



# Welwyn Garden City Horticultural Society

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**Summer 2022**

[www.wgchortsoc.co.uk](http://www.wgchortsoc.co.uk)

## Our Centenary Gardening Year

### Our Society – We are Celebrating 100 Years in October!

One of the oldest societies in the Garden City, the Horticultural Society was established at a public meeting on 30 October 1922. It is therefore fitting that we will celebrate our centenary at our meeting on 11 October 2022. To mark the occasion, every member will receive a boxed, garden themed, fine china mug from the Kew Garden range. (There is a choice of three designs). In addition, members will be given a specially printed booklet chronicling the history of the Society. For those that cannot attend the October meeting, we will make arrangements to deliver your gift at a later date. Also, following the evening's talk, we will be serving wine and soft drinks instead of the usual tea and coffee so we can all raise a glass and toast the Society. Here's to the next 100 years! *Alison Ewington - Chair*



### Committee Changes

A flourishing society relies on people stepping forward and offering their help to keep everything running. We have been very lucky to have had a stable committee for quite a few years but as outlined in our last newsletter, the time has come for a bit of a reshuffle which will formally happen at the next AGM. Luckily, we are holding on to Denise and she will be taking on the role of membership secretary. We now have a joint team of Anne Freimanis and Jenny Begg who are organising outings. Anne will, thankfully, continue to produce the newsletter. We also have two volunteers Rosie has organised all the speakers on the programme up to May 2023 but Laurence and Sue will start work on the 2023/24 season.

### Membership Renewal

Subscriptions will become due on 1 September 2022 and remain at £15 per annum. If you would like to continue as a member, please let Steve Williams have your subscription either by cash or cheque. Alternatively, you can pay by BACS into the Society's bank: Account No 10733806, Sort Code 20-92-54. As it takes some time for BACS information to come through, please let him know when you have renewed your membership. We shall be issuing membership cards this year. Please contact Steve by email at [patstevewilliams@btinternet.com](mailto:patstevewilliams@btinternet.com) or on 01707 324608.

### Our 2022 – 2023 Programme

#### 13 September 2022 – I saw 10 Pests Coming over the Garden Wall - Allison Terrell

Allison is our local plant health inspector working for the Animal and Plant Health Agency, APHA, an executive agency of Defra, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. She will be giving us an update on new legislation introduced to improve plant

health and biosecurity and the implications and obligations this has for anyone wanting to move plants across borders; how these affect the workload and viability of specialist nurseries, “master” growers and owners of National Collections and, in turn, how this could alter the diversity and cost of plants and trees to us as horticultural consumers with a keen interest in the unusual. What can we do as individuals to increase biosecurity?

### **Our Centenary Meeting**

#### **11 October 2022 - A Traditional Nursery in the Modern World – Luke Whiting**



Luke is a D’Arcy and Everest partner and RHS Master Grower whose family run Meadow Sweet Nursery in Huntingdon. They specialise in home grown alpiners, sempervivums and unusual perennial plants. His entertaining presentation will cover a day in the life of a busy nursery in a fun way on this our Centenary meeting.

#### **8 November 2022 – Italy: From Seed to Plate - Paolo Arrigo**

Paolo represents the 7<sup>th</sup> generation of the oldest family-run seed company in the world, “Franchiseeds of Italy”, established in 1783. He heads up the UK section of the company. He was “Slow Food UK Person of The Year 2020”; is a cookbook author, BioDiversity campaigner, multiple RHS medal winner and is passionate about responsible food. He will cover vegetables from Roman times to the present day, look at the seed industry and then will take us on a food journey around Italy.

#### **13 December - The Evolving Landscape of the Garden City: the next 100 years - Oliver Waring**

Needing no introduction to our members and returning now as the Landscape and Ecology Manager for Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, it is 8 years since we enjoyed Oliver’s excellent presentation on Caring for Trees in WGC. We are delighted that he will be joining us for our Christmas meeting to update us on the many enhancing changes that are taking place in the town and to look ahead with his ambitions for the next 100 years.

#### **14 February 2023 - Bordering on Insanity - Timothy Walker**

No apologies for inviting back one of our most popular speakers. His first presentation to us was in 2003 when he spoke about a year in the life of the Oxford Botanic Garden, where he had started his horticultural career as a post graduate having read Botany at University College, Oxford, and where he became Director of the Botanic Gardens. This time he looks exclusively at the herbaceous border in his wife’s garden, covering the principles and practicalities of creating a border that is interesting all-year-round.



#### **14 March 2023 - The Worshipful Company of Gardeners - Peter Waine**

Peter was the Chair of the WGC Centenary Foundation and will tell us all about another of his many roles, as the recent Master of The Worshipful Company of Gardeners. It sounds as if we should know all about them but....do we? His reputation as a great raconteur goes before him.

### **11 April 2023 - Garden in a Bottle - Marina North**

Marina will explain what a terrarium is and will demonstrate how to make a large closed jar version using a variety of plants. She will explain how to maintain the health of a mini-ecosystem. She will bring a variety of terrariums to display to demonstrate different options. These can be bought on the evening.

### **9 May - Cottage Garden Style – design ideas for the modern garden - Andrew Sankey**

Andrew is a garden landscaper and designer, a nurseryman and a lecturer with a special interest in the evolution of the cottage garden style. He will bring copies of his recently published book, "The English Cottage Garden" to sell and sign.

*Rosie Brewis*

### **Our 2023 Outings**

Tickets will be on sale at meetings from October 2022 or you can book earlier by sending a completed booking form, as attached to this Newsletter, to Jenny Begg and making payment by cheque or BACS.

Please note that to keep prices at a reasonable level, we have not included refreshments in the ticket price for Leonardslee and Bressingham. At both venues there are full café facilities.

### **22 February 2023 – Our Winter Lunch and Visit to RHS Hyde Hall, Chelmsford, Essex. £70 including coach, gratuities and lunch (drinks not included). Depart - 9.30 College Way, WGC.**



The coach will take us to RHS Hyde Hall Gardens, where we can see the winter gardens renowned for their early colour. You will have some time to enjoy more of the extensive

gardens or browse in the shop and café. We will go on to enjoy a three-course lunch in nearby Rettendon Lodge and then return at about 4pm.



### **11 May - Leonardslee Gardens, Horsham, West Sussex. £50 including coach, entry to the gardens and all attractions (including Dolls House Museum) and gratuities. Depart 9.30 College Way, WGC.**



The gardens have been extensively renovated by the new owners. We have timed our visit to make the most of the wonderful colour of the azalias and rhododendrons for which the Gardens are truly famous. Features include a lake, the famous dolls house museum, a sculpture park and art gallery. The gardens and woods





can be explored by winding paths. You will be able to take the day at your own pace stopping if you wish at a range of food and drink venues including the delightful lake side Engine House Café.

**20 September - Bressingham Gardens, Diss, Norfolk. £45 including coach, gratuities, entry to the gardens and all attractions (this is a Steam Day so all the steam trains will be running). Depart – 9.30 College Way, WGC.**



Laid out in six linked gardens over 17 acres. Alan and Adrian Bloom's gardens are famed for their unusual trees and displays of perennials with clever underplanting. There is plenty of colour throughout the year, but especially in the autumn for which the main gardens are designed. Facilities include cafes, steam train rides and a steam museum to allow you to make the most of the day. There is also a large garden centre next door.

*Jenny Begg, Anne Freimanis*

## **Our 2023 Holiday**

### **14 - 16 June - Two Counties Garden Tour**

All the places on next year's holiday have now been taken. However, as it does not take place for some months, there will, inevitably, be cancellations. If you have not booked a place, but would like to go, please keep the dates free, contact Denise Madden (on 07970 415288, 01707 323951 or [gladers2@gmail.com](mailto:gladers2@gmail.com)) and ask to be added to the waiting list.

## **Needing Summer Inspiration? Then visit Superbloom**



Sue Friend recently went to Superbloom at the Tower of London. Although the detrimental effects of the weather on the planting were apparent there were some lovely plants in the mix. One that took her eye was the Cape Daisy, variety Zulu Prince. The general shot shows the use of Garden Orache, variety Rubra, a tall red plant related to spinach that added a lot of interest to the planting. Click for details:

[https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-](https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/superbloom/#gs.8hlbx2)

[london/superbloom/#gs.8hlbx2](https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/superbloom/#gs.8hlbx2)



*Sue Friend*



## **Thinking of a Dry Garden Scheme? A Member Recommends her Favourites**

Pamela Hawkins recommends Gaillardia for a hot, dry position. Her south facing front bay window is a place where very few things flourish, but the Gaillardia she has there has just gone on and on flowering this summer and without water too. She also has the red/ orange one there but this year she planted a plain red and yellow, in the back garden. It

was a bargain ie, on its last legs, and having given it water, it looks as if it is about to flower.

Another good doer is Sedum. Pamela prefers the smaller ones with light foliage as the big Autumn Bliss is rather overwhelming she finds. We are all going to need drought tolerant plants in future aren't we?  
*Pamela Hawkins*

### **Suffering from Box Blight? A Member Recommends a Remedy**

Cheryl Baker recommends a treatment for Box caterpillars, it is called DiPel DF. Their webpage can be found online by typing the product name into your favourite search mechanism. This will provide details of current price, and full instructions of the how and when of application are on the package. You will need to mix it up and it should be delivered via a spray pump, which is a separate purchase. *Cheryl Baker*

### **Have a Look at Our New Website**

Please visit and bookmark our new website [www.wgchortsoc.co.uk](http://www.wgchortsoc.co.uk).

Here you can find details of our upcoming meetings, outings and news. There is also information on how to contact the committee or join as a member, so please do share with anyone who may be interested in the society.  
*Beth Mateer*



### **April Visit - Pie Corner, Bedmont, Herts**

It turned out to be a beautiful day for our visit to the house and gardens of Bella Stuart-Smith, sister of the well-known designer Tom Stuart-Smith. Although very close to both the M1 and the M25, Pie Corner turns out to be discreetly tucked away off Bedmont High Street and reached through a succession of narrow and picturesque country lanes. The house itself is an impressive classical style house. In fact it was built in the late 80's but it all looks very well established and much older. There is a beautiful view from the house over an extensive wild meadow surrounded by woods and stretching into the distance, and the extensive gardens (4 acres) are divided into distinct quadrants. There is an informal hilly woodland area on one side, where a profusion of wild garlic was complementing all the different green shades of spring, and a careful selection of trees provide a succession of blossom throughout the year. That area also contained a perfectly kept vegetable garden where to the delight of our group, plants were available for sale. The areas closest to the house were more formal: a rectangular pool on one side and a swimming pool on the other, some traditional box shapes, and classical borders filled with colourful tulips and defined by impeccable edging. However, despite its size, there is a very intimate and comfortable feel to the whole property. The visit was made even more enjoyable by the owner's very warm welcome and her willingness to answer occasionally difficult horticultural questions. I wish I had thought of asking her what inspired the unusual name of the house...  
*Laurence Bauer*





## June Visit – Deene Park and Elton Hall and Park

Deene Park is a very impressive mansion originally Elizabethan but with some later remodeling. We were allowed through the doorway into a very impressive courtyard showing the beautiful Elizabethan architecture, with huge stone urns planted for the Summer with ginger lilies and fuchsia. The vast parterre style garden, changed in Georgian times to natural parkland as was the fashion and was then remodelled in the 1960s by David Hicks.



To the southeast side of the house was a small parterre filled with roses most just coming into bloom and a magnificent climbing rose on the wall. The south of the house faces the David Hicks parterre - always planted with a blue and white theme. In spring it was hyacinths and tulips. We saw alliums and white bedding. There was a border spilling out with white honesty, alliums, peonies, verbena, iris and roses, all overlooking the lake and parkland where the grass was allowed to naturalise near the lake with wild orchids in bloom. Huge brick walls were smothered in climbing roses and the borders filled with poppies, peonies, thalictrums, roses and lavenders, with annuals popping up.

The Four Seasons Garden, named after the sculptures, had a vast stone planter filled with ginger lilies and fuchsias. It led into a garden with a viewing tower. Such an interesting garden and I take my hat off to the gardener and his assistant who undertake almost all of the work. Also, the house is worth a visit.

*Sara Poole*

## Elton Hall and Park

After lunch we drove to Elton Hall which has been home to the Proby Family since 1680. It sits in 200 acres of parkland and the gardens had largely fallen into disrepair by the 1980s. This was certainly the case when Graham and I lived in Elton village in the 1970s. Since then the gardens have been remodelled and restored by the current Lady Proby.



The Head Gardener, Sean, took us first to the Sunken Garden. It was a scented palette of the pinks, blues and whites of paeonies, roses, hebes, herbaceous clematis, the blue wild indigo and magnificent delphinium plumes, in startling contrast to the box parterre guarded over by the immaculate topiary pheasant, peacocks and Bertie the dog, all set against the background of the Hall.

High hornbeam hedges protected the Flower Garden and Millennium Orangery, and the shelter belts of mature trees beyond the gardens gave an extra dimension to the scale of the gardens. The Flower Garden was magnificent and, again, its muted whites, pinks and blues were just beautiful for an early summer show. There was a white wisteria archway walk along one side and the beds again held wonderful roses, alliums, lupins, nepeta and astilbes. The Coriolis fountain (so named because of the way the water jets rotate) was the central focal point of the garden. Oranges, reds and yellows predominated in the Millennium Garden all cooled down by the approach walks through tall yew and hornbeam hedges.

The Wilderness Garden, not normally open to the public, contains many mature trees intersected by pathways. Additional plantings included 17 varieties of Buxus, Parrotia persica, an archway of twisted hazel, a Sarcococca hedge, Acer griseum (paperbark

maple) and Calycanthus, the spice bush. Personally, I loved the wave of box hedging around the open air swimming pool on the edge of the woodland which was topped by holly and roses. At the end we headed off to the cafe and browsed the excellent garden centre. Our thanks to Denise for arranging such an enjoyable trip on what was a beautiful sunny day in June.

*Alison Daniels*

## **July Visit – Two Oxfordshire Gardens**

### **Pettifers**

It was lovely to be welcomed on arrival by Gina Price's full-time gardener, Polly, who has been there for 14 years. On turning into the courtyard a breath-taking view greeted us, extending as far as the eye could see over undulating fields. Gina greeted us and talked to us about the ideas that have motivated her and her husband James since 1984:

"everything is planted according to the lie of the land and I want to change things constantly". She realised long ago that she would need to employ a full-time gardener in order to realise her dreams and ambitions for the garden. Gina is not a professional garden designer and her determination to take on this task 38 years ago is admirable. She chose to work with the land she had rather than try to fight against the shape of it. I think this respectful and evolutionary approach is the secret to why the garden really works.



It was noticeable how every border is different.

At the end of the lawn steps lead to the lower garden with its parterre of evergreen box of the "leathery" variety which, according to Polly, do not succumb to the dreaded moth. The garden entices you to stop and look and go off into dead-ends with seating interspersed throughout. The variety of wooden benches, deck-chairs and cast iron chairs with bistro tables all added to the charm of the place.

The garden is north-facing which can often limit the planting selection but not in this case. Within the shade of the yew trees were geraniums but where the sun shines on the beds there were a vast variety of plants. A rambling rose threaded itself through an apple tree. Tall plants drifted over the top of the box hedge parterre. There was a row of maluses and an unusual variegated oak tree whose leaves were not very oak like at all. Partitioned compost heaps were cleverly situated where they had experienced the least success in planting. In the side courtyard were lots of pots with salvia. Even the old stable block windows had floral metal grilles. The wildflower meadow at the end was in the perfect location fitting in with the fields extending beyond the garden.

*Catherine Sullivan*

## **Broughton Grange**



The Head Gardener, Andrew Woodall, explained that the estate has been owned by Stephen Hester since 1992. For the first four years he renovated the house and ever since he's been developing the garden and estate. We started in the walled garden then wandered as we wished before returning for tea/cake and plants to buy - perfect!

The walled garden, designed by Tom Stuart-Smith in 2001, has three individually themed

terraces but with only two walls allows the most glorious view south over the Oxfordshire countryside. The heady scent of *Genista aetnensis* transported many of us much further south as did Andrew's seasonal planting in the lowest terrace with its stands of millet. Leaving the cool rill and water features of the walled garden we wandered through the formal Yew Terrace and the tree house into the fountain garden, woodland garden and stumpery and past sculptures whilst enjoying glimpses of the extensive arboretum beyond. Returning through the long borders we arrived at the rose parterre where the box hedging was replaced by *Euonymus* in 2020 and the compartments are planted with clematis, nicotiana and cosmos. Adjacent to the tea lawn, as a final treat, we enjoyed the wildflower meadow and woodland walk created from a former paddock. The day was a brilliant success and a magnificent finale to Denise's outings-thank you so much Denise for all of them!

*Marcella Wright*

### **All Aboarders – Spring at the Station**

The All Aboarders held a Station Makeover Day on 29 June. Regular volunteers were joined by GTR and Network Rail staff, local councillors, Rotary Club members and prospective volunteers. We planted out donated plants, then weeded, pruned, and watered. The facilities staff painted posts and troughs and put up new signs. This really



smartened everything up and the new paint makes the plants stand out.

The station was also reunited with one of its original light up platform signs, kindly donated by Malcolm Cowan who saved it when it was decommissioned years ago. We are hoping to display this with our heritage gallery in the Waiting Room on platform 3/4. A great day was had by all. Many commuters stopped to give us kind

words and we are pleased that four new members joined us.

Regular volunteer sessions continue weekly on alternate Thursday and Saturday mornings, 10am-12pm. As the hot dry spell continues we also try to do extra watering to keep everything looking its best. If you would like to join us, support us, or find out more please contact the All Aboarders Chair, Lynda Cowan, on 01707 324723 or visit [www.AllAboarders.org](http://www.AllAboarders.org).

### **Hertfordshire Gardens Trust – Call for IT support**

The Hertfordshire Gardens Trust are looking for a volunteer with IT experience and some time to spare to help us with setting up our events on Zoom and Eventbrite and monitoring the emails. It would need commitment but would not be very time consuming once set up, and we can offer training. If you can help them please contact Liz Carlin on [info@hertsgardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:info@hertsgardenstrust.org.uk).

**If you have any news, seen plants in our public spaces or have plants in your garden that you would recommend please let the Editor know: Anne Freimanis, [a.freimanis@icloud.com](mailto:a.freimanis@icloud.com) or 01707 323277.**