7/2021.

## **PROPAGATION GROUP PROPAGATION @ BROOK FARM**

As soon as it is possible for us to meet, we will. Hopefully there will be some advance notice.

I will be running two mornings per month, with a maximum of 6 people each time. This way we should keep on top of everything.

I will email everyone with the dates nearer the time.



### **Plant Centre - Open During Lockdown Deliveries and collections also available**

Specialist Plant Centre stocked with an extensive range of plants for all gardens from trees and shrubs, including fruit to climbers, roses, herbaceous, ferns, grasses, alpines and herbs. Garden sundries, pots, compost gifts and vouchers.

**Plant Centre open daily 10am – 4pm  
Café and Garden – see website for opening times**

**The Place for Plants, East Bergholt Place, Suffolk CO7 6UP  
Tel: 01206 299224 E-mail: [sales@placeforplants.co.uk](mailto:sales@placeforplants.co.uk)  
[www.placeforplants.co.uk](http://www.placeforplants.co.uk)**

## **RICHARD'S GARDEN SUPPLIES**

I have been asked by several members if I can supply them with various items by post or by collection from my home in Sudbury. I am happy to supply small and fairly light items by post, with postage being the only additional cost. Large or heavy items would have to be collected from Sudbury. Any enquiries about your requirements, i.e. price or availability and payment should be made to me on 01787 372603 any evening between 6pm and 9pm.

*Richard Mountstephen*

# HISTORIC AND RARE NARCISSUS FOR MEMBERS

On the following pages you will find a number of daffodils we have for sale. These bulbs will be either in flower, or coming into flower when you buy them. They would normally have been sold at our open days, and other group events but because of Covid-19 restrictions we are unable to meet.

The March edition of Gardens Illustrated will feature an article written by Alys Fowler about our National Collection of Narcissus bred by Rev'd Engleheart. Here is your opportunity to buy some of these cultivars for your own garden.

To buy any of them, please get in touch with me, Anne Tweddle either by phone 01473 737337 or email [anne@tweddle1.co.uk](mailto:anne@tweddle1.co.uk), and place your orders.

All the daffodils offered here are historic, bred before 1930, and rare. Many of them exhibit the characteristics of old daffodils, and will add charm and grace to your garden. Many are also scented.

Page 1 lists the Narcissus from our National Collection. The following pages lists cultivars by a variety of breeders, but all early pre 1920. They are all rare and in need of conservation.

We have arranged for 4 possible collection points for these bulbs. Raydon, Boxford, Bury St Edmunds and Charsfield. You will be asked to collect the bulbs, when restrictions allow from the collection point nearest you.

**Payment can be made by BACS into Plant Heritage account  
Account name Plant Heritage Suffolk Group  
Sort code 30-98-31  
Account number 31113960  
or cheque to, Plant Heritage Suffolk Group,  
when collecting your pots.**



# ENGLEHEART CULTIVARS

**N. 'Albatross' Price £5.00/pot: 2 bulbs/pot**

Albatross is one of Engleheart's early successes. Bred 1897. A large spreading flower, perianth white, cup pale citron-yellow prettily frilled and conspicuously edged orange red.



**N. 'Bath's Flame' Price £4.00/pot: 3 bulbs/pot**

Large, floppy flowers with spreading perianth segments soon passing to straw-yellow. On opening, the tightly-ruffled rim of the corona has a broad band of vibrant reddish orange, which becomes narrower and more subdued as the flower develops.



**N. 'Argent' Price £4.00/pot: 4 bulbs/pot**

An informal double with rarely more than two whorls of slender, spreading, milk-white perianth and short, rich egg-yolk-yellow corona.



**N. 'Beersheba' Price £8.00/pot: 4 bulbs/pot**

A very large and showy white trumpet. Opens large, floppy flowers with spreading perianth segments soon passing to straw-yellow.



**N. 'Buttercup' Price £6.00/pot: 3 bulbs/pot**

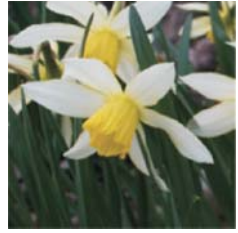
A multiheaded daffodil. Rich butter yellow perianth segments and corona. A very attractive daffodil.



# NON ENGLEHEART CULTIVARS

**N. 'Duchess of Westminster' Price £9.00/pot:  
2 bulbs/pot**

Corona a long rather slender, flanged, slightly flaring cylinder; at first warm apricot-yellow, passing to cream tinged palest buff.



**N. 'Elvira' Price £5.50/pot: 3 bulbs/pot**  
Long stemmed large flowers. Perianth pure white; corona yellow. Extra free flowering, with 3-4 flowers per stem. Multiplies rapidly.



**N. 'Emperor' Price £6.00/pot: 2 bulbs/pot**  
Endearing and distinct with dog-eared and cockled, forward-falling, sulphur-yellow perianth. Trumpet strong lemon-yellow, slightly angled; upper half flanged and gently flaring to unevenly notched, slightly ruffled rim which barely recurves.



**N. 'Mrs R.O. Backhouse' Price £9.00/pot:  
3 bulbs/pot**

The first pink daffodil, introduced in 1921. The petals are white with a small point at the tip. The corona is cylindrical and pale apricot pink with a slightly expanded and frilled mouth.



**N. 'Irene Copeland' Price £6.00/pot: 3 bulbs**  
The flower is a densely packed double on 10" stems, the outer petals a maze of white, with the inner corona segments interspersed with brilliant greenish yellow.



# NON ENGLEHEART CULTIVARS

## **N. 'Mrs Langtry' £5.00/pot: 3 bulbs/pot**

Bred by Backhouse pre 1869. Flowers slightly downward facing; perianth segments spreading, twisted, milk-white. Corona seems variable in length and always much pleated; soft lemon on opening; mouth straight; rim closely and fairly evenly ruffled.



## **N. 'Lucifer' Price £5.00/pot: 3 bulbs/pot**

Bred by Mrs Lawrenson pre 1890. Spreading milk-white perianth segments which tend to become paddle-shaped with age. Corona reddish orange at first, passing to rich orange; rim loosely ruffled. Base of corona and perianth segments stained warm apricot-yellow.



## **N. 'Sir Watkin' Price £6.00/pot: 3 bulbs/pot**

First flowered 1868. Bred by Pickford. Soft yellow petals that arch forward gracefully around a fluted, golden cup.



## **N. 'Tresserve' Price £4.00/pot: 1bulbs/pot**

Tresserve, is named for EA Willmott garden in France. Bred in 1912 by Heere Bros. The impressive size, presence and widely flared mouth are all its own.



## **N. 'Victoria' Price £9.00/pot: 2bulbs/pot**

Bred by J.H. van Veen/M. Vos(?), pre-1897 A chubby flower with a vanilla scent. Its sturdy, slightly-chiselled trumpet flares slightly to a rim of six lobes which are sometimes notched deeply apart, or even separated to the base.



# PROGRAMME OF EVENTS FOR 2021

**Saturday 27th March 2.30pm: Webinar.**

**Alan Gray: Plant Combinations**

Alan Gray is one half of the duo who created the magnificent garden at East Ruston. Less than two miles from the North Sea, surrounded by trees and hedges, the garden perfectly exemplifies what can be achieved with talent, vision and hard work.

Alan will be using his vast experience of many different plants to give us an insight into how best to combine plant forms and colour.

**Wednesday 7th April 4.30pm: Webinar.**

**Gary Carroll: Cranesbills, the hardy Geranium.**

Gary Carroll is the owner of 'Cranesbill Nursery' near Walsall. Gardening for over 15 years, Gary studied at Rodbaston Horticultural College and progressed onto a local Arboretum, a very large and busy Garden Centre. He then had his own Garden Renovation business, becoming a Gardener for a five-star hotel in Australia, to more recently being a Garden Manager at a historic National Trust property.

His aim now, is to provide the best range of Hardy Geraniums in the U.K. and beyond. All of his plants are robust sizes and aside from the Bare-Roots supplied in spring - ready to be planted straight out into your garden.

We are hopeful that our programme of autumn talks will be able to go ahead, face to face at Stowupland Village Hall. This may be subject to revision.

**Saturday 18th September 2.30pm: Stowupland Village Hall.**

**Colin Ward: Shade and semi-shade.**

Anyone who has been to Swines Meadow Farm Nursery near Peterborough will know what an extraordinary collection of rare and interesting plants can be bought there. Colin has a special interest in woodland plants and many of these make up the real rarities to be found at the nursery.

Colin is a strong believer in caring for the soil to keep his plants healthy, vital to a plantsman with such a diverse collection. His vast knowledge and experience will be evident to all.

**Saturday 23rd October 2.30pm: Stowupland Village Hall.  
Stella Exley: Camassia Calling**

Stella holds the National Collection of Camassia at her Yorkshire nursery: Hare Spring Cottage Plants. A Chelsea Gold Medal winner and appearances on Gardener's World has ensured Stella's pre-eminence in the world of Camassias.

This interesting group of plants, that span the spring to summer flowering period, are a firm favourite with designers and gardeners alike.

**Saturday 27th November 2.30pm: Stowupland Village Hall.  
AGM and Jan Michalak: Yes, but what did Linnaeus do for us?**

The AGM will open the afternoon and will be speedily followed by Jan who will give us a light-hearted look into the world of plant naming.

Linnaeus gave us the binomial system of plant classification which is still in use today. This promises to be a fascinating look at this important practice, no Latin required!



**Wootens**  
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[wootensplants.com](http://wootensplants.com)

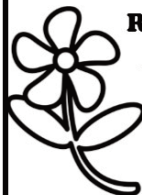
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## SUFFOLK GROUP M

Camellia x vernalis Yuletide in Ma  
Doreen Wrinch's garden in Creeting

(left) and irises in John and Marie  
House, Woolpit, Hellebores in Jane  
St James South Elmham, Cornus c  
lipsiensis in Judith Law's g





## MEMBERS' GARDENS

ery Clark's garden in Long Melford,  
g St Peter (centre), view in (bottom  
on Humphrey's garden Broomhill  
e Bastow's garden, The Laburnums,  
ontraversa Variegata and Anemone  
garden near Diss (top right).



*I am sure most of you will have heard of the death of Leslie Geddes-Brown, a long standing member of Plant Heritage and Kate Elliot, her gardener for so long, has written this lovely eulogy.*

## **LESLIE GEDDES-BROWN**

By *KATE ELLIOTT*



As many of you will know, very sadly we said goodbye to the most remarkable, special person Leslie Geddes-Brown who died at her home at Columbine Hall at the age of 78 on 19th November. She was a garden writer, a keen gardener herself as well as a witty and entertaining conversationalist.

Leslie was a huge inspiration to me and the gardens at Columbine. Leslie, alongside her husband Hew, made my dream of becoming a head gardener come true.

In 1993 she engaged the Chelsea Gold Medallist George Carter to design the gardens at Columbine Hall, the moated medieval Manor House she had bought that year with her husband Hew Stevenson. They embarked on a major restoration of both house and garden and I was so lucky to join them when I was 16 in 1997. The gardens continue to be enjoyed by many visitors and hold the Plant Heritage Dispersed National Collection of Engleheart daffodils.

Leslie started her career at 17 as a reporter on the Yorkshire Gazette & Herald where she was soon noticed by Harold Evans, the distinguished editor of The Northern Echo, who asked her to join his team. When Evans became editor of The Sunday Times, Leslie went too to become the newspaper's deputy arts editor. In 1987 she became deputy editor of Country Life and was later one of the magazine's regular columnists.

She was the author of 22 books on many subjects including gardens and decor. Her book, Gardeners' Favourite Nurseries, an opinionated listing of nurseries recommended by those who opened their gardens under the National Gardens Scheme, was published in 1999 and became a popular handbook. This was followed a year later by



Chelsea, the Greatest Flower Show on Earth, The Walled Garden in 2007, The Water Garden in 2008 and Garden Wisdom in 2009. Her book *Sweet Days and Roses* (2003) was a delightful anthology of Leslie's choice of what she considered was the best garden writing in both prose and poetry.

We miss her terribly but she will live on in her marvellous legacies - Columbine Hall and the gardens, her books, her writing and in the wonderful memories we have of her.

**A BRIEF NOTE IN PRAISE OF A RECENTLY  
REDISCOVERED AID IN THE FIGHT AGAINST  
THE DAMAGE WREAKED BY SLUGS ON  
WHOLE HOST OF VULNERABLE PLANTS.**

*MARY BJ CLARK*

Berkhya, Colchicum, Sternbergia, Orystachys all rescued... by the application of a simple piece of equipment...

In the spirit of recycling, reusing and most definitely not adding to landfill, I spent some of this Summer's unexpected additional time looking through, tidying, and making use of items in my stash of gardening equipment. Some years ago, this was enhanced by items rescued from my mother's garden shed. Now my equipment has never been tidier; a neighbour's request for emergency pots was fulfilled with unfamiliar efficiency.



Among my mother's old equipment, mostly very sturdy and made in the UK (!) were some copper rings. I had stashed these away 'somewhere safe' and forgotten about them.

Against my better judgement, among my online orders from nurseries was a Berkheya purpurea. I think these are beautiful with

the subtle colouring of the flowers and architectural shape. However, in my garden they get eaten, as unlikely as this may seem given the prickles! Anyway, I planted my new plant with that frisson of anticipation... and the slugs came and started their fiendish feeding. But I had something in my armoury that wasn't going to pollute the environment with damaging chemicals or murder any of the creatures that I so enjoy, including not even the slugs and snails.

The copper ring slipped around the plant, ensuring that no leaves were available as a way to access the plant did the trick. The plant grew and flowered; I was most impressed by the effectiveness of the copper ring. It is still in position as the new tender growth forms at soil level ready for next year's flowering.

As the seasons moved on I shifted my three rings around the garden before having a look on the web to see whether I could buy more rings, and indeed you can. I bought more direct from a firm called Slug Rings. On looking more carefully at my mother's slug deterrents I noticed that they bore the name of this very company: my mother would have bought them at least 15 years ago.



So a happy end to the slug battle begun so unsuccessfully earlier in the year using, as I usually do, sheep wool pellets to protect my young sweet pea plants. Only this year was different. The garden was very generously populated with blackbirds which were most successful in rearing large families in an environment more peaceful than usual as the restaurant garden next door remained uncannily quiet. The birds took a liking to the mats of sheep wool pellets around the sweet peas, possibly as nesting material. They repeatedly scratched up both the wool and the plants became collateral damage. Intricately woven grids of small Link Stakes were of no use whatsoever.

Next year the sweet peas will find themselves with neat copper rings as their support against voracious gastropods. The birds will have to resort to other nesting material.

# MAKING A GARDEN

JUDITH LAW

*I have visited Jude's garden a couple of times over recent years, and was very conscious it would make an excellent regular feature for our group journal. My powers of persuasion have resulted in the following first, hopefully of many, regular articles for our journal.*

ANNE TWEDDLE

I didn't garden until my early thirties when Tony and I moved to a tiny jasmine-clothed cottage on the Kent/Sussex border. With it came a cottage garden full of countless plants I could neither name nor knew how to care for. A kindly neighbour started my education by taking me to a 'little' garden just up the road. The 'little garden' was Great Dixter and it was indeed just up the road. Like many far better gardeners, as I walked up the flagstone front path to that fabled porch of potted plants through snakeshead fritillaries and camassia-spangled grass, I became a gardener in the making.

Those were the days before cannas replaced roses and I spent many hours at Dixter. Christo's books followed and from there I jumped to Beth Chatto's, to Sissinghurst, to Kiftsgate and all the wonderful array of literature, plants, plantspeople and gardens. Two other very special influences are seminal. Since moving to Suffolk, I've volunteered at Beth Chatto's and at Fullers Mill. From Beth's I learned about ecological planting, about form and foliage and ikebana inspired design and, hopefully, how to 'paint the sky' and from Fullers Mill an enormous collector's palette of plants, especially trees and shrubs and absorbed a deep sense of peace. I've also made many friends amongst the dedicated gardeners who are so generous with their time and knowledge as are the Suffolk PH prop group who have introduced me to many little treasures that now pepper my garden.

So fast forward 30 or so years and you find us standing in a very flat, ill-drained, wet, weedy, windswept Suffolk field containing a large wildish pond, complete with weeping willow, an exceptionally high water table, a *Robinia pseudoacacia*, an adolescent oak, and a cherry laurel hedge which shields us from the road. A scrappy field hedge of ash, blackthorn and hawthorn surrounds the rest of the plot and

separates us from an agricultural landscape of grain, pigs and poultry. There was not much else except a diverse seedbank lying in wait for any hint of bare soil, and a bristling population of migrant muntjac and resident rabbits.

The house is a converted, brick-built barn with single story extensions formed from timber-clad outbuildings. Attractive to the front, but a higgledy-piggledy homestead to the rear. No elegant, symmetrical, mullioned windows here to inform the design. Garden rooms and formal vistas felt inappropriate and I had neither manpower, machinery nor means to add hard landscaping. Nonetheless I felt the need to divide the space both horizontally and vertically. I also needed to slow the wind and add drainage for a veg garden. Beyond that, I was at a loss. I felt at home in the Suffolk countryside, felt in some strange way as if I'd come home, but I felt nothing for my bit of it. I felt no 'sense of place' for a long time.

We have five acres near Diss, three now contained within a deer fence put up in the second year. The house sits to the front roadside corner and the clay-lined pond comes right up to the house. House and pond, together with the remains of a pre-existing hedgerow divide the front third from the rest of the garden. From the dining area we look down the full length of this roadside axis and agreed, early on, that we wouldn't garden that view except to mow. Instead, we watch moorhens, kestrels, buzzards, voles, stoats and, in winter, a frenzy of mallards, enjoy this choice fairway and bring up their young in spring. A small garden to one side and a growing 'grandchild' tree walk have crept in at the edges but otherwise, gardening is confined to the 'back' garden where I am free to play.

Practicalities came first. My retirement present was a small greenhouse for propagation and a Dutch-light 'ratatouille' house. These were placed to the rear of the garden within the small corner I could afford to drain. A hornbeam hedge went round the drained section to provide shelter for a veg and flower garden and this became the Top garden. We also put up a wooden structure to provide shelter for young plants and for me when the heat of summer becomes too much.

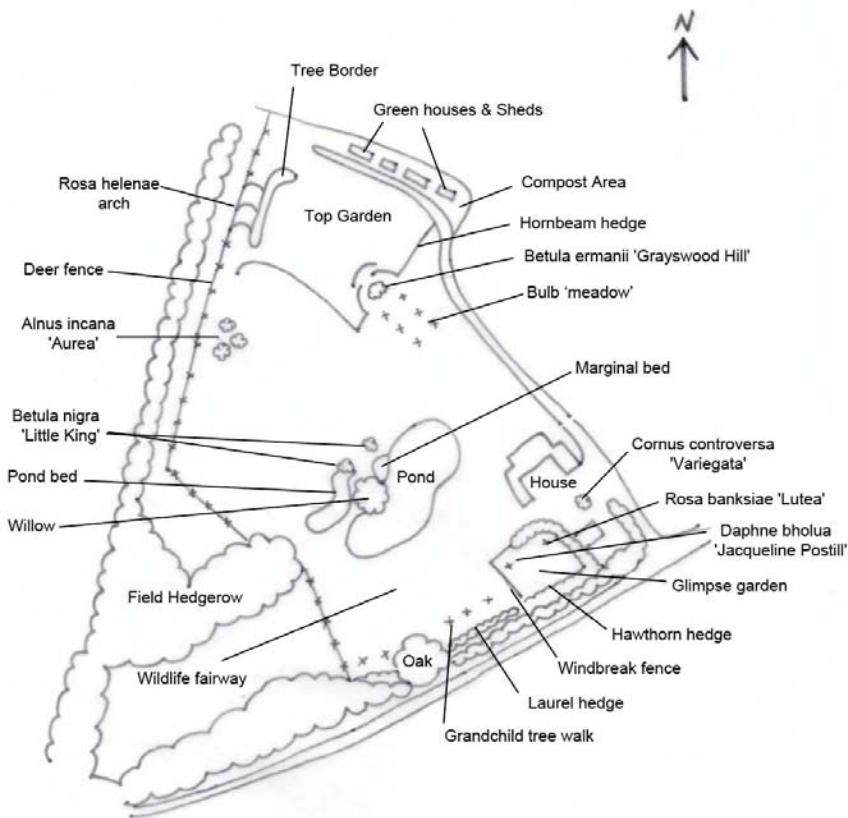
Despite this, I still felt little connection to the project. So, what

changed? Small things really; plants and trees started to demand attention and the first barrow load of my own compost was ready to use. I had many plants from my previous garden including a *Daphne bholua* 'Jacqueline Postill' which I'd snatched from the jaws of a bulldozer. Poor Jacqueline had been huddled in a pot by the house and desperately needed to be planted but where did she have a chance to survive the wind? The hornbeam hedge round the top garden, had been mauled by rabbits and wasn't yet up to the job.

To the side of the house there was a small rectangle of field enclosed on three sides by a hawthorn hedge, the garage and the laurel hedge to the road but was open to the prevailing south-westerly winds on one side. Extending the hawthorn would have been a slow remedy. So, amending an idea seen elsewhere, I used an eight foot fence of vertically slatted roof lathes to slow the wind and made a huge bed in the middle surrounded by an oval path which also formed two beds on the short sides. The Daphne eased gratefully into the soil against the slatted fence and three years on, is covered in blossom and filling the air with scent. For now, it seems happy.

The rest of the plants followed, not yet with any sense of artistry, but simply to get them planted. Editing will come later. There was though, one early bit of conscious planting, an experiment really. I've always wanted a *Rosa banksiae* but lacked the requisite 'warm' wall to ripen new growth and protect from frost. This is possibly my last garden, and so a lovely 'Lutea' found its way home in my car. It went in at the other end of the little garden to the Daphne, against the deer fence but in the lee of the hawthorn in full sun. The warmest and most sheltered spot in the garden and how it has rewarded me! It likes its relaxed training over the fence, arching down but tied loosely, and for the last two years has delighted from early April, when it is perfection in bud. Anticipation of the little double flowers is rewarded with an explosion of bloom and the spectacle continues until the very end of May when suddenly there are no more flowers. No browning relics mar the show, no deadheading required, just glossy, self-cleaning foliage. Maybe it will be short-lived but oh what glorious years it will have given.

Other 'statement' shrubby plants have gone in, a wisteria I'm training



as a standard, three *Rosa* 'Ghislaine de Feligonde', *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy' and a superb *Lonicera setifera* 'Daphnis', its exquisite winter blooms on bare, bristly branches as beautiful as a Japanese painting. These are supported by salvias, peonies, grasses, irises, dahlias and more. All 'peep' out at you through the slats of the windbreak fence, each glimpse of beauty demanding you enter for a closer look. So, the Glimpse Garden was formed and named.

Finally, I started planting trees and am so lucky to have room to plant lots. Three *Betula ermanii* 'Grayswood Hill', which you can see through the windows of the barn as you walk to the front door, went in at the entrance to the Top Garden and two naturally multi-stemmed *Betula nigra* 'Little King' went in the dampish area by the pond. Three *Alnus incana* 'Aurea' brighten spring with their pink catkins and a *Malus transitoria* sits on a dryish bank in the hope that

one day its spreading form will fill the pond with reflected blossom. Finally, in the front garden sheltered by the house, the Robinia and a scrappy Ligustrum hedge, I planted a *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata' to greet you on arrival and it thrills on every single day of the year. It is underplanted with *Anemone x lipsiensis*, whose flowers match the emerging lemon variegation of the Cornus leaves. As the tiers develop its form delights. More elegant than any statue, it offers its upturned balletic fingers with a flourish to the sky.

There is a serendipitous, doodling thread here. I am not so much designing a garden as gardening a space, trying things, moving things and having fun. Out of it all I hope a coherent garden will emerge.

So, what next. The deer fence is ugly and needs clothing or hiding, more windbreaks are needed but I don't have time for poplars. The Top garden needs dividing and planting, there are already a few trees in a 'tree border' but more trees and herbaceous planting is needed. Espaliered apples will screen the greenhouses. A sort of bulb meadow, my 'Dixter' path will hopefully accompany you as you approach the *Betula ermanii*. The soil is irretrievably fertile so, rather than coaxing yellow rattle to starve the grass, I am trialling bulbs with cultivated grasses, possibly *Molinia* 'Poul Peterson' or *Deschampsia cespitosa*, or if they don't look good early enough, maybe a grass-like, short green form of Ophiopogon with other cultivated forms of 'wild' flowers to keep the show going.

A *Rosa rugosa* hedge with mixed dark and light pink single flowers, and the odd purple hazel as a backdrop, will hopefully fragrance the walk to the greenhouses and a rather bucolic rose arch is awaiting three *Rosa helenae*. A species rose area is planned and I've started making a damp area beside the pond knowing that the damp recedes during the Suffolk summer and one day, I hope there will be enough shade for a few woodlanders - I've always wanted to grow Paris. Who knows how far along this list my energies will take me.

The next job though is to finish planting trees which will hopefully relish, or at least withstand, occasional waterlogging in the damp tree meadow and I want to try a Metasequoia hedge. Cuttings are hopefully striking.

## MAKING A NEW FEATURE

When we moved into our house nearly 12 years ago we inherited a Bramley apple tree which we think was probably planted when the house was built in 1954. It was a little overgrown (the previous occupants were not gardeners) but gave us some good crops of apples.

Within a few years, however, we realised that the tree had canker and that we would probably need to manage its decline. We wondered if, when the time came, we should replace it, or grow other sorts of apples and if so, where.



The hot summer of 2018 finished the tree off – most of the branches produced leaves which only shrivelled in the heat and only one small section looked vaguely as if it might survive, and that not for long.

Once we accepted that this was no longer a viable tree we had to decide what to do with it, marking as it did the edge of our vegetable plot, and providing a home for most of our bird feeders. We had planted a cercis Canadensis Forest Pansy opposite to balance the apple tree but that still has some way to go to match the size of its branches.

So we have decided to retain it as a feature and clothe the trunk (mostly now devoid of its bark) with climbers. We made a start with a honeysuckle - *Lonicera similis var delavayi* - bought from Tynings at Helmingham the year they came to speak to us at Stowupland. It is making a determined bid to climb as many of the branches as it can and has flowered well the last two summers.

Then I acquired a climbing rose called Wedding Day, bought cheaply at a talk from a member of the staff at Peter Beales which has also settled in well and produced a myriad of blooms last summer. We hope it will continue to climb up the tree. Lastly we have added a hop, *humilis lupulus*, which is not, so far, as vigorous as the others but is still in the game.

A friend, visiting in lockdown last year, was very impressed at the feature it has already become in our garden, and thought that she would like to paint it. The tree continues to support our bird feeders but we have still not made up our minds whether to plant some/an apple tree elsewhere in the garden.



# THE 'WILD ABOUT GARDEN' AT HULLWOOD BARN

JIM MARSHALL

*“In a rational system of flower gardening one of the first things to do is to get a clear idea of the aim of the Wild Garden” William Robinson - The English Flower Garden 1883.*

Our home is a converted barn in the Suffolk Countryside, this gave us the inspiration Sarah and I needed to decide how our garden should develop. We knew we needed a large glasshouse for my Carnations, formal beds for the wide range of ornamental plants we are interested in, and also vegetable and fruit areas.



The planners were happy with the large glasshouse, but asked for it to be screened from the road. This gave us the opportunity to plant hazels in the form of a Nuttery. Graham Stuart Thomas the author of many books, especially on old roses, and also, for many years a Garden's Advisor with the National Trust, always said “If in doubt plant a hazel”, so we took his advice. Sarah thins the growth on a regular basis, and uses everything she cuts out for 'pea sticks' and garden stakes. We were inspired by the 'Nutteries' at Upton House and Sissinghurst Castle, and underplanted the area with cowslips, *Tulipa sylevestris* and *sprengeri*, a dwarf narcissus, given to us as Bambi, a form of *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, *Narcissus tazetta* 'Canaliculatus', *Narcissus x odorus*, *Leucojum*, *Anemone nemorosa* 'Cedric Morris' and then *Colchicums* for the Autumn.

On the other side of the drive, the large area adjacent to the house was more difficult to plan. Being outside our kitchen window we wanted to maintain the view across the garden to the Oak Trees beyond. The small pond by the roadside gave us the 'clue' to go for a 'semi wild' area, which has now developed into what we call the 'Wild About Garden'.

It must have been a standing area for carts going through the barn to be unloaded because when dug the area we came across tarmac, stones, concrete etc. The first year after digging we sowed 'green manure' which we hoped would improve the soil, and give us time to consider a more permanent planting. We have tried quite a few different plants, annuals, biennials and perennials. It has changed subtly over the years. Now we have a comparatively small range of plants, mostly relying on Fullers Teasels, Hollyhocks, Foxgloves a few other self seeders and also *Crambe cordifolia* and *Ferula communis* (giant fennel). However we could not resist a few 'impact plants'. Lots of *Narcissus* 'Bath's Flame' for spring, which bulks up very quickly, followed by *Papaver bracteatum*, (Sarah was given the seed of this, when she worked at Sissinghurst by a colleague from Kew). We very much like the scarlet red flowers against the black of the barn and with the green foliage of the teasels. We add Sunflowers as 'dot' plants in the spring, giving extra seeds for the birds. It is a haven for tits, gold finches, siskins and many others. They still seem to be find seed in the teasels until mid March when the area receives its annual tidy up! Ground eating birds, such as blackbirds, thrushes, robins and chaffinches forage amongst the lower foliage.

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