



RADLETT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
**WEEDERS
DIGEST**
SUMMER 2019



A spectacular Judas Tree

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5-day visit to Warwickshire

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Southill Park House and Kathy Brown's Garden**

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and “All About Roses”**

Some forthcoming events

NEW WEBSITE at the same address: www.radletthortsoc.co.uk

Editorial

Our weather continues to confound gardeners with a lovely early spring reverting briefly to winter in mid-April and then a dry sunny May and a cold, wet and windy spell in mid-June! However, lawns are just beginning to recover from last year's drought and we expect an abundance of fine flowers on display for the Members' Garden Walkabout on Sunday 7th July 2-5 pm. With this issue, you should have received a copy of the 2019 Autumn Show Schedule, and it is time to collect subscriptions of £6 for the next three years - a bargain at £6.00 total. If you have not paid the person who delivers your magazine and know who they are it would be a great help to them if you post it through their door.

Our Chairman was embarrassed to find that he had been supplied with two different varieties for the mystery dahlia, but has been assured that they do not differ in form or growing habit, only flower colour.

ERRATA: Jane has asked me to point out two errors in this year's Yearbook:

1. The holiday to Instow will be 4 nights from 29 September 2019 and
2. The shopper bus runs on a Tuesday and not a Friday

On a personal note, I have been overwhelmed by the kind tributes and generous offers that so many members of the society have sent me since Peter died so suddenly. If I haven't got around to thanking you personally, please believe I have appreciated all of them. Thank you so much. BRC



Day Trip April 25 Anglesey Abbey, Gardens and Mill

In spite of forecast rain, 43 people joined this trip, with several welcome new faces - and it was mostly sunny! The house was a fascinating blend

of ancient and modern, and full of interesting collections.

Outside, there were several unique features: the 'Winter Garden', with its rows of immaculate white-stemmed birches; the espalier pear tree on the rear wall of the house; the 'Lightning Tree',

a giant redwood which had defied the proverb by suffering two strikes; and, for those lucky enough to find it, a magnificent 'Formal Garden' laid out entirely in tulips in Lord Fairhaven's racing colours. Altogether a splendid day out. Thanks again, Gesine.

Day Trip June 8 Southill Park

After a puzzling drive round the whole estate to find a suitable access, a comprehensive tour of this magnificent Georgian house was offered to 48 members of the Society and their U3A guests. It was designed and landscaped for the Byng family by Henry Holland in 1777 on the site of an earlier property and sold to Samuel Whitbread, the beer magnate, a descendant of whom welcomed our party. The rooms were filled with historic furniture, family portraits (many by Gainsborough) and valuable paintings including several Dutch Old Masters. The tour was so fascinating that there was barely time to set foot in the gardens.



.... and Kathy Brown's Garden

Then a brief visit to the Shuttleworth Collection for lunch, and on through winding lanes and delightful villages to Stevington for the highlight of the day - the Manor House garden created by Kathy and Colin Brown.

This inspirational area provided a treat at every turn and a seat from which to enjoy it! There were many turns, created by beautiful trees and shrub hedges, to a formal garden, a cottage garden, a wisteria walk, a winter walk, a summer dry garden and borders of peonies, roses, clematis, and poppies.

Specialties were the Edible Garden, about which Kathy has written a book, and the borders inspired by works of art. Kathy herself showed us round and then indulged us with tea and her superb cakes using edible flower ingredients. Wow! what a day!

Holiday May 19 – 23 Warwickshire

Once again leader Peggy and driver Sam chose good weather for 34 members to spend four nights at the Stratford Manor Hotel. En route we visited Sulgrave Manor the ancestral home of George Washington's family. The orchard sparkled with buttercups among the grasses and the Tudor vegetable garden contained herbs and plants like comfrey and cardoons, while the walled garden provided a colourful border.

Our Monday visit was to Upton House, where steep undulating paths proved rather daunting for some of the less mobile, but there was a great view of the "the mirror pool" from the edge of the lawn. Those who went down to the lower garden enjoyed both the pool and the more formal beds they found there.

Further interest was provided in the old squash court by an exhibition of Heal's posters, and there was an eye-catching Judas tree in the courtyard.

Being so near to the Cotswolds we had our Tuesday morning coffee while exploring Chipping Campden, one of the attractive villages typical of the region.

Then north-eastwards, via a winding lane, to Warwick to see the outcome of a rather remarkable Victorian experiment - Hill Close Gardens. The landowner had divided his land into 32 plots which he rented to townspeople as detached gardens, with hedges, paths, summer houses and even fruit trees. Some bought their plots, some sold or rented them on and some were bought by the council for housing. 16 remain, now revived and cared for by volunteers.



The next day we headed for Coughton (pronounced coat-on) Court home to many generations of Throckmortons, who were persecuted in Tudor times for their Catholic faith, but survived. There are two churches in the estate, but it is the “English” one which holds all the family’s historic monuments, the Catholic one being modern and plain. The gardens were full of flourishing herbaceous plants in bud and the courtyard held the last vestiges of a lovely tulip display.

Our route home, the “pretty way”, as Sam put it, took us near Oxford, to Waterperry Gardens, designed as a “School of Horticulture for Young Ladies”. We admired long mixed borders, a walled garden with fine irises and lupins and an orchard of espalier pear trees. We also enjoyed the pottery in the craft area and the Rural Life museum. The Saxon church had some superb embroidery.

Another marvellous holiday with thanks to Peggy the organiser and Sam the driver.



May 4 Spring Plant Sale



Numbers were slightly down from last year to 114, no doubt due to the heavy shower just before the start, but nevertheless the usual long queue of customers poured into the Scout Hut and filled many trays and boxes with their purchases. Vegetables were snapped up very quickly, and so were some of the ancient and rather tall cacti. A precious hippeastrum in full flower was damaged in the melee, but luckily the buyer wanted the corm for future years.

Members had grown a huge variety of herbaceous plants which were all neatly arranged in alphabetical order. Here too were the ever-popular bought-in, good value bedding plants, though threats of imminent frosts may have produced an element of caution among customers. Any unsold plants were taken to the Store next door ready for its opening the following day. By noon on Sunday, however, the Society was showing its best-ever result, with a profit of £905 to help stage the Autumn Show.

Outside a team of 1st Radlett Guides and their parents were serving teas, luscious-looking cakes and cookies to the throng, and boosting their funds for the overseas projects they had undertaken.

Talk March 27

What Do I Do With This Space?

45 members were charmed by Darren Lerigo's fluent and entertaining talk on the use of garden space that he had found in other cultures. First of all the audience were each given a small pellet and told not to eat it! He later explained that this was a way rice was sown in Japan, with several grains rolled into a clay ball; this dissolved and the seed germinated and spread when the rains came. (Our seeds were a flower selection).

Darren's philosophy was based on using no chemicals, recycling resources and fostering wildlife. Ideas included: planting fruit trees and bushes as well as flowers that attract pollinating insects and mulch everywhere with used compost to improve the soil. He also had several ideas for easier lawn maintenance which included sheep and goats nibbling away (and much more). Let us hope he writes a book one day.



**Darren Lerigo
at work on his
topiary**

Talk June 12

All About Roses

Despite the dreadful weather, a large audience of 57 members came to hear this talk by Jacqueline Avoilet, who had delighted us previously on the subject of

geraniums. With a clear and engaging manner, she spoke first about the history of roses, how growers discovered that while the plants would survive for a year or two anywhere in

the world, they only flourished in the particular region where they grew wild. So to make your favoured hybrid variety last for years, it must be grafted on to indigenous stock - and there were only 3 varieties of this in the UK.

As to cultivation, it was important to give your plant maximum light, so a climber must be planted 15" from a wall it was to be trained up. We were shown how to take cuttings, and given guidelines for pruning: cut young plants back hard in November, and older, taller stems by one third per year. Altogether a fascinating and enjoyable evening, and there was a fine array of plants for sale.



Some of our coming events

For full details see the Yearbook or go to www.radletthortsoc.co.uk

7 July Members' Garden Walkabout

31 July Talk: "Skulduggery in the Shrubbery"

8 August Day trip: Beth Chatto's and Green Island Gardens

7 September Autumn Flower Show

29 September Holiday: to Instow, Devon

13 November Annual General Meeting and talk:
"The Restoration of the Garden at Wimpole Hall"

24 November The Store closes at 12.00 for winter break



Holiday in Devon

29 September-3 October 19
based at The Commodore
Hotel, Instow.

We hope to include visits
to Montacute House, RHS
Rosemoor, Arlington Court and
Dyrham Park.

Only one double/twin-bed
room still available

Pictured: Tapeley Manor was
one of the beautiful gardens
visited on our holiday to Devon
last summer

Your Committee for 2019

Chairman and Yearbook Editor - Peter Hordern
Vice Chairman and Archivist - Elizabeth Wackrow
Secretary and Talks Organiser - Jane Phipps
Treasurer - Peter Breward
Show Secretary - Amanda Harvell
Assistant Show Secretary - Jane Poyser
Membership Secretary - Rachel Pearce

Talks Organiser (2020) - Andy Harvell
Trading Secretary - David Bagon
Holidays Organiser - Peggy Sjoberg
Day Trips Organiser - Gesine Latimer
Yearbook and Website Design and Production -
Dave Oswald
Publicity - Karen Kendrick

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