

It is a chance to meet friends one doesn't see often (gin tent again!), and I met some very interesting people whilst working for a while on the Hardy Plant Society stand and made some new friends. One yearns annually for an Amdega conservatory or some 'aged' Ionic columns from Chilstone; one sneers at the gross vulgarity of the fat begonias and bath sponge marigolds; one appreciates, but does not necessarily want to repeat, the carefully tended groves of bonsai maples; the sweet peas and the pinks just have to be given nose; the lupins stand stiff and erect like rather tarty guardsmen and the Kelway's paeonies seem to be everyone a 'Bowl of Beauty'. Outside the marquee there are the gardens—the Alpine Gardening Society's being very fine indeed. The Slate Garden was fine too but spoiled by having a streamlet flowing in rather an awkward direction. The Argyll Garden had very little to do with the real Argyll and I could not bring myself to look at the hanging baskets (not my favourite garden appendage.) Hatchards and the RHS Wisley bookshops were there - Graham Thomas' new book "The Rock Garden and its Plants" and Roy Lancaster's "Plant Hunting in China". And there were second-hand booksellers with many desirable books. There was "Gardening News" and "Amateur Gardening" and lots of useless gimmickery - surely if you have a sturdy spade, graip and rake, trowel, graipie and secateurs, and perhaps a hoe, you can survive a lifetime without all that modern rubbish (which people will insist on buying on the spot and lugging around all day!). There was the band playing rousing marches; a seafood, Champers and Pimms tent; instant advice on green, black and white fly; unlikely exotic flowers from Trinidad and Tobago and Kirstenbosch; the National Trust for Scotland (commendably UNTartanned); Blooms from Bressingham and something for gardeners and plantsmen of all shades. Chelsea is a hardy perennial institution— long may it last.

In Memoriam Dr Gordon Smith d. 15th April 2020

Dr Smith was an undergraduate and postgraduate at Aberdeen University, becoming fond of the CBG in his student days. He became Secretary of the Friends writing and producing the newsletter and organising excursions during the 1980s and 90s.

# THE FRIENDS OF THE CRUICKSHANK BOTANIC GARDEN

## NEWS-SHEET

August 2020



### Office Bearers of the Friends 2019-2020

President: Steve Woodward Tel: 07793 196308  
E:s.woodward@asbdn.ac.uk

Secretary: Andy Roberts Tel: 01224 733710  
E:andylacyroberts@zoho.com

Programme Secretary: Kevin Mathew Tel: 07415 979494  
E:k.mathew.14@aberdeen.ac.uk

Membership Secretary: Marion Hart Tel: 01224 310948  
E:fcbgmembership@gmail.com

Committee members: Alana Greig, Edna Rhodes and Julie Young

Editor: Edna Rhodes Please send any articles or ideas to

Email: rhodespeir@gmail.com or you are welcome to phone on 01779 812126

Dear Friends,

We are writing to you all, hoping that you all remain safe and well in these strange times. So many organisations are having to put events on hold as the country fights the dreadful coronavirus, and we are not immune either to the virus or the disruption it causes! As I write the garden remains closed to the public. However it is hoped, all things being well, that it will re-open in September. Sadly, we are cancelling the Autumn Plant Sale to ensure the safety of all. However we hope to hold the Spring Plant Sale on May 8th 2021. It may be possible to offer plants for sale when the garden opens (at a flat price, money going into an honesty box). If you have plants ready and would like them used in this way, please contact Marion Hart.

Since we cannot enjoy normality I have gone back in time, having been inspired by the BBC showing memorable sporting events from the past. I have delved into our old newsletters and found one in particular, from June 1989, that was full of interesting nuggets of information.

## **June 1989**

The newsletter included the report of the Annual General Meeting in which Dr Pritchard retired from the post of President and was replaced by Mr Alex Hidalgo. During the meeting Dr Pritchard proposed that the Friends establish a category of Honorary Members. The proposal was passed unanimously and the committee went on to choose to honour its first recipient, Mr F.G. Sutherland who had been the Head Gardener for many years until his retirement. His dedication to the garden over the years meant it had maintained its character and has always been a showpiece of careful husbandry.

There was a summer lecture to be held in August coinciding with the Summer Open Night. The speaker was to be none other than Mrs Rosemary Verey, her subject to be her splendid garden at Barnsley House, Cirencester. The Friends provided wine and nibbles (at a £1 per person) at 7.00pm and everyone was invited to enjoy a walk in the garden where they could have the opportunity to talk with Mrs Verey. The lecture began at 8.30pm.

Mrs Verey had a busy time in Aberdeen as on the following evening she gave a different lecture (on 'the scented garden') at the Art Gallery organised jointly by the NTS and RHS London.

Taking place in July 1989 was a weekend meeting held by the Hardy Plant Society, based in Aberdeen. Mentioned among the topics were micropropagation at Craibstone and the cleaning up of the stocks of Brodie daffodils.

The Newsletter made tempting recommendations to partake of "splendid old-fashioned afternoon teas" at Kildrummy Castle Hotel having had a walk in the grounds. Then if you had any "££££" left you could visit the Mossatburn nursery nearby.

There was mention of the NTS work on the gardens at Drum Castle with sponsorship requests. One could sponsor the entire rose garden for £3550!

Finally the last piece taken from this newsletter is taken verbatim and was written by the Honorary Secretary, Dr Gordon Smith and is his account of his own visit to Chelsea! I think it is wonderful and I do hope you enjoy it!

## **Chelsea May 1989**

While I would hesitate to describe myself as a Chelsea 'veteran' I have been fortunate to attend for perhaps some ten years. Last year was given a miss—partly pique at being asked to pay extra (we Scottish Fellows of the RHS are able to avail ourselves of too few of the privileges of membership). However I have to say that the scheme to limit numbers has paid off and this year both Tuesday and Wednesday crowds were 'comfortable' - a contradiction perhaps, but one could walk around freely for the most part, although some outdoor gardens were difficult to see due to local crowding.

"How exciting! Going to Chelsea!" people say. Without being too blasé perhaps 'exciting' is not quite the word. For me Chelsea is a mixture of things. It is a quintessentially English summer event such as can never be duplicated anywhere else! Where else normally would you see otherwise sensible people of all ages; sitting, legs apart, on damp grass, eating damp sandwiches, drinking warm beer and either freezing in thin frocks or in a tropical torpor in tweeds? This year it was 85°F on Tuesday and 86°F on Wednesday. The ice creams could not be licked fast enough and the gin and beer tents were unassailable.