

THE EAST ANGLIAN GARDEN GROUP

Newsletter 97

December 2008

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Committee:

Mr Michael Hawkins
Mr Kevin Seager
Mrs Audrey Tyerman

Mrs Elizabeth Seiffer
Mr John Wight

Retirement of Chairman

Sadly Barbara Segall stood down as Chairman at the AGM. Barbara has completed 5 years as Chairman and has contributed a great deal to the EAGG during that time.

The Committee will greatly miss her invaluable knowledge as well as her efficiency as our Chairman.

New Chairman

The Group welcomed Heather Massey as the new Chairman. No-one has done more for the EAGG than Heather over a great number of years and it is fitting that she now becomes Chairman.

Committee Changes

Committee members, Mavis Smith, Toni Seager and Margaret Thorpe stood down and were thanked for all their enthusiasm and hard work.

We are very pleased to welcome back Michael Hawkins, John Wight, Kevin Seager and Elizabeth Seiffer on to the Committee.

Serving on the Committee

Should you feel that you would like to serve on the EAGG Committee, and would like to discuss the subject, please contact the Secretary.

Annual Subscription

The subscription for 2008-2009 became due on October 1st 2008 and is now £8. If you have not already paid, please send your cheque made payable to the *East Anglian Garden Group* to the Treasurer, Miss Josephine Mitson (address on page 1). Please note that subscriptions are no longer to be sent to the Secretary.

Outings Money

When outings are full it is usually necessary to return money. When all money has come in on one cheque this obviously complicates matters, so would you please send a separate cheque for every outing.

Plant Stall

Please continue to bring interesting, good quality, clearly labeled plants for sale. It is requested that members who bring plants take home any that are unsold after the meeting. The plant stall is a most valuable part of EAGG meetings and we are extremely grateful to all who contribute to it.

Waiting List

Members wishing to propose prospective members should send full names and addresses to the Secretary. Prospective members are welcome as guests of members, their application for membership not now being considered until October 2009.

Guests

Guests may be brought to the meetings, at the discretion of the Secretary, depending on the number of people expected. Visitors are asked to pay £3 per visit. This may be paid prior to attendance, by sending a cheque to Jackie Smythe or paid on the day of the meeting.

Contributions for Tea

Daphne has been delighted with all the offers of help and the refreshments brought to the meetings. It is usually the same small number of people who help and Daphne has requested help from members who haven't helped before, to give the usual helpers some time off! People do seem to enjoy helping in the kitchen, so why not give it a try? Fill in the return slip and Daphne will then contact you in good time when she wishes you to help.

We are urgently seeking HELP from one (or two) of our Group to help with the assembly and operation of our projector at the afternoon meetings.

Instruction and guidance will be given, of course, beforehand.

Please contact Heather or Jackie for more information.

Books for Sale

There will be books for sale at the February meeting. The books had belonged to the late Mrs Anne Debenham and have been donated to the Group by Mrs Mary Wolton.

Suffolk Apples for Suffolk Gardens

If you are thinking of growing an apple – or even if you are not thinking of planting one – do make garden space for one of the old varieties first raised and grown here in Suffolk in the 1800s. I know three that are still highly thought of for their flavour, juiciness and for being good growers.

A beauty of particular interest to anyone in the Bury St Edmunds area is St Edmunds Pippin. A resident of that town, Mr R Harvey, raised it from a pip I know not when, but I've discovered the Royal Horticultural Society awarded St Edmunds Pippin a *First Class Certificate* on October 6th 1875. That's the time of year when its lovely russet dessert fruit are ripe and juicy and it is still probably the earliest of all the russet varieties.

Though they don't keep in store for long, they are highly regarded. St Edmunds Pippin is included in the lists of the best dessert varieties in the RHS *Fruit Garden Displayed* and in Dr D G Hessayon's best selling book *The Fruit Expert*. The mature trees are upright and spreading. A point to bear in mind when pruning is they are partial tip bearers, meaning the blossom tends to be on the tips of shoots that grew the previous summer.

Sturmer Pippin is another truly Suffolk apple. It must have won me exam marks when, as a student, I wrote that its fruit should be left as long as practicable on the tree – until November or even early December. Picked too soon, their flesh develops a rubbery texture whereas, characteristically, it should be firm, crisp, juicy with a rich flavour. At their best after a hot summer and well stored, these apples will keep in sound condition until the following April, their skin remaining a yellow-green with a brownish flush.

Just the variety to cope with climate change, and as Sturmer Pippin trees stay fairly compact, it's one for planting where space is limited. Much recommended by fruit experts today we owe the variety to Ezekiel Dillistone who was a nurseryman in Sturmer, near Haverhill and its name was first mentioned in print in 1841. When Ezekiel's grandson, Thomas, immigrated to Australia in 1834, some of the grafting wood of Sturmer Pippin that he took with him, survived the long voyage and in the post-war 1940s and 1950s many thousands of bushels of Sturmer Pippins were imported into Britain from Australian trees.

Residing at Thornham Hall, near Eye in the 1800s, Lord Henniker with his passionate liking for home-brewed cider, caused his head gardener, Mr John Perkins, to sow quantities of apple pips and keep only the seedlings which grew into the finest fruiting trees. By far the best of these was one he named Lady Henniker. It came to be revered as an excellent culinary variety, outstanding for making puree, but very useful too as an eating apple between October and January. Don't be put off by the fruit's greeny yellow skin. 'Its appearance by lamplight is very telling,' wrote the fruit specialist Robert Hogg in his *Fruit Manual* in 1884. I remember a tree of Lady Henniker in Lord de Ramsey's garden orchard at Abbots Ripton Hall in Huntingdonshire and recall eating its baked apples stuffed with raisins and demerara sugar.

Where can you get plants of these old varieties and advice? There must be other sources, but when a friend of mine wanted plants, she got them from Bernwode Plants, Kingswood Lane, Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire, HP18 9RB (Tel: 01844 237415). **Tony Venison**

Programme for Spring & Summer 2009

Saturday January 3rd 2009

Winter Walk in Anglesey Abbey Gardens

Everyone who comes on this walk enjoys it so if you haven't yet joined in, come along. It is an informal meeting with no guided tour and it goes ahead whatever the weather!

We shall meet in Anglesey Abbey's car park at 11 am. It is requested that we enter the garden as a group. After the walk, lunch may be purchased in the restaurant. We need to know numbers for lunch please. Entrance is free to members of the National Trust and £4 to non-members (group rates). Entrance fees are to be paid on the day.

If you have not previously indicated that you are coming and would like to join us, would you please let Jackie Smythe know.

DON'T FORGET YOUR NATIONAL TRUST CARD

Saturday February 7th - 2.30pm at Hitcham Village Hall

EAGG Forum entitled 'Roses'.

Maggie Thorpe will chair the Forum and the following members will take part: Jim Marshall will talk on *Organic Principles and Roses*, Jane Crowe on *Some Roses and their Companions - a Personal View*, Sarah Cook on *Training Roses, the Sissinghurst Method* and Nathalie Finch talking on *My Favourite Roses*

Each speaker will talk for ten minutes (and be restricted to showing ten slides) and there will be questions following each speaker.

Saturday March 7th - 2.30pm at Hitcham Village Hall

Graham Gough talking on a topic to be decided by the Committee at the meeting in January. Members who have been on the last two holidays will remember visiting Graham's garden. Marchants has gained a reputation as one of the finest small nurseries in the country and has featured on BBC Television and in virtually every important gardening magazine and major periodical.

Saturday April 4th - 2.30pm at Hitcham Village Hall

Helen Yemm will talk on *Moving to My New Garden*.

Readers of the gardening section of the Saturday Daily Telegraph will be familiar with Helen's question and answer page.

Saturday May 30th - 2.30pm. Car visit to Feeringbury Manor, Feering.

An ever changing garden of diversity with an emphasis on continual colour.

Featured in the *English Garden*.

Cost £5 to include tea and cakes.

Directions - From SUDBURY take the road to Halstead.

As you come to the beginning of the High street, take the left turning on the mini roundabout (by the Church) which is the A124 to Earls Colne.

Go right through Earls Colne and take a right turn at the mini roundabout marked A1024 to Coggeshall. Keep on this road and pass a sign pointing to Marks Hall and soon afterward you come to the A120.

Turn left and then first right (which takes you over the second carriageway of the A120) which is signed to Coggeshall.

Take the first turning left signed Feering and Kelvedon.

After about one mile look for a white picket fence with Feeringbury Manor marked.

Take this roadway.

If you have satnav, the postal code is CO5 9RB.

June 7-10th June Visit to Oxfordshire.

The four day visit to Oxfordshire is fully booked.

Wednesday July 1st - Coach visit to Spencers' Garden & Parsonage House, Helions

Bumpstead

Departure time: The Cock Inn car park, Lavenham 10.30 am

Return time: Lavenham 4.45 pm

(approx)

Transport cost: £8 (to be paid on booking)

Entrance costs: £15 (to be paid on the coach)

This will not be a long coach visit, but it was thought that members may prefer to have a coach rather than drive. Spencers' garden is at the centre of a small, very traditional English country estate and was owned by the late 'Rab' Butler. We shall arrive at Spencers at approx 11.15am and will have a tour of the garden with the Head Gardener. Coffee and biscuits will be served on arrival.

Bring a packed lunch, which we shall have in the grounds of Spencers

We will travel a relatively short distance to Helions Bumpstead. Parsonage House is owned by the Hon. & Mrs Nigel-Turner and the garden is small and charming (with a further 3-acre of newly-planted orchard). Mrs Turner and her Head Gardener propagate very many unusual, interesting plants – there will be lots to buy. Tea and cakes will be served. All profits from visits go to Bury St Edmunds Hospice.

Saturday 5 September 2009 – Coach Visit to Wisley

Departure times: The Cock Inn, Lavenham 8.30am

Depart Bury St Edmunds (Stand 9 at The Bus Station
opposite the Library) 9.00am

Return times: Bury St Edmunds 6.00 pm

Lavenham 6.30 pm

Cost: Transport £13.50

Entrance £6.50

There are several places for lunch, plus two specially designated picnic areas in the garden, if you prefer to bring a packed lunch.