



Somerset Group Newsletter

June 2021



<https://somersethps.com/>

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Issue Number 67

From the Chairwoman



Looking back at past newsletters it seems that comments on the weather feature in most Chairwoman's introductions. So, I shall follow the trend. It has been an interesting spring weather wise. The dry and cold April delayed growth in many plants but made others last longer. Then the rain of May has encouraged a surge of growth across the whole garden. Our lawn is blooming beautifully with those hardy plants that are often classed as weeds. (Cover photo). The trees have come into leaf and as in every other year I am surprised what a difference it makes. Not only for the greenness but the effect on the atmosphere. The temperature change becomes so much more noticeable between the open

garden and the "woodland" area and is much appreciated in summer.



The garden is much more colourful now, or should I say it has more colours. So often we ignore green as a colour. First the dominant colour was white with lots of snowdrops and viburnums then yellow. Now yellow and mauve dominate with a splash of red. I really like red but find it quite hard to place. As all the books will tell you it is because it is a dominant colour which leaps out at you and should be placed close to the viewpoint. However red tulips are very popular with gardeners who generally shy away from red.



Denmans Garden

I recently visited two gardens of very different style. The first was the Sussex Prairie Garden and the second was Denmans Garden, the home of the late John Brookes. The Prairie Garden was interesting in its layout with lots of curves and small paths that weave through the borders so that you can get up close to the planting. However, it is not yet in its full glory as it depends on herbaceous perennials for its impact. Denmans Garden on the other hand lived up to expectations. To be fair the garden is more mature and the shrubs and trees are well established. As you can see in the two photos much is made of plant foliage and form.

I would like to thank our committee members for their hard work in keeping the group going through the unusual circumstances of the pandemic. We have managed to provide Zoom lectures and now in June garden visits are up and running. I would especially like to thank Jane for taking on the work involved with the Plant Fairs alongside all she does as Secretary of the group.

This is the second newsletter that I have compiled as no one has come forward to take on the role of Newsletter Editor. The newsletter is an important communication tool for the group. Not only for the programme ahead but also interesting articles on plants and gardens. The emails that Bill sends out reaches a lot of members but there are many members who do not have or wish to use this facility so rely on the newsletter.

I look forward to seeing you all at a meeting in the village hall when the restrictions are lifted or at our plant sale.

Caroline Reeves

All photos in this article by Caroline Reeves except the Sussex Prairie Garden

Your HPS Group Needs You!

Each HPS post need only be held for three years, so please bear in mind these roles are not open-ended commitments.

Treasurer - Stuart Senior is stepping down from being Treasurer at the end of 2021 after more than 10 years in the post. He will be a hard act to follow but someone out there has the necessary skills to take on the role. All spreadsheets will be set up and ready to go. If you have any interest please talk to Stuart. The earlier the better to enable you to see what is needed throughout the year.

Newsletter Editor – This role requires a commitment twice a year to produce the newsletter. You do not need to be a member of the committee but it is sometimes helpful to attend a committee meeting.

Shows and plant sales organiser – this is an important job for raising the profile of HPS and Somerset Group in particular, and for generating funds for the group.

Nurseries list compiler – this is an important source of income and good advertising for the group.

Membership Secretary – maintaining the membership list and collecting subscriptions.

New Members

A warm welcome to these new Somerset Group members:

Vivien Bateman - Marston Magna

Christine King – Pilton

Sue Hart - Bristol

Mark Pearce – Wellington,

Heather Read – Clevedon,

Sue Wadhams - Exmouth

Subscriptions

The cost remains the same for 2022, at £5 for single and £8 for joint membership. It is easiest to pay by standing order but for those who prefer to pay by cheque, the usual payment slip is included with this Newsletter. If you would rather pay Caroline, our Membership Secretary, direct, you can do so at the next lecture meeting.

Please note that to be a member of our Somerset Group, you are required to be a member of the National Hardy Plant Society. A Somerset Group membership cannot be issued without a National membership number. National subscriptions can be renewed on the National HPS website - <http://www.hardy-plant.org.uk> - and you can subscribe to *Cornucopia* at the same time.

Alternatively, you can pay by BACS transfer online to the Somerset Group bank account:

Bank Branch: NatWest, Bridgwater
Account Code: Hardy Plant Society (Somerset Group)
Sort Code: 60-03-27
Account Number: 46429956

Please remember to quote your Somerset Group membership number (it is on your Newsletter envelope).

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018, please be advised that your full membership details are stored electronically. For full details of the Somerset HPS GDPR policy, go to bit.ly/shps-privacy

Cornucopia

Cornucopia is a twice-yearly magazine which brings you the pick of the best articles from the HPS Local Group newsletters. Recent topics have included articles on stumperies and erythroniums and garden visits. You can browse articles from previous issues online at this address: bit.ly/hps-cornucopia

Cornucopia is a snip at only £3.50 a year (incl. postage). Subscribe when you renew your membership, or call Clare at the Administrator's Office, 01386 710317, to subscribe separately.

Cornucopia is also available to non-members by annual subscription. Visit the website to subscribe online.

Marion Jay

Social Distancing was a Breeze

With the first three months of 2021 followed by a cold, but dry and windy April, subsequently followed by drenching rain in May, which included many night frosts right up to the end of the month, I felt life must improve in the garden, surely Armed with containers galore filled with bulbs, tastefully colour toned in flowering continuation, all were placed on my new crazy paving front patio. I felt quite satisfied with the effect, Hmm, it doesn't pay to be smug but I persisted, so I rashly offered to open up the garden on two afternoons per week for the month of May; just locally.

Then the rain and cold winds arrived! Sweeping up the debris of tulip petals, crab apple blossom and flowering cherry was very dispiriting, so what do I show now? Fortunately, Nature rescued me with a wonderful show of primroses, hellebores, erythroniums, fritillaries and a wonderful display of wild bluebells behind the Camellias.

Much of my 'field' has many specimen trees and in normal seasons, over 500 Southern Marsh orchids. This year only three orchids have appeared so visitors were marched through 2 acres of grass paths and over bridges to admire the national collection of ground elder, mares tail and the dreaded water hemlock! Risk Assessment was interesting, accompanying the mantra "please don't touch that - it may kill you!" Compared with that, social distancing was a breeze.

This was a naive experience which has made me feel fitter and more appreciative of the effort of all those gardeners who regularly take on the challenges of opening their precious gardens for our delight. Enjoy them wherever they are, as will I.

PS I did raise some money for my local garden group. Would I do it again? Not sure!

Janet Murley

Summer Plant Fair

The Summer Plant Fair at Lower Severalls near Crewkerne has been a popular event for the Group for a number of years now. We have 14 nurseries booked in, including the resident nursery, CB Plants, plus The

Gardeners' Blacksmith selling a range of handmade items for the garden such as plant supports, Somerset Wildlife Trust and our own plant stall. Tickets can be purchased online via the link on the HPS Somerset Group website.

The Group relies on volunteers to help make these events run smoothly, so if you feel that you could help on the day, please get in touch with Jane Hunt. We will certainly need people to help run our plant stall, plus others to help with checking tickets and directing cars. Volunteers will, of course, receive free admission to the Fair.

We will also need donations of good, labelled plants for our plant stall, so if you can bring any along to the Fair please do.

Jane Hunt



Panoramic photo of Sussex Prairie Garden © Robert Reeves

2021 Programme

All lecture meetings are held at West Monkton Village Hall (TA2 8NE) and are free to members (except for the Group Plant Sale in April). Non-members are welcome, at a modest charge of £5 per person. With the option of becoming a member. Doors open at 10.30am and tea/coffee and biscuits are available before the lecture. The Group has a plant stall and a book stall at most meetings, plus a 'Plant and Flower of the Month' competition.

Further programme details may be found on the website, which is updated whenever fresh information is released. Location maps or directions will be supplied once a place on a trip, or ticket for an event, has been booked.

Information on how to book is at the end of the Programme pages

Saturday 4 July

HPS Somerset Group Summer Plant Fair at Lower Severalls

Summer plant fairs are the most colourful of the year, and have the advantage that you can really see what a plant will look like in the border when you buy it in full bloom. The fair at Lower Severalls has become increasingly popular, with nurseries from across the area bringing their best plants to sell. It will be a smorgasbord of colour, not to be missed.

£4 for general entrance and £3.50 for HPS and RHS members.

Tuesday 6 July

Holcombe Court, Holcombe Rogus TA21 0PA

Nr Wellington, Somerset.

Morning Visit from 11.00am

Holcombe Court is recognised as the finest Tudor house in Devon and the current owner has worked steadily over the last 19 years with a small and highly skilled team of specialists to revive the house and gardens as a home. There are 4 trout ponds and a Victorian rockery. The Walled garden has box-edged vegetable beds, two shrub borders, espaliered fruit and shaped yews. There is a woodland garden and

herbaceous borders either side of the summer house famed for its fan vault ceiling and viewing platform on top. Also, a hornbeam avenue, topiary beech, pleached Hornbeam and a beech "house". A cold drink and biscuits are included in the cost of the visit

AND

Silver Street Farm, Uffculme

Nr Cullompton, Devon. Afternoon visit from 2.00pm

This plantsman's garden, right on the Devon/Somerset border, has an idyllic rural setting and is alive with scent, colour and dynamic planting. There are roses, herbs and perennials, enormous herbaceous borders with meandering paths and an eclectic collection of plants and shrubs. Designed with the family at the heart of it is a haven for people who love to nurture and be playful with their plants.

Combined admission price £11.00

Tuesday 7 September

Stoneleigh Down, Tockington BS32 0LQ

Nr Bristol, Gloucestershire Morning visit from 10.30am

Nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ acre of south-facing garden has curved gravel pathways around an S-shaped lawn that connects themed areas. These include sub-tropical; summer walk; acers; oriental pond; winter garden; spring garden. It is on a level site which has been densely planted with trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs for year-round interest. Plenty of places to sit. Tea and cake are included in the cost of the visit.

AND

Special Plants, Cold Ashton SN14 8LA

Nr Bath, Gloucestershire. Afternoon visit from 2.00pm

An architect-designed $\frac{3}{4}$ acre hillside garden with stunning views which was started in the autumn of 1996. Exotic plants. Gravel gardens for borderline hardy plants. Black and white (purple and silver) garden. Vegetable garden and orchard. Hot border. Lemon and lime bank. Annual, biennial and tender plants for late summer colour. Spring fed ponds. Bog garden. Woodland walk. Allium alley. A free list of plants in garden is supplied. Derry Watkins will be speaking at the HPS Somerset AGM in November.

Combined admission £18.50

Saturday 18 September

**10am 50/50 Plant Sale
11am LECTURE**

Jimi Blake A Beautiful Obsession Huntingbrook Garden, Ireland

Saturday 16 October

LECTURE

11am Autumn – so they think it's all over!

Mary Payne MBE Garden Designer, Horticultural Consultant, Writer and Broadcaster

Saturday 20 November

AGM/LECTURE

10:30 am AGM followed at 11:15am by lecture

Derry Watkins Special Plants, Chippenham
Pushing the Boundaries – borderline hardy plants you can't live without

Booking Information

All garden visits (self-drive or coach) must be pre-booked with Penny Berry:

Tel : 01278 662720 Email : p.berry487@btinternet.com

If you would like to book places on any of these events and trips, please complete and return the entire enclosed Booking Sheet. The joining instructions for each event will then be sent to you via email or by post.

To receive the instructions via email, simply fill in your email address on the Booking Sheet even if you believe I already have a note of it. In addition to emailing your joining instructions, I will also email your booking confirmation. Please print your name clearly, and remember to advise me of any change to your email address.

To receive your joining instructions by post, please remember to send me TWO SAEs for EACH event you wish to attend.

Penny Berry

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