

The University of Oxford

111

Botanic Garden & Arboretum

Friends'
newsletter

*Celebrating
400 years*

Summer/Autumn 2022



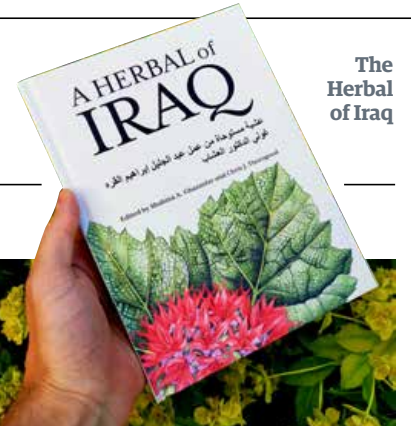
CELEBRATING 400 YEARS



Nymphaea

From the Editor

By Chris Thorogood



The Herbal of Iraq



The delegation from the University of the Philippines at OBG in early April

After a two-year absence due to the pandemic, the ancient tradition of May Morning made a spectacular return to the city this year. Despite the dry spring, the Botanic Garden looked beautiful on May 1st, and hundreds enjoyed a view of Magdalen Tower framed by bowers of handkerchief tree, assertive red sprouts of rheum, and splashes of colour in the taxonomic beds. Meanwhile, a few miles down the road, a blue haze settled over the Arboretum as the native bluebells unfurled.

Many new visitors have enjoyed the blossom at the Garden and Arboretum this spring. On 3rd April we were delighted to welcome a delegation from the University of the Philippines, led by President Danilo Concepcion, Chancellor Jose Camacho Jr., and Vice-Chancellor Nathaniel Bantayan. During the visit, we discussed ways in which we can extend our collaboration, including

work on enigmatic *Rafflesia* which is discussed on p.8, and research and conservation at the University's Land Grant in the Sierra Madre mountain range. We look forward to taking this exciting work further together.

On 28th April we enjoyed an evening examining herbal medicine in the time of Shakespeare at the Botanic Garden. There are 160 references to plants within Shakespeare's works. This was explained by the Director of the Oxfordshire Shakespeare Festival, Tom McDonnell; meanwhile Natural Medicine Practitioner Roz Jones concocted medicinal brews, filling the Garden with the smell of herbs and botanicals. Then we undertook



a mandrake harvesting and enjoyed ambient music from the Tudor era performed by Dan Glazebrook and Spencer Williams.

On 4th May we celebrated the launch of our long-awaited Herbal of Iraq with colleagues from the University and the Iraqi community. This interdivisional project was established to develop a herbal in collaboration with leading authority on Middle Eastern floras, Dr Shahina Ghazanfar at Kew, and Rana Ibrahim (an employee of Oxford University's History of Science Museum). The book was published by Kew this April. Its publication will help safeguard the continuation of traditional Islamic medicine and its profound importance in the treatment of disease, in areas where due to war, the knowledge of generations has been lost. You can purchase a copy of the published work in the Botanic Garden's shop (or online).

In this issue of the Newsletter we discover breakthroughs in the propagation of rare Oxfordshire natives on p.5, progress made in planting a living celebration of the flora of Mount Tateyama at the Arboretum, and a growing focus on sustainability in our education and public engagement work.

We have a busy summer ahead. Later this month, we will be recruiting a new Project Manager and two Community Engagement Officers to support our National Lottery Heritage Fund project to create 'a gateway to nature' at the Arboretum, and work with new audiences and under-represented groups. Then, in July, the Botanic Garden will become a hive of 400th anniversary celebratory activity once again. Do check our 'What's On' page online to see what exciting activities are unfolding week by week.

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A talk about Herbal Medicine in the time of Shakespeare. Insert: A freshly harvested mandrake

From the Director

By Simon Hiscock

I am writing this piece on the eve of the Chelsea Flower Show, where on Monday 23rd May we will (finally) launch our Oxford Physic Rose with Peter Beales Roses. For the last week master rose breeder Ian Limmer has been working hard to assemble their dramatic stand in the Grand Marquee. The Oxford Physic Rose will take centre stage in this display, described in the press release as "*designed so that visitors can walk through and immerse themselves in the beauty of the rose... whichever way you enter the exhibit, (you) will be greeted with a spectacular vista through to the classic stonework centre piece, a cloister tower, beautifully dressed with our new introduction the 'Oxford Physic Rose'*" - I can't wait to see it. Following the launch, the first 250 pot-grown roses will go on sale at OBG, where initially they will be available exclusively to our Patrons' groups and Friends.

The launch of the Oxford Physic Rose will herald the beginning of the final two months of our year of 400th anniversary celebrations. Among these celebrations, music and the arts will feature prominently. In addition to the concert of 17th and 18th century music by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment on July 25th, there will be a concert by the Academy of Ancient Music and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama on July 2nd in the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, where they will perform Handel's *Music for the Royal*

Fireworks and Water Music; this forms part of the Oxford Festival of the Arts organized by Michelle Castelletti of Magdalen College School. We are also looking forward to the Nature Printing Exhibition and workshop with Pia Östlund and Matthew Zucker and a new poem by Alice Oswald to mark the end of our celebrations.

With spring now marching towards Summer, the Botanic Garden and Arboretum have been gloriously bedecked with blossom. Daphnes and camellias paved the way at the Arboretum followed by rhododendrons, azaleas and a sea of bluebells - one of the best displays I have seen in recent years. These were enjoyed through April and into May, when on a beautifully warm day on May 14th over 1200 people enjoyed the Spring Fair in combination with the Friends' plant sale. For the first time in recent memory, everything felt normal once again and - at least on that delightful spring day - the pandemic was forgotten. Back at the Botanic Garden we celebrated spring with the first May Morning gathering since 2019. Over 200 Friends enjoyed early morning tea, coffee and croissants as they waited for the sunrise, and the choir and bells of Magdalen College.

Large events have certainly returned, as have near-normal visitor numbers to the Botanic Garden. For a good few of the warmer weekend days in April and May, we welcomed over a thousand visitors a day, numbers reminiscent of the record year of 2019 when our combined visitor numbers to the Garden and Arboretum topped 200,000 for the first time in OBG's history. Income at our shops reflected these healthy visitor numbers, with sales of Oxford Physic Gin, Harcourt Honey and the OBG floral soaps reaching new heights. In June we look forward to the launch of Jo Boyes's delightful new collection of Oxford Physic Rose-themed products, including two elegant silk scarfs, rose soaps, bath salts and skin products. This collection will be followed in July by our long-awaited Black Pine Whisky, another exciting collaboration with The Oxford Artisan Distillery. The whisky label features a wonderful drawing of the famous tree, a favourite of JRR Tolkien, by Stanley Donwood, better known for his work with Robert Macfarlane (*Holloway* and *Ness*) and Radiohead (album covers). At the end of this year, beside a warm open log fire, I look forward to toasting the success of our 400th celebrations with a large glass of this fruity, and very characterful, grain whisky.



News from the Garden

By Mark Brent

The Garden this spring has seen an unusually cool, dry spell; we were not expecting to use irrigation before the end of April! However the horticultural team has continued to maintain the collections to a high standard. The spring bulb displays in particular have held up well and the praise we received after the May Day celebrations was encouraging.

Russell Beeton - a valued member of our horticultural team, and much loved by Friends and visitors, has moved on to the National Botanic Garden of Wales this spring. We wish him all the best with his new adventure. As we say farewell to Russell, we have welcomed volunteers back to the Garden; our volunteers provide invaluable support. We also look forward to welcoming two interns this summer, one of whom, Max Heupel, will be an exchange student from Bonn Botanic Garden.

We have continued to develop the plant collections with, for example, new proteas added to the South Africa bed next to the

Conservatory. More often seen growing in the Scilly Isles and South Cornwall I doubt many gardens in central England can boast a king protea (*Protea cynaroides*) flowering outside.

We are also redeveloping the Medicinal Plant beds. We plan to make them distinct from the adjacent taxonomic displays and reference Bobart's original design through the use of topiary and geometry. The collections will be organised to represent early medicinal uses of plants found in the 'Pharmacopoeia Londinensis' as well as plants used in modern medicine.

The return of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show to a more familiar format has presented OBG with two wonderful opportunities to highlight our horticulture. Our 'Oxford Physic Rose' will no doubt receive the attention it deserves during its official launch at the Peter Beales stand. We have long held a national hardy collection of euphorbias at the Botanic Garden, first established by David Mabberley

and Ken Burras in 1983, as a valuable teaching resource. OBG will be displaying a number of *Euphorbia* species such as *Euphorbia stygiana* on the Plant Heritage stand.

During a botanising trip to Israel this spring I visited Jerusalem Botanic Gardens where, as at OBG, the pandemic demonstrated the value of gardens for wellbeing and mindfulness. We shared experiences from our respective gardens over the last two years and exchanged knowledge of native species conservation. I was delighted to deliver the first lecture held in person for two years for their Friends.

On a different note, we have had the pleasure of supporting the activity of Shay Vyas from St John's College in growing and distributing sunflowers around Oxford to show solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

On behalf of the horticultural team I thank you for your valued support and we look forward to welcoming you to the Garden this summer.



Iris atropurpurea in Israel



Helicodictyon muscivorus in flower in the Rock Garden



Musella lasiocarpa

A new installation in the Literary Garden

By Mark Brent

During the spring a new piece of art, in the form of a mobile created by Iris Milward has been hung from our mature wild service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*). It highlights the introduction to a poem celebrating the tree's beauty by the 19th century poet John Clare.

Its autumn berries, known as chequers, have been used in the past for the treatment of colic, and stomach complaints.

The Surrey Tree by John Clare

Tree of tawny berry rich though wild
When mellowed to a pulp yet little known
Though shepherds by its dainty taste beguiled
Swarm with clasped leg the smooth trunk
timber grown
and pulls the very topmost branches down.
Tis beautiful when all the woods tan brown
To see thee thronged with berry's ripe and fine
For daintier palates fitting then the clown
Where hermits of a day may rove and dine
Luxuriantly amid thy crimson leaves...



The new art installation depicting the first line of John Clare's poem

Native Species Conservation project

By Mark Brent

Our collaborative project at Oxford Botanic Garden with the Freshwater Habitat Trust to aid the recovery of locally threatened and endangered species is gathering pace with a propagation program led by botanical horticulturist Jim Penney. In winter and early spring we had great success in raising significant numbers of locally scarce species, such as fen violet (*Viola persicifolia*), greater water parsnip (*Sium latifolium*) and tubular water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fistulosa*). In total, thirty five species are now being raised from seed and cuttings in our nursery; a newly acquired dew point cabinet has proved particularly beneficial to germination and establishment.

Creeping marshwort (*Helosciadium repens*) is another threatened species we are propagating. Oxfordshire Flora Group member, county recorder and 'plant guardian' Judy Webb has re-introduced plants to a spring area near the Lye Valley reserve pond outside the SSSI area. The botanist John Sibthorp reported its presence here in his Flora Oxoniensis in 1794.

Another interesting rare grass species, interrupted brome (*Bromus interruptus*), was recently brought to us by Dr Fred Rumsey, a former Curator at London's Natural History Museum. Described by the doyen of Oxford Botany, George Claridge Druce, this English endemic weed of sainfoin and other crops famously was declared extinct 50 years ago, only to be rediscovered growing on an academic's windowsill. From that point several

attempts have been made over the decades to restore the species in the British countryside. For the last nine years an initiative has been funded by Natural England under its Species Recovery Programme led by the Natural History Museum, working closely with the BSBI, Plantlife, BBOWT, to re-introduce the plant to a limited number of sites. Further progress is reliant on identifying other suitable areas where long-term management is possible and most importantly in having the necessary seed to populate them. It is here that Oxford Botanic Garden is now playing an important role, both in the provision of sites but also in the bulking-up of material. Seeds received in summer 2021 germinated rapidly and are now flowering, the first stage in this grassy phoenix's return to Oxfordshire.

Freshwater Habitat Trust's 'Gro Wet' is garnering community support with upwards of two hundred volunteers stepping forward; they will play an important role in distributing and establishing plants in dedicated reserves around Oxford.



Bromus interruptus in flower at OBG

Viola persicifolia in cultivation at OBG



News from the Arboretum

By Ben Jones

Since 2012, in partnership with Japanese and international partners, OBGA has led a collaborative international plant collection and conservation programme in Japan. This work has seen the collection and ex-situ conservation of 409 woody and non-woody plant species, some of which are endangered or critically endangered in the wild. OBGA has

also conducted 44 vegetation surveys known as Rapid Botanical Surveys (RBS) to gather data and documentation on plant diversity. As a result of this collaboration, OBGA is building an extensive plant collection from Japan at the Garden and Arboretum in Oxford.

To celebrate our collaboration with the Botanical Gardens of Toyama in Japan,

we have been developing a unique plant collection at the Arboretum to display the extraordinary plant diversity of Mount Tateyama. As the new plantings establish, this collection will reflect the rich diversity of plants that grow on the mountain, including *Magnolia obovata*, *Euptelea polyandra*, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*,



Mount Tateyama, Toyama Prefecture, Japan



Grace Cooper, Apprentice Arborist climbing a coast redwood tree

Grace Cooper, Apprentice Arborist

I joined Harcourt Arboretum as an Apprentice Arborist in early March of 2022. After completing a BSc in Environmental Science and then an MSc in Global Biodiversity Conservation at Sussex University, I began my working career firstly as a Field Ecologist/GIS Assistant at a small ecology consultancy. After this early experience I took on the role of Environmental Consultant within an engineering company and then as an Ecologist within another large corporate. After gaining experience in species surveys and report writing for planning, I concluded that these roles did not

provide the hands-on, practical career I had hoped for.

As an active person, I spend most of my time outdoors, whether it be for sport, such as hiking and running, or at local nature reserves, camping and exploring. Working at Harcourt Arboretum has given me an invaluable opportunity to unite my interest in the outdoors with my love of nature and ecology.

Over the last two months I have had a comprehensive introduction into the world of arboriculture, developing my skills in tree identification, planting, plant care, machinery use and much more.

Tree Team update

By Guy Horwood

My position as Senior Arborist covers a wide range of roles in order to maintain the diverse collections at the Arboretum. One of the most important parts of my role is maintaining the large tree collection. This not only requires all the trees to be inspected on an annual basis, but also climbing to undertake maintenance and examination to ensure the trees are as healthy and safe as possible. It is unsurprising that tree climbing has the potential to be very dangerous and it is essential to climb the trees in a way that is safe and does not risk harming the tree. Many of our trees are over 40 metres tall and as a result can be challenging to climb and require a range of techniques to access them.

The climbing industry has evolved significantly in my 16 years of climbing, and there are now lots of new climbing devices and techniques to make climbing as safe and efficient as possible. Last month we took part in a three-day advanced tree climbing training course and assessment, which focused on single-rope climbing techniques, combined

with accessing and operating within the tree canopy, using two-rope work systems. The course was held at the Arboretum, led by Billy Dickerson, a fellow climber from Westonbirt National Arboretum. Terry Barnyard imparted knowledge we will pass on to our new Apprentice Arborist Grace Cooper, who is at the beginning of her climbing career. It was great having the opportunity to climb with Billy, as he maintains a very similar tree collection to our own. Working with other arboreta such as Westonbirt, the National Arboretum and Bedgebury, the National Pinetum enables us to share knowledge, experience, arboricultural techniques, as well as plant material.

Last month we had the opportunity to undertake aerial rescue training, at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, with their Tree Team. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to climb trees in such a prominent collection. Whilst we were there, we were given a tour of Kew's new top-of-the-range propagation facility, which is something we aspire to having at our own Arboretum. We plan to host their team in the summer for a reciprocal aerial rescue training day which will be an opportunity for us to show Kew's tree team our own fine collection of trees.

Corylus sieboldiana, *Betula corylifolia*, and *Hamamelis japonica*.

The first phase of planting has been completed, and the Mount Tateyama Collection will offer visitors a tranquil setting in which to experience and be inspired by some of the fascinating plants that occur in this biodiverse part of the world.



Magnolia obovata and *Euptelea polyandra*

I enjoy working with an experienced team of committed people and being able to learn 'hands on'. I have also been studying the theoretical side of arboriculture at Berkshire College of Agriculture and I recently passed the Chainsaw Maintenance and Crosscutting Course, my first 'professional qualification' of the Apprenticeship.

I look forward to developing as an Arborist over the next two years at the Arboretum, and I am particularly excited to begin climbing trees and to improve my identification of the ornamental trees in the collection.



Setting up ropes on three-day advanced tree climbing training course



Tree Teams from the University of Oxford Botanic Garden & Arboretum and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

An expedition to the Philippines

By Chris Thorogood

In March I joined botanists Pat Malabrigo and Adriane Tobias, from the University of the Philippines, on an expedition that had been delayed for two years due to the Pandemic. Our aim was to document and collect data on *Rafflesia*, the genus with the world's largest flowers. These botanical enigmas are famously elusive, and grow in remote rainforests, so the trip was logistically (and at times psychologically!) demanding. We encountered four species of *Rafflesia* which is more than I could have possibly hoped for.

The trip started in Los Baños with an ascent of Mount Makiling. The jungled slopes of this mountain are reputedly home to more woody species of plant than the whole of the USA. An exciting find here was a wild jade vine (*Strongylodon macrobotrys*), at the same location in which the type specimen of the species was first collected. Its bat-pollinated flowers were an otherworldly shade of turquoise. The prize find though, was *Rafflesia panchoana*, nestled in the vines about 500m up the mountain slope. The flowers of this species are small, relative to others in the genus, and could fit comfortably in the palm of your hand. The lurid white and red markings were just sensational.

We drove north to the Sierra Madre where the University of the Philippines owns a Land Grant - an extensive tract of rainforest with enormous potential for research, conservation, and public engagement. After giving an online seminar in the offices, I was taken into the forest to see the native flora. We pushed our way through spiny



A member of the Banao Indigenous Community with *Rafflesia banaoana*



Rafflesia panchoana

rattans and pandans, and enormous tree ferns, and eventually found an ant plant (*Myrmecodia tuberosa*). These plants live in the canopy, and harbour ant colonies. The fallen specimen we found was taken to the nursery for conservation.

My next destination was Mount Banahaw, an active three-peaked volcano located at the boundary of Laguna and Quezon provinces. A local man had seen *Rafflesia banahawensis* in flower here just yesterday, and showed us photos on his phone. He kindly took us to the location to see this exceptionally rare plant, but sadly, the flower had already gone over - less than 24 hours later! This demonstrates just how difficult it can be to plan an expedition around these furtive flowers.

We spent several days in the rainforests of Aurora Province searching for *Rafflesia leonardi*. The terrain was rough, and involved bike rides into the depths of the forest before setting off on foot - and even swinging on vines. A prize find here was another jade vine called *Strongylodon elmeri*. I do not believe this species is in cultivation so to see it was truly special, and it was simply breath taking; its flowers hung like great chandeliers from the canopy and shone blue through the mist. I had to climb a tree to get close to the flowers, however the finest specimens were out of reach. I still have the bruise on my hip from falling out of the tree - a small price to pay, I think.

The most important destination of the trip was the forest of Balbalasang-Balbalan

An illustration of the Banao Indigenous Community with *Rafflesia banaoana*



in Kalinga Province - a remote wilderness that, besides my colleagues, no one I had met on the expedition so far, had ever been close to. It took days to drive there. In the forest we met the Banao Indigenous Community: they and they alone knew how to reach our target: *Rafflesia banaoana* - a plant, I was told, I would be the third botanist and first Westerner, ever to set eyes on. With the help of the tribe, we bored into the very depths of the pathless forest, battling with stinging vines and leeches, to reach the site. We crossed a river and entered a densely forested slope where dozens of the giant flowers were quietly unfurling. I can say with sincerity that this was the most extraordinary experience of my life, and it brought tears to my eyes.

We have exciting plans to extend the work with our colleagues from the University of the Philippines, including taxonomic revisions of *Rafflesia*, propagating the plant *in situ* for conservation purposes, and research and conservation

at the Land Grant in the Sierra Madre. I recently completed a pencil illustration of the Banao Community and I am happy to report that a print of it was framed and given to them as a small gift to thank them for sharing their special flower with me.

With new glasshouses, perhaps one day we will be able to grow some of these extraordinary plants in Oxford.



Rafflesia banaoana



Field work in Kalinga



An ant plant, found in the forests of the Land Grant in the Sierra Madre



A species of jade vine (*Strongylodon elmeri*)

Education at OBGA

By Tegan Bennett, Catherine Vivian and Lauren Baker

Palate for the Planet

The sustainability challenge being produced in collaboration with Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) is now fully formed. This challenge is designed to educate and inform people about the carbon footprint of their food choices, brought to life by Maryam Gohari.

Food sustainability is such a complex issue that it can feel overwhelming. Our activity is designed to introduce and encourage the following three simple rules: *eat more plants, eat local and eat seasonal*. The aims are to educate participants about the average carbon footprints of some of the most commonly consumed items in the UK and some common 'greener' substitutes. Participants are challenged to reduce the total carbon footprint of their food over a fortnight, and there is a prize draw available to all that complete the project. The resources have been designed to be family friendly and the prizes support local businesses, with vouchers to Oxfordshire restaurants, hampers with sustainably produced goods, free OBGA annual passes and more.

We are aiming to engage with 10,000 participants to investigate how effective botanic gardens and similar educational

institutes can be in encouraging behavioural changes. BGCI is producing a series of resources geared towards more sustainable lifestyles. These include a food waste challenge, our current carbon footprint challenge and a sustainable horticulture challenge being developed by Cambridge Botanic Garden. Once tested, these resources will be rolled out nationally.

Young People's Programme GROW

GROW is a six week programme, in the wider Reconnect Partnership, funded by the Rothschild Foundation. We are working in partnership with Iffley Academy, Oxford City Farm, The History of Science Museum, In Our Element, and the artist Laura De Moxon to deliver a nurturing programme, offering support and wellbeing strategies for young people in need of further developing emotional literacy and confidence.

OBGA is offering two sessions on the programme, one at the Botanic Garden and one at the Arboretum. The sessions will include immersive sensory walks, photography-based activities, object handling and cultivating edible plants. These plants will be nurtured by participants and harvested at the end of the six weeks for use in their final cooking session. The Arboretum session will also include flower pressing with the artist Laura de Moxon.

UnbeLeafable Botany Podcast

A new engagement tool is under development! Thanks to Friends' funding received during the first lockdown supporting the purchase of new digital equipment, a podcast recording set has now been purchased. Podcasts are excellent tools for engaging new audiences, particularly those aged 18-30 years. To help us to reach and engage with this audience, we have recruited 12 current Oxford University students to be the writers, producers and hosts of UnbeLeafable Botany, Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum's brand new podcast. The podcast will be launched this summer. Each episode will explore a different topic relating to plants and will draw upon internal and external expertise. The first few episodes currently under development are: Murder most foul - a look into the world of forensic botany; Killer Plants - carnivores, vampires and parasites of the plant kingdom; and, Skulls, Seeds and Stormy Seas - the story of William Dampier the pirate botanist.

The Oxford Physic Rose Collection

By Jo Boyes

To celebrate the launch of the Oxford Physic Rose we are delighted to introduce the new Oxford Physic Rose Collection, available exclusively at Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum.

The highlights of this unique collection are two limited edition, hand-finished silk scarves evoking four hundred years of the Botanic Garden with their baroque tumble of Oxford Physic Rose blossom. We worked with talented graphic artist Jacqui Sinnatt of St Agnes Eve to create the bespoke designs based on the delicate pink petals and rich golden coronet in the centre of the open-cup double blooms.

The collection is inspired by the new rose and also the medicinal plants that were first grown at the Botanic Garden in the 17th century. The collection is designed to enhance wellbeing and restore balance, and includes rose salts, body scrubs and balms, vintage rose soaps, and scented candles, as well as seeds inspired by the Garden's 1648 catalogue. Products will be available to purchase online and in the Botanic Garden Boutique from the end of May.



Friends' Section

News

From the Friends' Chairman,
Sarah Taylor

Jane Annett

In the latest of my articles about the active Friends who organise all our many events, I want to tell you, mostly in her own words, about Jane, who has stepped back from very active involvement but deserves our fervent praise and thanks for her long association in two central planks of the Friends, Garden Visits and Coffee Mornings.

Jane was born in the middle of the second world war and lived in the village of Aldworth in the Berkshire Downs with her mother and elder brother. Her father was a pilot and was captured after being shot down in North Africa. As children they were free to roam on bikes and often went off for the day with a pack of sandwiches. They pond dipped, helped on the farm, gathering the harvest (more like hindering), and swam in the river. From about the age of six onwards she spent most of her time with the shepherd, helping with his horse and the penning, feeding lambs, eating lambs' tail pie in his hut. It is from him that she learnt all her wildflower knowledge, bird songs, how to find nests and collect eggs (illegal today). This, often idyllic, childhood laid the foundation of her interest, knowledge, and love of the environment.

The family moved to Bristol. Out of school Jane rode, did years of Girl Guides, winning a place at Windsor World Guide camp, and played lots of team sport. She went on to Homerton College Cambridge on a 3-year teacher training course. She had a wonderful time, worked hard, played hard, and met her husband. Biology, Botany, and the Arts were her specialist subjects.

After her first teaching job in London, she moved schools, following her husband with his promotions to various places in the UK. She set up playgroups for her two children and over the years taught an age-range from 3 to 90 years old. In Norfolk she joined the Adult Literacy scheme and headed the Norwich and South Norfolk area, which introduced teaching into prisons, special needs homes, homes for the elderly, gypsy camps, and especially for evacuees who had not attended school and the young unemployed.

After doing an Open University degree in education Jane joined the staff as a Senior Counsellor in Oxford. She went back into schools and became a head, a peripatetic head, and advisor for the environment, writing materials for schools. Jane has travelled widely, including to China to help set up centres for the children of lepers who are often shunned.



Jane Annett

Her involvement with the Botanic Garden came after she became head of an Environmental Centre in Headington Quarry in 1994. At an Environmental Committee meeting, she met Louise Allen who invited her to bring A-level students to the Botanic Gardens for lectures by Timothy Walker and Louise; this was an immediate success. Jane occasionally taught and helped set the curriculum for visiting students at the Botanic Garden.

Jane joined the Friends in 2003 and understudied Joanna Matthews for a year before taking over the garden visits in 2005. Harriet Bretherton and Pauline Coombes joined her in 2011 to start a team as the visits programme grew. Diana Naumann joined the team in 2013 and Jane Thrift has joined this year. Thanks to Jane's and her team's considerable efforts, the visits have become ever more numerous and complex to organise.

In 2012 Jane, as if she was not doing enough, shadowed Lucy and Anthony Hughes running the coffee mornings which had been started by Valerie Laphorne. She took over in 2013 and appreciated that there are many Friends who do not have cars or who cannot join visits but enjoy having a place to meet and make new friends. It is also a lovely way for new Friends to be introduced to the Garden and for guests to be invited. The vital part is the excellent high-level talks given by the garden staff on these occasions. Thus, under Jane's aegis, the coffee mornings have grown at the Garden and the Arboretum. Now Cressida and Ian Battersby are continuing the tradition and running the coffee mornings beautifully.

Jane adds that she would like to thank all those who have supported her and helped the Friends to continue to be such a valuable part of the Botanic Garden and Arboretum. I believe that the thanks are entirely due to her for being such a central pillar of the Friends for so many years.

The future for the Friends

Since lockdown, the problems which resulted from our Administrator resigning at a moment's notice last January, together with many, entirely positive, developments at the Garden, which have seen it grow in size and importance within the University, has led your Board, after much debate, to consider the process of changing how 'the Friends of Oxford Botanic Garden & Arboretum' is structured. We will be ending its legal entity as a separate charitable organisation and integrating the Friends with the Garden. This will bring us into line with all the other Friends' organisations within the University department, GLAM - Gardens, Libraries and Museums - such as the Ashmolean and the Bodleian.

This will not stop our wonderful volunteers continuing to support the Garden as they do now, whether it be organising Garden Visits, fund raising events, or coffee mornings. It will simply mean that we no longer have a separate Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer. The success of the Friends over the last 30+ years has meant that the administrative burden has got ever heavier and it will now be more efficient to centralise the organisation within the Garden.

This process will take some time, as legal and other issues are settled. However, the Bodleian has recently led the way, so that we will be able to follow in what I hope will not be too onerous a process. If you have any questions about this, please do email me via the Administrator (friends.administrator@obg.ox.ac.uk).



Menyanthes trifoliata in flower in the pond at the Arboretum

Friends' Garden Visits

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

We hope you'll enjoy the following eclectic mix of visits, which round off this year, during which 22 gardens will have been visited.

Continuing thanks to our Friends' Ticketing Administrator and Friends' Administrator because without their support, preparation for visits wouldn't happen as smoothly as they do. And thanks also to the owners and gardeners who welcome us, giving generously of their time and knowledge.

Booking Visits: Although these visits still need to be booked 'by post', we hope that all the planets (and a booking system!) will be aligned in time for the 2023 visits, when both online & postal bookings will finally be possible.

To book visits see enclosed Booking Form.

Note: We advise bringing a facemask, in case required.

Dogs and Garden Visits: Our visits follow Botanic Gardens policy, therefore dogs are only permitted if registered assistance dogs.

And lastly, if you've visited any gardens you'd like us to organise visits to, please email details to: harriet@brethertonfamily.com



Bonsai garden

Friends of Botanical Gardens Forum (FBGF)

By Harriet Bretherton

What I thought was going to be a 'launch' for the Friends of Botanical Gardens Forum, turned out to be a hybrid meeting, that is face to face and on Zoom. There was no champagne! The meeting was held on May 14th in the Birmingham Botanic Garden, the same day as the Arboretum Spring Fair.

We briefly discussed a proposed Constitution which would allow the FBGF to define its purpose, raise a subscription and elect officers. The Constitution will be discussed more fully in a Zoom meeting.

The 14th May was a lovely day, as Friends at the Spring Fair will vouch. In the afternoon we were taken round the Birmingham Botanic Garden by the Head Gardener, Wayne Williams. It's a splendid Victorian garden on many levels. They have the National Bonsai Tree Collection for the UK. (See photo). The Garden Visits Team will arrange a coach to the Birmingham Botanic Garden in 2023.

You can find out more about the FBGF by tapping FBGF on your computer, tablet or smart phone or if you receive the Newsletter by email this link <https://fbgf.org/>.

Events

First Friday of the Month Coffee Mornings

Coffee mornings normally take place in the Garden or at the Arboretum on the first Friday of every month (except January and August) and are an opportunity for Friends to get together. Coffee mornings begin at 10.30am.

For upcoming coffee morning dates, please check the website: <https://www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk/>



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.



© Flora MacLeod

The Plant Specialist Nursery

**Thursday 25th August,
6.00pm**

**Private visit to
The Plant Specialist Nursery**

Whitefield Lane, Great Missenden,
Bucks HP16 0BH

By kind permission of Keith Pounder and Sean Walter

Established in 2002 by Keith Pounder and Sean Walter, the Nursery, alongside its display gardens, is located in Great Missenden in the Chilterns. Sean Walter will give an introductory talk about the work of the Nursery followed by a tour which includes the non-public areas such as stock beds, growing areas and the trial beds. Dedicated to growing a wide range of new and unusual herbaceous perennials and ornamental grasses, the Nursery continues to introduce new forms of older favourites which often have longer flowering periods, more vigour and a wider range of colour. Many of the new plants that will catch your attention are constantly being added to the stock and trial beds, with the most successful being offered for sale. Coffee, tea and biscuits will be served. And, if you wish, you are welcome to bring a picnic supper.

- Friends £15, guests £20
- Maximum 28

**Thursday 1st September,
2.30pm**

**Private visit to
Crockmore House**

Icehouse Lane, Fawley,
Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 6HY

By kind permission of Julia Kirkham

This private visit is the last time we will be able to visit this stunning garden, under the

ownership of Julia Kirkham. It was designed and landscaped by Christopher Bradley-Hole, in collaboration with Julia, a landscape gardener in her own right. Christopher Bradley-Hole designed the Wakefield Hepworth Sculpture Garden. We will be visiting at the best time to see the grasses and perennials, purples and burgundy reds, controlled and yet exuberant. Julia will be present during the visit and will give an introductory talk. Wheelchair accessible. Refreshments included.

- Friends £25, guests £30
- Maximum 40

**Thursday 8th September,
10.00am**

**Private visit to
Daylesford House Garden**

Daylesford Estate, Moreton-in-Marsh,
Glos GL56 0YH

By kind permission of Lord and Lady Bamford

This is a private visit to this magnificent C18 landscape estate created in 1790 for Warren Hastings, greatly restored and enhanced by the present owners, Lord and Lady Bamford. Garden designer, Rupert Golby, will be our guide for the visit around the large walled garden which is formally planted and contains orchid, peach and working glasshouses. There is a collection of citrus trees within a period orangery as well as a secret garden with pavilion and formal pools. Lakeside and woodland walks. Refreshments not available.

- Friends £25, guests £30
- Maximum 35



© Andrew Lawson

Crockmore House

Wednesday 21st September,
2.00pm

Private tour of St John's College Gardens

St John's College, St Giles,
Oxford OX1 3JP

By kind permission of The President and Fellows
of St John's College

The St John's College gardens were first laid out in the 16th century, although they soon expanded into three separate gardens: the President's Garden, the Masters' Garden or outer grove (the original Grove) and the Bachelors' Garden, or inner grove. The layout of the garden nowadays reflects the dominant influence of the landscaping movement in the second half of the 18th century. The main feature is the large lawn, framed by paths lined with trees and shrubs. Among the most notable trees are two large copper beeches, a cork oak and a paper-bark maple. Perhaps the finest tree in the garden



From a private collection

The Oxford Botanic Garden in the mid-eighteenth century



Courtesy of St John's College

Gooseberry Garden, St John's College

is the fern-leaved beech at the northern end, now flanked by the new Kendrew Quadrangle in which tea will be served at the end of a tour led by Head Gardeners, Phil Shefford and Jane Colquhoun.

- Friends £20, guests £25
- Maximum 40

Saturday 15th October,
10.00am and 2.00pm

'Building the Botanic Garden based on archive documents'

University of Oxford Herbaria,
Department of Plant Sciences,
South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3RB

By kind permission of Professor Mark Fricker,
Head of the Department of Plant Sciences

2021 saw the 400th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone for the Oxford Botanic Garden. Part of the Garden's history is written in its architecture, but that part of the history related to planting schemes, science and administration is found in archives held by the Department of Plant Sciences. This Friends' private visit with Dr Stephen Harris, Associate Professor in Plant Science to the Oxford University Herbaria will be an opportunity to see, through looking at over three centuries of original letters, maps and documents why and how the Garden has come to look as it does today. A fitting visit with which to bring our 2022 garden visits to a close. Refreshments will be served.

- Friends £20, guests £25
- Maximum 20 per session

The Danby Patrons' Group

By Maura Allen

On April 26th we gathered at the Arboretum to celebrate the best that Spring offers us in the UK - the spectacular flowering of the bluebells. The rain held off and we had a leisurely walk through the Arboretum with Ben Jones updating us on all the latest news and future planting plans. Many of the new species of rhododendrons and azaleas were in flower and it is wonderful to see this part of the Arboretum flourishing.

After arriving at the Barn our Danby Patrons enjoyed some excellent wine whilst listening to Jane Owen, former deputy editor of FT Weekend, editor of House & Home and FT contributing editor, recount her experiences as a Chelsea Gold medallist. Our guests enjoyed a very locally sourced barbecue with pheasant kebabs, native Aberdeen Angus beef and very local free-range sausages. This was a very special evening for me to be amongst the Danby Patrons' Group after more than two years absence.

The postponed February event with Professor Stephen Harris will now take place in September at the Oxford Natural History Museum when he will be presenting his recent research on the intriguing 126 column capitals that feature plants representing all the botanical orders and each carved from a different decorative rock.

During July the Danby group Patrons will be special guests at three events hosted by the Botanic Garden. Tuesday 7th will be a private viewing of a beautiful exhibition of 'Nature printing' by Pia Östlund and Mark Zucker, a book dealer based in New York who has assembled the best private collection of nature prints in the world, Friday 15th July an invitation to the main (postponed) 400th birthday celebration event beginning with a ceremony at the University Church and on July 25th Danby Day, with an early evening tour of the Garden with Mark Brent and others to introduce the newly configured medicinal plant beds. This will precede the concert by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the Town Hall.

We hope that a trip to Sicily will be possible in October with Prof Hiscock and Dr Thorogood sharing their huge knowledge of the Mt Etna region and all the scientific work they have been undertaking in collaboration with local scientists and also the chance to explore fabulous gardens with an extremely knowledgeable local guide specialising in horticulture. The group will be staying at a boutique hotel 'Donna Carmelo' in the shadows of Mt Etna.



A feast in the Barn!

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

The Bobarts Patrons' Group visits got off to a good start this year with a visit to Christ Church college in March where we enjoyed seeing the beautiful Old Library and a treasure trove of old botanical volumes. Preparation for this event led the Librarians to discover that a Herball displayed for us had once belonged to Walter Raleigh.

However, just to show that not all things botanical run so smoothly, staff shortages and other issues in the garden led to the cancellation of our return visit to Woodperry House, as their head gardener felt it was just not up to scratch!

By the time you are reading this newsletter we will have visited a range of other gardens, large and small, both open to the public and extremely private. 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. Oxford Botanic Garden is the key that opens many garden gates to us.

Over the next few months, we're looking forward to a walking tour of Secret

Gardens in the City of London as well as visits to Eythrope Walled Garden at the Rothschilds' Waddesdon Manor, Cotswold Wildlife Park for its glorious planting which is constrained by the animal enclosures and the need to represent something of their native habitats, and a private garden with arboretum near Abingdon for its autumn colour.

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.



Produce for sale at Eythrope

Calendar

2022

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

August

Thursday 25th August, 6.00pm

**Private visit to
The Plant Specialist Nursery**

September

Thursday 1st September, 2.30pm

Private visit to Crockmore House

Friday 2nd September, 10.30am

Coffee morning

Thursday 8th September, 10.00am

**Private visit to Daylesford House
Garden**

Wednesday 21st September, 2.00pm

**Private tour of St John's College
Gardens**

October

Friday 7th October, 10.30am

Coffee morning at the Arboretum

Saturday 15th October,
10.00am and 2.00pm

**'Building the Botanic Garden
based on archive documents'**

**The Friends of Oxford
Botanic Garden and Arboretum,**
Rose Lane, Oxford OX1 4AZ.

All Friends' enquiries, including those about Friends' events, should be made to the Friends' Administrator.
Tel: 01865 610303
E-mail: friends.administrator@obg.ox.ac.uk
Web: www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk

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.

