

The University of Oxford

110

Botanic Garden & Arboretum

Friends'
newsletter

*Celebrating
400 years*

Spring/Summer 2022



From the Editor

By Chris Thorogood



Amal and Alice meet and their journey through Oxford begins

to Japan; together they comprise a collection of great conservation importance. They also create a green sanctuary that can enhance people's good mental health and wellbeing, as demonstrated by the exit surveys to the Autumn Fair last October (see p.10) run by Tegan Bennett and Catherine Vivian. Now we are busy working out how we can extend these benefits to the audiences who are *not* visiting, or who *cannot* visit the Arboretum currently.

New audiences flocked to the Botanic Garden in October to admire Little Amal, a 3.5m tall puppet of a Syrian refugee (p.10). Tens of thousands watched the event unfold online; as they did our online symposium

Writing the Friends' Newsletter in January compels us to look back at what we've been doing at OBGa over the recent months, whilst we plan for the year ahead. In fact, during the Botanic Garden's 400th Anniversary year, we've been looking back further than recent months; we've been examining the Garden's rich history over the past four *centuries*. In this issue, Mark Brent delves into OBGa's archives and shares fascinating glimpses of the Botanic

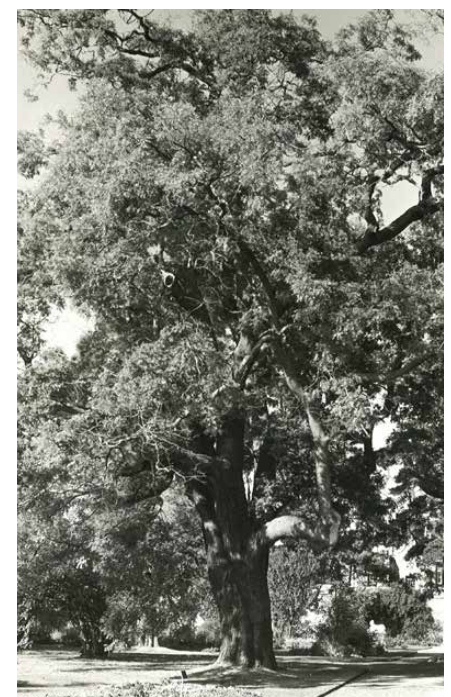
Garden's ceremonial tree planting to mark the 350th anniversary. On p.5, PhD candidate India Cole gives insights into her research focused on two seventeenth-century botanists: Mary Somers, Duchess of Beaufort and Jacob Bobart the younger, together with letters from the University's archives. We look forward to hearing more about her research in the future.

We're also mindful of the important role our historic Garden must play in the coming centuries in the face of global challenges. COP26 sharpened our resolve to develop a draft Sustainability Strategy last year - the first in OBGa's history. Central to this strategy will be conservation, which like other botanic gardens and arboreta around the world, is a key focus for OBGa. Like keepers of the Botanic Garden centuries ago, today we propagate rare native flora in our plant collections. Jim Penney is now growing 30 plant species from Oxfordshire in the cold-frames outside, to support a National Heritage Lottery Fund (NLHF) project called 'GroWet', run by the Freshwater Habitats Trust. Meanwhile, oblivious to the frosts outside, the peculiar 'grass tree' (*Xanthorrhoea australis*) sent up its impossibly tall spike of flowers in the Arid House.

Our plans for the Arboretum are bold and ambitious, as explained by Simon on the next page. Every tree we plant there makes a mark on the landscape for generations to come. Ben Jones and his team, together with our dedicated volunteers, planted 60 new trees and shrubs across the site last autumn. These include an endangered species and specimens raised from seed collected on expeditions

Celebrating Botanic Gardens: Past, Present and Future, which was coordinated seamlessly by Lauren Baker with help from Franco Santarsieri in October. Evaluation of the symposium shows unequivocally that it was nothing short of an international triumph.

At the time of writing, the first of the early spring blossoms are appearing at OBGa. They are full of promise.



The original specimen of a Japanese pagoda tree (*Styphnolobium japonicum*) at OBG in 1971

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From the Director

By Simon Hiscock

Just before Christmas we were delighted to learn that OBG's application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) to create a Visitor and Learning Centre at the Arboretum had been successful. This means Phase 1 ('development') funding (~£191k) will be released to allow us to refine and develop an appropriate design for planning permission, and to begin the outreach work needed to engage with groups and communities who do not currently visit the Arboretum. Fundamentally linked to this transformational project is the Friends' campaign to raise £750k for improving the Arboretum's paths to enhance access. Indeed, this 'buy in' by the Friends played a key role in the success of the bid to the NLHF. So far, the campaign has raised over half of its target, which will allow work to start on the paths in the spring. Successful delivery of Phase 1 over the next two years will lead to the NLHF awarding the remainder of the ~£3M award.

The good fortunes of the Arboretum continued at the end of 2021 with an extremely generous gift of \$200k from an American donor to create a state-of-the-art plant propagation facility to support OBG's national and international plant conservation programmes. This new facility will dramatically enhance the propagation capability for both the Arboretum and the Garden. Indeed, we expect it to play a vital role in propagating and storing plants during construction of new glasshouses at the Garden. 2022 will certainly be an exciting year for the Arboretum as its journey of transformation begins - very timely given that next year will be the 60th anniversary of the Arboretum becoming part of the Botanic Garden.

2022 will also be another exciting year for the Botanic Garden as we continue a year of celebrations for the 400th anniversary. Reflecting on my message this time last year, the list of celebratory highlights is remarkably similar, reflecting the number of events postponed because of the pandemic. These will begin with the official launch of the Oxford Physic Rose by Peter Beales Roses Ltd at the Chelsea Flower Show in May. Following the launch, the rose will be available commercially through OBG and Peter Beales.

Our main celebrations at the Garden will begin with a mini 'Encaenia-style' event on July 15th. This will consist of a short ceremony at the University Church followed by a procession to the Botanic Garden where the Vice-Chancellor will plant a ceremonial tree, and c150 guests will enjoy lunch in a marquee on the Events Lawn. The Garden will open to the public for an afternoon tea party. The marquee will then be the venue for a week of events, including poetry from Alice Oswald and friends, a Q&A with Raymond Blanc, and a workshop and exhibition of nature printing with Pia Östlund. Celebratory events will then continue in the Garden until the end of July.

Away from the Garden, we also intend to stage another performance of the highly successful *everything grows extravagantly*, co-commissioned by OBG and the Oxford Lieder Festival to celebrate the Garden's



Anna Eavis

A view through the Danby arch on a winter's afternoon

400th anniversary. A date for all your diaries is July 25th, when the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment will perform their long-awaited concert for the 400th anniversary. Keep an eye on our website for emerging details for all these events.

Let's therefore hope that 2022 will be a year free from any further pandemic-induced postponements, and that we can finally celebrate the 400th anniversary with suitable gusto.

Witchhazel blossom
at OBG in January



News from the Garden

By Mark Brent

Visitors often ask what we do in the winter. I quote Paul Theroux; 'winter is a season for recovery and preparation'. Our new apprentices Jack and Lucy have been very much involved

with the autumn and winter work; they are learning that an incredible amount of work is required during these dark months to lay the foundations for Spring and Summer.



Mark Brent being taught the art of olive picking at Villa Racalia



Cyclamen hederifolium flowering in Racalia

The darkness of winter was briefly alleviated by a team visit to Sicily at the end of November. Alison Richards and her husband, Robert Hazell, kindly hosted Russel Beeton and me at their wonderful historic garden, Racalia, near Marsala. The trip not only provided an opportunity for Russell to observe the native Mediterranean flora in situ for the first time but also to establish a link which will provide future experience for our apprentices. We also enjoyed the privilege of joining the annual olive harvest; I doubt that our efforts will increase the local GDP but it's an experience neither of us will forget!

Our work in the Garden and Arboretum hasn't gone unnoticed by others and in recent months Guy Horwood and I have given presentations to Plant Network. Being able to share practical experiences with our peer group is always a pleasure.

Working with others is very much in our thoughts at the moment. We have long maintained a small propagation unit for the cultivation of our endangered local native flora. In the autumn our local collaborator, the Freshwater Habitats Trust was awarded a grant which will help further expand this project. Botanical Horticulturalist Jim Penney has been increasing our propagation of species such as greater water parsnip (*Sium latifolium*) which will be planted out across Oxford. The FHT project is also working collaboratively with community groups to set up 'Species Conservation Hubs' in Oxford to involve local people with the conservation of Oxford's wetland plants.

GroWet! Conserving Oxfordshire's most endangered wetland plants

By Mark Brent

In previous newsletters we have highlighted our work supporting the recovery of threatened local wildflower species through propagation carried out at the Botanic Garden. Over the last few years we have established a stock of plants including greater water parsnip (*Sium latifolium*) which has been distributed across the county to bolster existing populations or to increase its range. Our interest in Oxfordshire's local flora is not new and it reaches back to the origins of the then Oxford Physic Garden in the 17th century. Jacob Bobart the Elder actively sourced examples of local species for planting in the collections. As a Botanic Garden we recognise our responsibility to be guardians of our own local flora as well as that which grows further afield.

In the last few months we have been able to greatly expand our conservation role by supporting a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) project called 'GroWet' organised by David Morris of the Freshwater Habitats Trust. The aims of the project are to propagate some of Oxfordshire's most endangered wetland

plants, to engage over 1,000 people, especially adults living in disadvantaged urban areas with little access to nature, and to introduce the propagated plants to high quality freshwater and wetland habitats.

With the support of the additional funding and access to plant material the knowledge and expertise built up over the last few years at the Botanic Garden will enable us to vastly increase the number of threatened species we grow. At the moment Botanical Horticulturalist Jim Penney is cultivating approximately 30 species which will be eventually distributed to receptor sites identified by FHT around Oxford. These sites include fens, floodplains and ponds in locations such as Lye Valley, Christ Church Meadow, Otmoor and Cothill. Delicate species such as Fen Violet (*Viola stagnina*) and the locally scarce Grass-of-Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) found at Lye Valley are currently under propagation. The Oxford Florilegium group led by Rosemary Wise has been engaged to illustrate many of the species to create permanent records and a resource for interpretation.

GroWet article poster Freshwater Habitat Trust



Fen Violet *Viola persicifolia* under propagation at OBG

Russell Beeton has had some extraordinary success in cultivating British native broomrapes (*Orobancha*) which form an important component of our research. Some of these species such as greater broomrape (*O. rapum-genistae*) and its host, common broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) will also be re-established in key local sites once these have been identified.

For further details on the GroWet project or the Freshwater Habitat Trust's activities in Oxfordshire, do visit their excellent online resource. Alternatively contact Mark Brent or Jim Penney at the Botanic Garden.

Progress to revitalise the Medicinal Plant beds was made this winter. The Director and I were invited to view the medicinal garden at the Royal College of Physicians in mid-November which was a great source of inspiration. Outline plans have been completed to reconfigure the shape of the beds which reference the historical 17th century walled garden landscape. Key objectives for the re-planting are to illustrate both the historic Doctrine of Signatures, to highlight the geographic origins of important species and to reference plants named after physicians such as Johann Hieronymus Kniphof. We are planning a layered approach to the planting to provide year-round interest.



Winter frost on the Merton border

From the Botanic Garden's archive

By Mark Brent

Styphnolobium Japonicum
(syn. *Sophora japonica*)

During its 400 years the landscape of the Walled Garden has remained largely constant in its layout; however, there has been an ever-changing cast of plants. A recent search through the archive brought about a reminder of some of the specimen trees that have graced our Garden, one of which is *Styphnolobium japonicum*. Known fittingly as the 'Scholar tree' an impressive specimen was planted adjacent to the entrance to the Garden in 1817. Unfortunately the tree had to be felled in 1973, however a replacement had already been planted in July 1971 by the then Chancellor of Oxford University Harold Macmillan, to mark the 350th anniversary of the Garden. Long-serving Superintendent of Oxford Botanic Garden, Ken Burras can be seen alongside the Chancellor during the ceremonial tree planting in the photograph. Another specimen of the tree can still be found opposite the Welcome Centre in the approximate position of the original.



The original specimen of *Styphnolobium japonicum* at OBC in 1971



Harold Macmillan planting *Styphnolobium japonicum* in 1971 (from the archive)

Bobart: 'Ragworts and All'

By India Cole

By way of brief introduction, I have just begun the second year of my PhD, which is a collaborative project between Queen Mary University of London and Oxford Botanic Garden. My project is focused on two important but under-researched seventeenth-century botanists: Mary Somerset, Duchess of Beaufort (1630-1715) and Jacob Bobart the younger (1641-1719).

Bobart the Younger was the second keeper of Oxford Botanic Garden - or Oxford Physic Garden, as it was then known. He took over from his father, Jacob Bobart the Elder, who passed away in 1680. Both father and son were crucial in creating and maintaining the Garden in its first decades. My focus, though, is on the younger Bobart and his role in expanding the collection of plants in the Physic Garden. Perhaps his most visible legacy (outside of the Botanic Garden) is the Oxford Ragwort (*Senecio Squalidus*), which he introduced to the Physic Garden before it quickly spread further afield. It can now be seen all over the UK, especially along the railway lines.

The first year of my PhD got off to a somewhat frustrating start. I was desperate to get into the archives but was prevented

from doing so by the pandemic. When I was finally able to go, I was keen to review anything I could find relating to Bobart and the Botanic Garden's early history.

Excitingly, I was able to hold the letters that he had written, and I found myself moved by the man behind them. Bobart strikes me as a kind and loving husband and father; but aside from this, in his capacity as keeper of the Physic Garden, he was humble about his horticultural skills and botanical expertise, despite achieving so much

(including establishing the herbaria that exist to this day). He was also noticeably resourceful; as Magdalen College was not forthcoming with the payments required for running the Garden, Bobart had to find innovative ways to fund it and, importantly, feed his family. For example, it appears that he had a kitchen garden just alongside the Garden's

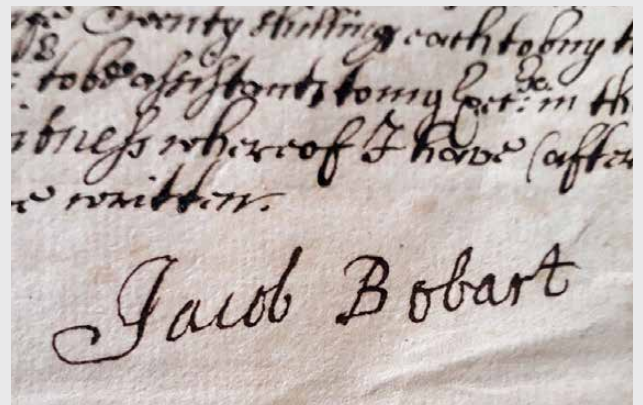
west wall (where Rose Lane is situated) and he grew produce there, much of which he sold at market.

Additionally, for at least part of his life he ran two inns. The Three Cups Inn was where 43-44 Queen Street is now situated; a draft of his will shows that he leased this from All Souls College. There was also the Greyhound Inn, which he appears to have owned as well. The Greyhound Inn was on Gravel Walk, which was directly opposite the Botanic Garden, and the site is now part of Magdalen College's library. How he found the time to run a physic garden *and* multiple inns is unclear, but personally, I suspect his wife and children helped a lot.

These findings offer a glimpse into the exciting things I've been able to find, more of which I hope to share soon.



The only known portrait of Jacob Bobart the Younger



News from the Glasshouses

By Kate Pritchard

Winter months are a busy time in the glasshouses as staff complete the programme of cleaning and maintenance activities whilst planning for the seasons ahead. The tropical pond has been drained and replanted for a second time in a year due to a leak, and the Carnivorous Plant House roof has had some much-needed attention with the replacement of many damaged panes of glass.

An activity for this spring is the re-landscaping of the next section of the Rainforest House beds. This project has been funded by the Friends and will enable us to

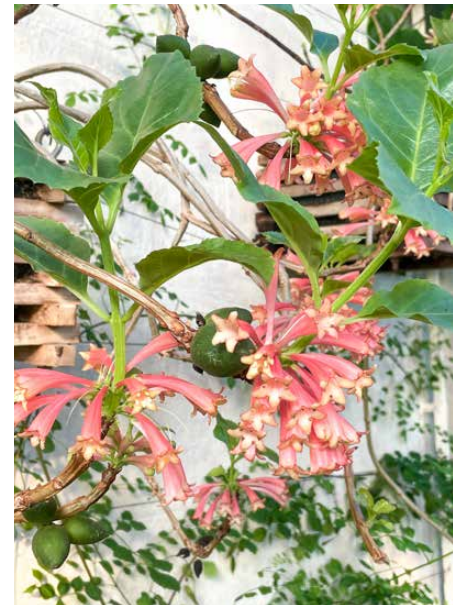


Curio herreanus

replace eight tonnes of exhausted soil with the bespoke mix trialled so successfully elsewhere in the glasshouses.

In addition to supporting cutting-edge research at the Garden, the glasshouse collections provide material for research elsewhere. Material from *Opuntia ficus-indica*, *Baculellum articulatum* and *Curio herreanus* has recently been supplied to The Oxford Martin School's Dryland Bioenergy Project. This is an interdisciplinary collaboration investigating the suitability of succulent plants as a new source of raw material for advanced anaerobic digestion. Over 630 million people in sub-Saharan Africa have no access to electricity and 800 million people depend on firewood and charcoal as their primary domestic energy source. Many succulent plants use a very water-efficient mode of photosynthesis termed Crassulacean acid metabolism (CAM), enabling some such as *O. ficus-indica* to proliferate to the point of becoming an invasive species in areas of Namibia. The objective of the programme is to determine the suitability of these succulent plants to provide an energy source for electricity and biogas production.

Knowing that our cultivation of the glasshouse collections contributes to research and public engagement activities is hugely satisfying. In this addition of the newsletter, my colleague Lucinda Lachelin has written about the inclusion of several orchids in a display at Chelsea Flower Show in September. Glasshouse staff also regularly



Dermatobotrys saundersii

assist horticultural students with enquiries about cultivation and curation practices. When you visit the glasshouses this spring, be sure to visit the Rainforest house where there will be a Fairtrade display highlighting some of the food plants we grow. On your visit, you will also find *Xanthorrhoea australis* in flower in the Arid House, *Dermatobotrys saundersii* flowering in the lower corridor and pots of the orchid *Dendrobium x delicatum* in flower in the Conservatory.

Orchids go to the Chelsea Flower Show

By Lucinda Lachelin

In early September I had a call from a member of the Orchid Society of Great Britain asking me if Oxford Botanic Garden had any orchids that they could lend the Society for their stand at the Chelsea Flower Show. The Show was moved from May to September this year and it was proving tricky for the Society to find enough orchids from its members to fill the stand. Whenever a society is doing a display at shows, they never know what they are going to have until the day, which in many ways makes it more challenging than a nursery putting up a display, who will know what they have on site to use prior to the show, although trying to get plants to be at their peak for a particular week is always a challenge.

Initially I said, sorry, that we didn't have anything, but the next day I had a look around and had second thoughts, particularly as I am a member of the society and I wanted to help. We

had a nice specimen of *Phragmipedium schlimii* 'Wilcox' with three spikes, *Phragmipedium memoria* 'Dick Clements', *Cymbidium erythrostylum* and a *Cymbidium elegans* with three spikes, which although in bud at the time, I was hopeful that it would be out in time for

September 20th when judging would take place. I am pleased to say that the four plants were placed on the stand and added to the beautiful naturalistic display of both species and hybrid orchids. The exhibit was awarded a well-deserved Silver Gilt Floral Medal.



OSGB exhibit Chelsea Sept 2021

News from the Arboretum

By Ben Jones

We undertake our hazardous tree survey work in winter. Whilst we all would like to keep every tree in the collection, certain trees need to be removed due to their decline. Where possible, we leave such specimens to grow old gracefully. We do this by fencing trees off or diverting pathways to reduce the risk to visitors; both of these options have been used this winter. When all options have been exhausted, trees which are deemed 'high risk' are felled. We recycle as much as possible: branch wood is put through our chipper, and the woodchip is then used for pathways or placed around newly planted saplings.

The Arboretum team, and our dedicated volunteers, have made a great start on this season's planting. Sixty trees and shrubs have been established across the site since the end of October 2021. The bottom of

Holly Walk, towards the Serpentine Ride now contains nine Chinese coffin trees (*Taiwania cryptomerioides*). These trees will form an important part of the historic landscape, and will be viewed from many different aspects. This tree is native to eastern Asia where it grows in the mountains of central Taiwan. In the wild it is endangered due to illegal logging for timber. The tree has distinctive juvenile and mature growth forms, and forms a shapely conical tree with pendulous branches in youth. Other notable plantings include *Staphylea japonica*, *Styrax obassia*, and *Betula corylifolia*. These new additions are new to the Arboretum and were raised from seed collected in Japan in September 2019.

The year has started with a blaze of colour that is always a welcome sight during the short days of winter. Witch hazel, mahonia, and daphne have given a splash of colour

and perfumed the Arboretum with their almost intoxicating fragrances. *Chimonanthus praecox* is another fragrant plant that can be enjoyed on a cold, crisp winter's day. These plants provide a signal of what's to come as we head towards the longer, brighter, warmer days of spring, with snowdrops, bluebells, and eventually rhododendrons, magnolias, and camellias in store.

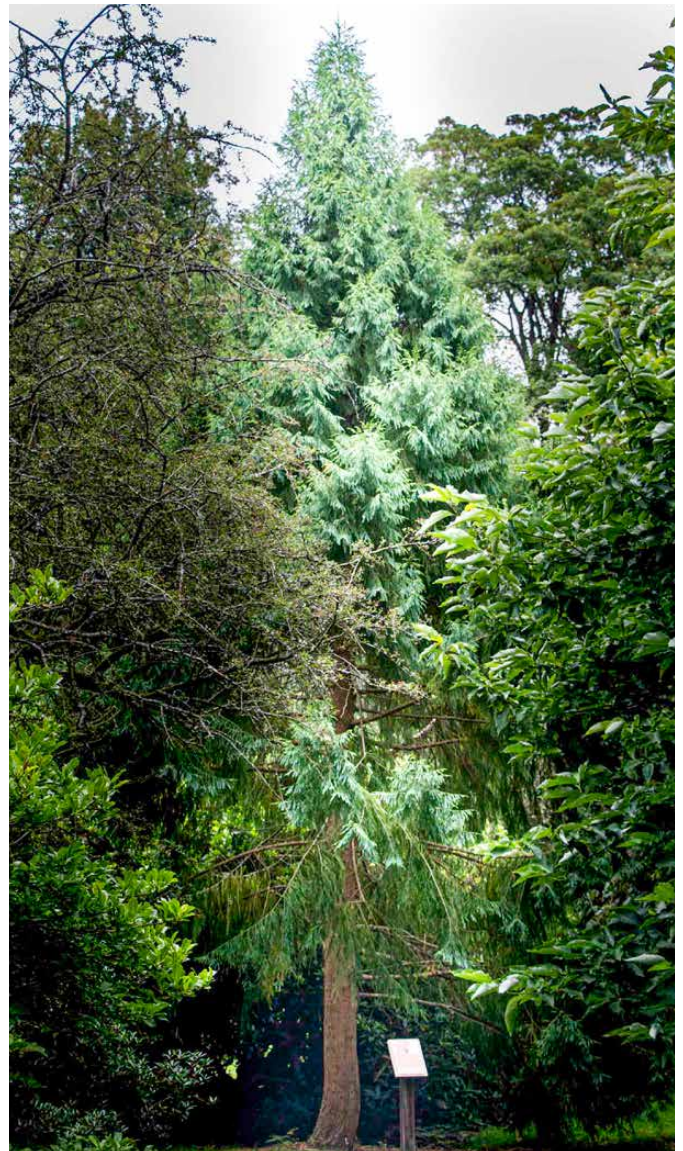
If you would like to be involved in the work of the Arboretum, you can find information on our website: <http://www.obga.ox.ac.uk>, under the 'What's on' section, including information about our practical courses such as forest bathing, nature photography, and recreational tree climbing. If you would like to hear more about the exciting work going on at the Arboretum, then do join our monthly 'Insight Tour' which takes place on the first Wednesday of each month.



Styrax obassia



Staphylea japonica, wild in Japan



Taiwania cryptomerioides

Desert Hyacinths: an obscure solution to a global problem?

By Chris Thorogood

'Desert hyacinths' (genus *Cistanche*) are both beautiful and astonishing. There are about 25 species of them that occur across the dunes and deserts of Asia and North Africa, where they sprout from the bare earth and sand. Leafless, and devoid of chlorophyll, these parasites extract their nutrients from the roots of desert shrubs called saxauls and tamarisks. As you may recall from previous Friends' Newsletters, I have been fortunate to see these plants in the Middle East, and just recently, in the Canary Islands. In full bloom, they are an explosion of colour.

Desert hyacinths have long been used in China in herbal medicine, and elsewhere in the world as a source of food. They have perceived 'trophy' attributes (properties reputed to bestow longevity, stamina and sexual vigour). The large, fleshy underground stems are harvested and sold fresh, or dried. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the plants are traded as products called 'Rou Cong Rong' or 'Guan Hua Rou Cong Rong'. Indeed they have been used in China for more than 2000 years and they are still valued today as tonic herbs (functional health foods).

Few studies have examined the genetic relationships within this poorly known genus. Confusion among species is of global concern, because some may be traded illegally for herbal medicine, which could have disastrous conservation implications. We have been working with Professor Julie Hawkins at the University of Reading along with our PhD student, Majed Zaal M Aldughayman, and scientists in China and the Middle East. Together our work seeks to understand the relatedness of these plants to inform trade, cultivation and conservation.



Cistanche tubulosa in the Palestian Territories



Cistanche phelpaeya growing the the dunes of the Canary Islands, Christmas 2021

Recently we published two papers on desert hyacinths, emphasising their growing potential in a changing climate. About 75% of the world's poor people are affected directly by land degradation (desertification) - in fact it is now a global crisis. The challenge of feeding a rapidly growing human population in affected areas is significant. One proposed solution to desertification is to plant stabilising 'shelter forests'. These comprise long ribbons of drought-tolerant small trees and shrubs such as saxaul and tamarisk - trees which happen to be ideal hosts of desert hyacinths.

Desert hyacinths are already being grown as an ancillary crop in China, where they are planted alongside the shelter forest belts; they feed from the trees' roots, doing them little or no harm. Their successful farming in China demonstrates the potential

for cultivation elsewhere, for example in the Middle East, where the plants are also valued. If 'shelter forests' are to be planted widely to halt land degradation, the incorporation of desert hyacinth farming could be of significant economic value



Cistanche deserticola stems traded for herbal medicine
<httpsdoi.org/10.1002ppp3.10215>



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Cistanche deserticola growing in a shelter forest in China. Source Thorogood et al (2021) <https://doi.org/10.1002/ppp3.10215>

globally, and support communities who are reliant on plants for food and herbal medicine locally. We suggest that this would relieve pressure from unsustainable harvesting of rare wild populations.

These plants do not feature in botanic gardens currently. We are carrying out cultivation trials and have bold ambitions to grow these special plants.

You can read more about our work here: <https://nph.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ppp3.10215>



© Majed Aldughayman

in China. Source Thorogood et al (2021)



Chris Thorogood (left) and the team of ecologists on La Graciosa

Rewilding the Canary Islands

By Chris Thorogood

OBGA works in collaboration with botanists and ecologists in the Canary Islands - a region of high plant species richness and endemism. This winter I joined local ecologist Matías Hernandez Gonzalez on a rewilding project in Lanzarote, and examined a rare and poorly known parasitic plant on La Graciosa.

During the week preceding Christmas, we planted native succulents from Matías's nursery on a volcanic site in the centre of Lanzarote. Then, on Boxing Day, I had the pleasure of joining a community-led effort to rewild a brownfield in the city of Arrecife. The work we did received TV, radio and other local press attention in the Canary Islands. In the longer term, we hope to rewild several sites in the city, as well as roadsides which are cleared of native vegetation currently.

After Christmas, I joined a team of ecologists to locate the Canary Islands' single remaining population of *Cynomorium coccineum* on the island of La Graciosa, which we received permission to visit, by boat. We eventually found the curious plant growing on the crest of the dunes. We are planning in situ and ex situ conservation work to safeguard the existence of this rare plant on the archipelago.

We plan to extend our representation of the Canary Island flora under glass, and now have several species thriving in our care thanks to the work of Mark Brent and Russell Beeton, as you may have read in the last issue of the Friends' Newsletter.



Cynomorium coccineum on the island of La Graciosa



Locating *Cistanche phelypaea* on the dunes at dusk



The wild plant nursery

Education at OBGA

By Tegan Bennett, Catherine Vivian and Lauren Baker

Little Amal Meets Alice

By Lauren Baker

On October 26th 2021, Little Amal, a 3.5m tall puppet of a nine year old Syrian refugee arrived at Oxford Botanic Garden. Her visit formed part of her journey from the Syrian border to Manchester and was coordinated by The Walk and The Story Museum. In our 400th anniversary year, and the 150th anniversary year of Lewis Carroll's Alice Through The Looking Glass, Amal reached Oxford and was welcomed by a 3m high puppet of Alice at Oxford Botanic Garden. As Alice and Amal navigated fantastical flowers and the demands of the Red Queen, Amal's memories spilled out into the city of Oxford and the two girls went on a quest to recover them. The performance brought a diverse audience to the Garden. The narrative for Amal's journey through Oxford was specially commissioned by The Story Museum from award-winning children's book author and illustrator, Nadine Kaadan. Our recording of the event, available on our YouTube channel is our most popular YouTube video, with over 28,000 views to date. If you would like to read the story in full, do visit: <https://www.obga.ox.ac.uk/little-amal-meets-alice>.

BGCI Collaboration

We're delighted to be working with Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) on an exciting new Sustainability Challenge. Following the success of their 'food waste challenge', along with Cambridge University Botanic Garden, we were approached to develop new resources on sustainability. These resources will be trialled at the Garden over the next six months and then scaled up across BGCI's global network. As part of the grant to support this project, we're pleased to welcome Maryam Gohari as our new Education Assistant who will be working on the delivery of this project in the Education team. Please keep your eyes peeled for our Sustainability Challenge and find out how you can get involved. This will be released in April 2022.

Oxford Youth Chemistry Conference

On Thursday 25th November, Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum were delighted to speak at the Oxfordshire Youth Chemistry Conference. Founded in 2019 at Wychwood School, this year's event welcomed the county's science students from years 10-13 to take on the challenge of communicating science relating to climate change. OBGA presented a series of talks that spanned the chemistry of medicinal plants, epigenetic regulation and the chemical processes that

enable plant-fungal interactions. It was a pleasure to hear from so many young scientists and award prizes for the best poster, conference paper and student presentation. We look forward to returning next year.



Students experienced a real-life Wychwood Chemistry Conference 2021

Primary Education at OBGA

The Autumn Fair ran at the Arboretum on the 9th October 2021. As well as generating income, the Autumn Fair builds the Arboretum's profile, engages with existing audiences, and attracts people who have not visited previously.

1500 tickets were sold for the event, and generated a profit of £3350. Online survey responses and 'mood barometer' surveys revealed that most visitors to the Autumn Fair had such an enjoyable and engaging experience, they are likely to visit future seasonal fairs and recommend the Arboretum to others. Respondents highlighted that they were primarily visiting for the atmosphere and an opportunity to socialise with family and friends; they particularly appreciated the willow weaving activity, band and puppet show, and 'meet the arborist' activities at the Woodland Barn. Visitors saw a tree climbing demonstration which deepened engagement with the work of OBGA.

The comparison of the entry and exit surveys revealed that the event also positively impacted visitors' wellbeing: 82% of survey respondents ranked the impact of the fair on their personal wellbeing as 'above average', meanwhile their happiness doubled during their visit.



Little Amal enters the Garden through the Danby Arch as part of Walk with Amal

Nymphaea x daubenyana, the beautiful water lily used as the event branding. This image was taken in OBGA's waterlily house.



Celebrating Botanic Gardens: Past, Present and Future

By Lauren Baker

On October 21st and 22nd 2021, OBGA hosted an inaugural online symposium, 'Celebrating Botanic Gardens: Past, Present and Future', as part of our 400th anniversary celebrations. The symposium explored the vital work botanic gardens across the world undertake within four areas of endeavour: (i) research, (ii) collections and horticulture, (iii) education and engagement, and (iv) conservation.

Professor Simon Hiscock began proceedings by welcoming delegates, speakers and the online audience and inviting us all to 'celebrate the work of all our botanic gardens and institutes and to think about the role of botanic gardens in the 21st century.' Simon was joined by Councillor Bob Price, who helped develop Oxford's Twinned City Partnerships, to discuss the importance of international collaboration in forging new links between the institutes and people of the linked cities. We were delighted that five of Oxford's eight twinned cities were able to join us as speakers in the event. A highlight of the symposium was a talk by Professor William 'Ned' Friedman, Curator of the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University entitled, 'The magic and meaning of a garden of trees'. Ned's talk captured the audience's imagination, and many respondents to our evaluation survey cited the evocative content and beautiful images of the arboretum.

In total, 839 people joined the symposium live from around the world who heard from 26 renowned speakers from 22 different institutions. The recordings of each individual speaker are available on OBGA's YouTube channel; these recordings have already been viewed over 1,400 times. Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive, and 89% of questionnaire respondents rated the symposium as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good'.

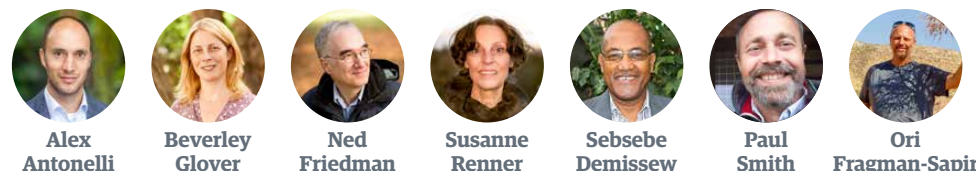
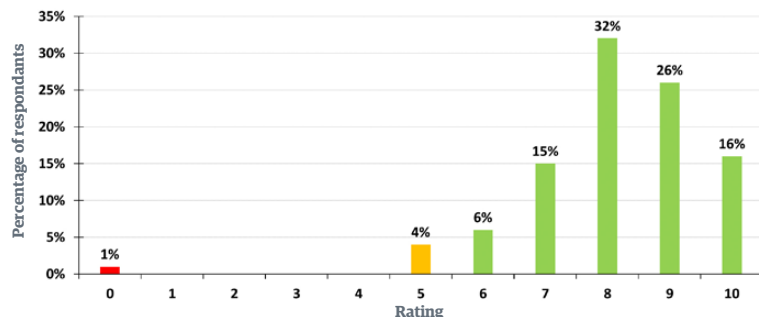


An ant plant, which was explored in detail during one of the symposium's keynote talks

Evaluation also showed a high rate of sustained engagement, and over 50% of the respondents attended all four sessions.

We thank Plants, People, Planet and the New Phytologist Trust for their support and sponsorship of this event, which enabled free attendance for everyone.

Overall Enjoyment Rating (n=94)



Lottie Apsey

When I was given the opportunity to take a year out of my undergraduate degree to gain experience in a workplace of my choice, I leapt at it. Not only because my first two years of studying BSc Biological Sciences at Durham University had been somewhat marred by the pandemic, but also because during my degree, I have rarely had the opportunity to work with the public.

I secured myself a placement to work with OBGA's Education team. I was keen to take this opportunity to explore the different career options studying plants can offer, in addition to horticulture or lab-based research. My personal interest in plants stems from a visit to Alnwick's Poison Garden years ago where, perhaps macabrely, I was fascinated by the ways in which some plants could so easily kill us with just one bite! My interest peaked when I learned how some of these poisons can be turned into lifesaving medicines, and how decreasing plant biodiversity, through climate change, may impact the availability or the discovery of future medicines.

My main project here at OBGA is to develop a podcast to inspire young people with plants. I've been lucky to pick a great year to work here too, with the 400th anniversary taking place; I will be working with the team to develop the celebratory offerings this July.

I'm really excited by what I will gain this year, working at OBGA.



Lottie Apsey

Friends' Section

News

From the Friends' Chairman,
Sarah Taylor

Introduction

The Friends are emerging, chrysalis like, from lockdown and you will see in the next couple of pages of this newsletter, that there is an explosion in activity planned, whether May morning, the sale of really special plants propagated by the Garden at the Spring Fair, the opera in New College, many more wonderful garden visits to go on or the resumption of coffee mornings. The latter are under new management. Jane Annett having, after many years of devoted service for which no thanks could be sufficient, handed over to Cressida Battersby.

You will also read that the Paths Appeal is gearing up for the final push and I urge you all to help us reach our target so that many more people are enabled to visit the beautiful Arboretum. We are nearly halfway, having raised £355,000 of our £750,000 aim and we now step up our efforts, led by Anne James and Cathy Stewart, to complete this great task by the time of the postponed celebrations of the 400th Anniversary in July.

Diana Naumann

I continue with my series of articles on the fascinating people who make the Friends 'tick'. Diana has just joined the board of Directors, having been actively involved in the Friends since 2014 as a member of the extraordinarily productive and creative Garden Visits team. Her involvement came after retirement from co-ordinating University events and resulted from a chance conversation with Timothy Walker.

Diana's life has, to put it mildly, been adventurous and varied. She grew up in the idyllic Surrey countryside, where her parents bred whippets. Great promise led her, at the age of 8, to boarding at Elmhurst Ballet School in Camberley. By the age of 13, she found that ballet was not for her, and she moved schools and interests, branching out into multiple sports as well as contemporary dance and drama, and making lifelong friends in the process. The prestigious Guildhall School of Music and Drama followed, where Diana trained as a drama teacher and, once qualified, became responsible for drama for five challenging and rewarding years at Sarah Siddons School in Paddington.

Diana's life then once more changed tack dramatically and she set off for Kathmandu with a group on a bus from Victoria Coach Station. Despite the Iranian border being closed in the midst of the 1978 oil crisis, she managed to reach Nepal and brave the challenge of walking

to Muktinath, 3,800 metres up - a sharp contrast to her native Surrey. She then continued solo down into northern India, Burma, Thailand (where she relied on a hand-drawn map and the kindness of strangers to find her way), Penang and Sumatra where, in a hint of her later involvement with the Botanic Garden, she travelled South hoping to see the Rafflesia in flower - sadly it wasn't. Continuing in her intrepid vein, she then tried to hitch a ride on a cargo ship from Singapore to Perth, but when she couldn't, reluctantly had to rely on a more conventional aeroplane. She reverted to hitchhiking in Australia, through the dirt roads of the west and the Kimberley to Darwin, then through the centre to board The Ghan train, finally arriving in Melbourne to visit cousins. She settled in Canberra for four years but was then drawn back to the 'old country'.

Diana arrived in Oxford in 1985 and embarked on a varied career in education and the arts, with Oxfam, the Old Fire Station, the Pegasus Youth Theatre, the Museum of Modern Art, the Oxford Gallery, Oxford Today and finally events co-ordination for Oxford University. In the process, she studied for an MA in Arts Administration and became an accredited Humanist Celebrant for weddings and namings. Her work gave her a unique view of Oxford. Her walks around the City are marked by memories of her involvement, amongst others, in the opening of the Rothermere American Institute by Bill Clinton in 2001 and that of the Chemistry Research Laboratory by the Queen in 2004.

In 1989, at Michael Black's alternative May Morning, she met the man who



Diana Naumann

was to become her husband, jeweller and silversmith Tony Thomson. She recommends conversations with strangers - maybe at the Friends' May Morning Event this year? - because you never know where they may lead.

They have certainly led Diana through an eventful and exciting life to the Friends, where we are incredibly fortunate that she puts at our disposal her gifts, her insights, and her energetic enjoyment of being a member of the Garden Visits team.

Arboretum Paths Appeal

By Cathy Stewart and Anne James

Please help with the Friends' Appeal to raise £750,000 to provide Fully Accessible Paths at the Arboretum.

The lack of paths at the Arboretum has meant that most of it is currently inaccessible to people with mobility problems and parents and carers with little ones in buggies, which is why we knew that we needed to raise the £750,000 to create a comprehensive network of paths.

It is estimated that there are 110,000 disabled people in Oxfordshire: which equates to around 1 in 7 of the population. Of these people approximately 45% will be of pensionable age, and 6% children. 8% of these people will be wheelchair users. There are also about 36,500 under 5s. These figures are based on current national estimates.

The Arboretum does not collect the numbers of disabled people or of parents and carers of under 5s who visit, however, soft information from the Arboretum staff suggests that far fewer than 1 in 7 of the current visitors is disabled or had a mobility problem.

Feedback that we have had from potential visitors confirms the importance of the paths:

'We have always loved spending time in the Arboretum, but now my husband is in a wheelchair, the rough ground has made visiting impossible for us. We both do miss our visits to such a beautiful and tranquil place. The planned paths would make it possible for us to come back.'

Mrs A.H. Oxford

'Even with our off-road buggy we couldn't venture far enough into the Arboretum for us and the children to enjoy everything that is there. The planned paths would be just brilliant.'

Ms L.G. Banbury

Thanks to the generosity of individuals, many of whom are Friends, plus money donated by Trusts and grant-making bodies we have already raised over £355,000, which is both impressive and a fantastic start! And that gives sufficient funds to complete the first two of the six planned paths. But we still need to fund the remaining four paths. And we are asking for your help with raising the money.

If each us as a Friend gave just over £100, we could raise all of the outstanding £395,000 needed and reach our target of £750,000. We do understand that a donation of that size will not be possible for some people, but please be reassured that whatever you can donate will be very, very welcome. And if you can give more than £100, then thank you for your generosity. And do remember if you are a UK tax-payer and opt for Gift Aid, this will allow the Friends to recover tax amounting to 25% of your donation.

To donate you can send a cheque made payable to **FOBGA** to:

The Friends Administrator,
Oxford Botanic Garden,
Rose Lane, Oxford OX1 4AZ
(please write The Paths Appeal on the back of your cheque)

Or make a Bank Transfer to
The Friends of The Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum
Sort Code: 40-35-34
Account number: 62346532
referencing The Paths Appeal.

And let us all look forward to the time when the whole of the Arboretum will be accessible to everyone.

Membership and Friends' Gardens for Friends

By Rebecca Mather

Membership

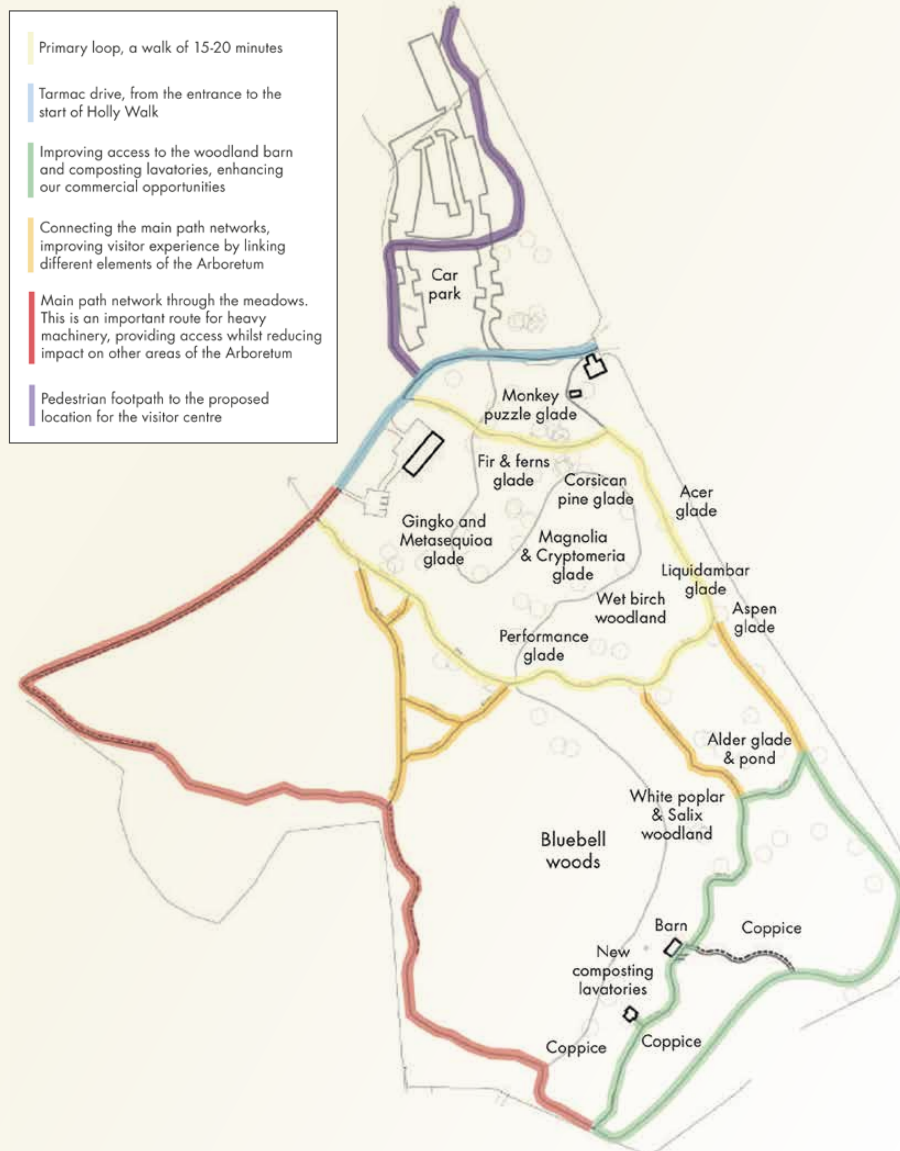
As a result of feedback from Friends, we are changing the Joint Membership category. This will now apply to two Friends who do not necessarily live at the same address.

We are also introducing a new category: **Friend Plus One**. This will allow one named Friend to bring in a guest accompanying them. The card holder must be present and provide identification. This is £70 pa. The hope is that guests will enjoy their visit so much that they will join as a Friend! We are always happy to get comments and feedback from Friends and this can lead to changes.

Friends' Gardens for Friends

In past years we have had a successful venture, Friends' Gardens for Friends, an opportunity to look around the gardens of Friends and enjoy tea. There is no charge other than for the tea but donations are welcome, all going to OBG. There is a willing team of volunteers to bake cakes, pour tea and clear up!

It would be good to restart this. Would you be willing to open your garden? Big gardens, small gardens, country or town, all welcome. This is a friendly event and the gardens do not have to meet NGS standards. Please let me know if you would like to do this (rebecca.mather28@gmail.com).



Friends of Botanic Gardens Forum (FBGF)

By Harriet Bretherton

The FBGF Newsletter 5 has appeared. You can find it at <https://fbgf890441273.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/newsletter-autumn-2021.pdf>. There are articles about botanic gardens in Belfast, Benmore, Birmingham, Glasgow, Ness, Oxford, Sheffield, Treborth, Bristol, Durham and St Andrews. The article by Sarah Taylor, our Chairman, about the History of Friends of Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum in our Newsletter was reprinted in the FBGF Newsletter.

You can find the website of the FBGF at <https://fbgf.org/>

Events



Sunday 1st May May Morning

Don't miss our annual celebration of May morning in Oxford. Escape the crowds on Magdalen Bridge and hear the choristers sing in the morning in the peace and beauty of our iconic botanic garden. The early start is very well worth it. See the sun rise over the river and the first rays penetrating the Garden. Warm up with hot drinks from the moment you arrive. After watching Cry Havoc, our wonderful Morris dancers, and listening to the choir of Magdalen College, wander through the Garden enjoying its beauty in the early morning. Particularly captivating if you enjoy photography; catching that early light amongst the many different plantings.

Sunday 1st May, 5.00am to 7.00am

Entry is only via the Rose Lane gate of the Botanic Garden between 5.00-5.30am

Morris dancers, Cry Havoc, perform 5.15-5.45am

- Friends £15, Guests £20, children 15 and under £5
- Ticket includes complimentary coffee, hot chocolate or tea and a croissant with homemade jam
- Extra croissants £1.50
- Please pay by cheque with the printed booking form.

First Friday of the Month Coffee Mornings

We are delighted to say that coffee mornings will be starting again on the first Friday of the month, at 10.30am as usual. There is no need to book in advance but please remember to bring your membership card. We will be meeting outside in order to keep socially distanced. Plenty of warm clothes are advisable!

We will have subsequent coffee mornings on the first Friday of the month (except August), until the end of the year.

Saturday 14th May,
10.00am-4.00pm

Sale of Plants in aid of the Arboretum Paths Appeal at the Spring Fair

Owing to increasing concerns about biosecurity at the Arboretum with its exceptional collection of trees and shrubs, we will not this year be able to sell Friends' plants, but there will be a wonderful selection of plants for sale, specially propagated by the Garden.

We are very grateful to those who have already divided and potted up plants in anticipation of the sale: please do keep them in reserve as we plan to hold a full plant sale next year at a less sensitive site.

VOLUNTEERS!

We will need volunteers on Friday 13th and Saturday 14th May to help set up the stall and sell the plants, as well as supply cakes for and man a cake stall.

TOMBOLA

We will also be running a tombola stall so would appreciate any donations you may have for this.



For offers to volunteer or any queries at all, please contact Seonaid Danziger (seonaidscd@gmail.com).

Monday, 6th June 2022, 6.30pm

The Friends' Annual General Meeting

The Riverside Pavilion, St Hilda's College, Oxford OX4 1DY

Should we be unable to hold the AGM in person, we will email members to give them the alternative Zoom connection.

Wednesday 6th July 2022 - Advance Notice

The Friends' Opera *Le Astuzie Femminili (Feminine Wiles)*

by Domenico Cimarosa

Sung in English by New Chamber Opera and The Band of Instruments

At New College Oxford

5.00pm Pre Performance talk by Prof. Michael Burden, Director of New Chamber Opera

6.30pm opera performance in the Warden's Garden (open from 6.00pm)

The opera is a dramma giocoso (a drama with jokes) in four acts with a libretto by Giuseppe Palomba. Composed in the Neapolitan style it was premiered in Naples in August 1794 and remained very popular during the first quarter of the 19th Century, with a London performance in 1804. This New College performance provides a rare opportunity to see a high-spirited opera which is not often performed these days.

The story line features Bellina, an orphan and the difficulties her father's will places on her and her guardian Don Romualdo: she can only claim her large dowry if she marries the crude and cowardly Don Gianpaolo Lasagna. The plot focuses on the efforts to rescue Bellina including those by two buffoons disguised as Hussars, whose incompetent disguise includes them speaking in wild and broken German.

The opera will be performed in the lovely surroundings of the Warden's Garden at New College, or in the chapel if wet. There will be a 75-minute interval for picnicking in the cloisters.

Tickets £44 to include a welcoming glass of sparkling wine in the cloister garden. £3 for the pre performance talk. Tickets will be on sale from 1st April 2022



Naples in the 18th century

Friends' Garden Visits

By Harriet Bretherton, Pauline Coombes, Jane Annett, Diana Naumann and Jane Thrift

We hope you'll find this summer's programme full of variety including two coach visits to further afield gardens.

Because we continue to have everyone's health and safety in mind when planning visits, we will remain guided by advice from garden owners, the Botanic Garden and Government regarding masks and testing, numbers and physical distancing.

Celebrating the 400th Anniversary of the founding of the Oxford Botanic Garden continues during the summer so we hope we'll see you at some of these visits and at other events.

Booking tickets online: We had hoped to offer online booking for these visits. However, for a variety of reasons, this has not been possible though hopefully will be available for the autumn visits.

To book visits see enclosed Booking Form

Dogs and Garden Visits: Our visits follow the Botanic Garden's policy that dogs are not permitted unless they are registered assistance dogs.



Tythrop Park

Wednesday 11th May, 2.00pm

Private visit to Tythrop Park

Tythrop Park, Kingsey, Nr Thame, Bucks
HP17 8LT

By kind permission of Nick and Chrissie Wheeler

A welcome return to Tythrop Park's ten-acre garden surrounding the Grade I listed manor house (not open). Still seldom open to the public, the grounds blend traditional styles with more contemporary planting and Head Gardener, Phil Kusmishko will lead a tour of the garden with time to explore on your own. Features include an intricate parterre, deep mixed borders, a large greenhouse, walled garden, kitchen and cut flower garden, meadows, many old trees and shrubs. Tea, coffee and cake are provided.

- Friends £20, guests £25
- Maximum 30

Wednesday 18th May

Double coach visit to Derry Watkins Special Plants and Iford Manor

8.30am: Depart Redbridge Park & Ride

5.30-6.00pm: Approx return time at Park & Ride

Derry Watkins Special Plants

By kind permission of Derry Watkins

This double visit begins with Derry Watkins' garden and nursery which grew out of muddy fields surrounding

their house. Derry begins our visit with an introduction about what she, and her architect husband, Peter Clegg, have created. Over 20 years, the garden has grown and bloomed beyond their wildest expectations. Full of unusual plants collected from all over the world, Derry specialises in annual and biennial plants, tender perennials for terrace and conservatory, a range of hardy herbaceous and rockery plants. There are ponds with trickling water; bog and vegetable gardens, an orchard and sculpted hedging to explore. Buying plants from the nursery provides a great opportunity to stock up for summer. Coffee, tea & flapjack included.



Aerial view of Derry Watkins' garden

Iford Manor

By kind permission of William and Marianne Cartwright-Hignett

This is a wonderfully contrasting afternoon visit at Iford Manor (not open), an internationally renowned Grade I listed Italianate garden originally created by landscape designer, Harold Peto, from 1899 to 1933. Over the past 50 years, John Hignett and Elizabeth Cartwright-Hignett lovingly restored the gardens of steep terraces with Roman style colonnades, statuary, pools, narrow paths and magnificent rural views. The new generation of owners will give a talk about their plans for the gardens, refreshing the planting and preserving the heritage within the main garden, assisted by the Head Gardener. Tea and cake included. Please note there are many steps and uneven paths.

- Friends £50, guests £55
- Maximum 40



Blewbury Manor garden



Iford Manor, the Great Terrace



Rodmarton Manor

Tuesday 24th May, 1.30pm

Private visit to Rodmarton Manor and garden

Rodmarton Manor, Rodmarton, Nr Cirencester, Glos GL7 6PF

By kind permission of Mr Simon Biddulph

At the start of the 20th century, Rodmarton Manor was designed, built and furnished for the Biddulph family by Ernest Barnsley according to Arts and Crafts ideals. He also laid out the eight-acre garden surrounding the manor. There is a guided tour of the house by the owner and you are welcome to explore the garden whose original layout survives today. Close to the house, the garden is more architectural, with a wide selection of planting done over the years giving way to less formality and open farmland; superb vistas throughout. Refreshments included.

- Friends £25, guests £30
- Maximum 40

Thursday 16th June, 2.00pm

Private visit to Blewbury Manor

Berry Lane, Blewbury, OX11 9QJ

By kind permission of Mr and Mrs Blythe

Blewbury Manor is situated at the northern edge of the Berkshire Downs. The 10 acres of garden are varied in style including a parterre, pergola walkway full of climbers, privy garden, small kitchen garden and a mix of formal mixed borders. There are many hedges of box, beech and yew giving the garden a strong and cohesive designed layout. The Dial Garden which is comprised of a sunken gravel garden surrounded by a hornbeam allee offers a more contemporary touch. Plants of interest at the time of the visit include a selection of roses and clematis, various lavender and herbaceous perennials including acanthus, achilleas, cephalaria gigantea, knautia macedonica, hemerocallis and nepeta. The tour of the garden will be lead by Head Gardener, Richard Rosyln. Refreshments included.

- Friends £18, guests £23
- Maximum 40



Westwell Manor Garden

© Sev Josey

© Andrew Lawson, used with permission from Thomas Gibson

Thursday 23rd June

Double private visit Westwell Manor and the Old Vicarage, Bledington

10.30am

Private visit to Westwell Manor

Westwell, Nr Burford, Oxon OX18 4JT

By kind permission of Mr Thomas Gibson

The visit begins at Westwell Manor with a short presentation by the Head Gardener followed by a tour of the six-acre garden surrounding the old Cotswold manor house (not open). Created by Anthea Gibson, one of Britain's foremost landscape gardeners and seldom open to the public, the garden contains a knot garden, potager, shrub roses, herbaceous borders, topiary, earth works, moonlight garden, auricula ladder, rills and a water garden. Refreshments not provided.

2.30pm

Private visit to the Old Vicarage, Bledington

Main Road, Bledington, Chipping Norton, Oxon OX7 6UX

By kind permission of Sue and Tony Windsor

And the double visit continues at the 1½ acre garden surrounding the late Georgian vicarage (c1843/not open) in Bledington. The borders and beds are filled with hardy perennials, shrubs and trees as is the informal rose garden with over 300 David Austin roses. There's also a small pond,



Old Vicarage Bledington

vegetable patch, paddock with trees, shrubs and herbaceous border. The garden is planted for an all the year-round interest. Plants will be on sale. Tea and cake will be served.

- **Friends £30, guests £35**
- **Maximum 30**

Thursday 30th June, 2.00pm

Visit to Kiftsgate Court Gardens

Kiftsgate Court Gardens, Chipping Campden, Glos GL55 6LN

By kind permission of Mrs Anne Chambers

The theory of evolution rather than revolution is the abiding theme at Kiftsgate

Court gardens created by three generations of women gardeners, and the owner Anne Chambers has continued the family tradition of seeking out new and interesting plants to complement the colour schemes which were established when the garden was originally laid out. Her introductory talk begins the visit. The garden has a magnificent situation and views, many unusual plants and shrubs, tree peonies, hydrangeas, abutilons, species and old-fashioned roses including the largest rose in England, *Rosa filipes* 'Kiftsgate'. Some paths are steep, uneven and can become slippery when wet or very dry. Sensible shoes strongly recommended. Refreshments included.

- **Friends £20, guests £25**
- **Maximum 40**



Kiftsgate Court Garden

Tuesday 5th July, 2.00pm

Private visit to Broughton Grange

Wykham Lane, Broughton, Banbury, Oxon OX15 5DS

By kind permission of Mr Stephen Hester

Broughton Grange is considered one of the most significant private contemporary gardens in Britain. Set in over 400 acres of parkland, farmland and open meadow, with parkland planting that owes its origins to the Victorian era, Broughton Grange's history dates back to 1620 initially as a small farm cottage associated with the Saye and Sele estate at neighbouring Broughton Castle. Owned by the Morrell family for some 200 years, the present owners have been resident since 1992. The landscape designer Tom Stuart-Smith was commissioned to transform a six-acre south facing field into a walled garden. This impressive new garden, walled on two sides only, features three individually themed terraces and was designed in strong relation to the surrounding rural landscape. Formal and informal areas combine to make this a special site including a newly laid arboretum with many other ongoing projects. The Head Gardener, Andrew Woodall, will welcome our group and the visit ends with refreshments. Please note: uneven ground with quite a lot of walking and steps.

- Friends £22, guests £27
- Maximum 40



Broughton Grange



Merton College garden

Wednesday 6th July, 1.45pm

Private visit to Merton College including the gardens

Merton Street, Oxford OX1 4JD

By kind permission of The Warden of Merton College, Professor Irene Tracey

Merton College's Head Gardener, Lucille Savin, will lead the garden tour. An all year-round interest is created by a mix of familiar and unusual bulbs, perennials and shrubs. Summer seasonal displays use exotics overwintered in the greenhouse, or grown-on cuttings. Native wildflowers love the shallow alkaline soil and a highlight is the lavender border - a magnet for bees. The garden provides herbs for the college kitchen and quadrangles provide rooms within the garden. In addition, there will

be a display of botanical works in the lower library and we will have a tour of the chapel. Refreshments will be served.

- Friends £25, guests £30
- Maximum 30

Thursday 14th July, 2.00pm

A welcome return to Coton Manor

Coton Manor, Coton Road, Northampton, NN6 8RQ

By kind permission of Ian and Susan Pasley-Tyler

A much looked forward to return to this treasure of a garden. It is hoped the owner, Mr Pasley-Tyler will give a welcome introduction after which there is much to explore. Roses are everywhere - in borders, as specimen plantings, up and over walls and trees, in the



Coton Manor

©Coton Manor



© Knepp Wildland Safaris

Marbled white - *Melanargia galathea*'

Rose Garden, Rose Bank and the Rose Walk. Also achilleas, aconitums, delphiniums, galega, herbaceous clematis, thalictrums, salvias, foxgloves and lots more. The Water Garden is at its best and everywhere is filled with colour. And there are seats from where quieter and calmer parts of the garden can also be enjoyed. Refreshments available in the Stableyard Café, but not included. A visit not to be missed.

- Friends £18, guests £23
- Maximum 30

Saturday 30th July

Coach trip for a visit to Knepp Wildland

10.00am: Depart Redbridge Park & Ride

NOTE: Lewknor pick-up possible

7.30pm: Approx return time at Park & Ride

By kind permission of Isabella Tree and Sir Charles Burrell

This is a first for our Friends - exploring the pioneering Knepp Wildland either on a walking or in a vehicle safari. Knepp is a 3,500 acre estate known for 'rewilding' previously farmed land. Using grazing animals as the drivers of habitat creation and with the restoration of dynamic, natural water courses, the project has seen extraordinary increases in wildlife. Extremely rare species like turtle doves, nightingales, peregrine falcons, storks and purple emperor butterflies are now breeding and populations of more common species are rocketing. Guided by expert ecologists and carefully tailored to suit the season and weather conditions, your 'safari' will take you to current 'hot spots' of wildlife interest. Bring a picnic for lunch, sturdy waterproof boots and binoculars. Refreshments provided during the safaris which last for 3 hours. Vehicle safari can be bumpy and walking group safaris will go off the main tracks. A visit not to be missed if at all possible!

- Friends: walking safari £60
- Vehicle safari £85
- Guests: walking safari £65
- Vehicle safari £90
- Max walking group x 2: Total 29
- Max vehicle group x 1: Total 12

The Danby Patrons' Group

By Maura Allen

In late November the Danby Patrons' Group were able to gather to enjoy the fabulous exhibition at St John's College of Botanical Illustration by the OBG Florilegium Group. Founded by Rosemary Wise, Plant Sciences' Illustrator, the group aims to follow in the tradition of recording flora through graphite and watercolour illustration which are both botanically accurate and beautiful to view. The original work is held in Plant Sciences Herbaria and forms a continuum of records going back many centuries. The evening was complimented by a tour of the wonderful new St John's College Library, introductions to the Florilegium work by both Rosemary Wise and Professor Stephen Harris and a glasses of sparkling wine.

2022 shows more promise for events, starting with a visit to the Herbaria to hear more fascinating stories from Professor Stephen Harris, this time drawing on his

encyclopaedic knowledge to discuss how the conventions used in botanical illustration, plus accidental or deliberate errors, may create scientific confusion, drawing on examples from sixteenth century through to the twentieth century and illustrated from the Herbaria collection.

April will see the Danby Patrons' Group reconvene at the Arboretum for Tree Tales and Bluebells with some gastronomic feasting to accompany the event. I am thrilled that I will be finally back in the UK and able to attend a Danby event!

The small and intimate events that are planned for the Danby Patrons' Group give an excellent opportunity for individuals to have meaningful conversations with leading exponents in the field of Plant Sciences and horticulture. The patrons membership gives very important support to both the herbaria and the Garden and Arboretum on targeted projects.



Florilegium exhibition

Special message to all gmail users

Gmail has a disconcerting way of filtering messages into different categories. You may miss emails from us because they have been filtered into the Promotions or Update categories. It is advisable to apply a filter to move any emails from Friends' Administrator to force them into your Personal or Primary Inbox. In particular you may not receive your emailed copy of the newsletter magazine that is published three times a year. The dates this is usually sent out are as follows:

Mid-March / Early July / Early November

If you need any help with applying a filter to move our emails into your inbox then do contact the Friends' Administrator: friends.administrator@obg.ox.ac.uk

Don't forget your membership card

when you come to visit the Garden or Arboretum. Our ticket office staff do not have access to the membership database (for data protection reasons) and can't let you in free of charge if you don't have your membership card!

Message to all email users

If you are not receiving regular e-bulletins with news of Friends' events by email, it will be because, for some reason, we do not have your current email address. Please send an email with your name, to the Friends' Administrator at friends.administrator@obg.ox.ac.uk.

The Bobarts Patrons' Group

By Helen Potts



Delphiniums at Bledlow Grange

After a delayed start to 2021, our Patrons enjoyed a series of fascinating and enjoyable visits. We are looking forward to an equally attractive year in 2022 and sincerely hope our programme will not suffer interruptions.

In the first half of the year we begin with a visit to Christ Church in March to see some of the Botanical Art held in the College collections. Then as Spring advances and the days warm up, we are delighted to have been invited to return to Woodperry House for another small group visit, before we enjoy a private visit to the recently renovated gardens of Bledlow Manor, home of Lord & Lady Carrington. In June we plan an early evening garden party at the home of one of our members near Brill windmill, with a backdrop of glorious and extensive views. A private tour of The Secret Gardens of the City of London in July will see us walking the City streets to find green gems, some quite hidden, in the company of a Blue Badge Guide.

As ever, the friendly, collaborative nature of this garden loving and committed group of Patrons will enhance our visits, as will the way the curators, owners and head gardeners so generously give up their time to share their knowledge and enthusiasm.

Do consider joining us. Our loyal Patrons provide extra financial backing to support the valuable work of the Botanic Garden and Arboretum. Our members, and the Danby Patrons' Group, enjoy all the benefits of the Friends plus a programme of small group visits to the University collections and to some of the best gardens and estates in the area. We aim to visit as wide a range of gardens as possible in terms of style, size and location and are very grateful to all those who welcome us to their own creative realms.

Calendar

2022

Please check the website: <https://www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk/> for the latest news regarding forthcoming events.

March

Wednesday 30th March, 10.00am
Private visit to Wadham College Gardens

April

Friday 1st April, 10.30am
Coffee morning

Tuesday 12th April, 10.00am and 2.00pm
Fritillaries at Magdalen College

Tuesday 26th April, 2.00pm
Return visit to Evenley Wood Garden

May

Sunday 1st May 5.00am
May Morning, Botanic Garden

Friday 6th May, 10.30am
Coffee morning

Wednesday 11th May, 2.00pm
Private visit to Tythrop Park

Saturday 14th May, 11.00am
Spring Fair, Arboretum

Wednesday 18th May
Coach visit to Derry Watkins & Iford Manor

Tuesday 24th May, 1.30pm
Visit to Rodmarton Manor

June

Friday 3rd June, 10.30am
Coffee morning

Monday 6th June, 6.30pm
Friends' AGM

Thursday 16th June, 2.00pm
Visit to Blewbury Manor

Thursday 23rd June
10.30am Visit to Westwell Manor
2.30pm Visit to Old Vicarage, Bledington

Thursday 30th June, 2.00pm
Visit to Kiftsgate Court Gardens

July

Friday 1st July, 10.30am
Coffee morning

Tuesday 5th July, 2.00pm
Visit to Broughton Grange

Wednesday 6th July, 1.45pm
Visit to Merton College

Wednesday 6th July, 6.00pm
New Chamber Opera

Thursday 14th July, 2.00pm
Visit to Coton Manor

Saturday 30th July, 10.00am
Safari visit to Knepp Wildland

**The Friends of Oxford
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All Friends' enquiries, including those about Friends' events, should be made to the Friends' Administrator.

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The Friends' Office is staffed on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. This Newsletter was edited by Chris Thorogood and Carol Maxwell. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Board of the Friends or the Visitors of Oxford Botanic Garden.

