

DEVON NEWSLETTER Autumn 2009



**DEVON PLANTSPEOPLE: POPPET HEANTON
HEUCHERA * GEORGE DYMOND & CO.**

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THE MISSION

The NCCPG seeks to conserve, document, promote and make available Britain and Ireland's rich biodiversity of garden plants for the benefit of everyone through horticulture, education and science

DEVON GROUP PLANT SALES 2009

Our last Plant Sale of the year

① Sunday 20 September at
Tavistock Panier Market

NCCPG/Plant Heritage members free
Opens at 10 o'clock

For organizers details see page 2
① Tim Millar

Don't forget to bring your own interesting plants for the *Plant Heritage* table. One label with your name and the price and another with the plant name and you get the majority share and the price label back. Donations of plants also welcome. Remember that quality sells.

EDITOR'S NOTES

This is the first newsletter with our new title of *Plant Heritage* on the cover and it sits above a picture of a new cultivar of *Hydrangea* (see page 5).

The AGM is just around the corner and the booking form is on page 16.

As mentioned last year, 2009 is my last year as Newsletter Editor. So far no one has come forward to take on the role. I am prepared to continue doing the layout, as that reduces our costs, so no one need be scared of using the publishing program. I remain as a National Collection holder for *Ruscus*. One of my former colleagues, Andy Pulman, has a second National Collection to look after with the move of the *Heuchera* collection to the University of Exeter.

David Cann

MEMBERSHIP RATES:

Single £25

Joint £40

Student £15

Gardening clubs & non-commercial groups £40

Corporate £70

Cover: *Hydrangea* 'Garden House Glory'

Copyright: The Garden House

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

As the rain pours relentlessly onto our gardens, surprisingly I have been thinking more of the positives than the negatives. Our own trees, particularly the *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* (which incidentally ought, I feel, be grown in groups in a lawn), seem to be growing in girth before my very eyes! We all have trees, shrubs and plants that relish a wet summer.

This leads me on to tell you how I was inspired by the visit to Richard Pitt's garden at Ashprington (yes, I am still trying to get around to seeing everyone!). It rained heavily, but that was good as it showed off to perfection the deepest blues and violets of his large leaf hydrangeas. Also I saw the dedication of Jan and Rob Wagstaff and their happy band of committee workers. I would have thought this was Plant Heritage at its best. So was Felicity's Members Day. I am sorry that I could not stay the whole day, but what I saw was of the highest standard. And in North Devon, again a first class day looking at hellebores organised by Margaret Jewell.

I would like to mention fellow committee members Trevor Wood, Mike Squires and Eric Reynolds. I continue to benefit greatly from their experience, and to all the other workers who have given up their time to a subject they love - a big thank you.

My initial view is that locally we are successful. So why do we need a Special Meeting? Maybe we do not - but my view, gleaned from my discussions with many members, is that a number of themes are recurring which need to be aired and then some may be "put to bed". We could then concentrate on discussing the way forward.

Following this article are the notices for this meeting. I would ask all of you to come, or at the very least write or email me on j.turner100@btinternet.com with your views. Do try and come - I am sure we'll also do a lot of talking about gardening!

Finally, please could we have two dedicated people to fill the post of Secretary and Newsletter Editor urgently? Both are interesting positions.

John Turner

SPECIAL MEETING: Wednesday 21st October.

All members are invited to a Meeting at Longdown Village Hall at 10.30 am to discuss our future. There will be a free hot meal, tea, coffee & soft drinks. To be sure there is a hot meal for you please contact the Secretary, see page 2, as soon as possible before the meeting.

We will discuss the following topics:

1. Membership.

- We still have the largest Membership in the Country, but numbers are decreasing. Currently we have 571 members.
- Should we be doing more to encourage new members?
- How? Better/different forms of publicity?
- Do we need a broader membership - perhaps more younger members?

2. Meetings and garden visits.

- Should we try and meet more at weekends?
- How can we encourage more families to come?

3. Cost of Membership.

- Is it too high?
- Are we getting value for money?

4. The National Body.

- Are we getting value from them?

- Are they even necessary?
5. Our Devon National Collection Holders.
- Are we supporting and communicating with them enough?
 - My own initial view is that this is an area where we can do a lot more. There ought to be at least one representative on our committee.
6. If you have other items for discussion please let me know.

Directions:

From the M5 & the A38 from Plymouth, leave at junction 31 to join the A30 westbound. Leave at the 1st junction & on the roundabout turn left towards Ide & proceed to the B3212 (Exeter to Moretonhampstead road). Turn left to Longdown, where opposite the garage & immediately after the pub, turn right. The Village Hall is on the left a few hundreds yards up this road.

From the centre of Exeter follow the B3212 (Cowick St & Dunsford Hill) to Longdown.



The logo for 'The Garden House' features the word 'The' in a small, serif font above the word 'GARDEN' in a large, bold, serif font. Below 'GARDEN' is the word 'House' in a smaller, serif font. The 'G' in 'GARDEN' is particularly large and stylized, overlapping the 'H' in 'House'.

The Garden House celebrated the start of summer with the exclusive introduction of a new *Hydrangea* hybrid. Specimens trialed in the garden alongside the large collections of established cultivars have proven vigorous and disease resistant. They also possess the added advantage of a compact habit approximately 45cm x 45cm (18" x 18") and are thereby suited to today's smaller gardens. *Hydrangea* 'Garden House Glory' stood out from its sister seedling for

its profusion of showy red lace-cap flowers and its ability to repeat bloom, extending the season even further.

This new cultivar was raised and selected by local nurseryman-plantsman, Mark Fillan, from a series of crosses he made between *Hydrangea macrophylla* and *H. serrata* aiming to combine the variability of the former and bud hardiness of the latter. Specimens of *Hydrangea* 'Garden House Glory' take pride of place at the garden entrance and were available to purchase from the Plant Sales Centre on Saturday 6 June.

This latest introduction follows in a long line of new plant releases from The Garden House over many years, from a diverse range of genera including *Rhododendron*, *Mahonia*, *Geranium*, *Rodgersia*, *Astrantia*, *Epimedium*, *Origanum* and *Anemone*. Breeding work is also underway with the view to future introductions of *Erythronium*, *Nerine*, *Galanthus* and *Narcissus*.

Contact: Matt Bishop, Head Gardener at The Garden House or Sue Allen, Trustee at The Garden House.

Tel. No. 01822 854769

Buckland Monachorum, Yelverton, Devon PL20 7LQ

www.thegardenhouse.org.uk email office@thegardenhouse.org.uk

WEST OF ENGLAND SEED DISTRIBUTION NEEDS SEEDS

After two poor years of seed production, this year promises to be a better one. The growth of plants in my garden has never been so vigorous. Most flowering plants have been spectacular. A lettuce, 'Greenfrills' weighed in at two and a half pounds! Could this be due to climate change?

Please find time to collect seeds from your garden for other participants of the seed scheme to grow for free. All donations are very gratefully received. Thank you in advance for your time and efforts.

The CLOSING DATE for posting packets of named seeds to me is SATURDAY 21ST NOVEMBER 2009.

Send the seeds to:-

MRS JEAN GUTHRIE, ROSEBROOK HOUSE, DINMORE, HEREFORD HR4 8ED

The seeds will be repacketed and a list of the donations compiled. If you have taken part in this distribution before and requested a seed list with its order form you should receive it before Christmas. On the other hand if you are new and wish to have free seeds please send me your address label by post or email your address to me at:-
jeanguthrie346@btinternet.com

The West of England Seed Distribution Scheme is voluntary and is operated by myself and Professor Robin Sibson who checks the list and prints it for free. My ambition is to produce a list with a thousand items on it. The highest recorded was 833 different types of seeds gathered in 2006. Could this be the year?

Jean Guthrie

PLANT EXCHANGE

Plant Exchange 2010 needs you and your plants!!! We had a very poor response from Devon in 2009 with fewer plants being donated. We can do better. Please contact me by end of September if you have any plants you want or can offer (criteria for both is no more than two suppliers in the current Plantfinder).

Please also contact me if you have any queries as to the mechanics of the Exchange.

Edna Squires 01404 822118

feebers@onetel.com



Vallea stipularis

This beautiful Bolivian shrub has proved to be very hardy. It is normally partially evergreen in the garden but this last winter it lost most of its leaves but had no die back at all. The cold did not stop it flowering and May of 2009 had the 10 foot, somewhat gawky shrub covered in new growth and plenty of flowers. The plant is growing at Halbury, Crediton.

David Cann



**South and West Area
Winter Lunch
Wednesday, 24th February 2010
at
Rattery Village Hall**

Coffee and plant sales from 10.45 am.
followed by an illustrated talk by Mark Wash at 11.30
“Plant hunting in South Africa”

Lunch at 1.00 pm: main course, choice of desserts and coffee.
(Please state if vegetarian dish or other dietary requirements when ordering tickets)

Booking essential
Tickets £11 per person

Please send SAE to:

Mrs E. Pickard, 11 Peter's Close, Elburton, Plymouth, PL9 8NU

Tel: 01752 492765

Cheques should be made payable to NCCPG Devon Group

TWO IMPORTANT PLANTS IN THE NATIONAL COLLECTION OF *CALTHA*

Caltha palustris Flore Plena

The Collection plant was obtained from Mrs M. Hudson, The Mill, Cannington, the previous Collection Holder in 1993. She had obtained it from Bressingham in 1985 and its garden origins go back to before 1819. It is sterile and can only be reproduced vegetatively by dint of burying the pre-terminal nodes of the flowering stems. However, a further specimen was given to the Collection by David Cann in 2003, and what is so very important about this plant is that it was wild collected by him near Torrington. It thus represents



another occurrence of the mutation which produced the original plant. It is something of a comfort to realise that if we lose the descendants of a natural mutation it can happen again! It is also important to remember that this plant is quite distinct from *Caltha palustris* 'Plena' which flowers a month earlier and is propagated by division rather than by creating plantlets from the nodes. (See Devon Newsletter Summer 2007 page 21)

Caltha palustris 'Cannington Surprise'

Sent to the Collection in 2004, again by Mrs M. Hudson. This intriguing plant occurred as a sport at The Mill, and is characterised in having the golden yellow petals very narrowed and somewhat twisted. This gives the plant a very distinct and different appearance to any other form. In stature it is the same as the species. This kind of aberration is one found in other members of the Buttercup family (Ranunculaceae), being not uncommon in *Clematis* and more occasionally in *Ranunculus ficaria*.



John Carter

BUTTERFLY FRIENDS

Perhaps because of our fascination with plants we can easily overlook as collectors the important association this provides for our insect population.

Some of course are very unpopular and we want to keep those out at any cost, but what about the friendly ones such as bees and butterflies?

I want in this short article to deal with some of the interesting things about butterflies, my apologies in advance if it is old hat! But before this, I am looking out into my garden at my *Euchryphia x nymansensis* (below), which at the age of 7 is at last producing an enormous amount of nodding white flowers. The tree is alive with the sound of bees - can there ever be a better sight? I know it can look ugly in the winter, but otherwise has every qualification. All it needs is a cool root base with, eventually, its head in the sun.

Butterflies! There are over 30 indigenous species of butterflies. They need to feed on the nectar or the fruit of plants, and they live between 10 days and 10 months long depending on species. They fly only in the daytime in sunlight (although not all) between mid morning and mid afternoon. In the evenings they like to settle and at the appropriate time mate! Undoubtedly they prefer to feed on pink and white coloured flowers - we can all think of many examples, typically most herbs, buddleias, daisy-like flowers, verbena. Blackberry flowers and *Echinacea* are great favourites at the moment. In the main they do not like to fly in the rain and will shelter underneath the closest large leaf of similar colour they can find. Generally they are not territorial - but there are dramatic exceptions. The Common Blue, for example, will see off any butterfly that trespasses onto its own plant.



The only butterfly that breaks the trend is the Speckled Wood (right). It is common in our garden, often going unnoticed by the gardener. It does not have the exotic looks of say the Peacock or the Painted Lady (incidentally have you noticed the extraordinary number of them this year?). There has been a mass migration of them from Africa via the Med. The Speckled Wood, being an insect of the woodland is the only butterfly that will truly fly around on cloudy and wet days. It has a haunt (usually a woodland clearing) from which it can fly out and see off any other butterfly. At this time of year have you seen it fly round and round another butterfly, spiralling upwards and upwards until it has seen off the intruder? It will then, job done, go back to its original resting place. Talk about unneighbourliness! Also, it is the only butterfly that can either remain as a caterpillar or a chrysalis throughout the winter. It is one of the earliest of the year - often seen in March, and very usefully feeds on couch grass! So, a lovely insect to have around.



John Turner

Photos John Turner

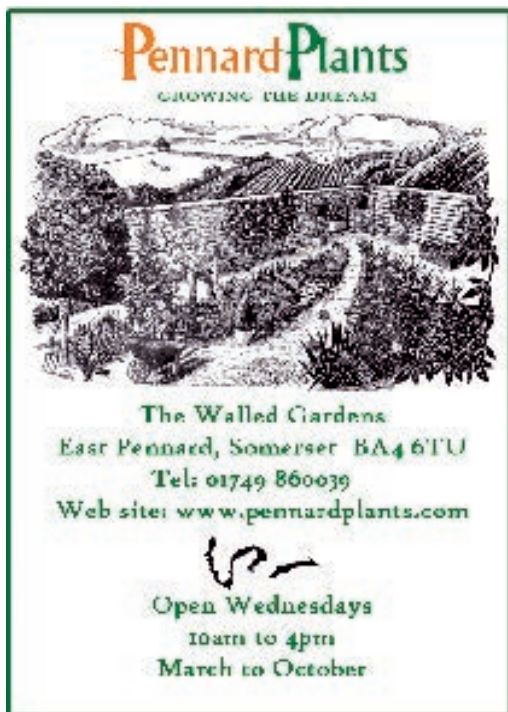
SIR JOHN & LADY PRUE QUICKE: LODER RHODODENDRON CUP 2009, WITH SPECIAL MENTION OF KNAPHILL AZALEAS

Prue and I made our first trip to Knaphill Nurseries in November 1957 together with our second son Michael in a carrycot. We came back that day with 39 Azaleas of 15 different varieties. Over the next five years we repeated the trip once a year until 1962 when we had acquired all the varieties we especially liked.

We have been collecting azaleas and rhododendrons until the present day; and recently have acquired small collections of all the Azalea species that were used by the Waterer Family in the production of the Knaphill strain.

J. G. Quicke 22nd August 2009
(with thanks to Georgina Craig)

The garden at Sherwood, Newton St. Cyres, is open each Sunday between 2-5.



Pennard Plants
GROWING THE DREAM

The Walled Gardens
East Pennard, Somerset BA4 6TU
Tel: 01749 860039
Web site: www.pennardplants.com

W

Open Wednesdays
10am to 4pm
March to October



John & Prue at Rosemoor. Photo: Vaughan Gallavan

NATIONAL COLLECTION MOVES INTO A NEW HOME AT UNIVERSITY

by Anita Merritt. *The Mid Devon Gazette* Tuesday April 21 2009, reproduced with thanks.

The UK's most significant collection of *Heuchera* plants has arrived at the University of Exeter and so far they have been thriving in their new home under the watchful eye of grounds staff.

Nowhere else in the UK will you find a bigger or more impressive collection of heucheras than in Exeter.

More than 150 varieties of the plant were re-homed at the University of Exeter in February and everyone is now eagerly awaiting the first flowers, expected to bloom in May.

Heuchera are perennials known for their fine foliage. They offer year-round interest with attractive rounded leaves and small flower spikes in spring and summer. Some purple foliage varieties such as Plum Pudding and Palace Purple form part of the collection, as well as more traditional green-foliaged varieties.

For the last eight years the collection has belonged to gardener Bryan Russell, who has dedicated his time to developing them at his garden near Ilfracombe.

He said: "It was started by a Mary Ramsdale, who was in her 60s and concentrated on European heucheras, then I took it on. I've had a lifetime experience in gardening, but not specific experience of heucheras. What I like most is the flowers, which are quite beautiful. The interesting thing for me is the variety, they are all so very different.

Looking after such a collection is a big undertaking, and Bryan decided that after he retired he would no longer be able to care for the collection.

Bryan contacted the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens [the overseeing body], which, in turn, contacted the university.

"The university is an excellent place for them," said Bryan. "In a way it was sad to see them go, but I've had quite a struggle with them and it's time for someone else to take them on. Also, to have a proper collection you need quite a lot of space."

Luckily that is one thing the university has got. Two thirds of the collection have been replanted into a 150 square metre site on the campus, known as the Plantation.

Smaller varieties will be introduced to the Northcote Rockery and it is hoped that after successful establishment, they can be propagated and grown elsewhere on campus.

University gardener Andy Pulman said: "It's exciting being able to take on the collection. It took us a day to move them here. The hardest thing was making sure we didn't get the plants and labels mixed up."

The university is already renowned for its beautiful campuses, and is a registered botanic garden and arboretum. The campus boasts 153 hectares of green space, tended by 30 staff. It currently houses the National Collection of *Azara*, a South American evergreen plant, and also the wild conifer collection in association with the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

AREA EVENTS 2009-2010

All events in each area are open to members and members' guests. Charges (including tea and cakes) except where otherwise stated: members £3 per day and members' guests £4. All events will take place whatever the weather. May we ask you to respect the owners' privacy and not enter before the time specified.

EAST DEVON

Area Co-ordinator: Diane Rowe, Orchard House, Parsonage Farm, Uffculme EX15 3DR
Tel. 01884 840545 Email: diane@orchard-house.demon.co.uk

NORTH DEVON

Area Co-ordinator: Mrs Margaret Jewell, The Croft, Yarnscombe, Barnstaple EX31 3LW
Tel.: 01769 560535

SOUTH AND WEST DEVON

Area Co-ordinators: Jan & Rob Wagstaff, North Boreston, Halwell, Totnes TQ9 7LD
Tel: 01548 821320 Email: borestongarden@btinternet.com

Saturday 17 October

10:30 am

11 am

12 am

Lunch 1 pm

2 pm

3 pm

Cost

MARWOOD HILL GARDENS. Booking Essential

Arrival and coffee.

Kevin Hughes: talk on Autumn flowering shrubs & plants. Kevin was at Spinners Nursery & now has his own nursery at Hele Garden near Salisbury. He has knowledge of a wide range of plants and their habitats.

Walk around the garden.

Lunch in tea rooms.

Barry Starling: talk on Rhododendron, Camelia & Magnolia Group trip to China (with slides).

Barry has lived for many years on the northern fringe of Dartmoor where he grows & hybridizes a wide range of ericaceous plants. He has been on many plant expeditions Raffle.

£10 for day, includes lunch. Please book in advance with Mrs Margaret Jewell, details above.

Wednesday 21st October

10:30 am

Lunch

Directions

Cost

SPECIAL MEETING: Longdown Village Hall

See the Chairman's Letter page 4.

Provided.

From the M5 & the A38 from Plymouth, leave at junction 31 to join the A30 westbound. Leave at the 1st junction & on the roundabout turn left towards Ide & proceed to the B3212 (Exeter to Moretonhampstead road). Turn left to Longdown, where opposite the garage & immediately after the pub, turn right. The Village Hall is on the left a few hundreds yards up this road.

From the centre of Exeter follow the B3212 (Cowick St & Dunsford Hill) to Longdown.

Free.

Saturday 14 November

10:30 am

10:45 am

11:45 am

Lunch

2:15 pm

Directions

Cost

AGM 2009 RHS ROSEMOOR

Coffee and plant sales.

AGM.

“The Devon Group.” A talk by our Chairman, John Turner.

At a discount in the Rosemoor Café

A walk in the garden with our president, Christopher Bailes looking specifically at grasses.

Just south of Torrington on the Winkleigh Road.

Tickets (includes entry to RHS Rosemoor) £10 see p. 15-16.

2010

Wednesday 24 February

10:45 am

11:30 am

Lunch 1 pm

Directions

Cost

WINTER LUNCH: Rattery Village Hall. Booking essential.

Coffee and plant sales.

Illustrated talk by Mark Wash:

“Plant hunting in South Africa”

Main course, choice of desserts and coffee.

Off the A38.

£11 per person. Send SAE to: Mrs E. Pickard, 11 Peter’s

Close, Elburton, Plymouth, PL9 8NU Tel: 01752 492765.

Cheques should be made payable to NCCPG Devon Group.

NEWS AND EVENTS

IS YOUR GARDEN OR NATIONAL COLLECTION OPEN NEXT YEAR?

Let me know and have the dates included here. **David Cann**

CLIFFE GARDEN, LEE, ILFRACOMBE

Open: 1 April – 30 September 9.00am-5.00pm 7 days a week.

Admission: £3 as part of the NGS

The garden is well worth a visit with fantastic views and many areas of interest throughout the year.

DEVONSHIRE ASSOCIATION BOTANY SECTION

If you are interested in Botany in Devon then why not join the Devonshire Association Botany Section. We are a group of amateurs and professionals who all share an interest in wild flowers, conservation and recording our natural history. Throughout the year we have a series of field meetings where you can learn and record at whatever level suits you. This year, visits have included Braunton Burrows, the Axmouth-Lyme Regis Undercliffe, Bolt Head in south Devon and private woodland in north Devon. A huge range of native plants have been seen including *Sorbus devoniensis*, *Scilla autumnalis* (autumn squil), rock rose, and sea stock. Complete beginners, children with families, visitors, everyone is welcome. Please contact Dr. Frances Billinge, Hon. Secretary fbillinge@btinternet.com, 01626 833620.

NURSERIES AT COUNTY EVENTS

One nursery at a time is invited to sell plants at the Devon Group’s county events, usually held in March & November. If you are interested in being invited please contact Trevor Wood, who will sent you more details. Email: trevor@wood31.wanadoo.co.uk Post: 2 Willens Cottages, Kenton, EX6 8HQ.

NATIONAL COLLECTIONS NOTES

Holding a National Collection often gets you into unexpected avenues. I am slowly passing on the responsibility of the plants themselves to younger and more energetic people but would like to share some of the perhaps unusual things I have come across in the past years. The National Polygonum Collection always caused raised eyebrows as the, I must say, very occasional visitor, viewed the brave stands of Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) in all its varieties. However, having obtained material of good provenance from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh to start with, we did have the right plants. Always a matter of prime importance to anyone starting a Collection. I found that we were therefore well thought of by the scientific community in general. In the late eighties I supplied material to Glasgow University for instance, where research was being conducted into the possibility that the Japanese Knotweed might produce a natural fungicide. This work continued for just a few years only. It was ended when the funding was not renewed! But just for a while I basked in the thought that the plant might actually be able to produce something really useful.

Growing a plant that everyone hates is itself a perverse pleasure perhaps, but I think I must have been the only Collection Holder who actively engaged in learning how to murder his carefully nurtured charges. This came about because I got a letter from Cornwall County Council in the mid nineties which sternly informed me that the writer had seen my entry in the Plant Finder, and I should wake up to my responsibilities and destroy my stocks of *Fallopia japonica* at once. I replied that whilst I understood only too well the writer's worry I could not comply with his request as the plants formed part of a National Collection. Would he like to come down with his staff to see not only the basic plant but also all her hybrids and varieties, I continued? Further, for his comfort I could also tell him that due to my explaining to the only five potential customers I had ever had, that they could be fined up to £2000 if they let the plant loose in the wild; no sales at all had taken place! They duly came for a visit and we became firm friends; and I joined The Knotweed Forum which is a council funded organisation in Cornwall devoted to getting rid of Knotweed. Subsequently we formed a similar organisation in Devon. Mind you I still cherish in my memory the expression on my Cornish visitors faces when I showed them the male plants here. The reader may be unaware that the terror in question is actually female and can only increase either by ramping about, division or hybridising, and she lived in Europe for over a hundred years without a husband. The men from Cornwall were aghast to see the fine fellow in the Gardens as he was probably the most dangerous plant in the country, when you think of his potential! Funnily enough the male Knotweed is either entirely non-spreading in habit or only very slightly so.

Shortly after these events we were approached for various 'Fallopian' and 'Persicarian' materials by the Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI). This not-for-profit organisation is involved with research into the difficult subject of biological control and their work, always incredibly carefully scrutinised, has helped to control several of the worst agricultural and horticultural pests all round the world. Bearing in mind several notorious mistakes that have been made in this field by others less scrupulous than CABI it was a very great pleasure to meet and discuss the "Problem" with them. It was therefore a matter of excitement that last October it was reported that they had found a little plant louse that attacks only *Fallopia japonica*. The tiny fellow, only two millimetres long, is called *Aphalara itadori* and as it lives exclusively on the Knotweed there is a very good chance that DEFRA will give permission for field trials, and that the insect could provide control of the menace; removal of which has a potential cost in the billions! Of course, should this indeed be successful, I will look forward to receiving hundreds of visitors intent on seeing the only surviving botanical tigers left in the country, as it continues to thrive in the National Collection.

John Carter

The Annual General Meeting of Plant Heritage (NCCPG) Devon Group will be held Sat 14 November at RHS Rosemoor Gardens

Agenda:

- 1. Apologies for absence.
- 2. President's welcome.
- 3. Confirmation of Minutes of the last AGM.
- 4. Chairman's Report.
- 5. Treasurer's Report.
- 6. Reports by other officers.
- 7. Election of Officers & other Committee Members for 2009/2010.

Nominations for Officers & other Committee Members, with the permission of the nominees, & Motions for consideration at the AGM, must be received by the Secretary, in writing, with the names of their proposer & seconder, before 1st November 2009.

The Secretary & the Newsletter Editor are retiring at this AGM. Volunteers are needed for these interesting, & often rewarding, posts. If you know members who might fill these vacancies please talk to them persuasively.

The Minutes of the 2008 AGM are available from the Secretary. Please send a SAE or your email address.

Booking form overleaf

AGM, 14 NOVEMBER 2009 RHS ROSEMOOR, TORRINGTON

10.30am – 4pm

10.30 AM: COFFEE AND PLANT SALES

10.45 AM: AGM

11.45 AM: “THE DEVON GROUP.” A TALK BY OUR CHAIRMAN,
JOHN TURNER

1.00 PM: LUNCH AT A DISCOUNT IN THE CANTEEN

2.15 PM: WALK IN THE GARDEN WITH OUR PRESIDENT, CHRISTOPHER
BAILES, LOOKING SPECIFICALLY AT GRASSES



TICKETS (TO INCLUDE ENTRY IF NOT RHS MEMBER) £10

NAME(S)

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TICKETS, AS USUAL, WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR COLLECTION ON THE DAY. THIS IS PURELY TO SAVE YOU THE COST OF AN SAE. IF, HOWEVER, YOU WOULD LIKE ME TO SEND YOU YOUR TICKETS, PLEASE ENCLOSE AN SAE. PRODUCTION OF YOUR AGM FORM WILL ENABLE ENTRY TO ROSEMOOR.

PLEASE SEND YOUR TICKET APPLICATIONS AND CHEQUES TO FELICITY DUDBRIDGE, COTLEY HOUSE, DUNSFORD, EXETER EX6 7BH. FOR ANY PROBLEMS, EMAIL FELICITY@THEDUDBRIDGES.COM, OR PHONE 01392 811647.

GEORGE DYMOND & CO., EXETER

In 1815 George Dymond & Co., nurserymen, seedsmen & florists, Bridge Street, Exeter succeeded Ford & Please on Lady Day. Joseph Ford & Thomas Please traded from a seed shop near New Bridge, next to a house they owned; and a nursery of about 27 acres in St Thomas, south & adjacent to Okehampton Street, extending roughly to what are now Okehampton Place, Clinton Street, Maple Road and Warder Road. Until 1796 this was the nursery of Joseph Ford's father, also Joseph.

In about 1817, and no doubt in other years, Dymonds sent plants, mostly bundles of trees, by Russell's horse-drawn wagons, as far as London. Russell's depot was on South Street, Exeter. In 1824 Dymonds advertised Dutch Flower Roots, fruit & forest trees, ornamental shrubs and plants, collection of new geraniums [*Pelargoniums*] and in 1828 fruit trees, evergreen and flowering shrubs, herbaceous perennials, forest trees, Dutch flower roots [bulbs], hot-house and green-house plants, garden & agricultural seeds. At the Devon & Exeter Botanical & Horticultural Society's 1st Exhibition of Fruits, Flowers & Vegetables on 30th July 1829 Dymond showed gloxinias, *Yucca filamentosa*, hardy perennials & a new seedling apple raised by his foreman John Hutchings. At the 2nd Exhibition in September they were awarded a prize for light coloured flowers in their display of Georginas [*Dahlia*].

Dymond & Co had Georginas worked into a crown ("the ermine in the base being admirably imitated by the manner in which the white georgina and violet were interwoven") at an exhibition of the Devon & Exeter Botanical & Horticultural Society on 29 Sep 1831. The next year they showed hollyhocks and in 1833 they displayed pelargoniums including their own 'Lady Grey', 'Lord Ebrington', 'Queen Adelaide', 'New Scarlet' & 'Johnstonianum'; petunias, calceolarias, grevilleas, polygala & epacris. Early in 1834 they advertised forest trees for sale.

Later in the year the nursery ground of about 20 acres, in the occupation of George Dymond & Co, was for let, as Dymonds were closing on the expiry of their lease; stock was for sale at very low prices, including fruit and forest trees, ornamental shrubs and hardy flowering plants; George Dymond & Co will continue as agricultural & garden seedsmen. A report dated 17 July 1834 says Messrs Dymond have relinquished a portion of their business. Later in the year Dymond managed to show seedling and other Georginas; and coxcombs and on 14 May 1835 they had a small stand of pelargoniums including a new seedling, both at Devon & Exeter Botanical & Horticultural Society's Exhibitions.

In June 1835 Nott & Hewett succeeded George Dymond & Co. In October 1835 there was an auction of stock on the 6 acres of Dymond's nursery ground not being taken over by Nott, Hewett & Co.

In November 1836 Dymond's seed shop at 14 New Bridge Street, still trading, was taken over by William Kerswell Mogridge, who named it *The Original Seed Establishment*. He was still trading at this address in 1852.

James Veitch (1792-1863) is said to have introduced & named the Dymond Peach, "which he met with in the garden of a gentleman named Dymond, & it is now widely distributed over the western counties . . . it is very hardy, a great bearer"; perhaps George Dymond?

Trevor Wood

ISLE OF MAN TOUR 27 APRIL-1 MAY 2009

The days seem to have passed when Devon Group could mount a distant garden tour itself, so it was with pleasure that we received an invitation to join the International Camellia Society on a tour of the Isle of Man. The invitation was not entirely altruistic as the ICS has no representation on the island whereas Plant Heritage is strongly represented by its affiliated society, the Manx Plant & Garden Conservation Society. Its chairman, Kathleen Morrey, was a tower of strength and soon we had a programme of six gardens for our party of 29 to visit. These gardens had rarely, or never, been visited by the public.

Space does not permit a description of each garden. Suffice to say five were over 10 acres and one was small. Five were privately owned. Many had money lavished on them and it was interesting to see the divergent results. All with similar climates but developed with quite different concepts. The small garden appeared larger than it was because it was arranged with the house in the middle, and one could only see a “room” at a time. Each was enhanced by artistic use of stones, tree trunks and pots. We were not surprised to learn that the owner was a talented artist. What a wonderful tea he produced for us!

Surprisingly the youngest of the large gardens appeared the most mature. Construction of both house and garden started in 1985 on bare fields. Hundreds of tons of soil were moved to sculpture the landscape into an interesting shape, followed by the tasteful building of stone walls, lakes, a rill, fountains and bridges. There are 3500 plants in the garden, labelled and with their position logged. A plantaholics dream!

We owe a debt of gratitude to the Manx Plant & Garden Conservation Society because although the island contains many beautiful gardens, very few are open to the public, and we could not have undertaken this visit without their help.

David Molloy



Devon Group & ICS members at Ballamanaugh, a garden never previously visited by the public

DEVON'S PLANTSPEOPLE: A TRIBUTE TO POPPET HEATON 1931 - 2009

This article has been brought forward from 2010 replacing the intended one on modern plant hunters (now to appear in 2010). Poppet Heaton was a dedicated plantswoman, plant collector and creator of gardens; collecting the information for the article from Poppet herself, her family and her horticultural friends was proving to be a very interesting journey. However the article will never be complete as sadly Poppet died, suddenly and very unexpectedly in late May 2009. But what information I have appears here as a tribute to Poppet.

POPPET HEATON – LIFE BEFORE DEVON

Poppet was born in 1931 in South Wales and lived in the family home often in the care of her grandmother, Nora Prichard, who was a brilliant gardener. It was Nora who encouraged the passion for plants developing in the young child. But at the age of 9 all this stopped when Poppet was evacuated to Canada during the Second World war. Here she lived with her god-mother who was a great horsewoman and so horses became a major interest which continued all of Poppet's life.

Returning to Wales after the war she continued to develop her horsemanship and her love of plants and gardening. She often spent school holidays in Devon with her Aunt Rosalind (by marriage), Agatha Christie's daughter, at Greenway on the Dart. This was a great garden in which to learn plantsmanship as it had been developed over the centuries from the late sixteenth century by such owners as Roope Harris, who imported camellias, Elton, a landscaper of the Repton school, the Carlyons of camellia fame, and the Williams family more often associated with Caerhayes and magnolias.

Moving to the Cotswolds to pursue a career working with horses she met and married Peter Heaton in 1964. She moved to Peter's home, Ampney St Mary Manor. Fifteen months later at the age of 33 she was left a young widow with a stepson and stepdaughter to care for and a large farm to run. Despite not having any prior farming experience she ran the 1000 acre farm successfully until her stepson Mark was old enough to take over but she still found time for her two passions, horses and plants and gardens. She served as joint Master of the Vale of White



Poppet at a 2009 NCCPG Plant Sale. Photo: Jan Wagstaff

Horse hunt and was renowned as a great horsewoman with the gift of good and sensitive hands.

It was probable that the gift of these sensitive hands contributed to her success as a plantswoman who could get anything to grow. She developed a lovely garden at Ampney St Mary Manor and made many friends in the horticultural world, one of whom, Rosemary Verey, lived nearby at the famous garden, Barnsley House. Poppet would often accompany Rosemary when she was designing and supervising construction of garden commissions, and, I am sure, fed in her own ideas and comments. We know that she was involved with the garden Rosemary did for Elton John and no doubt in further conversations with Poppet more gardens would have been discussed. You certainly could not mention a garden or garden owner in the Cotswolds that Poppet did not know intimately; I remember discussing Highgrove with her and she was of the firm opinion that the garden, whilst very interesting, had probably been better when the Macmillan family owned it before it became a royal residence.

When Mark took over the farm, Poppet moved to Green Meadow at Rendcomb just north of Cirencester where she created a stunning garden and more and more of her time was spent on gardening and plants. This area of the Cotswolds is known for its severe winters and because of Poppet's developing love of the more unusual, and often more tender plants, she decided to move either to Devon or back to South Wales where she could push gardening boundaries even further.

LIFE IN DEVON

After much searching Poppet found Wilton near South Pool, a house with land which faced south and was virtually frost free. Wilton was not a very appealing place, to quote her friend and solicitor who went to look at it with her " I trudged behind her through waist deep nettles and thistles, tripping over rusty abandoned implements. Poppet however had the imagination and a good eye to see that a sow's ear of a place could be transformed into a silk purse."

Poppet moved into Wilton in the winter of 1999/2000 and within 2 years it had been transformed. Poppet still kept horses but it is the walled garden she created which took her time and interest and is a fitting memorial to her. The walls were already in existence but previous owners had kept chickens in there with a few veg. She filled it with plants of such rarity that many are listed in the Plant Finder as only having one supplier and some that are no longer available in this country. Many of her plants were acquired from friends and fellow gardeners and she could remember where every single one came from; in later years as labels got lost naming the plant was sometimes a problem – genus was always OK but species name was more doubtful.

The climate was not quite as gentle as Poppet had hoped as cold strong winds blew up from the coast funnelling up the valley creating what she called "an egg beater effect" in the walled garden. Nevertheless until the winter just past, the garden was relatively frost free and plants grew with enormous vigour in the walled garden as well as in the open garden.

She had a huge *Cobaea scandens* growing as a perennial over a shed roof and regularly covered in bloom, a plant which most of us would grow in a conservatory or outdoors as an annual. Poppet also developed one of the outbuildings into a glasshouse for the tender plants even she could not grow outdoors. She did lose some plants in the 2008/9 winter, for example *Osteospermum ecklonis*, which we had taken cuttings of and which had survived in our tunnel but which we were unable to return to her in time before she died.

Poppet continued to visit Greenway regularly whilst her Aunt Rosalind still lived there although the property and garden had been bequeathed to The National Trust in 2000. She continued to be a regular visitor up to her death and must have been a valuable source of plant information to The National Trust gardeners. From a conversation with one of them recently, she was quite firm in her views and advice on what they should be doing.

As in the Cotswolds she soon knew all the garden owners and nurserymen and women in the South West; she joined Plant Heritage and became one of our most stalwart supporters. She never missed a plant sale and rarely a garden visit. She acted as a guide to new friends helping at least two of them to create amazing gardens. She was always generous with her plants and many of us owe some of our rarer plant possessions to Poppet.

It was this sharing of plants that, for Plant Heritage at least, was a great contribution to plant conservation; she was definitely a subscriber to the view “that a plant shared is a plant conserved”. When in 2008 she decided she may leave Wilton within a couple of years to return to Gloucestershire she asked a small group of us to take as many cuttings, seeds, and plants as possible, to propagate them and make them available to Plant Heritage members via our plants sales and garden visits. This way she was preserving her collection, distributing her plants to like-minded plant enthusiasts and helping to raise money for further conservation work. Five of us visited Wilton on several occasions in the autumn of 2008, collecting material from such plants as *Aloysia chamaedrifolia*, *Bowkeria gerrardiana*, *Buddleja nappii*, *Cestrum x cultum* ‘Cretan Purple’, *Crinodendron patagua*, *Clematis bractea* and many many more. Poppet had many *Clematis* and rare buddlejas, some unnamed, but all very unusual (she was an active member of the Clematis Society). The first of these plants will be available at the April 2010 Totnes Plant Sale.

POPPET THE PERSON

“That small spare figure, wearing an old husky over corduroy trousers; sharp twinkling eyes in a freckled face...” so began an address at Poppet’s funeral. She seemed indestructible, so full of life and keen to share her knowledge (and plants). You never knew when she would appear through the gate “I am on my way to..., can’t stop but thought you might like these”. These would turn out to be some plant gems that she thought would fit in a space in your garden she had spotted on a previous visit. Then there would be the phone calls, she didn’t need to announce herself her voice was distinctive, twenty minutes of rapid discussion about plants, or gardens or plants people and then suddenly “must go” and the call was over.

Everyone she knew has memories of her. I have spoken to many nurserymen and women

when preparing this article and they all say, with a smile on their face “ah yes, Poppet, wonderful woman, I remember when...” and off they reminisce. Most of them have plants from Poppet, species unknown, but referred to by names such as Poppet’s Gem, Poppet’s Pink and even Poppet’s Revenge. One of the nurseryman Ray Hubbard of Hill House Nursery, who regularly swapped plants with Poppet has decided to launch an *Erysimum*, acquired as a cutting from her, which has been checked and appears to be a new variety with yellow flowers with an internal red ring on the petals. Plants are being produced of *Erysimum* “Poppet Heaton” and will be available from Hill House in the spring.

I have not been able to include in this article many of Poppet’s observations about various gardens and her anecdotes as I cannot seek her permission but we have lost an enormous amount of historical information and commentary and tremendous plant knowledge with her death. Hopefully we will be able to preserve at least some of her plants and pass them on. We certainly can walk around our garden and see many of Poppet’s specials.

The horticultural world has lost one of its characters, Plant Heritage has lost a very special member and many of us have lost a good friend.

Jan Wagstaff

CLEMATIS WEEKEND AT ROSEMOOR

A steady flow of people was reported through the marque over the two days of the weekend of the first and second of August. The pictures show the display that was set up with many specimens from Mr and Mrs Pridham of Roseland House near Truro, National Collection holders of cultivars of *Clematis viticella*. The range of flower and the display board pictures were well worth viewing.

David Cann



Clematis at Rosemoor. Photos: David Cann

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