

THE EAST ANGLIAN GARDEN GROUP

Newsletter 98

July 2009

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Committee

Our President, Tony Venison, is due to retire at the end of this year.

Annual Subscription

The subscription for 2009-2010 becomes due on October 1st 2009. Members will remember the Chairman telling us that the subscription will have to be raised this year. All costs have been rising in the past year and if we want to continue seeking talks by first class speakers, we must raise the subscription cost. The cost of the membership subscription will, therefore, now be £12 per year. The Committee feels that this still constitutes very good value, bearing in mind the excellent speakers we wish to attract. Please pay your subscription at the AGM in October. Otherwise please send your cheque, made payable to the *East Anglian Garden Group* to the Treasurer, Miss Josephine Mitson (address above).

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. Please note that the deposit for outings is non-returnable unless another EAGG member can take your place.

Plant Stall

Please continue to bring interesting, good quality, clearly labelled 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, their application 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 will now be asked to pay £5 per visit. This may be paid prior to attendance, by sending a cheque to Jackie Smythe (made payable to the *East Anglian Garden Group*) or by paying at the meeting.

Contributions for Tea

Daphne has been very grateful for all the support she has had and is seeking help for the remaining two meetings of this year. Please continue to bring your excellent refreshments and if you are able to contribute by helping in the kitchen, please fill in your name on the return slip and Daphne will contact you nearer the time.

Suffolk Apples for Suffolk Gardens

Members will remember Tony Venison's article in the December 2008 Newsletter. Tony wondered where old varieties of Suffolk apples could be purchased other than the Nursery he mentioned in Buckinghamshire. Two members replied.

One member mentioned a nursery where she purchased old varieties of Suffolk apples 12 years ago (the nursery is still advertising in the RHS magazine). It is Deacon's Nursery, Moor View Godshill, Isle of Wight PO38 3HW. Tel. 01983 523575.

The second member gave the name of 'an excellent organisation which is a charity – the East of England Apple & Orchard Project. It aims to increase awareness and understanding of the heritage and diversity of fruit varieties in orchards of Bedfordshire, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Essex, Lincolnshire, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. They sell trees to fund further tree propagation and research into rare and at risk local fruit varieties. Annual membership is at present £8. Their web site is www.appleandorchards.org.uk. membership enquiries: 24 The Green, Henham, Beccles Suffolk NR34 8AJ. Tree orders and stock enquiries: School House, Rougham, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE32 2SE. They run excellent practical days, covering all aspects of fruit tree growing and are most helpful and friendly'.

Gardens of Oxfordshire

I am not a horticulturalist or journalist so this is a very personal view of our visit to Oxfordshire in June.

We left Lavenham and it started to pour with rain - not a good sign. First visit was to Upton House, weather had cleared, across lawns was a garden descending into a steep terraced valley, finishing in a lake. Imposing balustraded stone steps (going down fine, not so up). The terraces were planted but needed more TLC. We then visited the house - an art collection to die for, porcelain collection OK.

Next on itinerary Rousham which remains almost as designed by William Kent. Huge walled garden with delightful herbaceous borders. Paths bordered by espalier apple and pear trees said to be 100 years old and still fruiting. The park held a herd of rare Long Horned cattle with calves, much to my delight, also a very large dovecote, walk in, complete with doves.

On day 2 first visit to Brook Cottage. Impossibly gardened on steep slopes but the planting was mouth watering, roses, clematis, shrubs and trees of which many very rare. There was also a stream running at the bottom - lunch not bad either.

Broughton Grange came next. Our group was shown around by a young new gardener (no hard questions then). Down Spring Walk to large Cotswold Mansion with views across valley, down to stumpery, love them or hate them, along to view across arboretum, old and new, with wide rides mown into the landscape. Then up to Tom Stuart Smith's terraced garden - rill, very modern, but then walked through huge beds with planting that could not be bettered - stunning.

Day 3 - Westwell Manor which garden was created in 1979. I lost count of the number of large garden rooms we went through, all seemed to contain some form of box. The rose gardens beds

were edged by box balls!! Descended to a small river which, to my delight, was informal and lushly planted, walked up to the top in-between hedges of hazel, which they coppice, and found lovely plantings of martagon lilies. Could not resist and asked head gardener if he liked box, he turned and gave me THE look and said most emphatically No, can't say I blame him.

Had the afternoon free, decided to go to the Oxford Botanical Gardens - small but almost perfect. Usual beds of family plants, ornamental planting but a perfume everywhere - *Euphorbia mellifera* - planted around every corner. Visited tropical house and the jade vine was in flower, beautiful thing, not as good as the one in Cambridge though. Veggie plot next, not my thing, but. there was a broad bean with a dark crimson flower, very eye catching. Don't know whether old or new variety.

Day 4 - Worcester College. Weather had been so good to us but it rained, hard, but luckily the cloisters afforded shelter. Had a talk on history of college. Buildings as usual on three sides and quad and in the centre the most immaculate lawn I've seen ever, great borders on the three sides, rain stopped, we walked through entrance in wall and there on the grass Canada geese guarding their young, walked down to a very large tranquil lake. Rose garden was mostly dark crimson and purple roses with a soft yellow digitalis - enchanting. Next, planting around new build students housing, complete contrast, new special trees and very modern gravel planting.

Final garden, Woodchippings, not a large garden but the planting was so close the weeds did not stand a chance. The paths were quite narrow and the whole effect was quite overwhelming. As you walked through the plants were very happy and some quite

unusual, if not yet again, rare. Needless to say here I succumbed and bought two unusual plants.

Home to Lavenham. The weather was kind, it did not rain on us, the hotel was special and I had a great time.

Marion Jamieson

The 2010 EAGG Garden Tour – Four Day Excursion

We are now preparing for next year's garden tour. Please send a stamped and addressed envelope to Heather Massey, Jackdaws Ford, The Street, Chelsworth, Suffolk IP7 7HU should you require further details. Information will be sent out to interested members in mid September.

A Founder Member of the East Anglian Garden Group

Members will remember our President, Tony Venison's article on the 40th Anniversary Celebrations in last Summer's newsletter. One of the founder members, Mr. F.G. Barcock, had been inadvertently missed out in the original minutes and the Committee invited his daughter, Mrs. Maureen Ridge, to submit a resumé on her Father:

'When he was rubber planting in Malaya my Father was always fascinated by plants and had a lovely garden. In late 1932 he and my Mother returned to England, buying Garden House Farm at Drinkstone, by cable, unseen, on the way. A year or two later, he started an alpine nursery, keeping poultry and pigs to provide a living whilst getting established. The war put plans on hold, so he started up again afterwards, but with trees, shrubs, roses and herbaceous plants as well as alpine. Meanwhile, he began the woodland garden, digging the first acre by hand with the help of one man – some undertaking! He created what we dubbed 'Father's Follies' pits filled with a leaf mould mixture to accommodate Camellias, Rhododendrons and Azaleas, which all flourished. After the purchase of a heavy rotovator, the nursery and the private garden expanded, including a rock garden of beautiful Westmorland stone.

In the early 1960s, he became hooked on lily breeding and did a few TV garden programmes on the subject, long before the time of 'instant gardens'. About the same time, he started designing gardens which rapidly gathered momentum.

He was, I believe, a founder member of the Iris and Lily Group which metamorphosed into the EAGG. Several introductions to the plant world were his, including *Taxus baccata* 'Drinkstone Gold', *Cornus alba* 'Variegata No 2 Form', *Cotinus coggygria* 'Drinkstone Form', *Penstemon* 'Drinkstone Red' and as far as I know *Berberis thunbergii* f. *atropurpurea* 'Green', to name but a few.'

He died in 1988 and very sadly the magical woodland garden has now been neglected for several years'.

Maureen Ridge

Programme for Autumn/Winter 2009/2010

Saturday September 5th. Coach visit to Wisley.

The coach is now fully booked and there is a short waiting list.

Those of you who have booked to come on the visit will be pleased to know that as we have now become affiliated to the RHS this year, we are able to enter Wisley free of charge. Please bring a small box (clearly labeled) if you wish to buy plants.

Saturday October 3rd – 2.30 pm at Hitcham Village Hall

The talk will be given by Mr Vic Asplant and the talk is entitled *Cyclamen in the Garden*.

Saturday November 7th – 2.30 pm at Hitcham Village Hall

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

After the AGM business, Mr Tim Fuller will talk on *New, Rare and Unusual Perennials*.

Saturday January 2nd 2010 – A different Winter Walk

The Committee has decided to try a change from the walk around Anglesey Abbey, which we have done for several years. We hope that you will join the Group for a walk around the University Botanic Garden in Cambridge.

We shall meet at the entrance to the Garden in Trumpington Street at 11 am when we can all enter together. Buses go from the Trumpington Park & Ride site every 10 minutes and should only take 8/10 minutes to arrive opposite to the garden entrance (outside the Leys school playing field). The cost is £2.20 from the machine or £2.50 on the bus (free, of course, for bus card holders). On leaving the Garden, the pick-up point for the return journey is right outside the entrance (on the corner with Bateman Street). I have been advised that we must put out our hand to summon the bus to stop for us!

Trumpington Street Park & Ride site is off the A11 – junction 11 (postal code CB2 9FT)

We shall not have a guided tour. The café has been extended and it is possible to buy snacks such as jacket potatoes, soup, sandwiches, etc.

Please indicate whether you will have lunch as numbers are required in advance to help with the catering.