

# THE JOURNAL OF THE KEW GUILD (CIO)



**Founded in 1893**

*The Association of members of the Kew staff past and present, and  
those interested in furthering the purposes of the Guild*

## **Events of 2020**

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Editor: Sparkle Ward  
Advisory Editor: Richard Ward  
Email: [editor@kewguild.org.uk](mailto:editor@kewguild.org.uk)

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**Royal Botanic Gardens  
Kew**

### Cover Photos

Front: View of the Palm House, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (*Taken by Sparkle Ward*)

Rear: (First Photo) Rainbow in Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (*Taken by Sparkle Ward*)

(Second Photo) View towards Bloomers Valley, Wakehurst (© *Maud Verstappen*)

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## **The Kew Guild**

Patron: Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra

### **Trustees and Officers 2020-2021**

#### **Trustees:**

Richard Barley  
Robert Brett  
Jean Griffin  
Harold (Graham) Heywood  
Chris Kidd  
Tony Overland  
David Simpson  
Harvey Stephens  
Peter Styles

#### **Officers:**

President:	Chris Kidd
President Elect:	Harold (Graham) Heywood
Vice President:	Harvey Stephens
Immediate Past President:	David Simpson
Secretary:	Sara Arnold
Treasurer:	Linda Baharier
Membership Secretary:	David Simpson
Editor:	Sparkle Ward

## Editorial

Despite the restrictions and deprivations that COVID-19 inflicted on us during 2020, and beyond, all contributors to this annual Journal have not let us down. After some nudging and suggesting ideas during the year we merely put your Journal together using the 'copy' that you send in. For obvious reasons there are noticeable gaps from 2020 - Award Scheme write-ups, Students' Prizeday, and Guild Annual Dinner to name a few. But News of Kewites is larger, due to your COVID-19 stories; and we have a wonderful selection of past Diploma student Maud Verstappen's photographs from Wakehurst.

Whilst the Guild has wisely-invested funds, the Trustees are mindful of annual costs, and to that end we strive to limit the Journal to 128 pages or less. In a normal year over three quarters of print is reporting regular events and information - AGM, Events and Award write-ups, President and Committee pages, News from Kewite members, Kew and Wakehurst, obituaries, names and address list, 5-year Index etc. Much really is valuable history.

The old saying that 'you get out of it what you put into it' certainly applies to the Kew Guild. So please consider becoming a Committee member. Contact our Secretary today...

We particularly thank Secretary Sara Arnold; Pamela Holt for much of 'News of Kewites'; Graham Burgess for (more than 30 years of) obituaries, and Alex George, in Perth, Australia, for preparing the Index (as well as botanical proof-reading). The Guild couldn't do without you. Well done.

Floreat Kew.

Sparkle Ward. Richard Ward.

Sparkle Ward  
Richard Ward

Editor  
Advisory Editor

Flat 2, 62 Mortlake Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4AT  
Tel: 07986802669

Email: [editor@kewguild.org.uk](mailto:editor@kewguild.org.uk)

President  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Membership  
Events  
Awards Scheme  
News of Kewites

[president@kewguild.org.uk](mailto:president@kewguild.org.uk)  
[secretary@kewguild.org.uk](mailto:secretary@kewguild.org.uk)  
[treasurer@kewguild.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@kewguild.org.uk)  
[membership@kewguild.org.uk](mailto:membership@kewguild.org.uk)  
[events@kewguild.org.uk](mailto:events@kewguild.org.uk)  
[awards@kewguild.org.uk](mailto:awards@kewguild.org.uk)  
[newsofkewites@kewguild.org.uk](mailto:newsofkewites@kewguild.org.uk)

Chris Kidd  
Sara Arnold  
Linda Baharier  
David Simpson  
Brian Phillips  
Chris Kidd  
Pamela Holt

**Chris Kidd**

President 2020/2021



Liz Walker and Chris Kidd at the  
Kew Guild Annual Dinner 2019

The global pandemic of Covid-19 has had a profound impact on our world, the full extent of this tragedy will not be fully weighed for years, but for the sake of historical record within our Journal I will focus on the effects to our Kew Guild up until now. Following the Presidency of David Simpson, whose agenda couldn't have been more curtailed as we entered global lockdown, it has been difficult to plan for our organisation at a time when so much is at risk in the wider world; nonetheless the Trustees and I have a duty to you all. I feel we are at a crucial juncture with the Kew Guild. We are enabled by our history and constitution, by our finances and fellowship, to apply the organisation to a wider charitable role.

The Kew Guild is, in crucial ways, a different organisation to that which began over a century ago. We are now mature and financially stable enough to do much more than we do at the moment. The social calendar and Journal is excellent, but there are other things that the Guild should be doing and that is the agenda we would like to start with the coming year. It has been clear to us that we need to draw closer to Kew, our alma mater, and we have begun to talk anew with staff, students and managers how we can re-engage.

Some years ago, the then President, Allan Hart, asked the students how could the Kew Guild help their studies and careers. From this dialogue came the Kew Guild Awards Scheme, which now makes awards totalling £10,000 annually. We have asked the same questions again, and have received good feedback to the questions: What could we offer to you, the staff of Kew and the wider body of students at Kew? What is your perception of the Kew Guild? What opportunities are to be found from within our resources, membership and fraternity? How can we support and enhance this bond between us?

I hope you may see that we don't want to discard any of our longstanding principles and facilities. For example, the Awards Scheme was able, just, to make the first round of its awards in March 2020. As the global pandemic grew, it was clear that the majority of awards would not be viable, so we extended the deadline for the awards to be taken up. We have since extended once again. Unlike other awarding bodies, ours remains open to applications. Faced with the global crisis, and mandated by our constitution, it made very good sense to make further awards in the summer of 2020 to assist related organisations, including Kew, whose finances have suffered. It is this charitable outreach that will be increasingly important to our Kew Guild. We are enabled to work in this way from legacies through our constitution, we simply have to give direction and reap the benefits in the form of works that we can all be proud of. By enabling, perhaps, new studentships at Kew we can grow our membership. We should look to creating inclusivity across the whole of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. We should look to extend our alumni, thereby redressing a shrinking membership and strengthening our fellowship.

Picture a Journal, not long from now, reporting a full calendar of social events, our annual

dinner, reports of awards made from our scheme. News from Kewites at home and overseas. Imagine a Journal that needs to be bigger, because of so much more that we have been able to do. Reports from “our own” students that we have supported into their studies, “our” interns that we supported into placements at Kew, “our” members who have become new to Kew in introductory terms we supported. Reports on outreach programmes, such as those we already supported organised by Mike Fitt at Kew in 2019, but now annual. Reports on our new funding streams making us ever buoyant and able to do even more. I hope the picture is one you’d like to see, and help us make. Of course I don’t propose to make it in a single presidential term, such aims are strategic, but the basic direction is there to be steered. As with all things in life, the hardest part is getting started. I look forward to the coming year and hope it brings each of us closer.

### **Harvey Stephens** Vice President



In 2019 I was delighted to accept an offer to join The Kew Guild as a Trustee. Whilst I envisaged joining colleagues at meetings and events Covid-19 wiped out 2020’s programme and as I write this it is having a significant impact on 2021’s programme. Remarkably 2021 marks 25 years since my fellow students and I (Course 31) graduated from the School of Horticulture! With this in mind I have made it my goal to reconnect with as many as possible this year and see whether I can persuade some to re-join the Guild. Since graduating I’ve been so very fortunate to work with some of the very best in the business, travel regularly and manage some amazing gardens and plant collections.

I was born into a farming family just a stone’s throw from the famous Jamaica Inn on Cornwall’s bleak Bodmin Moors, this inevitably influenced my upbringing and appreciation of the great outdoors. Helping in the family vegetable garden are some of my earliest gardening memories and in later years my first pocket money came from looking after a neighbour’s carnivorous plant collection when she was on holiday.

Sport occupied much of my teenage years and playing rugby for Redruth, Cornwall and South West England was practically all I focused on. A chance meeting and a lucky break landed me an interview and place at Cornwall’s County Demonstration Garden, Probus. I enjoyed the practical hard graft and found the camaraderie among fellow students and staff to be fun and particularly conducive to learning. After three years as an apprentice gardener and winning top student at the Duchy College Rosewarne, I was encouraged to apply for a place on the Kew Diploma. I was successful but sadly, Probus Gardens closed just a few years later. The site was consumed by a neighbouring housing estate in the late 1990s!

Whilst I found competition for results seriously intense at Kew, the opportunities to travel and learn fuelled my desire for new horizons and adventure. Six weeks in Nepal and trips to Spain (both partially supported by The Kew Guild) increased my appetite for travel and the discovery of new plants, gardens and experiences. I still consider myself lucky and privileged to have received so much encouragement from so many generations of Kewites. Awarded a funded twelve-month scholarship by the Friends of the Jerusalem Botanic Garden I packed my bags and moved to Israel to share an apartment in central Jerusalem with three other scholarship recipients. The welcome and support we received over the

year from former student Amanda Linde was exceptional, we travelled extensively and I'm so blessed to have seen quite so much of Israel. The chance to subsequently move to Russia was an unexpected but huge opportunity that I seized with open arms. The opportunity to horticulturally lead ground breaking changes to the historical Botanic Garden of Moscow State University was marvellous, though it wasn't all smooth going. Changing the Spring bedding display from scarlet red Tulips to a mixed educational display resulted in a summons to the Director's office to explain my actions! The three years in Russia dramatically expanded my cultural horizons, foreign language skills and plant knowledge. So many unique experiences in Russia remain highlights of my career.

In late 2000 I returned to England and briefly to Cornwall. The Eden Project was miraculously developing in a clay pit just a couple of miles from my new family home in Par. I joined the Green Team to undertake the final planting before the site opened in April 2001. Later in the year I was appointed Head Gardener of Borde Hill Garden in West Sussex, this appointment led to five happy years spent planting many exciting new species and generally raising the presentation across the estate. Numerous opportunities arose, I became a board member of PlantNetwork and was invited to join the Royal Horticultural Society's Woody Sub-Committee awarding AGM's (Award of Garden Merit) to the very best woody plant cultivars. Whilst we won many RHS show awards the ultimate team achievement was having Borde Hill voted the 2005 garden of the Year. In 2006 I was appointed Head of the Savill Garden and was quickly immersed in an exciting project to build a garden showcasing New Zealand's native flora. This was the first of many thrilling projects that kept me focused over the ensuing decade. The post offered countless privileges none greater than the occasional meeting with Her Majesty the Queen and members of the Royal Family and cutting and preparing thousands of flowers for two Royal Weddings. Promotion to Deputy Keeper of the Gardens (Savill, Valley and Frogmore Gardens) in 2015 was a great honour and afforded significantly more responsibility.

2018 heralded the start of a fresh chapter with new opportunities, I accepted a role working for Her Grace the Duchess of Westminster as Head of Grounds and Landscape at the family home in Cheshire. In 2019 the RHS awarded me the A J Waley Medal for my contributions to the Magnolia Rhododendron & Camellia Group over the previous 15 years. I hope my tenure with the Guild brings plenty of opportunities to meet with as many of its membership as is practically possible and hopefully inspire another generation of students to realise their horticultural dreams. Stay safe and happy gardening.

## **Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting of The Kew Guild CIO held on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 2pm Via Zoom**

Members were requested to register in advance to take part in the meeting. The meeting was held on Zoom due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Prize Day has been postponed in 2020 and is therefore not on the agenda.  
There were 24 attendees at the meeting.

### **Attendance: Trustees**

David Simpson (President)	Graham Heywood
Peter Styles (Immediate Past President)	Tony Overland
Chris Kidd (President Elect and Award Scheme Chairman)	Alan Stuttard*
Jean Griffin	
Stewart Henchie*	

\* Trustees standing down at this meeting

### **Committee:**

Sara Arnold (Secretary)  
Sparkle Ward (Editor)  
Richard Ward (Advisory Editor)

### **Members:**

Sonya Abraham	Bob Ivison
Gregory Armstrong	Colin Jones
Richard Barley**	Jill Marsden
Robert Brett**	Trevor Matthews
Mike Griffin	Dennis McGlade
Judy Hancock	Brendan Mowforth
David Hardman	Simon Owens
Colin Hindmarch	Sylvia and Brian Phillips

\*\* Members standing as Trustees to be ratified at Minute CIO 2020-21.12

### **CIO 2020-21.001 Welcome by the President**

The President welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting of the Kew Guild CIO and explained to members that the Guild is required to hold an AGM and due to the current Coronavirus pandemic, we are not able to hold this meeting in person. Trustees felt that Zoom was the best way to do this, having tested another video conferencing application prior in the year. The President said that the Kew Guild AGM was also about meeting up with fellow members and that it was a shame this couldn't happen, but welcomed members from outside the UK having the opportunity to join us.

### **CIO 2020-21.002 Apologies for absence**

#### **Trustees:**

None.

#### **Committee:**

Linda Baharier, James Richardson, Tim Stafford.



**Members:**

Jennifer Alsop  
 Ursula Buchan  
 Graham Burgess  
 David Cutler  
 Raymond Evison

Patricia Fisher  
 Hugh Flower  
 Gordon Fraser  
 Lauren Gardiner  
 Jennifer Grundy

Pamela Holt  
 Jim Mitchell  
 Veronica Priestley  
 Martin Staniforth  
 Susan Urpeth

The President opened the meeting at 2pm. There were eight Trustees, three Officers (two non-voting) and 15 voting members present at the meeting. Please note Sara Arnold and Sparkle Ward are the non-voting members and therefore they both abstained from any voting.

**CIO 2020-21.003 Notice of death of members**

Members who passed during the year are: Andrew Barnes, Peter Bridgman, Stephen Bristow, A. Howard, Kenwyn Pearson, Trevor Savage and any others we may not be aware of. The President asked for a minute's silence in honour of those members passed.

**CIO 2020-21.004 Consultant Secretary's report – Sara Arnold**

SA asked if there were any comments on the Minutes. There were none.

Proposal: to approve the Minutes of the 2019 AGM. Proposed: Tony Overland. Seconded: Graham Heywood. Decision: Approved.

SA told members of a comment from Martin Staniforth about the security of a Zoom meeting. SA assured members that all had been done to keep the meeting safe and secure, but if anything untoward should happen, SA will call an emergency abort to the meeting. The Kew Guild CIO met three times face to face before lockdown was imposed. Two meetings were held via Microsoft Teams which kept Guild business running and proved very beneficial for the trustees and officers to come together. The first Teams meeting was limited to trustees and main officers only, but it was successful so the second meeting was opened up to all officers. This threw up some issues, which we have solved by using Zoom. All of the meetings were quorate in accordance with the CIO (three or one quarter of trustees).

Meeting dates for the Trustees and Officers; all will be conducted via Zoom until further notice. Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021. The Guild year would usually consist of five Trustee and Officer meetings, but the first meeting of the year is usually in October but was postponed due to Covid-19.

Proposal: to accept the Secretary's report. Proposed: David Simpson. Seconded: Jean Griffin. There were no objections. Decision: Report approved.

**CIO 2020-21.005 Volunteer Treasurer's report – Linda Baharier****Accounts 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019**

The President ran through the report in Linda's absence.

As you can see from the accounts we have reasonable balances but please remember these are split between various headings:-

Endowments	£ 154,586	Restricted	£ 114,475
Unrestricted Designated	£ 457,448	Unrestricted	£ 181,679



This makes us asset rich but not cash rich, though we are ok at present. Also, because of COIF's way of paying dividends - in good years not paying large returns, but always paying a reasonable return - we have not yet been adversely affected in our investment.

The Charity was also very fortunate in receiving a legacy from the late Valentine Tynan of £34,961, which was also left to us as unrestricted. This legacy is to be invested so that its value is protected going forward, but will produce an income for the charity. While the Endowments remain the property of the Old Charity, their income is "donated" to the New Charity BUT with the same restrictions on the use of the income.

We have gone forward into 2020 with energetic ideas, only to be stopped in our tracks by Covid, which has meant that even grants that had been awarded could not be taken up. So we need to maybe look at new ways to handle grants? There have been requests for donations, some of which we have made but the important thing to remember is even they – from unrestricted money – have to fit with our core values.

So, with no Annual Dinner this year – unless we can work out how to hold a virtual one – maybe organising a time to order a take away and all meet on Zoom?

Proposal: to accept the Treasurer's report. Proposed: Trevor Matthews. Seconded: Bob Ivison. There were no objections. Decision: Report approved.

### **CIO 2020-21.006 Volunteer Membership Secretary's report – James Richardson**

The President ran through the report in James's absence.

As at October 4, there were 322 members listed.

Breakdown by "status"

Current = 302

New = 0

Lifetime = 20

Lifetime members

Richard Bisgrove, Derek Edwards, Raymond Evison, Eric Grant, Adil Güner, Niall Kirkwood, Roy Lancaster, Brian Lowe, John Massey, Dennis McGlade, John Melmoe, Piet Oudolf, HRH Princess Alexandra, Anna Pavord, Graham Ross, Shirley Sherwood, Tim Smit, Peter Thoday, Kevin Wah, Eduard Wolf.

Breakdown by membership type

Standard = 282

Standard (student) = 20

Honorary Fellow = 17

Honorary = 2

Patron = 1

### **Honorary fellows**

Richard Bisgrove, Derek Edwards, Raymond Evison, Adil Güner, Niall Kirkwood, Roy Lancaster, John Massey, Dennis McGlade, John Melmoe, Piet Oudolf, Anna Pavord, Graham Ross, Shirley Sherwood, Tim Smit, Peter Thoday, Kevin Wah, Eduard Wolf.

### **Honorary**

Eric Grant, Brian Lowe.

### **Membership database**

Since January, very considerable progress has been made in tidying up the membership

database, which had been full of errors and inconsistencies (e.g. approximately 20 individuals being listed twice, payments being listed on the wrong date, for the wrong amount or against the wrong individual or not being entered at all). It remains the case, however, that there are many individuals who were once members who are still paying by standing order at a subscription rate that is at least five years out of date. Whilst a significant number have been tracked down (as far afield as Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Israel, the United States and Ireland), there are many who have failed to respond to a range of attempts to contact them either by email, ordinary post, text message or phone call or by some combination of these. A few have responded but then failed to follow up on their indication of a wish to rectify their membership. Comprehensive notes have been entered in the database to record the efforts made.

The President told members that James has decided to step down as Membership Secretary and had done a fantastic job with the database. DS said the way forward for the Guild now is to increase membership numbers. Robert Brett asked how many members we could potentially attract. DS replied that there are 16 students on horticultural courses, and that he has been targeting the science students (of which there are 20-something). There are also potential members in Kew Staff, but the Guild is seen more as an alumni association.

Proposal: To accept the Membership Secretary's report. Proposed: Greg Armstrong. Seconded: Jean Griffin. There were no objections. Decision: Report approved.

### **CIO 2020-21.007 Editor's report – Sparkle Ward**

The Events of 2019 Journal was published on time in May 2020 at £4,485 (including book proofs) for 500 Journals, including printing and Editors fee. The cost of the 2018 Journal in comparison was £4,485, and the 2017 Journal £4,440. Additional Editor costs were £58.36 for envelopes, and £738.48 for postage (as Journals weren't able to be franked by Kew this year).

Sparkle gave thanks to all those who contributed towards the Events of 2019 Journal, and others for their kind voluntary input, including Alex George for Botanical proof reading, Graham Burgess for Obituaries, Pamela Holt for News of Kewites and Sara Arnold as Secretary.

The Advisory Editor, and Editor, recently raised again the idea of an online-only Journal for consideration. The various options will be canvassed amongst Members for comment/views including a question on preference for print only, print version online (PDF), or dedicated Journal website. Sparkle invited Guild members to make suggestions for the cover of the Events of 2020 Journal to her by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

Please could Guild Members send in their News of 2020, and if there are ideas or suggestions for articles please do get in touch. Write to [editor@kewguild.org.uk](mailto:editor@kewguild.org.uk). There are no events happening, so content will become important. RW urged members to send Covid-19 stories. It may not seem much now, but in another 50 years it will be important Kew Guild history. RW asked members if they thought a section in the next Journal dedicated to the Covid stories would be a good idea. Members present agreed.

GH suggested using one of our visit photos for the cover of the journal next year. SW to see what images are available.

Proposal: to accept the Editor's report. Proposed: Colin Hindmarch. Seconded: David Hardman. There were no objections. Decision: Approved.

### **CIO 2020-21.008 Award Scheme report – Chris Kidd**

Chris ran through his report. The year has been very difficult due to the current pandemic. Awards made have not been able to be accepted but they will be made available until September 2021 and we hope there will be an end to this and that awards can be taken up. The KGAS met on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 4pm to consider applications for awards and the nomination for the Honorary Fellowship of the Kew Guild. Following the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, and after agreement with the Trustees, the second meeting of the year in July was at first postponed and later removed from schedule.

Present in March 2020 were Chris Kidd (Chairperson), Maxine Biggs (Secretary), Marcella Corcoran, Allan Hart, Gillian Leese, Silke Strickrodt (student), Sal Demain, Richard Wilford. Apologies from: Susyn Andrews, David Hardman, David Simpson.

#### **Awards**

A total of £13,007 from the five named Funds and General Funds was available at the meeting to be made as awards. Eleven applications had been made, most were successful after individual discussion. At the meeting the impact of Covid-19 was beginning to register. Decision was made to proceed with making Awards where the proposal was not immediately impacted by the virus. Awards were made on condition that although the proposal dates may vary from those on the award application, the award would be available to be taken for one year from the date of the meeting provided the rest of the proposal remained unchanged. Significant other change to the proposal must be notified to the Awards Scheme through the Chair or Secretary, the Award then suspended for discussion at the July meeting, or sooner with Kew Guild Trustee approval.

Alberto Trinco, Study tour of Orchids in Ecuador: Awarded £1000 total, £500 from Woodhams Fund and £500 from Leese Fund

Ed Ikin, Study tour in Japan, Awarded £900 from Redman Fund

Francisco Lopez, Study tour in USA, Awarded £1000 total, £500 from Turner, balance of £500 from Arnold Fund

Harry Baldwin, Study tour in Chile, Awarded £600 from Dallimore Fund

Ignacio Silva de la Iglesia, Study tour New York & Philadelphia, Awarded £1000 from Redman Fund

Luigo Leoni, Study tour Columbia, Awarded £1000 total, £500 from Woodhams Fund and £500 from Leese Fund

Marcelo Sellaro, Conference and work experience in Munich, Awarded £500 from Redman Fund

Martin Xanthos, Attend AETFAT conference in Zambia, Awarded £500 from Redman Fund

Tim Stafford, Study tour Vancouver, Awarded £500 from Redman Fund

**Of a total fund availability of £13,007 for 2019, £7,000 was awarded.**

#### **George Brown Memorial Award**

A nomination for the George Brown Memorial Award was received, made by Allan Hart, for William Bessler. After discussion the proposal was agreed unanimously. Protocol is for the President to write to William Bessler making the Award and inviting the recipient to the appropriate Annual Dinner (2021) to receive it. (Nomination form to be sent to Trustees for info).

#### **Fellowship of the Kew Guild**

Two Honorary Fellow's nominations were received, one made by Jean Griffin and one by Richard Barley. After discussion the committee decided to support the nominations. Full report to be brought to next Trustees meeting.

The meeting scheduled for Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020 from 4pm in the Jodrell seminar room RBG Kew was postponed and then cancelled due to restrictions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. At the Kew Guild Trustees meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020 it was agreed that the awards made in March 2020 will be valid for an extended period, to be taken and completed by the end of September 2021. In addition it was agreed that the next meeting of the Awards Committee will take place in March 2021. The precise date will be confirmed with the secretary as restrictions and further impacts on life become clearer.

Proposal: to accept the Award Scheme report. Proposed: Graham Heywood. Seconded: Trevor Matthews. There were no objections. Decision: Award Scheme report approved.

### **CIO 2020-21.009 President's report – David Simpson**

David ran through his report. What a strange and surreal presidential year it has been! We started out full of optimism with a programme of activities and plans to develop a strategy which aimed to broaden the appeal of the Guild right across Kew and beyond. Then Covid19 struck and everything came to an abrupt stop. We quickly realised that events, such as the Ireland trip which had been in gestation since mid-2019, would have to be cancelled. Worse still, it was clear that the Annual Dinner, a mainstay of the events programme, could not take place. An alternative date in September was proposed but as the time drew closer, we realised that it would be too risky. It was an intense disappointment not to be able to hold these and other events.

Good things that have happened...

Despite everything, a number of good things have happened during the year:

All business has been conducted by email/video conferencing. This has worked well and we have been able to hold nearly all our planned Trustee meetings, with additional meetings as required. We do miss being face-to-face at Kew though.

Membership numbers have stayed steady and we are very grateful to all our members who have stayed with us during this difficult period.

The Journal was produced on time, with its usual rich and varied content. Many thanks to Sparkle Ward and Richard Ward for their efforts.

Our finances have stayed on an even keel and our investment income has remained more-or-less steady.

We were able to start a campaign to attract more members. I gave a presentation to Kew's Science Directorate staff in late October 2019 which went well and the Guild have started awarding prizes to Science students, as well as continuing the awards to the Hort students. This was starting to yield results and I hope we can continue this campaign as soon as possible. We managed to hold one event before the lockdown, namely the student supper on 26 February. Both Hort and Science students were invited and it worked very well with a very good turnout.

We made one-off charitable donations to three organisations during the year. These were to RBG Kew for horticulture and science support (£5K); to Perennial for horticultural education and research support (£2.5K) and to the Arboriculture, Forestry, Horticulture and Landscape Trailblazer Group for horticultural apprenticeship support (£1K).

The 2020 Kew Guild Medal was awarded to Peter Holman and the 2021 Medal to Prof.

Mark Chase FRS. Both will receive their medals at the 2021 Annual Dinner (subject to the Dinner going ahead). We also hope to announce a new Honorary Fellow in due course.

DS personally thanked James Richardson for his help with membership and told members that he has volunteered to take over from James. DS also sent thanks to Janette Ames, our Archivist who left during the year. This role is important and we are happy to have found a replacement archivist in Christina McCulloch. SA asked Trustees who are leaving this year to pass any documents for the Archives to the Secretary to pass onto Christina when we are able to meet in person.

DS thanked all the Trustees and Officers for all their hard work over the past year, especially given the difficult circumstances. DS extended those thanks to the retiring Trustees, Alan and Stewart, for their loyalty and hard work over the many, many years they have been involved in the Guild. Members present gave Alan and Stewart a round of applause. DS thanked David Cutler who has stood down from the role of overseeing the Kew Guild Medal. David has a long history with the Guild, and we thank him warmly.

Lastly, to all members of the Guild for their loyalty and support. We will resume normal service as soon as we can! The future is uncertain but DS was confident the Guild would survive and the coming year will be very challenging.

Proposal: to accept the President's report. Proposed: Jean Griffin. Seconded: Richard Barley. There were no objections. Decision: President's report approved.

### **Constitution update:**

Clause (17) Taking of decisions by charity trustees. Any decision may be taken either:

- At a meeting of the charity trustees; or
- By resolution in writing or electronic form agreed by all of the charity trustees, which may comprise either a single document or several documents containing the text of the resolution in like form to each of which one or more charity trustees has signified their agreement.

### **Change to:**

- By resolution in writing or electronic form agreed by 75% of the charity trustees, which may comprise either a single document or several documents containing the text of the resolution in like form to each of which one or more charity trustees has signified their agreement.

Proposal: to accept the change to the Constitution at Clause (17). Proposed: Tony Overland. Seconded: Peter Styles. There were no objections. Decision: to accept the change to the Constitution.

### **Further Constitution updates**

Jean Griffin proposed that Trustees revisit the Constitution and Byelaws in their entirety to ensure they are up to date and relevant, that we are adhering to them, and to propose updates where necessary. RW has been looking at Trusteeship and commented that it is quite complicated. He asked that the Trusteeship be made clearer in the future - there are anomalies in wording. DS said that this is part of what we intend to do. RW said an example is where the President is chosen only from Trustees – five of the current trustees are past presidents and there may be a time when all of the trustees have served as president. DS replied that this issue is being discussed. JG responded that there have been lengthy conversations and we are at the point that we can do something about it. We need to look at the Constitution from what it was when it started to what it is now. JG has

requested that this is an agenda item for the next meeting.

Proposal: for Trustees to revisit the Constitution and Byelaws in their entirety to ensure they are up to date and relevant, that we are adhering to them, and to propose updates where necessary. Proposed: Jean Griffin. Seconded: Tony Overland. There were no objections. Decision: Approval for the Trustees to revisit the Constitution and Byelaws.

The President asked Brian Phillips to say a few words about the events during the year. Brian reported that events have been cancelled due to Covid but refunds have been made. The Ireland trip is still on the agenda, but we will wait until about March to see what the situation is. David Hardman asked if it was possible to go on a waiting list, Brian replying, yes, there are people on a waiting list, and others are welcome to put their names down. Enquiries to events@kewguild.org.uk.

### **CIO 2020-21.010 Annual subscription rates**

Subscription rates will remain at £27 for Ordinary Members and £15 for Students.

Proposal: to accept the subscription rates remain as above. Proposed: Colin Jones. Seconded: Richard Ward. There were no objections. Decision: Subscription rates for 2021 approved.

### **CIO 2020-21.011 Rota for Trustee retirement**

Our Constitution requires us to replace Trustees every year on a three-year rota. Trustees retiring this year are: Stewart Henchie and Alan Stuttard. Members present gave Stewart and Alan a round of applause. Stewart Henchie thanked everyone and said it was a shame not to be a part of it any more. He joined in 1970 as a student and they had a mini reunion in September this year. RW said that SH had been very helpful in liaising with the Archivist in previous years and asked if there was anyone who would take this over. SA to put on the agenda for the first meeting.

Alan Stuttard joined the meeting and the President reiterated his thanks and members present applauded him. AS replied that it has been great to be part of the Guild. Nominations have been sought for the Guild year 2021-22 and two members have put themselves forward.

### **CIO 2020-21.012 Nomination of Trustees**

Two new trustees have been approved by the current trustees, they are Richard Barley – proposed by Chris Kidd, Seconded by Dave Simpson and Robert Brett – proposed by Harvey Stephens, Seconded by Chris Kidd. SA has carried out the relevant Fit and Proper Persons Checks which have both come back clear. The President welcomed them both to the Guild.

Proposal: to approve the nominations of Richard Barley and Robert Brett as Trustees 2020 - 2023: Proposed: Peter Styles. Seconded: Stewart Henchie. The nominations were approved unanimously.

### **CIO 2020-21.015 Election of Officers**

With our new CIO Byelaws we do not require President/Vice President nominations to be agreed by the membership at the AGM, it is a matter for the Trustees.

The committee for 2020-21 is as follows:

President	Chris Kidd (from President Elect)
Vice President	Harvey Stephens
President Elect	Graham Heywood

Immediate Past President	Dave Simpson
Hon. Treasurer	Vacant
Voluntary Treasurer	Linda Baharier
Hon. Secretary	Vacant
Consultant Secretary	Sara Arnold
Hon. Journal Editor	Vacant
Editor	Sparkle Ward
Hon. Membership Secretary	Dave Simpson
Acting Membership Secretary	Sara Arnold
Archives Officer	Christina McCulloch
Kew Gardens Representative	Vacant

Proposal: to accept the officers as listed above including David Simpson and Christina McCulloch. Proposed: Jill Marsden. Seconded: Tony Overland. There were no objections. Decision: Approved.

### **CIO 2020-21.016 Inauguration of new President**

David said handing over the reigns to Chris virtually is going to be quite difficult. He hasn't been into Kew for many months, and the President's Regalia is safely locked away there. Members present gave David a round of applause. David formally handed over the Presidency to Chris Kidd. Chris thanked David for all his support over the past year and it was a shame that the highlights of the year never happened - those things normally on our agenda like the Annual Dinner and AGM. Chris hoped that by the time Graham becomes President, we are back to normal.

Chris thanked Richard and Robert for becoming Trustees. There is a lot to do as Trustees over the next few years and welcomed their input, adding that he looks forward to working with all of the Trustees over the next year. Dave Simpson taking over membership is a very positive thing and Chris asked if all our members could encourage others to join, we can increase our numbers. Chris's target is to get all of the ex-Kew people on the Isle of Wight into, or back into the Guild and to build the membership up. We are in a good secure position financially, and Chris thanked Jennifer Alsop for being an active part in this up to now. Jennifer is now stepping back and Chris said the Guild finances in the future are going to become greatly pressurised, and he anticipated needing someone to work alongside the Voluntary Treasurer.

The impact of Covid on our social agenda has changed the way the Guild work. This is a good opportunity to plan all the events we would normally do going forward. The most critical thing is that we get underway and Chris would like to build on the Kew Guild relationship with the School of Horticulture and to increase our presence with the students at all levels within Kew. Some ideas have already been discussed and CK will arrange another meeting with Richard Barley before the next trustee meeting. We have a mandate within the Constitution to expand and there is an opportunity to expand beyond the current Award Scheme. We should start to focus on where monies are coming from and to make sure the Guild finances are working. We should also start to look at generating money and allow donations.

Chris thanked trustees and members for the opportunity to become President of the Guild. The situation presented that every trustee had been President and that Chris was the only choice under the current Constitution. He wants to make sure in the future that anyone in the Guild would have the opportunity to become President.

Chris thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. The next meeting is set and there are



already things on the agenda. Chris said he was looking forward to working with everyone in the coming year. Members present gave Chris a round of applause.

### CIO 2020-21.17 Any Other Business

Prior to the meeting, our member Sonya Abraham asked if the Guild could make the most of the conferencing software to provide online lectures. SA to put this on agenda for first meeting. SA asked for any suggestions or volunteers, please let her know. SA to seek suggestions from students to get them involved. Colin Jones thanked SA for organising the meeting and how well it has gone. Colin reconnected through the meeting with Greg Armstrong.

Tony Overland said, on an optimistic note, that Cambridge Cottage has been confirmed for the Annual Dinner on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

### CIO 2020-21.018 Date of next Annual General Meeting

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2021, Lady Lisa Sainsbury Lecture Theatre.

The meeting was closed at 3.12pm.

Alan Stuttard apologised to the Past President and President for his late attendance at the meeting.

### The 2020 AGM, via Zoom



Showing the ‘handover’ of the Presidents Ribbon, from David Simpson to Chrid Kidd

*From L to R: Sara Arnold, Sparkle Ward, Alan Stuttard, Chris Kidd, Tony Overland, Richard Ward, Colin Jones, Jean Griffin, David Simpson, Brian and Sylvia Phillips, Graham Heywood, Trevor Matthews, Mike Griffin, Simon Owens, Stewart Henchie, Peter Styles, David Hardman, Judy Hancock, Bob Ivison, Robert Brett, Richard Barley, Dennis C. McGlade, Brendan Mowforth, Greg Armstrong.*



## School of Horticulture Kew Diploma and Prizes Course 55

**There was no formal prizegiving day due to Covid-19 restrictions. Prizes, Diplomas and Certificates awarded as follows.**

### **Final Year Prizes**

The Alitex Glasshouse Award, awarded for best practical performance during work placements under glass.

The Kew Guild Individual Study Prize, awarded to the student attaining the highest marks in their systematic botany project.

The Dummer Memorial Prize, awarded for the best herbarium project.

The Worshipful Company of Gardeners' Prize awarded to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year student achieving top overall academic and practical marks (awarded jointly with Charlie Harpur).

Along with the Kew Gardener Prize, awarded to the top student in amenity horticulture (awarded jointly with Charlie Harpur).

Awarded to: **Faye Adams**

The George Conrad Johnson Memorial Prize, awarded for the best overall performance on the Kew Diploma.

The Matilda Smith Memorial Prize, awarded to the best practical student overall.

The Fred Larkbey Cup, awarded to the best practical student marks in their work placements.

The F. Nigel Hepper Cup, awarded to the top student in plant identification tests over the three years.

The George Brown Prize, awarded to the top student in the Arboretum, Gardens and Horticultural Services Section.

The Kingdon-Ward Prize, awarded to the student attaining the highest marks in their final year dissertation.

The C P Raffill Prize, awarded to the winner of the Kew Mutual Improvement Society's student lecture competition.

The Worshipful Company of Gardeners' Prize, awarded to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year student achieving top overall academic and practical marks (awarded jointly with Faye Adams).

The Kew Gardener Prize, awarded to the top student in amenity horticulture (awarded jointly with Faye Adams).

The Freda Howson Award, awarded for excellence in ecology and conservation.

The Donald Dring & Gilbert Memorial Prize, awarded to the student attaining the highest marks in entomology and crop protection.

The Squires Garden Centre Prize, awarded to the top student in landscape design.

Along with The Kew Guild Cup, awarded for the highest marks in the 1<sup>st</sup> year vegetable plot project.

Awarded to: **Charlie Harpur**

### **Apprenticeship Prizes**

Horticultural Trades Association Prize for The Best Practical Apprentice, awarded to:

**Timothy Shaw**

**Sam Stapleton**

The Apprentice who made the most progress throughout the apprenticeship, awarded to:

**Andrew Owen**

The Highest Test Results in Plant Identification, awarded to:

**Matilda Cresswell Cox**

**Timothy Forshaw**

The Apprentice with the Best Weed Project, and The Apprentice with the Best Work Journals and Plant Profiles, awarded to:

**Vicki Thompson**

### **The Kew Diploma**

Honours:

**Faye Adams**

**Neil Alderson**

**Charlie Harpur**

Credit:

**Bex Lane**

Pass:

**Daniel Le Cornu**

### **Kew Specialist Certificates**

Pass:

**Georgi Ennis**

**Josef Kreidt**

**Eva Huguet Moreno**

**Matthew Payne**

**Arnau Ribera Tort**

**Alberto Trinco**

**Millie Woodley**

Certificate of Attendance:

**Suzanne Antonelli**

**Robert Flack**

### **Kew Apprenticeships**

Distinction:

**Matilda Cresswell Cox**

**Alice McKeever Crowcroft**

**Timothy Forshaw**

**Timothy Shaw**

**Vicki Thompson**

**Sam Stapleton**

Pass:

**Andrew Owen**

Certificate of Attendance:

**Darrell Bennett**

**Qamar Nur**



**Lewis Barrett**



**Lauren Dunec Hoang**



**Eleanor Edmonds**



**Cecily Eltringham**



**Francesco Gorni**



**Giulia Grasso**



**Caleb Job**



**Svenja Juehrend**



**Jack Kinsey**



**Josef Kreidt**



**Hattie Moore**



**Sophia Moseley**



**Tim Shaw**



**Sam Stapleton**



**Vicki Thompson**



**Jennifer Wright**

## **KEW DIPLOMA COURSE 58**

## Student Report

### Fruzsina Nagy, C57

In January 2020, students looked forward to a great year with anticipation and started in their second work placements in the Gardens, Arboretum and Glasshouses. The biweekly Plant Identification tests resumed after the holidays and preparations for the Vegetable Plot project continued. At the beginning of March students were getting ready to plant seeds and start growing. Unfortunately, Covid-19 stopped all of this in its tracks, and it brought major changes with the Gardens closing their doors to visitors as well in late March. All Plant Identification tests had to be cancelled with immediate effect, together with the Vegetable Plot project. Our first lecture block due to start in April was postponed by three months. Students in Gumley Cottage were put under quarantine for 14 days as well as some other first year students with underlying health issues.

After a couple of weeks many students returned to work. Some of them started working in new placements while others remained in their previous section. The work schedule differed in the various placements with reduced work hours, shortened days and staggered breaks. Four students out of the 13 were placed on total furlough temporarily to comply with Kew's Covid-19 protocol, either due to their underlying health issues or due to their reliance on public transport. This period during lockdown without any visitors at Kew Gardens was very unusual, but despite the stress of the pandemic students could appreciate the effort the management made to keep things going. As time progressed it became clear that not only the Vegetable Plot project had to be cancelled – though those not on furlough continued to manage their plots - but the traditional two-week Wakehurst stay also had to be cancelled. The yearly fundraising through selling produce from the student plots sadly could not go ahead. Those who still managed to tend to their plots decided to donate produce in excess to a nearby food bank to support the community in this difficult time.

Thankfully, C57 students could start their first lecture block on 6<sup>th</sup> July after the end of the first lockdown. The lectures were attended in person at the School of Horticulture – some of them held face-to-face, while others held online. Students followed the lectures from the School of Horticulture and interacted with some of the lecturers online through Microsoft Teams videocalls. The subject schedule was mostly unchanged, though Plant Systematics had to be swapped with second-year Arboriculture lectures due to lecturer availability. Field trips were cancelled, but the practical lectures, though slightly modified, could go ahead. The exams week went ahead as planned with strict social distancing rules

in place. Sadly, two students left the course and the current number of C57 students stands at eleven. Jon Bedford had a slightly different arrangement due to the Covid-19 protocol and he will join the C57 group in the second lecture block in January 2021.

Thanks to the hard work of our KMIS President Andrew Wilson, Vice President Ciaran Bradshaw and Treasurer Emily Hazell, the KMIS lectures were set up online and started in September 2020. It is clearly a success as attendance has almost doubled, and lectures have gone to a wider international



Wisteria ©Fruzsina Nagy

audience. Although in October students started in their new placements, during the second lockdown previous work arrangements of the partial furlough scheme returned with some differences in the various placements. This challenging year forced us all to remain flexible and adapt to the ever-changing situation with resilience. Thankfully, with some modifications to the Kew Diploma Course schedule, C57 remained on track and our education program continues. © Fruzsina Nagy

### **Jon Bedford, C57**

I was in placement in the Orchid section of the Tropical Nursery when national quarantine was instituted in March 2020. A few colleagues had been self-isolating already. Travelling to Kew by train and having asthma meant I was advised to stay at home and, as with many others, this later became furlough. C57 were due to begin Lecture Block 1 in April but this was delayed due to continuing quarantine and the Vegetable Plot Project was cancelled. Many of my year group were retained, working within the minimal staffing levels needed to keep everything going. Finding it difficult reconciling the difference in our situations, I busied myself with work at my small allotment. Luckily, the sowing I had done in preparation for the Vegetable Plot Project was not wasted. The uncertainty prevailed through early summer until late June. The delayed Lecture Block 1 was about to begin in July, but Health & Safety had conducted a risk assessment for me, and I was advised that I would not be allowed to take part. It is an understatement to say this was a bit of a blow. I was given an option to take Lecture Block 1 a year later with C58 the following April, proceeding with Lecture Block 2 as normal in January. However, I still needed to complete a couple of pieces of work from Lecture Block 1, either because of timing issues or as preparation for Lecture Block 2. This proved to be challenging with the absence of group interactions and dynamics.

A few weeks into July I was summoned back to Kew to take up a placement in the Arboretum. Knowing that mask wearing on trains was far from comprehensive despite Government rules, cycling to Kew was the best way to stay safe and I negotiated a two-week period so I could learn the route while getting fit enough to make the journey each day. At the end of July, I began cycling. I live near Finsbury Park, North London and my journey is by way of Kentish Town, St. Johns Wood, Maida Vale, Westbourne Park, Notting Hill, Shepherds Bush, Chiswick and finally Kew Green and on to the Arboretum, a round trip of 25 miles.

I spent almost six months in the Arboretum. Initially I maintained the Rosa species area near Victoria Gate before transitioning into team working on edging, weeding and mulching tree circles. Swapping teams in early October, this work continued alongside working in the Japanese Gateway Garden, around the Lake and in the Conservation Area. In November when mass quarantine was again put in place all Arboretum staff and students were put on to a 50% part-time furlough schedule.

Towards Christmas there was still uncertainty over undertaking Lecture Block 2 with my year group. I approached the Health & Safety Team asking to review my risk assessment. Without this review, I would not be able to continue the Diploma. The School of Horticulture had offered me a transfer to a Specialist Certificate and a clean Diploma re-start in September 2021. An attractive proposal but the financial cost of five years on minimum wage was not. Fortunately for me, Health & Safety took account of the Government's change of advice for people with asthma resulting in my personal risk assessment being waived. So, I have re-joined C57 in Lecture Block 2 and will immediately follow up with Lecture Block 1 with C58.



## Kew Guild Student Representatives, Reports to the Committee Meetings in 2020

### January-March 2020

**Fruzina Nagy, C57.** At the beginning of January first year students started their second placements in the Gardens, Arboretum and Glasshouses. The bi-weekly plant ident tests resumed after the holidays. The Vegetable Plot project continued. In February students resumed their vegetable bed preparations and in March they made the final preparations and built supportive structures for the plants, etc. Everybody was getting ready to plant seeds and start growing. Unfortunately, Covid-19 stopped all these in their tracks, and it brought major changes to everybody's plans with the Gardens closing their doors to visitors as well in late March. All Plant Ident tests have been cancelled with immediate effect, together with the Vegetable Plot project. The lecture block that was due to start at the beginning of April has been postponed by three months. Students in Gumley Cottage were put under quarantine for 14 days as well as some other first year students with underlying health issues.

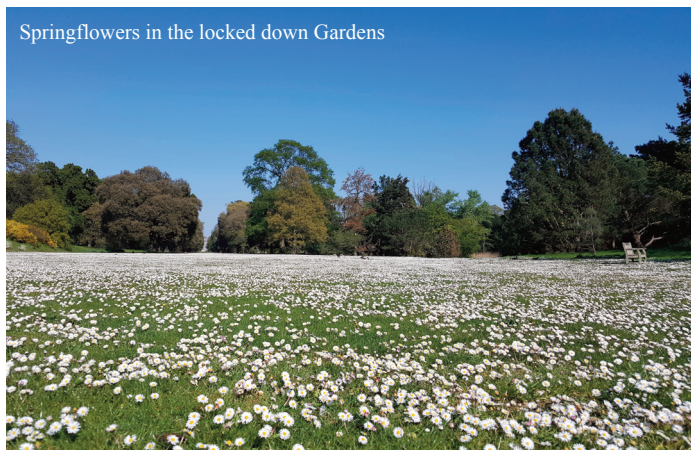
After a couple of weeks, the initial general confusion lifted somewhat, and many students returned to work. Some of them started work in new placements while others remained in their previous section. Students in the Gardens and Arboretum sections have been put on a rota, working three days per week, while students in the Glasshouse sections are currently at work full-time. Four students out of the 13 have been placed on furlough, either due to underlying health issues or having to use public transport to commute to work. Students will find out more about how these placements will be regarded in terms of marking, etc. The lecture block is due to start in July and part of the lectures might be held online. In due time more information will come from the School of Horticulture about how things can get back on track in terms of studies and markings. We all hope the life can return to normal soon and that everybody stays safe and in good health.

**Silke Strickrodt, C56.** January 2020 saw the C56 students going into their second lecture block. The lectures comprised a great variety of subjects, offering something of interest for each of us: Landscape Surveying, Landscape Design and Landscape Detailing for individuals with a creative and mathematical turn of mind; Arboriculture and Turf for the budding arborists and greenkeepers; Soil Science, Ecology, Conservation Studies and Genetics for the scientists; Garden History for the historians and designers; and an Interpretation workshop for those interested in visitor management and pedagogy. The perceived highlights therefore depend very much on individual preference, but most of us would probably include the visits to Clivedon and Stourhead as part of our Garden History studies with Richard Bisgrove, even if during the Clivedon visit we were battered by nearly horizontal rain. Some might also nominate the counting of earthworms during a Soil Science practical as their highlight, while others might choose the lovely turf at the Hurlingham Club in Fulham, which we inspected as part of our Turf studies with Alan Lewis.

There were, of course, additional activities. The Plant Idents included Winter Interest, Seeds, Bromeliads and Araceae, and Temperate House Plants. The second half of the KMIS lectures, organised by our cohort, attracted a large audience, comprising both specialists interested in particular talks as well as local stalwarts. Many of us were busy with the preparation of our travel scholarships, including funding applications and the organisation of itineraries. All these activities came to an unexpected and full stop with the outbreak of the Corona/COVID-19 crisis and the lock-down of gardens from 24 March, at the beginning of our revision week. Suddenly, the impossible, or rather unimaginable became

possible and the possible impossible: plant idents, examinations, KMIS lectures and travel scholarships were all cancelled and the gardens were closed to most employees as well as visitors, excepting only those critical staff – including, of course, the gardeners – who can

Springflowers in the locked down Gardens



make it there without using public transport. This means that eight of us are now working in the gardens, carrying out essential tasks for the maintenance of the collections, while the other five, who are unable to commute in these circumstances, are furloughed, as is the majority of the RBGK's staff. We are trying to make the best of these difficult and

uncertain times. This is probably easier for those of us who are actually working in the gardens now, as these are beautiful and at their spring-flowering best now.

## April-June

**Tim Stafford, C56.** Since the last meeting, Kew Gardens has re-opened and furloughed staff have been recalled, including the five furloughed C56 students. It's good to have everyone back. The exams for the second lecture block, which was studied from January to March, have been re-scheduled for the week starting 17 August. Three days of revision leave have been granted from 12-14 August. Tony Kirkham has promised to give an hour's revision of the arboriculture course. All the plant idents for this school year since lockdown were cancelled, and they will restart in the new school year as usual. Coursework has still been required, but the deadlines for several pieces were extended, which was appreciated. Nevertheless, students on furlough had to work on the design coursework without the use of the design studio.

C57's lecture block began on 1 July, and since that date other students have not been allowed the freedom of the School of Horticulture, in order to comply with Coronavirus regulations. Non-C57 students are required to ring the bell and be admitted if they need access. C56 students have discussed this with the School staff and the Director of Horticulture to ask if the restriction can be lifted. Travel scholarships had to be cancelled, and there is no certainty about when foreign travel for study can be made again. The Bentham-Moxon Trust, which gave an equal travel bursary to each C56 student, has asked for the money not be used for the time being until they review the situation and come to a decision. Students whose dissertation proposals depended on their travel scholarships are endeavouring to see what can be done.

Coronavirus has disrupted the Diploma course for us all. But none of us have dropped out, we are all back in the gardens, and we have a good summer placement to enjoy and to learn from before the third lecture block, which is planned for October to December as usual.

**Fruzsina Nagy, C57.** In the period from the beginning of April to the beginning of July

most C57 students continued work in their respective placements in the Gardens/Arboretum or in the Glasshouses, with the exception of the few who spent this time on furlough in order to comply with Kew's Covid-19 protocol. Naturally, due to the pandemic, work experience was different from normal and the various teams of the Kew Horticultural staff followed different work schedules and work hours. While students placed in outdoors sections had a weekly rota with three work days per week, students in most of the glasshouses worked from Monday to Friday and had a day off from work every fortnight. Also, work hours differed from the norm, with shortened days and staggered breaks. Despite these differences all of us followed the same Kew Covid-19 protocols to keep everyone safe. This period during lockdown without any visitors at Kew Gardens was very unusual, but despite the stress that the pandemic caused I think we all appreciated the effort the management made to keep things going.

Students did not get assessed for practical work at their placements, as this would have been difficult under the circumstances. As time progressed it became clear that not only the Vegetable Plot Project had to be cancelled – though those not on furlough continued to manage their plots - but the traditional two-week Wakehurst stay had to be cancelled too. Although this normally is an organic part of the curriculum, students were informed that complete cancellation was necessary, and the trip cannot be reorganized to a later date for various reasons. The yearly fundraising through selling produce from the student vegetable plots sadly could not go ahead. Our KMIS team are looking into whether the talks can be held in some way, perhaps online. Unfortunately, this will most probably result in loss of potential revenue through the usual fundraising route. Naturally, this situation has affected all first, second and third year students' Kew Diploma experience to some extent.

The good news is that our first lecture block could go ahead, and it started on 6<sup>th</sup> July. We all go into the school every day and meet some lecturers in person, while other lecturers give their lectures online. That means we all sit in the upstairs lecture room in the School of Horticulture and interact with the 'online' lecturers through Microsoft Team videocalls. The subject schedule is mostly unchanged, though Plant Systematics had to be moved to second year and students have Arboriculture lectures now instead of the second lecture block. The scheduled end date for the C57 first lecture block is 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020. So far so good, and we all hope things are getting back to normal and will stay so.

## **October-December**

**Tim Stafford, C56.** C56 students finished their summer placements and began the final lecture block at the beginning of October. The three main subjects are amenity with Richard Bisgrove, management with Neville Stein, and sustainable planting with Dr Mima Taylor. The exams will be on 17-19 December. The first fortnight of November was landscape design and detailing with John Sallis-Chandler and Brita von Schoenaich; this built on the previous lecture block 'design weeks', and the students made designs with A1 masterplans, A1 planting plans, A3 image sheets, and A3 design details for Westerly Ware, Kew. The students presented their work to John, and Peter Styles, the external examiner, on 2 December. The work specification coursework set by Martin Staniforth was completed in November, and the work-placement presentations will be given on 3 December. Covid restrictions and the second lockdown have made the lecture block more difficult, but have not stopped it. Students have worn masks during lectures, and some lecturers have taught over Microsoft Teams. A few lecturers have been able neither to travel to Kew nor to teach over Teams. All visits were cancelled except for Burgess Park with Mima Taylor. Matthias Spall has left the course, and 12 of the original 15 students remain. Dissertations are due on 1 March 2021.



## Kew Guild Events in 2020

Due to COVID-19, no Guild organised Events took place during 2020.

## Kew Guild Awards Scheme 2020

by Chris Kidd

The KGAS met on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 4pm to consider applications for awards and the nomination for the Honorary Fellowship of the Kew Guild. It should be noted as a historical record that at the time of the meeting the full scale of the unfolding pandemic was far from clear. We had discussed whether to postpone the meeting but had agreed to proceed. 48 hours later parts of Europe began lockdown, the UK followed suit shortly afterwards. Present in March 2020 were Chris Kidd (Chairperson), Maxine Biggs (Secretary), Marcella Corcoran, Allan Hart, Gillian Leese, Silke Strickrodt (student), Sal Demain, Richard Wilford. Apologies from: Susyn Andrews, David Hardman, David Simpson.

### Awards

A total of £13,007 from the five named Funds and General Funds was available at the meeting to be made as awards. Eleven applications had been made, most were successful after individual discussion. At the meeting the impact of Covid-19 was naturally raised. Decision was made to proceed with making Awards where the proposal was not immediately impacted by the virus. Awards were made on condition that although the proposal dates may vary from those on the award application, the award would be available to be taken for one year from the date of the meeting provided the rest of the proposal remained unchanged. Significant other change to the proposal must be notified to the Awards Scheme through the Chair or Secretary, the Award then suspended for discussion at the July meeting, or sooner with Kew Guild Trustee approval.

**Alberto Trinco** Study tour of Orchids in Ecuador  
Awarded £1000 total, £500 from Woodhams Fund and £500 from Leese Fund

**Ed Ikin** Study tour in Japan  
Awarded £900 from Redman Fund

**Francisco Lopez** Study tour in USA  
Awarded £1000 total, £500 from Turner, balance of £500 from Arnold Fund

**Harry Baldwin** Study tour in Chile  
Awarded £600 from Dallimore Fund

**Ignacio Silva de la Iglesia** Study tour New York & Philadelphia  
Awarded £1000 from Redman Fund

**Luigo Leoni** Study tour Columbia  
Awarded £1000 total, £500 from Woodhams Fund and £500 from Leese Fund

**Marcelo Sellaro** Conference and work experience in Munich  
Awarded £500 from Redman Fund

**Martin Xanthos** Attend AETFAT conference in Zambia  
Awarded £500 from Redman Fund

**Tim Stafford** Study tour Vancouver  
Awarded £500 from Redman Fund

Of a total fund availability of £13,007 for 2019, £7,000 was awarded.

### **George Brown Memorial Award**

A nomination for the George Brown Memorial Award was received, made by Allan Hart, for William Bessler. After discussion the proposal was agreed unanimously. Protocol is for the President to write to William Bessler making the Award and inviting the recipient to the appropriate Annual Dinner (2021) to receive it.

### **Fellowship of the Kew Guild**

Two Honorary Fellow's nominations were received, one made by Jean Griffin and one by Richard Barley. After discussion the committee decided to support the nominations, which were made to Trustees. Trustees agreed to support one nomination, for Marcus Agius. Educated at St George's College, Weybridge, he earned his degree in Mechanical Sciences and Economics at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and also holds an MBA from Harvard Business School. From December 2006 to 2012 Agius was a senior independent non-executive director of the BBC's executive board. Agius spoke at the CBI Climate Change Summit in 2008. Between 2009 and 2019 he was the chairman of the trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. On retiring from Kew, he donated £500,000 to the gardens to create the Agius Evolution Garden there. In January 2014, Agius was appointed non-executive chairman of PA Consulting. In January 2017, Agius was appointed the chairman of Reach South Academy Trust. He was appointed Chairman of the Cambridge University Plant Science Initiative. Marcus Agius married Katherine, daughter of Edmund de Rothschild of the Rothschild banking family of England, and has a close involvement with the Rothschild family estate, Exbury Gardens in Hampshire.

Marcus Agius has a clear and proven affinity for the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, demonstrated by his commitment to the Trusteeship of RBG Kew and stewardship as the chair. Further, a considerable personal philanthropic donation to the organisation through the Agius Evolution Garden. In 2019 he was present at the graduation for the Kew Diploma students and other prize giving, his keynote speech on the day outlined a wish to strengthen the alumnus of Kew, and a desire to remain part of the organisations future. The Kew Guild, by offering Honorary Fellowship to Mr Agius, make a most important link with an hugely influential individual. The President wrote to Mr Agius who accepted enthusiastically.

The meeting scheduled for Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020 from 4pm in the Jodrell seminar room RBG Kew was postponed and then cancelled due to restrictions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. At the Kew Guild Trustees meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020 it was agreed that the awards made in March 2020 will be valid for an extended period, to be taken and completed by the end of September 2021. In addition it was agreed that the next meeting of the Awards Committee will take place in March 2021. The precise date will be confirmed with the Secretary as restrictions and further impacts on life become clearer.

## Award Scheme Reports

### **‘We are part of a cult’ – A Review of the Beth Chatto Symposium (2018)** by Aaron Marubbi

With funding from the Guild, I was able to attend a two-day memorial symposium to the wonderful Beth Chatto, a woman whom I am sure many of us can thank many times over for inspiration and guidance in our own endeavours on a daily basis. Her many gardens at Elmstead Market have been a sourcebook for me since I first read about them in her books. Particularly the dry and scree gardens have provided the plant list for my own projects and acted as a living laboratory where I myself have been able to make observations on, and learn from. For a woman who throughout her life generously shared her knowledge of plants and gardens, the Beth Chatto Symposium on Ecological Planting for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is perfect celebration of her memory.

The symposium itself took place on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018. The programme was a mixture of lectures and discussion panels. The Guild was represented on stage by Dan Pearson and plenty more of us in the audience. Headliners were; James Hitchmough, Professor of Horticultural Ecology, Andi Pettis, Director of Horticulture at the High Line, Midori Shintani, Head Gardener, Tokachi Millennium Forest to name just a few personal favourites that struck a chord. We were in esteemed company. Luckily it was a good mix of ecological designers, gardeners, horticultural management experts and plantspeople to get discussions fired up and balanced. The main focus was on our current understanding of the ‘naturalistic’ form of planting we are currently practicing. Trying to focus on the ecological aspects of such ‘new perennial’ planting types. There are so many more names to call this type of planting but in the broad sense we are talking about the development of plantings from the New Dutch/German style that was coined by Stephen Lacey in 1992. Where we as planting designers have looked at natural north American and Eurasian prairies and developed cultivated plant communities that ecologically, temporally and aesthetically mimic naturalistic ones. I suppose we can look to Piet Oudolf as the poster boy for getting this style out into popular culture.

The reason I am interested in such planting is not just the aesthetic; they can be spectacularly beautiful, but I am most interested in the practical horticulture, maintenance cost and ecological benefits; are there any? I am generalising here, but in the broad sense I think most of you reading this would quickly run to the defence of any questions on this style’s validity. That is because as James Hitchmough put it; we are in a cult! We are plantspeople, we love flowers and lots of them. In a world of climate crisis and environmental awareness (...still some way to go) we look at this planting and it provides us with the wild untamed nature we are desperate to see in our world. I have no problem with this. I am happy to be part of this cult but is it based on solid evidence that it’s less resource and labour intensive, cheaper and good for local ecology?

James was very useful here as his work is backed up with hard evidence. Turns out ‘wild’ naturalistic plantings when layered, planned well with appropriate species mixes, and appropriately managed, are less work. This is about 3mins/sq m a year compared to 9-12mins/sq m conventional mixed border. James stresses the use and need of thick aggregate mulches of at least 100mm to act as hostile barriers to weed development; these are using finite resources...not so good. Generally, the cost to implement is the same as conventional planting but what makes them more attractive is the reduced labour need and irrigation/feeding etc. They are attractive to wildlife but this really is on the back of Jennifer Owens’ work and all garden plants in the right mix are beneficial, so more specific

work needs to be done here to give us more evidence. For this to be useful we need to get this evidence out of academic articles and out to a freely accessible mainstream audience.

After this symposium I realise that we're all already convinced of the advantages of this style of planting. We want to do it and want it to succeed. Which is great; but we need to do a better job of telling everyone else not just ourselves. The important take home message I want to stress is the fact that even though these plantings need less maintenance in general, the only way they succeed is with expert plantspeople. Without expert plantspeople and highly skilled horticulturalists all the benefits are short-lived. We need to shout out and self-promote as gardeners that our world needs tending by expert gardeners and we should support the training of these expert gardeners in places like Kew. For us to move to more sustainable planting we must support our industry; train-up and, importantly, pay them well so they want to do it and more are encouraged to do it too!

## **The Kew Guild Honorary Fellowship**

### **Introduction**

by Allan Hart

We are now celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> year since the Fellowship was inaugurated and it continues to be highly regarded by the recipients. It is a vehicle by which the ethos and traditions of the Guild are made available to those from different backgrounds who have achieved so much in their professional careers. The Fellowship is awarded in recognition of those who are particularly distinguished in their careers in horticulture, botanical sciences and associated fields of activity. The Fellowships are restricted to 25 at any one time. The Awards Scheme, which promotes and administers the Fellowship, carries out a considerable amount of research into the suitability of the nominees — the award is not available to those who are eligible to apply for regular membership of the Guild. It is regretted that the Trustees have yet to ratify the nominations for 2020 which should have been carried out within four weeks of their being informed by the Secretary of the Awards Scheme. An outstanding nomination was that of Steven Sillett, an American botanist, who developed an innovative method of climbing an ancient grove of Californian Giant Redwoods towering over 100 metres high and discovering an unique ecosystem previously unknown to science. It is hoped that Steven soon receives the recognition by the Guild that he and his research deserves.

### **Current Honorary Fellows are:**

Elected	2006	Roy Lancaster, John Melmoe, Tim Smit, Ed Wolf
	2007	Dennis McGlade, Anna Pavord
	2009	Richard Bisgrove, Niall Kirkwood
	2010	Shirley Sherwood
	2011	Adil Güner
	2012	John Massey, Graham Ross
	2013	Piet Oudolf
	2014	Peter Thoday
	2015	Raymond Evison
	2016	No appointment
	2017	James Hitchmough, Nigel Dunnett
	2018	Michael Fitt
	2019	Tim O'Hare
	2020	Marcus Agius

## Marcus Agius CBE

by Richard Barley

The Trustees of the Kew Guild were very pleased to award the title of ‘Honorary Fellow of the Kew Guild’ to Marcus Agius in 2020. While his professional career was built through the world of international banking, Marcus’ passion for the world of plants, gardens and conservation is very well known to those that have met him. He has been an enthusiastic and unwavering advocate for Kew for two decades, as a Trustee from 2007 and then Chairman of the Board of Trustees for an unprecedented tenure of 10 years, from 2009-19 (he was then succeeded by Dame Amelia Fawcett as Chair of the Board of Trustees). He also concurrently performed the valuable role of Chairman of the Kew Foundation Council, the body that underpins and guides Kew’s extensive fundraising and membership programmes from 2006-19.

During Marcus’ service to Kew as a Trustee and Chairman of both Boards, he very generously gave his time and energy extensively in support of Kew, for both sites (Kew and Wakehurst), but also for our diverse scientific and conservation programmes worldwide. He ensured that people from his wide network of contacts were introduced as potential Kew supporters or sponsors, and many have subsequently become our most ardent supporters and generous donors. Marcus and his wife Kate were also personal donors to Kew, supporting the total cost of the development of the Agius Evolution Garden, which opened in summer 2019. The aim of this garden is to provide visitors with an understanding of the current scientific thinking around the DNA-based plant evolutionary relationships – a physical representation of the Plant Tree of Life. ‘Bringing science into the garden’ has been a key aim at Kew for several years and the Agius’ very generous support for this new garden has been a significant realisation of this ambition.

Many people will know of Marcus’ dedication to the improvement and sustainable operation of the very impressive Exbury Garden near the Solent coast. His love of gardens and plants is infectious, and his personal interest in the trees of the Arboretum has led to many walks over the years with various groups of friends and potential donors. On arriving at Kew in 2013, I found Marcus’ support and insights invaluable, and he encouraged me to ensure that my own aspirations for our unique site and its living collections would not be modest. Marcus was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2021 New Year’s Honours list for services to botany and conservation. He was also recently appointed as Chairman of the Cambridge University Plant Science Initiative.

## News of Honorary Fellows

### Roy Lancaster

2020 began on a high note when, in late February my wife Sue and I joined friends for a week’s break on the island of La Gomera in the Canaries. With past memories of a much enjoyed family holiday on the neighbouring island of Tenerife we were really looking forward to exploring the mountains of this smaller, less visited island and our expectations increased on the ferry voyage from Los Cristianos to San Sebastian as we enjoyed watching Cory’s shearwaters skimming the foam-crested waves. In the following days we explored several trails in the laurel forests (*laurisilva*) of El Cedro beginning





with an early morning walk through a density of evergreen trees comprising *Ilex canariensis*, *Persea indica* and *Myrica faya* up to 20 metres tall with an understorey of *Viburnum rigidum* and *Hypericum grandifolium* (not very grand) and a ground cover of



A trail through the laurisilva in El Cedro on La Gomera

*Woodwardia radicans* and *Geranium reuteri*. Adding to our pleasure was the sweet fragrance of *Erica arborea* whose tiny crowded flowers were borne on high canopies up to 15 metres or so. We walked as in a daze through a fast dissipating mist which left the canopy dripping and glittering in the slanting shafts of the rising sun.

Elsewhere we came across *Laurus azorica*

and *Picconia excelsa*, a tall evergreen shrub or small tree of the *Oleaceae* with crowded 4-petalled, white flowers both of which I first came across many years ago in the woodland gardens of Exbury on the Solent. Giant golden flowered Sowthistles *Sonchus ortunoii* were frequent in open places accompanied by drifts of *Pericallis appendiculata* with large daisy flowers ranging in colour from white, pink to violet. It was heartening to see a huge area which had been devastated by fire several years previously, gradually recovering with shrubby re-growth while in one relatively sheltered valley we were delighted to find a thriving colony of a small green native orchid *Gennaria diphylla*.



*Sonchus ortunoii*

For the rest of the year of Covid-19 we have spent an inordinate amount of time in our garden which has brought us abundant pleasures and distractions especially during lockdown. One highlight being the flowering of *Clematis lanuginosa* a Chinese species which according to some authorities has long been lost to cultivation since its first introduction by Robert Fortune in 1850. This more recent introduction (Ogisu 352) by the Japanese botanist and plantsman Mikinori Ogisu flowered as a seedling here for the first time, its flowers with only 4-tepals and I look forward to it surviving this winter to produce its more typical and larger 5-tepalled flowers next summer.

### Sir Tim Smit KBE

If there is one thing this unforeseen pandemic has taught me it is this: When it is all over I am looking forward to all of us taking nothing for granted - our health, our environment, our friendships and family, not even the politics and economics that shape our lives. A year in which we had to say a painful goodbye to 169 much-valued Eden Project colleagues who lost their jobs due to the effects of our prolonged lockdown has also been one in which we started to see long-cherished plans begin to flourish. Our blueprint for an Eden



Project North in Morecambe has progressed with speed and in the autumn, we submitted a business case to the Government, setting out the huge economic, environmental and social benefits this would bring to the region. This year also saw us take part in a virtual groundbreaking ceremony for our project in Qingdao, China, and we are very excited that construction work has now begun there.

Closer to home, at our Cornwall HQ, we have another transformational project which we hope will spark a green energy revolution. Drilling on the site of our long-awaited geothermal energy plant is due to begin in early spring 2021, around the time of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Eden Project opening for the first time. As we look to the next 20 years, this fills us with energy and hope and helps remind us to live as if each and every day is special and to be treasured.

### Dennis C. McGlade

So far, I have survived the plague and the quarantines. As I am an introvert, I am not in as much of a need for an audience as are a lot of others. I see a limited number of friends in small gatherings in each other's homes. I regularly hit those restaurants with outdoor

Instagram Post - *Brugmansia*



seating when the weather is warm enough. I have been doing a lot of Zoom and "go to meetings". I belong to a couple of senior groups that look out for each other and offer volunteer services for those who need them, as well as offering lectures, book, music, and film discussions, play readings, virtual tours etc. etc. While all my garden touring has halted (no trip



to London last May for the Guild dinner) I still am able to work in the soil. I am on the master planning and horticulture committees for the Morris Arboretum of the University of



Pennsylvania here in Philadelphia, and I am on the landscape committee for my condominium. We have very large planters in the front of the building and a large garden to the rear. I also garden in Washington Square – planting hundreds of native shrubs and herbaceous plants. The National Park Service (they manage and maintain the square) wants to transition the square's plantings to those plants native to the Mid-Atlantic States. I have gotten into photography on my iPhone and posting the photos on Instagram. So in spite of the virus life is going on.

### Niall Kirkwood FASLA



This Spring, before overseas travel was curtailed by the COVID-19, I led a landscape design studio studying the role of mangrove plant communities to address sea-level rise, flooding and land retreat in the Bay of Bangkok in Central Thailand. Twelve graduate landscape students from Harvard Design School travelled with me to the City of Bangkok and hinterlands to carry out site analysis and document the agricultural, coastal forest and urban landscapes, parks and gardens. As part of our field visit we carried out public service for the local authorities by planting a field of short mangrove shoots that will quickly grow into part of a larger effort to re-establish the coastal forests destroyed by shrimp farming.

The resulting student design work was the recipient of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Student Award of Excellence, 2020 by graduate student Tina Tsai and was featured in the awards ceremony during the Virtual ASLA Annual Convention in November, 2020.

### Richard Bisgrove

My garden history lectures to 2<sup>nd</sup> year Kew Diploma students usually mark the beginning of the year but 2020 was different. On 4<sup>th</sup> January we celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with lunch at a nearby restaurant for fifty of our family and friends. Then came the Kew lectures in February with a visit to Cliveden at the end of the month and Stourhead in early March.

THEN, on March 23<sup>rd</sup> – as for the rest of the country – came Covid-19. No choir, no bell ringing and, one by one, my eight weeks of Oxford lectures for various American



universities were cancelled. At the start of lockdown I e-mailed the secretary of our bell ringing band to say, in jest, that I would see him in August, thinking that August was a long way off and the crisis would be long past by then. How wrong can you be! This week's (early December) news from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (I'm sure you always wondered what the initials CCCBR stood for) is that ringing will probably not be possible before next spring.



A new lawn weed - *Cyclamen hederifolium*

The one good thing about the crisis, as for many members of the Kew Guild, is that we were able to devote nearly all of our time to the garden. A well-known young professor from Sheffield emailed me in late spring to say that, for the first time in years, he was doing things at the right time in his garden and it was the same with us. Not only were borders

weeded, lawns mown and vegetables sown / planted in timely fashion but we attacked two corners of the garden that had not received any attention for many years. In our 'wood' (three large beech trees fringed by lilac and shrubby honeysuckles) we removed a thick layer of ivy and planted lots of bluebells. One of the 'invasive aliens' in our garden is *Cyclamen hederifolium*. Apart from making its presence felt as a lawn weed it had invaded a border among irises, lupins and asters. Our neighbour, new to gardening but very keen, wants to establish a carpet of cyclamen under his trees so buckets of *cyclamen* went across the wall. In planting his *cyclamen* he unearthed many bluebell bulbs so they came back to us. I think it's called symbiosis!

As autumn approached so did my November Amenity Horticulture lectures for the now third-year students. Two working days before the first lecture it became apparent that I could not go to Kew because of my great age. Tim Hughes and Jennifer Chan were very patient in tutoring me in the noble art of online lecturing via Teams and we made it – just. That was very useful, if not very enjoyable, because in late November I had to lecture online to Garden Design students at Cornwall College.

Now we wait with bated breath to see if we can visit our grandchildren for Christmas. News today (2<sup>nd</sup> December) that the first vaccine has received approval so there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Next year the gardening may not be done on time but we may be able to see each other again – and I may be able to scribble on the board and wave my arms during my lectures, next November if not next February.

**Raymond J. Evison**  
**OBE VMH FLS FCI Hort**

2020 has been an interesting and strange year for me as it has been for others. In April, my Raymond J. Evison Ltd. company set up a new joint venture in China with the Chinese State-owned company, The Beijing Florascape Co. Ltd. Our work goes under the heading of "The Chinese Joint Venture Breeding Project", and its aim and objectives are to collect native Chinese clematis species and breed them with new cultivars raised in Guernsey.



We are looking to bring better winter hardiness and improved heat tolerance to clematis as well as different colours with the compact habit of our Guernsey raised Cultivars. As the 2020 Chelsea Flower Show was cancelled, I staged an exhibit of the clematis plants that should have gone to Chelsea outside our glasshouses in Guernsey at the end of May, as Guernsey came into Phase 4 of coming out



of lockdown. This became a charity event and we raised nearly £7,500 to be shared between The Queens Nurses and The Guernsey Botanical Trust, a great success. As we come to the end of the year I am setting up a small native plant nursery for La Société Guernesiaise, Botany Section, whereby we will raise rare and endangered native plant species for re-introduction in Guernsey natural areas and bring public awareness to the need to conserve our native plants and our endemics. © Raymond Evison

Chelsea in Guernsey; a display of clematis that was due to go to the cancelled Chelsea Flower Show ©Raymond Evison

## **The George Brown Memorial Award**

*For furthering communication and diplomacy in the true spirit of the Kew Guild*

### **Chris Kidd**

As recipient of the George Brown Award 2020, I write this in the first person. Firstly, I should make it quite clear that I was wholly surprised by the Award, and secondly consider myself wholly unworthy, as my biography will show. I accept, only in the hope of becoming fully worthy through the redoubled energy I will dedicate to the Kew Guild. I have achieved little in comparison to former winners, indeed as President I feel quite out of my league compared to my forebears, a feeling that reminds me of my first days at Kew. I here briefly recount my relationship with the Kew Guild, rather than ‘gild’ the meagre achievements of an apprentice from Portsmouth Parks Department.

The Kew Guild Journal describes my first evening at Kew (1990). Chair of the Awards Committee, and past President, Peter Maunder hosted my course, 28, for a cheese and

wine evening in the newly opened School of Horticulture organised and underwritten by himself, Isabelle and Mike. Peter knew my name, and the names of my fellow starters, and wanted me to name an apple he'd brought to show us (Cox's Orange Pippin). Earlier in the day whilst walking through Brentford, looking where a chap like myself may find some Benson & Hedges, I had been bundled into a police van as a suspect from some unknown misdemeanour. Released as a poor match for the real villain, I realised I was a very small fish dumped into a London sized pond. I was most daunted to be at Kew, and was, along with Matthew Vincent from Australia, already wondering if this really was within our ability. The evening was the welcome I needed, and encouraged me to stay, and change my life forever.

We all joined the Kew Guild automatically, and everybody from the Curator downward recommended remaining. Supervisor of Studies Ian Leese was a particular exponent, as were fellow students who described Awards for travel that could be made to members. I became our student representative to the Guild, attending meetings and machinations, and Kew Guild dinners where I'd borrow a neck tie and have the guest of honour's name written on my hand in case I forgot. I received an award, a sum to travel to Sweden. I decided it would be honourable to return the effort and opportunity given to me by the Guild by giving my time and effort back, something that you will recognise in yourselves. I became secretary to the Awards Scheme until I went to Limbe Botanic Garden to work.

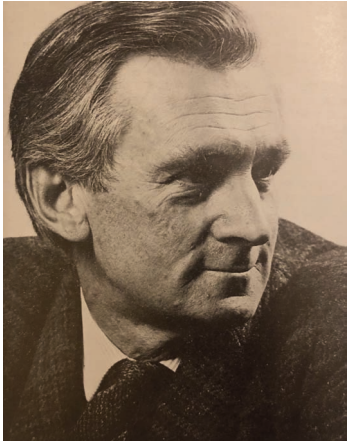
My contact with the Guild remained through the Journal. Returning to the UK I had a young family to support and ultimately moved to the Isle of Wight, to Ventnor Botanic Garden. Whilst here I heard of the tragic early passing of Ian Leese, whom I knew supported the Awards Committee. I offered my help in his stead to David Barnes, who was chair, and returned to the biannual meetings. I relished the ferry and car journey to Kew to see old friends in the garden and give as much money as possible to applicants. I argued strongly to make awards rather than withhold them, often despite the poorest of applications (note to reader: it's hard to argue the merit of an application that misspells the prospective location for a travel award). When David decided to stand down, I stood up and took on the role, and with it an expectation to present reports to the main committee and AGM, though I argued successfully for special dispensation to report in absentia as each trip from the Isle of Wight is a personal cost (though I have never missed an AGM).

Some years later, the Kew Guild moved to becoming a CIO. In order to get "over the line", committee meetings needed to be quorate and I found myself driving up to simply vote through the hard work done by so few other members. It became clear that in the new Trustee role people were needed who could dedicate time to the Kew Guild, and so I offered my name and became a Trustee, whilst remaining Chair of Awards. Trusteeship has had its rewards in return for effort and I'm pleased to be helping the Kew Guild move forward. The nomination for Presidency was an extraordinary honour. Surely there must be someone better suited, there certainly are in the wings. Peter Styles looked astonished when I said I'd remain chairing Awards, but as I say at each AGM – it's the best job in the Kew Guild. And then the surprise of the George Brown Award. My deep gratitude goes to the Award Scheme Committee members for the Award. I hope to have many more years in service.



## The George Brown Memorial Award – History and an Update

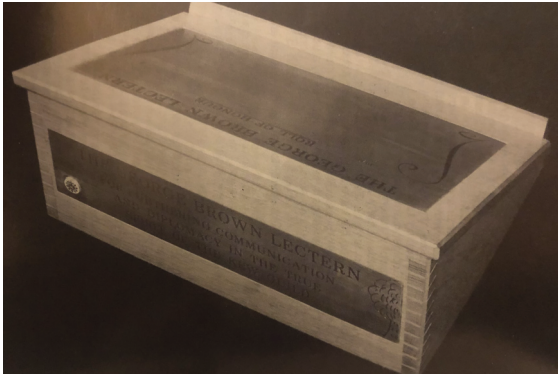
Prepared by Allan Hart and Richard Ward



As time passes it is easy to forget Kew Guild ‘events.’ Thus we have re-produced and updated information about this Award, for the interest of Guild members.

George Brown was Assistant Curator in Kew’s Arboretum 1956-77. He edited the Kew Guild Journal from 1956-73. He taught, and more importantly counselled, many generations of students, and staff. He retired to North Devon, and died in 1980. Past Curator John Simmons provided a poignant and fitting obituary for the 1980 Journal p 934. We reproduce a photograph, here, of George from the Events of 1974 Journal p 294.

In 1981, in recognition of George’s unique contribution, the Guild Committee commissioned a lectern, paid for by members’ donations, to be inscribed annually on the brass Roll of Honour, with the name of the Member who has *‘best furthered communication and diplomacy in the true spirit of the Kew Guild.’*



Not a lot of people know this - the lectern was made by a friend of Richard’s, Matt Thomas, who lived in Hammersmith. The American White Oak (*Quercus alba*) from which it is crafted, was originally salvaged by Matt from a rubbish skip! (Due to Covid-19 restrictions we were unable to obtain access to the lectern to get a better photo than the one in the Events of 1982 Journal (p 127).

The Award is administered by the Awards Committee and nomination forms have to be submitted to the Award Scheme Secretary by 28<sup>th</sup> February. The Award is usually made at the annual dinner when a Certificate is presented, signed by our Patron.

List of past recipients: (Thanks to Allan Hart!)

1982 George Joy, 1983 Noel Lothian, 1984 Noel Procter, 1985 John Lawrence, 1986 Ronald Keay, 1987 Thomas Everett, 1988 Alan Titchmarsh, 1989 Leo Pemberton, 1990 Robert Sealy, 1991 Stanley Rawlings, 1992 Tony Schilling, 1993 Martin Sands, 1994 Ghilleen Prance, 1995 Laura Ponsonby, 1996 Ray Desmond, 1997 Nigel Hepper, 1998 John Simmons, 1999 Patrick Nutt, 2000 Richard Ward, 2001 John Woodhams, 2002 Allen Paterson, 2003 Neil and Sheila Gilmore, 2004 Gren Lucas, 2005 Michael Clift, 2006 Jill Cowley, 2007 Allan and Joan Hart, 2008 Granville Turley, 2009 Kenwyn Pearson, 2010 John Sales, 2011 James Mitchell, 2012 Pamela Holt, 2013 Norman Robson, 2014 David Barnes, 2015 Susyn Andrews, 2016 Jennifer Alsop, 2017 Nicholas Boyes, 2018 Sandy Atkins, 2019 Marcella Corcoran, 2020 Chris Kidd, 2021 William Bessler.

## Kew News: 2020

**Kew and You** weekly online newsletter is produced by and for Kew and Wakehurst volunteers, and also available to staff. Editor Amanda le Poer Trench co-ordinates this and has kindly allowed us to publish excerpts. All copyright belongs to RBG Kew. Quite a lot of hours have gone into picking out some of the more amazing items of news during 2020 that we think will be of interest to Kew Guild members. This year much of the news has been electronically accessed through links. Particular thanks to Amanda, together with Ed Ikin (Deputy Director at Wakehurst), and Cathy Cordery (Horticulture volunteer at Wakehurst) and your remarkable volunteers and contributors! Precied by Richard Ward.

### January

**New species discovered in 2019.** RBG Kew's annual list of new plant species discovered in the past year has been published and has attracted phenomenal media attention. The list highlights 10 findings from a total of 110 species discovered in 2019. It celebrates the diversity of the world's plants and fungi, from a bamboo-dwelling medicinal fungus, to a snowdrop discovered on Facebook and a miracle berry that changes your taste buds. These represent the amazing breadth of new discoveries made by RBG Kew and our collaborators across the globe every year: around 102 vascular plants and eight species of fungi in 2019 from Africa, Asia, the Americas and beyond. Many are already under threat of extinction from threats to their natural habitat from conversion to agricultural land, to hydro-electric dams, quarrying, cutting of trees for charcoal and timber, man-made fires, and climate change. Some of these new discoveries could hold the key to the development of new medicines, provide a solution for agroforestry, or become the new plant lovers' favourite. They are a stark reminder of the importance of exploring and studying the world's plant and fungal diversity before species are lost forever. Nearly half of Kew's new discoveries this year were from Africa, with most published by Iain Darbyshire, leader of the Tropical Important Plant Areas (TIPAs) project. Others involved included Martin Cheek, Aaron Davis, David Goyder, Isabel Larridon, Xander van der Burgt and Alex Monro.

**New Year's Honour for Tony Kirkham.** Tony Kirkham, Head of Arboretum, Gardens and Horticultural Services at Kew, has been awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List 2020 for 'services to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and to Arboriculture'. The award marks Tony's invaluable contribution to horticulture over the last 41 years. At Kew, around the UK and globally Tony has championed education in arboriculture as well as transforming practices in tree management and the control of pests and diseases. Among his achievements at Kew, Tony led the creation and build of the Treetop Walkway in 2008. He is also a published author of six books, and has fronted five broadcast series, including last year's 'My Passion for Trees' with Dame Judi Dench on ITV, which raised public awareness of the wonder of trees and their importance to our planet's sustainability. Welcoming the news, Richard Deverell said, 'Tony's award is a fitting public tribute to his many and significant achievements over a long and impactful career. His passion and love for trees and horticulture has captured the hearts and minds of not only those in the industry but of the wider public as well. I am extremely proud of all that he has achieved, and I offer him my very sincere congratulations on this extremely distinguished honour'.

**David Barnes wins the Aiton medal for services to sustainability.** Congratulations to David Barnes, Kew Sustainability Group Chair, who won the Aiton medal for his 15-year service to environmental sustainability at RBG Kew. He has been instrumental in fostering collaboration with RBG Kew staff and suppliers to achieve improvements in sustainability. RBG Kew's Estates team is now monitoring all mains water meters electronically, helping

to proactively detect leaks. During March 2019, you may have seen Peter from AquaSolve Water Management travelling around Kew Gardens and Wakehurst in a high visibility jacket, listening to the ground through a stick. RBG Kew Energy Manager Darren had noticed several leaks at each site and hired Peter to complete a full leak audit. Using his acoustic leak noise correlator, sounding stick/ground microphone and pipe location (tracer), Peter was able to identify a total of 51 leaks across the two sites (10 leaks at Wakehurst Place, 41 at Kew Gardens). Work to repair these leaks has been underway and huge savings can already be seen in our water usage. Our glasshouses at both Kew and Wakehurst are now using daylight simulation LED lights. Providing a similar level of light to natural daylight, the bulbs can save up to 80% more energy than typical bulbs alongside improving productivity and wellbeing of the workforce. Other energy saving improvements include Wakehurst installing two new low energy boilers in the Millennium Seed Bank, and will install two more by the end of 19-20 FY. Helping to close the gap between farm and fork, Wakehurst is now sending all its food waste to a company which composts it and uses it on farmland to grow food.

## **February**

**Richard's Blog: Our environmental footprint: aiming for excellence.** A clear message from last year's staff survey was that many of you felt that RBG Kew, as a scientific environmental organisation, needed to raise its game in terms of our environmental policies and footprint. In short, you said we needed to aim higher – that we should strive to be world-class in terms of our energy & water use, transport, recycling, greenhouse-gas emissions and other aspects of environmental sustainability. I agree. Consequently, we have appointed Rachel Purdon, an expert in this area, to develop a new environmental strategy for RBG Kew. She starts on 2 March and will report to Richard Barley (who leads for the Executive Board on environmental sustainability). Her brief is to be ambitious in developing a 10-year environmental sustainability plan setting out what we need to change to be genuinely world-class. This needs to include reaching net-zero in terms of greenhouse gas emissions (we need to set a target date for achieving this) and working out reliable and effective mechanisms to both reduce our emissions and to off-set those we are unable to eliminate entirely. Rachel will draw upon and build upon the excellent work already under way at Kew and Wakehurst through our site-based sustainability groups. These groups encompass all departments and activities for Kew. As an example, their excellent work resulted in us retaining the ISO14001 accreditation for both sites last year. I am sure Rachel will also be looking for further ideas and volunteers from amongst our people at Kew. We anticipate setting up a working group of staff to assist in the process of developing the new sustainability plan. *Richard Deverell.*

**HRH Prince Charles addresses plant health and biosecurity conference at Kew.** The Prince of Wales delivered the final address of the 2020 Plant Health and Biosecurity Conference, hosted at Kew Gardens last week. The conference, the first of its kind at Kew Gardens, saw over 120 international specialists in Science and Horticulture come together to share knowledge and expertise on what can be done to address the global emergency of tree and plant disease. In his speech The Prince of Wales called on nations to quadruple their efforts in tackling the 'global plant health crisis' which threatens the world's flora, saying: "From every angle, plants play an absolutely vital role in our existence, but the ultimate irony is that just as we were realising this, we also managed to engineer a global plant health crisis." He also acknowledged the work of Richard Buggs and his Plant Health Research Group, looking at the genomics of Ash species, and how RBG Kew is leading the way on biosecurity practices and quarantining and, as our Patron, how proud he was to hear about this work. Richard Deverell also spoke at the conference. Biosecurity minister Lord Gardiner gave the keynote speech, while panels included Kew's Tony Kirkham,



Richard Buggs, Richard Deverell and Sara Redstone. A ‘practitioners panel’ included Frank P Matthews’ Nick Dunn, Crocus’ Mark Fane, Yorkshire Arboretum’s John Grimshaw and RHS’s Helena Pettit. Professor Nicola Spence, Bartlett Trees’ James Burns Ingram and Terra Nostra’s Henry Kuppen also spoke. Countryfile broadcaster Charlotte Smith was host and RHS president Sir Nicholas Bacon chaired the event. Representatives from bodies including HTA, BALI and NFU were also present.

**New living plant collection database for RBG Kew.** Following a procurement exercise, the BRAHMS system has been chosen as our new database for Kew and Wakehurst. Living collection data is now being migrated from the old database and we aim to go live with the new system by the end of March. Why a new database? Kew and Wakehurst together hold the world’s most diverse collection of living plants. We reviewed these living collections and planned their future directions in the recently published living collections strategy (LCS). One of the key priorities arising from the LCS was the need to replace the existing living collection database with a more fit-for-purpose system. The living collections database is a vital information management resource that is needed to underpin our operation as a botanic garden and support our global role in plant conservation.

The very extensive Kew/Wakehurst living collection data is being migrated from the old database across to BRAHMS, and any associated bugs or other configuration issues are being resolved. ‘Train the trainer’ sessions will be held over the next two weeks, and the aim is to have the new system go live by 30 March. We are on track to achieve this, within the allocated budget. I would like to personally thank everyone who has worked with such dedication and determination to ensure that we meet our objectives in terms of quality of the system, the timeframe for delivery and the budget available. This is a very significant step in terms of our role as a leading botanic garden and opens the door to far greater benefits to our various stakeholders and communities in terms of access to collection information. *Richard Barley.*

## March

**Kew scientists deposit seeds in Svalbard Seed Vault.** Scientists from the Millennium Seed Bank attended a special event at Svalbard Global Seed Vault in the Arctic last week. They deposited seeds of 27 wild plant species from meadows at Prince Charles’s gardens at Highgrove, representing plants that are disappearing from the UK landscape. A duplicate collection will be kept at the MSB.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault is a secure backup facility for the world’s seed and holds the largest collection of crop biodiversity in the world. The vault is owned by the Norwegian Government and operates under a three-party agreement between the Norwegian Government, NordGen and the Crop Trust. The deposit was part of the largest seed deposit to be made since the Seed Vault’s inauguration in 2008 and brings the total number of samples placed in the facility so far to over one million. More than 30 institutions contributed seed, which included the seeds of onions from Brazil, guar beans from central Asia and the candy roaster squash, deposited by the Cherokee Nation in the US. The MSB received two collections of seeds from The Prince of Wales’s wildflower meadow, one early in the season and one late in the season and they have been stored in the Millennium Seed Bank ever since. Chris Cockel, Elinor Breman and Janet Terry accompanied the seeds to Svalbard.

**Your wellbeing and caring for our collections: these are our priorities now.** Hello everyone: you will have heard the Prime Minister recently announcing a new series of measures to combat the Coronavirus. We in the UK are now in our period of ‘lockdown’,

just as many other countries around the world are experiencing. This will be an anxious and challenging time for us all. May I wish each of you the very best in coping with your particular circumstances, in particular if you are unwell, or caring for others who are unwell.

Kew has two immediate priorities now. Your wellbeing: The first continues to be the well-being of our people. We will do all we can to keep you engaged, informed and connected with Kew's work. We will continue to be in touch to answer the questions you have asked and to provide whatever support we can. Keep an eye on KewNet which has all the latest information and advice and also our RBG Kew website where we are hoping to bring our gardens to our visitors digitally. Caring for our collections: Our second immediate priority is to care for our collections. The Living Collections (we have nearly 20,000 species of plants at Kew Gardens and Wakehurst, some of which are critically endangered or extinct in the wild) will be maintained by a small rota of horticulturists. In addition, we have to ensure our buildings, and the collections they house, are also safe and maintained effectively. We are today drawing up a small list of 'critical workers' who will be given access to undertake these vital tasks. In doing this, we are seeking to avoid any requirement to use public transport and any breach of the 'social distancing' rules.

These are unprecedented times. However, the country is taking the right steps to defeat the spread of the virus. Although the next few weeks will be immensely challenging, they will pass, and normality will return at some point. I rather believe this will bring a surge of interest in nature, the importance of science, and how we need to care for our planet better. With best wishes – and take care. *Richard Deverell.*

**Helping to feed the vulnerable and needy, by Kim Francis, Head of Visitor Operations.** 'I thought you might like to know that the food left when we closed down the catering outlets last week is not contributing to the food waste mountain (which, apparently is growing because of waste after panic buying). The chef teams and senior managers from CH&Co took all the food that could not be stored or frozen to an amazing food charity that provides free meals for the vulnerable and needy in the UK. The Open Kitchen project, run by Muslim Hands, an international aid agency and NGO, aims to address the issue of food poverty. The charity established a community kitchen for the homeless, low-income families and needy children in Hounslow, free and open to all, serving 100 hot, nutritious meals twice a day, seven days a week. During the Coronavirus crisis, the Open Kitchen is now delivering food to struggling families rather than serving it in a public kitchen.'

**Hello everybody: I thought you'd like to see this lovely and thoughtful message from HRH Prince of Wales wishing us well. Clarence House - March 25<sup>th</sup> 2020.** To Everyone at the Royal, Botanic Gardens, Kew. As we all face an unprecedented period of difficulty, disruption and intense anxiety caused by the current coronavirus crisis, I particularly wanted to write and say how much I am thinking of everyone involved with the Royal Botanic Garden Kew as you struggle to deal with the huge challenges that have arisen in your lives, your livelihoods and in the continuation of your organization. As your Patron, I have nothing but the greatest sympathy for the predicament you face and the many difficult decisions and circumstances that have to be managed. Above all, I am certain you will be doing your utmost to maintain the essential elements of all you do so brilliantly, and of which I am so immensely proud as your Patron. I want you to know, therefore, that I can well imagine the appalling pressures you have suddenly and unexpectedly been put under and that my heart goes out to you and your families during the coming weeks and months of such hideous uncertainty. Charles.  
*With best wishes and take care, Richard.*

**Messages of support from my predecessors.** Hello everyone: many of you will know and have worked with three of my predecessors: Prof. Steve Hopper (2006-2012); Prof. Sir Peter Crane (1999-2006) and Prof. Sir Iain Prance (1987-1999). I thought you might enjoy their messages of goodwill and support to you all. *Richard.*

Dear Kew Community, I have been thinking of you all at this unusual and unprecedented time. Nothing as serious as the Covid-19 virus happened in my time as Director and I know that the management have made the right decision to close the Gardens and have most of you working at home. I also know that those of you who remain in post at the gardens will continue to take good care of the precious collections that make the institution so important to world science, horticulture, education and conservation. I, in my retirement, still do a lot of creative work here at home so I know that it can be done, but it is obviously harder when enforced as it is at present. I remember how the staff of the Gardens responded together so swiftly and determinedly to restore the damage caused by the two storms of the 1980s and 1990s. You got through that because of the good community spirit at Kew and Wakehurst Place and I know that you will respond to this crisis in the same helpful way. I wish you all well and hope that you all keep free of the virus. With very best wishes to all of you, Iain Prance.

Dear Kew Friends: We just wanted to let you know that we are thinking about you all in these very strange and difficult times. We understand very well how hard it must be to put your work on hold, and to see the plans you have made for Kew's visitors, Kew's horticulture, and Kew's science, all cancelled so abruptly. So too at Wakehurst. You all work hard to make Kew the special place that it is, and the disruption and disappointment will be hard to take. But this too shall pass. Kew has survived many ups and downs in its long history – and we know that Kew will be resurgent once this crisis has passed. Thank you for all you do to sustain Kew as the world's premier botanic garden! Stay safe and healthy. And as someone said just the other day – see you on the other side. Warmest good wishes, Peter and Elinor Crane.

Despite being half a world away, not a day goes by without Chris and I thinking about RBG Kew. From the botanical art hanging on our walls, to papers written at Kew that still influence profoundly my team's current research, we were moved indeed by the six years spent working for your institution. We enjoy lifelong influences from members of staff, volunteers and Friends. Plus our daughter, Claire, remained in London when we returned to Australia, and now is married to Ilias with a one year old son, Adonis. So, when Kew hurts, we hurt, and our thoughts are with you and all in the UK. In these early post-Covid-19 days, the world is in this together. As always, the world will continue to need plants and fungi, and to hear their stories. How they can continue to help us through this latest crisis. How we must not only understand them but enlist their help to repair and restore a world in trouble. I'm hopeful that we are also in the midst of a reset to renewed respect for people who devote their lives, not solely to self-enrichment, but to furthering public good through evidence-based science. In short, civil servants – including your good selves. Like you, I now sit at home to work online and contribute towards social spacing as a key strategy to deal with this insidious virus. Kew has dealt with periods of severe challenge, austerity and crisis before. I wish the organisation and you all well in this dramatic time of transition. Take care. Steve Hopper.

## **April**

**Meanwhile, we're still hard at work in the Gardens.** Some staff identified as key workers are coming into Kew Gardens and Wakehurst daily to look after Kew's priceless living plant collections. In the Tropical Nursery the team is continuing to work on the task

of watering and protecting the health of all 10,000 plants in 21 climate-controlled rooms, home to species such as orchids and ferns, as well as cacti and waterlilies. Outdoors, the Arboretum and Gardens team are committed to ensuring that Kew Gardens' 14,000 trees, Great Broad Walk Borders, Evolution Garden, Rose Garden, Children's Garden and other magnificent living landscapes across the 320 acre site are taken care of, by watering, propagating and mulching as needed. Similarly, at Wakehurst, an essential care team of horticulturists and arborists are ensuring tree health and safety across the 535 acre site, helping new plantings in the Kyrgyzstan Trail Beds to establish, and caring for our heritage breed sheep and cattle. In Wakehurst's nurseries, complex watering schedules are being maintained to keep important plants alive and strong – from those being grown for research for the Millennium Seed Bank, as well as those intended for new conservation landscape projects such as the American Prairie.

Inside the glasshouses at Kew Gardens, the Horticulture team are hard at work tending to over 50,000 plants from the tropical, temperate and dry regions of the world, that require watering and nutritional care. In the labs (and beyond). Whether analysing collections made during field research around the world or sharing data with partners, our scientists continue our vital work to investigate the properties of plants and fungi, to assess their possible human uses and contribute to global conservation efforts. A small selection of scientists identified as key workers will be coming into the Herbarium, Fungarium, and labs at Kew Gardens to ensure our eight million specimens are safe and secure. Meanwhile, at the MSB – the most biodiverse place on the planet – select specialists are working in shifts to ensure the right conditions are in place for the two billion wild plant seeds kept in the sub-zero underground vaults. The Digital Collections team is busy working with volunteers from Kew and further afield to transcribe more of our Herbarium specimens, so that they can be digitally accessible to botanists and aspiring scientists across the world. And Estates, Constabulary and the rangers at Wakehurst continue to keep our buildings and gardens safe for when the rest of us return. Thank you to everybody.

**The RHS People Awards for 2020:** Kew's Harry Baldwin wins the Roy Lancaster Award. In this year's RHS awards that celebrate individuals who have made outstanding contributions to horticulture and gardening, the RHS have recognised Harry Baldwin by awarding him the Roy Lancaster Award. This is awarded to individuals under 35 years of age who have achieved an exceptional contribution to the practice, science or promotion of horticulture. Harry was a horticulturist at the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens before joining Kew as a three-year diploma student, graduating from the course in 2018. With Harry's particular interest in trees and woody plants, he was successful with his application and took up the position of Horticultural taxonomist in the Arboretum, verifying the temperate woody tree collections, a post that is funded by Fondation Franklinia. He is passionate about temperate trees and where they come from and every spare day, he will be travelling somewhere to see trees growing in the arboretum at Kew, other gardens and collections or in their natural habitat with recent trips to the west coast of the USA and to Georgia. He always writes accounts up for his trips and is keen to share information with his colleagues, friends and other readers of journals. He has published 'The Red List of Nothofagus' and in 2016 an article in the RHS Plantsman on 'The Mexican Oaks in the British Isles'. The most influential person who has helped Harry decide on this career path is Roy Lancaster and if ever there is an opportunity to meet him and catch up on travels and trees, he will do just that, so this award is so perfectly fitting and I offer our many congratulations to Harry for his success. *Tony Kirkham.*

**The furlough scheme: achieving vital income and protecting jobs.** Hello everyone: I hope you and your families are all keeping well and bearing up. We are now in week five of 'lockdown'; I very much hope we can start to return to some version of normality as

soon as possible. You may have seen in the press recently that the government has extended the current job retention scheme to the end of June. This refers to the process of staff being ‘furloughed’ (i.e., not working) with the government paying 80% of their salary up to a monthly cap of £2,500, in order to protect jobs. Kew has participated in this scheme with 60% of our staff currently furloughed. We are ‘topping up’ furloughed salaries to 100% – so people being furloughed have exactly the same pay as if they were at work. Thank you to everyone who has helped us to achieve this. Whilst it is a temporary and emergency measure, it does provide us with urgently needed income to help us with the serious financial challenges we face given that all of our visitor-related income has disappeared. Our priority remains to avoid any redundancies, hence the need to take these and other steps now to protect our financial health. In tandem with this we are currently developing options as to how we can reopen both our sites. This is being led by Sandra Botterell with input from all relevant teams.

We currently have no idea when it might be possible to reopen but we are developing plans based around credible scenarios. I want to stress that we will reopen only when we are confident that we can do so safely, for our staff, volunteers and our visitors; and that we are fully compliant with the government’s advice and rules at the time. Whenever we reopen it will certainly be initially on a very limited basis. For example, we will cap the number of visitors and keep indoor venues closed. We will do our very best to keep each of you informed. Do keep looking at KewNet. In the meantime, may I wish each of you all the very best. Take care and best wishes, *Richard Deverell*.

**Saving the UK’s native trees: UKNTSP banks 13 million seeds:** 13 million seeds from over 70 species of the UK’s native trees and shrubs have now been collected and banked at Kew’s Millennium Seed Bank in Sussex as part of the pioneering UK National Tree Seed Project, launched in 2013 by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew with funding from players of People’s Postcode Lottery (PPL). The project, which ended last month, was set up in response to the challenges facing UK woodlands including temperature changes, extreme weather events and increasing numbers of pests and diseases. Over the past seven years, with the support of more than 400 volunteers and staff from 30 partner organisations, the UK National Tree Seed Project has made an extensive and unique collection of the majority of the UK’s native trees and shrubs. Seeds have been collected from right across the UK, from Cornwall to the Outer Hebrides; from sea level up to 600 metres above sea level. The 13 million seeds are now safely stored in the sub-zero underground vaults of Kew’s Millennium Seed Bank for long-term conservation. It is hoped these time traveller seeds will offer future possibilities for both research and conservation and can be used to regenerate woodlands or reintroduce new trees in years to come.

**New measures to protect UK plant health.** New legislation to safeguard the UK, and our forestry and horticulture industries, from a range of plant health diseases and pests, including exotic beetles which can kill ash trees, came into force recently. The new regulations will add more stringent import requirements to protect UK plant health against these threats:

- *Xylella* – The import of *Coffea* and *Polygala myrtifolia* species is now prohibited, due to a high disease rate in these species, as well as stronger import requirements for other high-risk hosts (including Olive, Almond, *Nerium Oleander*, Lavender and Rosemary).
- Emerald ash borer (beetle) – New measures applying stronger import controls to countries within 100km of confirmed outbreak areas. This includes the removal of an option, within EU legislation, to remove the bark and sapwood to a depth of 2.5 cm for all countries regulated for emerald ash borer. This will help mitigate the risk of importing infected wood which has not properly met the official requirements.



- Plane tree wilt – More stringent ‘Protected Zone’ requirements for the UK including measures for plane trees, intended for planting other than seeds, which must now have been grown throughout their life in a pest free area or an EU Protected Zone. The new requirements apply to imports to the UK from Albania, Armenia, Switzerland, Turkey, the United States and the EU-27.

UK Chief Plant Health Officer Nicola Spence, former RBG Kew Trustee said: ‘Protecting our country from tree pests and diseases is key to protect our environment, economy and our health. That is why we are introducing tighter restrictions on the importation of high-risk host plants and trees for Xylella, emerald ash borer and plane wilt. Xylella is a major threat to our landscape and industry and in this year of International Plant Health it is more imperative than ever that we do all we can to ensure the UK remains a Xylella-free zone. Emerald ash borer and plane wilt also represent significant threats, which is why we are bolstering our protection against them, in response to recent changes in the risk situation.’ The new legislation amends the Official Controls Regulations 2019, to address new plant health threats. More information on the new plant health national measures on the Defra Plant Health Portal.

**Wakehurst takes a walk on the wild side...** by Iain Parkinson, Living Collections and Conservation Manager. There’s been much debate over recent years about the pros and cons of rewilding and I’ve been asked many times why Wakehurst doesn’t adopt this progressive conservation approach. So, I’m pleased (if not a little surprised) to announce that over the past few weeks we’ve taken our first tentative steps to rewind the Gardens, arboreta and wider landscape at Wakehurst! With our landscape teams scaled down we’ve watched with interest as the Mansion Lawns revert to meadow and ‘winced’ as the manicured beds start to take on a distinctly cosmopolitan feel as the plant collections now mingle with our home grown weeds. Wildlife that not so long ago seemed so timid is now bold and brazen – the table has turned and it’s our small team of horticulturists who are now considered the interlopers. The kingfishers that nest each year at the artificial nesting bank in the Loder Valley Nature Reserve are enjoying the tranquillity.

The principle behind rewilding is to encourage a balance between people and the rest of nature where natural processes are used to repair damaged ecosystems and restore degraded habitats. Isn’t this what Wakehurst does already? – after all we are Kew’s wild botanic garden. Well, not really, and one of the reasons why ‘rewilding’ has polarised the conservation community is due to different interpretations of the term ‘wild’. Wakehurst is certainly taking a walk on the wild side at the moment - but is it actually a wild landscape. It’s true that the essence of wild pervades its very spirit but our appreciation of what wild means is difficult to measure as it’s experienced and valued by people in different ways. Trying to define the meaning of wild is not an exact science but more a matter of semantics. In truth the ‘wild side’ of Wakehurst is not bound within the pages of ecological classification but is found in everything that we do – whether that’s marketing, interpretation, programmes, science or visitor services. In the landscape it hides in the guise of the Tunbridge filmy fern that grows on the outcrops of sand rock in Tilgate Wood, or as a newly planted stand of monkey puzzle trees (grown from wild collected seeds that Jo collected during her trip to Chile) that now overlook the meadows in Bloomers Valley, and more recently in the new American Prairie that’s starting to take shape just a stone’s throw from the Mansion. Whichever way you experience Wakehurst you’re sure to learn something about wild plants collected from wild places. Re-wilding, wilderness, wildness and wild are words that conjure up an impression of abandonment and whilst Wakehurst, at its best, has a remote feel and an untamed charm, its distinctive character has been shaped over millennia by human intervention and so in this regard it’s no more wild than a field of barley.



Wakehurst has evolved through an interdependence of people, social structures, landscape and associated ecological systems – so Wakehurst is a ‘cultural landscape’ with people at its very heart. Chopping down trees in our woodlands has been an essential part of their management. This act of kindness lets sunlight flood through the canopy and helps the wood to rejuvenate its spirit - it shows its appreciation by sharing a profusion of flowers with us each spring. Wakehurst’s meadows rely on an annual cycle of cutting and grazing – their ‘genius loci’ is the result of blood, sweat and tears. And whilst Westwood Lake is now a picture of tranquillity, during the iron working era in Roman and post medieval times this landscape would have been hard worked on an industrial scale. Those who manage the landscapes at Wakehurst understand better than most the power of its wildness – managing the meadows, woodlands, wetlands and nature reserves is like riding a wild horse - sometimes you feel in control but other times you’re hanging on for dear life. Wakehurst is always chomping at the bit. To prevent it from breaking free it needs to be kept on tight reins. Harnessing Wakehurst’s wildness is the key to success and this is achieved by striking the right balance where the landscape is managed actively but sensitively – it’s this measured approach that allows nature to flourish.

That’s why it’s been important to maintain a small team of horticulturists, arborists and conservationists at Wakehurst during these difficult times – there are many sensitive habitats and rare plants which need their skills, care and attention. At Wakehurst the term ‘wild’ has come to mean different things to different people. To our visitors it evokes a sense of adventure – a place to escape, for those who plan our visitor programmes an exciting opportunity, to our interpretation teams an interesting story to tell, to our horticulturalists a fascinating challenge, and for me all of the above and many besides, but mostly Wakehurst’s wild areas are for enjoying – these are places of perpetual interest where you’ll find more questions than answers! Whatever descriptors we use to summon the spirit of Wakehurst it’s actions not words that are important. Wakehurst may well be overflowing with ‘wild’ flowers and ‘wild’ life but these only appear in any profusion due to the efforts of the teams that work hard to manage the landscape, and to care for the native and wild-sourced collections that make Wakehurst such a special botanic garden. So, it will be fascinating to see how Wakehurst fares under this new ‘rewilding’ regime of management (or neglect) – you never know, perhaps meadow on the Mansion Lawns is not such a bad idea...

## **May**

**Watch the Big Flower Fight.** The ‘Big Flower Fight’, a Great British Bake-Off style competition in which people compete to create the biggest and best garden sculptures, is now live on Netflix. As well as featuring volunteer Henck Röling as a contestant the prize for the winners is the chance to exhibit a large-scale sculpture in Kew Gardens in 2021. The prize is mentioned in every episode, presented by comedians Vic Reeves and Natasia Demetrious, with some beautiful drone shots of the Gardens. The programme will be available in 40 odd regions around the world, so audiences should be huge. Henck says: “...Hopefully ‘The Big Flower Fight’ will inspire a younger generation to take up a career in horticulture or other ‘green profession’. Even though what we did on the show is not your everyday gardening/floristry, I think it might just tickle the interest of someone who had not thought about a green career before. I’m very eager to see the show, as I have not seen any footage other than the trailer so far. But, if the trailer is anything to go by, it will be a really good show! Just some light hearted floral-inspired entertainment in these distressing times. The show is going live on Netflix on Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> of May. Root for me guys!”

**10 ways digital has performed in lockdown.** The Digital Experience team has been

working harder than ever in lockdown, finding ways to bring Kew to life on our digital channels for our at-home audience. Here are ten stats showcasing how digital has performed in March/April compared with January/February. Producing content from home has been a challenging and creative opportunity for DigiEx. For the public, digital channels are one of the only ways they can access our living collections right now; or potentially, digital could be the only way to get their daily dose of nature. We've been brainstorming angles and activities, repackaging archive content and working closely across departments to help our audiences escape to our botanic gardens right from their sofa.

Here's how it's gone so far:

- 1)** More people are opening our emails. The click-to-open rate of our marketing emails has almost doubled from 10% to 18%, and our average open rate has increased from 29% to 33% (a significant increase). This indicates that we are giving our audience things that they want to read.
- 2)** We have seen a huge increase in our blog readers. There is a 30% increase of all traffic to Read & Watch pages, and a 490% increase from traffic from our emails: the readers of our emails are excited about our stories, even if the email doesn't offer them an opportunity to visit Kew or Wakehurst.
- 3)** Virtual Kew is storming ahead. In its first month, it generated 51,710 views, making it the second-highest performing page on kew.org.
- 4)** Learning at home content is being well used. Another new page on kew.org has had 11,531 views in April, with a confident dwell time of 3.43 minutes, indicating people are spending considerable time identifying and using the resources.
- 5)** More people are seeing our content in their social media feeds. Total reach across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram has increased by 35%.
- 6)** More people are interacting with us. Total engagement across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram has increased by an impressive 64%.
- 7)** Unsurprisingly, significantly fewer people are visiting our site overall. Kew.org has seen a 30% drop in general users and visits, and our What's on pages have seen a 75% decrease in visitors. This indicates that most people who usually use our website are probably doing so because they are interested in a visit.
- 8)** But those who are on our websites are spending more time on their chosen page. There is an 11.21% increase in average time spent on a page on kew.org.
- 9)** Our YouTube community is growing. We now have over 11.1k subscribers to our YouTube channel. Overall views have increased from 46.2k to 150k. The average duration of views has increased from 1.44 minutes to 2.09 minutes. Ben, our video producer, has capitalised on lockdown by creating a bank of stock films about individual parts of Kew and these are performing very well. We are also using this time in lockdown to audit YouTube and make a recommendation on how we want to curate the channel in future.
- 10)** The Kew Shop is a popular shopping destination. More people are coming to buy our products, and people are spending more time on the shop...and they are coming back for more! Shop products feature in our blogs and emails. Revenue is up by 10%, transactions are up by 33% and the conversion rate has improved by 65%.

None of this could be done without the creativity and support from everyone at Kew who has helped us gather content from the gardens; from the superstar Hort. teams to our Learning and Science colleagues and our MCE friends coordinating alongside us. What comes next? We'll keep bringing stories about Kew and Wakehurst to those at home, and offering them activities that will help them connect better to the natural world. Feel free to share our stories with your own networks. We hope that they give audiences some much-needed distraction, activities and a renewed sense of wonder.

## June

**Diversity and representation: we need to do better** by Richard Deverell. This past week we have all seen the shocking scenes from the US of the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd. We have also seen a rising movement of people in many nations call out the racism that is endemic in society. There is an urgent need for meaningful change across our systems and structures around the world to end a cycle of racially motivated violence, prejudice and inequality in all its forms. We at Kew are fully supportive of this work. I am the first to admit that we are not where we should be on the issues around diversity, equality and race, both historical and current. There is much more we need to do, and want to do. I want us to institute long-term changes that truly support this movement, and not in a tokenistic or ‘quick fix’ way. This change is important, and, whilst accelerating, this extraordinary time places obvious limitations on how quickly we can work. The stark inequalities that this pandemic has highlighted means it is all the more critical.

Firstly, we need to improve our internal structures. We have an equality, diversity and inclusion steering group led by Ian McKetty. This group was set up to develop an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and this was presented to Trustees late last year and KLF in January. The next stage was to launch the strategy and develop the implementation plan. For obvious reasons this has been delayed and we need to find a way to do this. There will be opportunity to engage in this work and be part of our journey and every one of us has a duty to be part of this. Secondly, we have historic collections linked to the UK’s colonial history. We have been actively looking at how these fit into the new science strategy currently being developed and how best to manage those stories and items. We are not doing enough. Kew must be willing to add its voice to this cause. We need the support of all our people to help us do better. As a commitment, our social media and our digital channels will work to recognise and highlight the vital – and often underappreciated – contributions of BAME employees, scientists, horticulturists and indigenous people. These stories are too often hidden and we will do our best to seek them out. Please help us: if you as our staff, volunteers and students have stories to share, send them to Meryl Westlake in our Digital team.

True change takes time. With over 60% of staff furloughed and unprecedented financial pressure ahead of us, we have to retain our focus on operating safely and our financial health. However, in addition, each of us can make a small difference in our everyday lives to reflect, identify and act on this issue. We can call out racism when we see it by notifying our line managers or HR team directly. This echoes blogs I have previously written about challenging unacceptable behaviour in any form. My key message – then and now – is that you will be supported in doing so. I invite you to share your thoughts and ideas on what RBG Kew can do to raise its game as an exemplar of equality, diversity and inclusion. Please contact Jen Truelove in Internal Comms, who will collate and feed them back to the group in due course. As soon as we are able to, we will be in touch to bring this vital piece of work forward. Kew is more than our gardens and collections. It is fundamentally the people here – their expertise, commitment and hard work – who make the organisation an international treasure that is globally respected. It is up to each of us to make it change for the better.

**Loder Valley update - strippers in the woods!** by Stephen Robinson, Loder Valley Nature Reserve Warden. If you go down to the woods today you may be in for a surprise and for some woodland owners and workers not a very pleasant one. This is a crucial time of year to keep an eye on your trees as the grey squirrel may destroy your many years of hard work literally over a weekend. For some as a child their first close interaction with a wild mammal is the overweight McDonald fed grey squirrel in the local park. Seen as only

the cute, furry friend with acrobatic skills leaping through the tree canopy, there is actually a dark side to the grey squirrel. It is a North American species introduced into our woodlands around 150 years ago. This species has successfully spread in high numbers across many parts of the UK. The grey squirrel has now overtaken pests, diseases and deer browsing as the number one cause of destruction of our deciduous woodland. This is achieved by bark stripping most hardwood species when the tree is around 15 to 20 years old. Removing the bark exposes the phloem which transports soluble compounds containing minerals and sugars which is what the squirrel is after when the sap is running. It may not occur every year - some years there will be no damage, then one year dozens of trees will be hit. There may be a correlation as to when the high levels of damage occur with when we have a mast year (oaks and beeches producing high numbers of seeds). The high numbers of fruit enable many first year squirrels to survive the winter; therefore there are a high number of squirrels in spring which may trigger their destructive urge to bark strip. Signs to look for are multiple fragments of bark at the base of the tree or browning leaves in the tops as the squirrel will ring bark the tree (remove the bark all the way round the trunk). I have witnessed first hand how frenzied the squirrel is in its attack to strip the bark to get to fresh sap. Having travelled to North America and spoken to foresters there about this destructive behaviour they are in disbelief as it is unheard of in their forests! The bark stripping season is a short one - sometimes only a couple of weeks, but can be a catastrophic, depressing event for someone who has planted and nurtured their trees over the years. Fortunately, this year I have seen minimal damage in the reserve - but I have learnt never to let my guard down!

**Director of Science at Kew: it's time to decolonise botanical collections.** Alex Antonelli, Director of Science, has written about the colonial legacy in botany in an opinion piece for 'The Conversation' website, an independent source of news from the academic and research community. <https://theconversation.com/director-of-science-at-kew-its-time-to-decolonise-botanical-collections-141070>.

## July

**Successful move to new phase of reopening.** Kew Gardens had over 11,000 visitors the weekend of 4 and 5 July as glasshouses, The Hive and retail and catering outlets, including the Pavilion, reopened to the public. We continue to follow government guidance to ensure visitors remain safe, including one-way systems in the glasshouses. Entry and exit gates have changed slightly: Victoria Gate remains entry only and Lion Gate is exit only, while Elizabeth Gate and Brentford Gate are open for entry and exit. Staff and volunteers visiting the Gardens should continue to use Jodrell Gate to enter the Gardens. Thanks to all the teams who have worked so hard to get us to this next phase of reopening, including the glasshouse teams, retail staff, Visitor Operations, including gate staff and Constabulary. As you may already know, Channel 5 has commissioned a four-part documentary series about a year at Kew and Wakehurst which will be broadcast at the end of this year. The film crew have been on site throughout the past few months and were delighted to come in on Saturday before last to capture the reopening of the glasshouses and speak to the first visitors to step through the doors of the Temperate House at 10am.

**World's most expensive fungus and Madagascan lemurs on IUCN Red List.** The world's most expensive fungus, Caterpillar Fungus (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*), has entered the IUCN Red List as 'Vulnerable'. This fungus is highly valued in traditional Chinese medicine, where it has been used for over 2,000 years to treat many diseases including those related to the kidneys and lungs. Demand for the fungus has risen sharply since the 1990s. 33 species of lemurs in Madagascar are critically endangered, as their forest habitats continue to be destroyed. Caterpillar Fungus, which only grows on the Tibetan Plateau,

parasitises the larvae of ghost moths while they are buried underground. It then grows through their bodies and emerges through the larvae's heads to the surface, where it is harvested. In the last two decades, the fungus has become the main source of livelihoods for thousands of people where it occurs. Caterpillar Fungus' populations have declined by at least 30% over the past 15 years as a result of over-harvesting.

**Embracing our differences, expanding horizons.** Three cheers for the publication of the equality, diversity and inclusion strategy. From the discussions and postings of many staff across the organisation, on Kewnet and Yammer, it's clear there is a desire and commitment for change. The good news is that much is already going on in several departments, including Learning and Participation. We're already working with diverse audiences and making good progress. The push to encourage the museum sector to value diversity goes back well over 20 years and many cultural organisations, including Kew, have looked to learning as a vehicle for diversifying audiences. This work is usually project-based and 'bolted on' to core work, making it vulnerable when project funding ends. But building meaningful relationships (inclusion) takes time and commitment and is essential if we are to engage all members of society and achieve a world where plants and fungi are valued and conserved. Entry price remains a challenge for many visiting Kew and to address this we run a Community Access Scheme, providing discounted entry to groups that face social, economic, physical or psychological barriers. There are other inhibiting factors however and in focus groups we often hear people say they don't feel that Kew is a 'place for them'. The reasons why are complex and frequently due to multiple and overlapping dimensions of social exclusion, such as mental and physical ill health, educational inequality, family breakdown and lack of adequate housing. If we want Kew to be more inclusive, we have to recognise the barriers that people face and examine what we can do to enable everyone to fully benefit from their engagement with Kew and we from them. This is about equity rather than equality. Since 2013, there has been a concerted effort throughout Learning and Participation to engage with diverse audiences, on- and off-site, with a focus on people from low-income backgrounds.

Much of our work is currently supported by two major grants from the National Lottery, one for Grow Wild and the other for the Temperate House Activity Plan. These grants, plus support from other funders and Kew's core budget, have enabled us to develop and run a range of programmes, including:

- Grow Wild – through which we've engaged millions of people across the UK – reaching 30% of the most deprived areas of the UK.
- Endeavour – online learning platform for pupils from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 5. To date over 80,000 pupils have engaged with Endeavour.
- Youth Programme – annually 25 pupils from local schools (c. 80% BAME) participate in a six-month training programme and become Volunteer Youth Explainers in the Temperate House.
- Families and Early Years Programme – connecting children with nature, through linking to Children's Centres in our local boroughs. The programme caters mainly for families who have children under five and greater needs (e.g., young parents, living in temporary accommodation, etc).
- Community Horticultural Learning Programme – At our community allotment, located at Lion Gate, we teach basic horticultural skills to NEET and BAME community groups and run monthly carpentry skills workshops, for people in mental health recovery.
- Community Learning Programme –we tempt people to visit Kew Gardens through creative projects, such as Knitting Nature, Come and Sing at Kew and Plants Poet Corner. Groups include carers and parent-carers, community choirs, people with English as a second language, people living with HIV and on personal recovery journeys.



- Discovery and Access Programme – monthly British Sign Language tours, sensory guided walks for visitors with sight loss, health walks for people living with dementia. We have been particularly fortunate to have the support of Ealing's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Women's Group who have run basic BSL workshops for staff in L&P and Visitor Operations.

This list doesn't do justice to the richness and vibrancy of the programmes. We have a great deal of expertise in working with diverse audiences, bringing a wealth of experience to programme development and delivery of sessions. We're also fortunate to count on a large number of committed volunteers (c.240), from Guides and Garden Explainers to Family Connectors who develop resources with us (co-creation) and spread the word about Kew's work in the community. We also couldn't deliver this work without the magnificent cross-directorate support we receive. *Julia Willison, Head of Learning and Participation.*

## August

**Saturday was Earth Overshoot Day.** As a result of Covid-19, this year's Earth Overshoot Day, the date when we will have used 'all the biological resources that Earth can renew during the entire year, will, for the first time, arrive later than it did the year before, by more than three weeks, on 22<sup>nd</sup> August. The Global Footprint Network, an environmental research organization which has been calculating the date since 2006, estimates that the pandemic has reduced mankind's ecological footprint by 9.3%. In 2006 Earth Overshoot Day fell in October. The date has been earlier every year until this year. The Global Footprint Network collects more than 15,000 data points per country, mainly from United Nations sources. Researchers then compare Earth's biocapacity (the amount of resources the planet's land and seas can generate in a year) to our global ecological footprint (the demand for things like food and urban space, and forests to absorb our emissions of carbon dioxide), determine the gap and project the results onto the calendar.

## September

**The biodiversity crisis and RBG Kew: extinction** by Richard Deverell. Many of you will have seen the excellent BBC documentary on Sunday evening, presented by Sir David Attenborough, *Extinction, The Facts*. Despite being familiar with this subject I was struck by the urgency and impact of the film. It presents robust evidence that biodiversity at a global scale faces unprecedented threats, with extinction rates estimated at 100x pre-human levels. Furthermore, it demonstrates that every individual on the planet will be adversely affected by this crisis; no one is immune or should be indifferent. Prof Kathy Willis is one of the expert contributors. She argued that 'everything is joined up, from a single pond to a whole tropical forest'. I found it extremely moving and simultaneously deeply depressing. The images of vast destruction of forests and depletion of the oceans were shocking. We are reminded that many of the arguments about unsustainable exploitation of nature were aired passionately, and with evidence, at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. There have been many inspiring conservation successes since Rio. For example, the mountain gorillas, noted by David Attenborough in the film; the global recovery in whale populations; the impressive efforts by the South African government to remove invasive plants and the protection of the Asian elephants and tigers in India, Nepal and Bhutan. However, these are rare beacons of success and often anchored on 'charismatic mega fauna'. Overall, there has been an appalling lack of urgency and progress. It is a radical film because, unlike so many previous BBC documentaries, it makes the link explicitly between biodiversity loss, population growth and rich-world consumption. I have increasingly found the image of pristine nature, presented in some natural history documentaries, to be uncomfortably and indefensibly divorced from reality. Last week

also saw the publication of WWF's Living Planet report. Kew helped to author the chapters on the risks facing plants. It is an excellent and compelling report and echoes in more depth the themes explored in David Attenborough's film.

**Roaring nature: Kew Gardens sound during lockdown.** By Alberto Trinco – Kew Specialist Certificate in Display & Nursery. During lockdown I was lucky enough to be one of the horticulturists who kept coming to Kew. After work the Gardens were the place where I could find some peace of mind among the stress and worries of those months...long, wandering walks were my afternoon routine. During one of those afternoons, it hit me: the absence of the dreadful airplanes in the sky, the traffic noise coming from the streets or the visitors in the Gardens, did not result in silence. On the contrary, nature busy life took their place in full, with a deafening symphony of insect, birdsong, bees and wind. Phone in hand, I took a short recording of that masterpiece right under a bee-full flowering tree behind the Temperate House...and forgot about it. Only recently I rediscovered the recording and sent it to Cities and Memory, a global collaborative sound project encompassing field recording, sound art and sound mapping. Find out more about Cities and Memory. The sound of Kew Gardens during lockdown has now been added to their world sound map as part of the project 'Sounds from the global Covid-19 lockdown'.

## **October**

**Prestigious prize for Science's Ian Ondo and team.** An international team led by research assistant Ian has won first prize in the 2020 GBIF (Global Biodiversity Information Facility) Ebbe Nielsen Challenge for its work on developing a platform that improves visualisation, accounts for data biases and familiarises users with best practices in species distribution modelling. Their winning entry, ShinyBIOMOD, is a user-friendly open-source interface that extends the functionalities of biomod2, a well-established species ensemble modelling platform. Ian developed ShinyBIOMOD with Kew's Alex Antonelli and Samuel Pironon, alongside Wilfried Thuiller and Maya Gueguen of the Laboratoire d'Ecologie Alpine, a joint research unit of the CNRS at Université Grenoble-Alpes. Species distribution models (SDMs) and ecological niche models (ENMs) are tools that allow biogeographers and conservation biologists to predict the potential distribution of species across space and time. Developing such models is a complex multi-step process. Ian said: 'The processes for building and accurately interpreting environmental niche models requires a series of potentially error-prone steps, lots of data manipulation skills and a reasonable understanding of statistics - all of which makes them very challenging for non-GIS experts to produce. ShinyBIOMOD gives people access to a full range of statistical tools that examine relationships between species and their environments while gaining an understanding about good practice and the uncertainty behind modelled predictions.' As this year's first-place winner, the ShinyBIOMOD team will receive €15,000.

## **November**

**Supporting the community through lockdown.** The community allotment at Lion Gate is usually a slightly secret, wonderfully safe space in Kew that hums with participants from the community access scheme. But I've been rather lonelier this year, working on my own through the first lockdown, then with socially distanced volunteers: mowing, weeding and growing away to get all the vegetables we produce out to homeless projects and foodbanks. Some of the harvest goes to the local Vineyard Centre, which runs crisis and social inclusion services and supports those struggling with homelessness, addiction, loneliness and mental health. They were kind enough to say:

'The gardening team were given use of an allotment at Kew Gardens and last week they kindly delivered boxes of the planted vegetables to be given out to our foodbank recipients – a virtuous circle which has continued to be a blessing... Many thanks to RBG Kew for support and for now harvesting and delivering to us.' Alongside keeping the community allotment spick and span, I have also been out and about doing visits to local community growing projects that have been working throughout the lockdown, giving out bags of goodies from Kew to keep their spirits up and enable them to keep growing. I've also been letting them know about all the community offers we have in Kew, online and in the Gardens. Over the last week I've had a flurry of nice things happen and thought I'd share with you all as we wander into the second lockdown. I was interviewed on the Robert Elms show on BBC Radio. I have it on good authority that I am on at 2:11:37 – near the end. I can't bring myself to listen to it, but I got some lovely comments, so think it went well. Even nicer than that, this week Helena Dove donated a significant quantity of the Kitchen Garden harvest. These amazing vegetables would usually go to the kitchens in the Gardens but as they are closing again this week this wasn't to be. So, with her quick thinking and kind heart they made their way, with the weekly offering from the community allotment to two wonderful projects: West London Welcome and Brixton and West Norwood food bank. A massive thank you to her. She also posted on Instagram a picture of me standing on her precious veg beds. I think the next steps in our mutual appreciation society may be getting some t-shirts printed! It is a difficult time for all of us and for some people the balancing act is even harder, so I hope the fact Kew does make meaningful and lasting partnerships with these groups, usually quietly and always with great respect, makes you all smile a little. Thank you to all of you who help the Community Learning team. Do pop down to the community allotment to say hello next time we are all back! *Jane Rogers, Community Horticultural Learning Coordinator.*

**24 hour party people: MSB celebrates 20 years.** Last week saw the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Millennium Seed Bank, which was marked with a 24-hour social media party across Twitter and Facebook. Partners from around the globe shared content about their seed banking journey and partnership with the MSB. Our digital channels shared content throughout the day in a huge celebration of ex situ (conservation outside of the natural habitat) global seed conservation and partnership. A special MSBP 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of Samara is now available on kew.org. It includes contributions from across the partnership on all aspects of seed banking, from seed collection through to seed utilisation and reflects on 20 years of seed collecting with anecdotes from the field as well as taking a closer look at some of the significant species which have been conserved.

**Alex and Mark named as 'Highly Cited Researchers' 2020.** Professor Alex Antonelli and Professor Mark Chase, now an honorary research associate at Kew, have been named as highly cited researchers in the Web of Science's prestigious annual list. The Highly Cited Researchers list identifies researchers who produced multiple papers ranking in the top 1% by citations for their chosen field or fields and year of publication, demonstrating significant influence among their peers. This top 1% of the global research community represent magnets in their respective discipline. Alex was named in the cross-field category while Mark was named in the plant and animal science category.

## **December**

**National Tree Week at Kew.** Last week was National Tree Week, which marked the start of the annual planting scene in the horticultural world. To mark the occasion, Richard and Sarah Deverell planted a special young tree, a one-year old *Aesculus chinensis* var. *wilsonii*, Wilson's horse chestnut. From Western China, it was introduced to cultivation in

1908 and named after Ernest Henry Wilson who was a Kew plant collector. This is a very rare, small spreading tree in cultivation and this specimen is planted as part of the scientific collection in the arboretum at Kew. There were further plantings at Kew last week with specially invited guests. For more details on the week visit the Tree Council website.

**Our thanks to our volunteering community.** 2020 has been an incredibly challenging, transformative, and life-changing year for many of us in Kew's volunteering community. Many have been forced to surrender a year of dreams and high expectations to the year of 2020's reality. In some cases, 2020 has been a year of tragedy and loss and our thoughts are with those of you in our community who have suffered the dreadful pain of bereavement this year. The events of Covid-19 have taught us resilience and the importance of good health, family, and the well-being and safety of our community. We thank you all for your continued support during this extraordinary and difficult year and send our good wishes for the festive season and a more positive year ahead. My wish for 2021 – Kew and Wakehurst buzzing with volunteers back on site!

### Photos of Kew and Wakehurst during 2020

*We thank past Diploma student Maud Verstappen for sharing her photos of Wakehurst. Photos of Kew Gardens taken by Sparkle Ward.*







The Palm House



The Pagoda



The Orangery





Walkway - Agius Evolution Garden



Broad Walk in June 2020



Temperate House: one-way system



The Palm House





Hort team meeting (social distancing in front of Mansion)

©Maud Verstappen



Another Hort team meeting (location Coronation Meadow)

©Maud Verstappen





View towards the Mansion  
©Maud Verstappen



View towards Bloomers Valley  
©Maud Verstappen





Our lady volunteers weeding the Asian Heath Garden ©Maud Verstappen







## **An update for the Kew Guild provided by Director Richard Deverell**

2020 has been an eventful and challenging year. For the first time in RBG Kew's history we took the difficult decision on 22 March 2020 to close Kew Gardens and Wakehurst for an extended period in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following changes in government guidance, we were able to reopen the gardens on 1 June 2020. Our priorities throughout the crisis have been, and continue to be, to protect our staff and visitors, as well as our collections and estates, alongside allowing safe access to the gardens for the enjoyment and wellbeing of our visitors. I am very proud of the way the organisation has responded to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and the great many achievements we were able to make in 2020.

The 25<sup>th</sup> annual orchid festival celebrated the biodiversity of Indonesia and was held from 8 February to 15 March. Visitors to the Princess of Wales Conservatory found an exotic array of vibrant orchid displays, each representing an aspect of Indonesian wildlife and culture. The festival showcased Kew's vital science work in Indonesia to protect biodiversity. 'Orchids: After Hours', a curated programme of evening events, featured live gamelan music and traditional dancers, Indonesian cooking demonstrations, and a look at how Kew is fighting the extinction risk.

In February, the Kew Magazine celebrated its 100th anniversary with a foreword from our patron, HRH The Prince of Wales, who shared his thoughts on Kew's vital role in tackling the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Kew International Medal (KIM) was awarded to Professor Sandra Díaz. Professor Díaz is an expert in biodiversity and Professor of Ecology at the National University of Cordoba, Argentina. Her work aligns perfectly with Kew's vision to protect biodiversity globally. The KIM presentation ceremony scheduled for 18 March had to be postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. A few days later on 22 March we closed Kew Gardens and Wakehurst in response to the pandemic. We increased our digital output whilst the gardens were closed, recognising that our members and visitors wanted to stay connected to Kew and the opportunity to engage with a wider audience digitally. Digital engagement took the form of films, images, articles, and online learning resources. We also hosted virtual meetings for donors, patrons, Trust and Foundations and corporate sponsors as well as a successful Circle of Benefactors' virtual event. We will continue to build on this digital engagement in the year ahead.

We were able to reopen our gardens on 1 June, but indoor spaces remained closed. We introduced substantial changes to the way we operate, including social distancing measures and reduced visitor numbers. The Director's garden party in June was hosted virtually for the first time. On 4 July glasshouses and other indoor spaces at Kew Gardens and Wakehurst reopened with COVID-19 secure controls in place. In July the Herbal Essences Bio:Renew 'Save 20 in 2020' campaign was launched to support species conservation. The campaign, a collaboration between RBG Kew and Procter & Gamble, saw Herbal Essences Bio:Renew donate £200k to the Millennium Seed Bank (MSB) Partnership, and raise awareness about both the threat to plant biodiversity and the importance of seed banking.

Following a successful reopening, we invited visitors to 'Travel the World at Kew' from 22 August to 16 October, through our global collections. We guided visitors on a journey with poetry, prose, and illustrations from around the world displayed across our landscape. A large-scale botanical sculpture in the form of a whale by winners of Netflix series, 'The Big Flower Fight', was exhibited between 22 August and 18 September. In August,

Horticulture was thrilled to break the world record for the ‘Longest *Nepenthes* Plant Trap’. We also launched our first ever podcast, ‘Unearthed: Mysteries from an Unseen World’ with presenter James Wong. The six-part podcast series reveals the mysteries of plants and fungi and helps challenge the perception of botanic gardens. The first State of the World’s report to combine plants and fungi was published at the end of September and sets out an important international standard from which we can annually track trends in the global status of plant and fungal diversity. The State of the World’s Plants and Fungi Symposium was held virtually on 13 to 15 October and proved a huge success, with over 3000 people from 100 countries registering via Zoom and many viewing via YouTube.

Gruffalo Adventures came to Kew Gardens and Wakehurst in October half term and the interactive trail was very popular. In the same month, Jan Hendrix’s ‘Paradise Lost’ exhibition opened at the Shirley Sherwood gallery. This well-received exhibition included newly commissioned artwork and work on loan from the National History Museum. In October, work began on the construction of the Arboretum Headquarters, due for completion in May 2021, and the Family Restaurant, which will provide family friendly catering and retail facilities on the site of Climbers and Creepers, due to be completed in September 2021.

We were very proud that Professor Alexandre Antonelli and Professor Mark Chase were listed in the Clarivate Analytics ‘*Highly cited Research List 2020*’. The list recognises outstanding academics who have demonstrated significant influence in a field of research through the publication of multiple highly cited papers that rank in the top 1% by citations for field and year in the Web of Science. We were also delighted that an international team led by Kew Science’s Ian Ondo won first prize in the 2020 Global Biodiversity Information Facility Ebbe Nielson Challenge, for their work on developing a user-friendly platform called ShinyBIOMOD. The platform improves visualisation, accounts for data biases and familiarises users with best practices in species distribution modelling.

Following the announcement of the second national lockdown in November, government confirmed we could keep both Kew Gardens and Wakehurst open to visitors, with all indoor venues closed. Christmas at Kew and Glow Wild were due to open on 18 November and 26 November, respectively. We decided to continue with preparations for both light trails, but we did not open either until the lockdown was lifted in early December.

20 November marked 20 years since HRH The Prince of Wales opened the MSB and its associated science facilities at Wakehurst. 2.4 billion seeds have since been banked in the MSB with 39,000+ plant species from 190 countries and territories safely stored in its sub-zero vaults. On 19 November, a 24-hour social media party was held to celebrate the anniversary.

We were proud that our Children’s Garden won the Partnership and Collaboration Award at the Landscape Institute Awards (virtual) Ceremony at the end of November. The award celebrates excellence in partnership and cross discipline collaboration, with a particular emphasis on sustainability, value, and professionalism. We were also honoured that Kew Gardens was awarded Best Garden Visit at the Group Leisure and Travel Awards 2020. We witnessed a robust desire by our Members and visitors to access the gardens in the second lockdown, evidenced by record visitor numbers and tickets for Christmas at Kew were a sell-out. The COVID-secure light trail opened on 4 December and was mesmerising and hugely popular, although unfortunately it had to close early following the announcement of the third lockdown.



As we enter the new year it seems we will be living with the consequences of COVID-19 for some months to come. I remain optimistic though that, assuming the vaccines prove effective, we will see a rapid bounce-back of visitor volume in 2021-22. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues at RBG Kew for their resilience, commitment, and adaptability in 2020. I look forward to 2021 and the launch of Kew's new bold and ambitious Corporate and Science Strategies for the next decade. ©RBG Kew



## The Year at Wakehurst 2020

by Ed Ikin

What an extraordinary year! COVID-19 has impacted all of us in different ways and for Wakehurst it brought huge challenges and some surprising opportunities. As I write, with route out of lockdown mapped ahead, it feels like we might emerge from the pandemic in a stronger position than we could ever have imagined.

When lockdown first hit, we reduced our presence to a small critical operations team, with the aspiration to do little more than keep plants alive and Wakehurst secure. They were unsettling and strangely enjoyable times, with everyone focussed on the bare essence of their jobs, few meetings and a deserted estate devoid of traffic and aircraft noise. A warm spring brought extraordinary displays from our Magnolias and Rhododendrons – it felt very strange not to be sharing them with our visitors. The absence of the public did have some unexpected advantages. Our ash dieback remedial programme will last at least three years and remove thousands of dying and dead trees, a tragic impact on one of our most important native trees. Without visitors to shield from tree surgery, our arboricultural team were able to remove several massive trees from our busiest paths and roads quickly and efficiently, making the site much safer when we eventually re-opened in June.

Another project that advanced more quickly due to lockdown was the American Prairie. Once our critical operations routine was mastered, we realised we could continue this landmark project, great news due to the critical need to sow by the end of the summer. Dumper trucks were able to thunder up and down the American Prairie access road, bringing tonnes of soil to make new paths and landforms. Perennial weeds were removed as seed was sourced from US partners in Oregon and Wisconsin. In September and October kilos of seed were hand-sowed, to sit dormant in the soil until the following spring.

The American Prairie continues a long Wakehurst tradition of bringing wild plant communities from across the world into Wakehurst's designed landscape. We drew on our well-established US partnerships for expert advice and the ability to collect seed from some of the best prairie sites in Illinois. Over six acres, three US plant communities are turned into an immersive planting: the Atlantic Coastal Plain, the South Central Tallgrass Prairie and the Willamette Basin Puget Trough grasslands of the Pacific North West. The direct sowing will be complemented by tens of thousands of nursery raised plug plants which will be added in waves over the coming years. We're regularly asked when it will be ready and our favourite (tongue-in-cheek) answer is never! It will be a long process to establish this plant community and we think 2022 is the earliest that it will start to look like a coherent planting.

In June we welcomed our visitors back, after a three month absence. Intense planning went into re-opening, reviewing every aspect of our safety and visitor experience to ensure our visitors felt secure and re-assured once our doors were open again. Re-opening turned out to be a triumph, with hundreds of thousands of people enjoying the scale, variety and quality of Wakehurst as a wonderful alternative to staying at home. By the end of the year, we'd exceeded our 2019/2020 visitors, despite losing three months to lockdown – an extraordinary result. Our numbers were boosted considerably by Kew Gardens members, who visited in their thousands every month, compared to hundreds in previous years. Wakehurst membership numbers recovered dramatically after an initial lockdown dip and we received wonderful volumes of positive feedback.

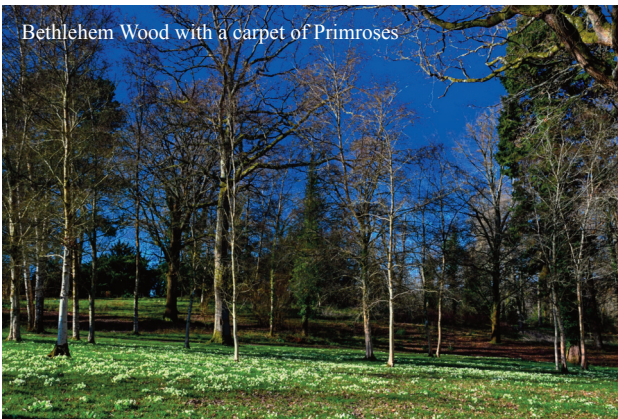
This momentum carried into Glow Wild. Despite concerns about increasing national restrictions, we were given government permission to run this evening lantern trail and





The American Prairie under construction

worked closely with our local authority to ensure it was safe and compliant. Ticket sales exceeded all previous records, with over 100,000 sold and, despite the obvious challenges, the event ran safely and without major incident until lockdown 3 brought our run to an early close. Glow Wild has gone from an experimental event with an initial run of 4000 tickets to one of RBG Kew's biggest commercial events, generating a significant surplus that supports our conservation, education and horticulture. We're surrounded by an ever-increasing range of winter light trail competitors, so one of our big challenges is staying ahead of the opposition without losing what makes our event special.



Bethlehem Wood with a carpet of Primroses

The year ahead is about recovery. Our landscape needs time and resources to reach the levels of quality we had in 2019. Turf requires restoration, beds need new plants and pruning and tree work is required everywhere. With our focus on ensuring the American Prairie establishes well, we're not taking on any new projects, but will seek opportunities to open up views and liberate some of our most important woody plants when they've

become encroached. As the year unfolds, we'll also develop a design for a new Conservation & Research Nursery, a project that will transform Kew Science's research at Wakehurst with a wide range of high quality experimental environments. If funded, this nursery will replace our current decades-old facility with dramatic improvements in efficiency and sustainability.

# Wakehurst Place Weather 2020

Wakehurst Place Weather:	<b>January</b>	Wakehurst Place Weather:	<b>February</b>
Month's total rainfall:	115.7 mm	Month's total rainfall:	180 mm
Rainiest day:	31.0 mm on 14 <sup>th</sup>	Rainiest day:	37.6 mm on 15 <sup>th</sup>
Rainless days:	6	Rainless days:	5
Highest Max Temp:	12.9 °C on 12 <sup>th</sup>	Highest Max Temp:	14.4 °C on 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Lowest Max Temp:	6.9 °C on 24 <sup>th</sup>	Lowest Max Temp:	7.8 °C on 29 <sup>th</sup>
Highest Min Temp:	9.1 °C on 9 <sup>th</sup>	Highest Min Temp:	9.8 °C on 16 <sup>th</sup>
Lowest Min Temp:	0.3 °C on 21 <sup>st</sup>	Lowest Min Temp:	-0.2 °C on 28 <sup>th</sup>
Nights with air temp below freezing (0.0 °C and below):	0	Nights with air temp below freezing (0.0 °C and below):	1
Windiest day date: 14 <sup>th</sup> Direction: SW Wind speed: 25 MPH		Windiest day date: 10 <sup>th</sup> Direction: WSW Wind speed: 38 MPH	
Wakehurst Place Weather:	<b>March</b>	Wakehurst Place Weather:	<b>April</b>
Month's total rainfall:	76.4 mm	Month's total rainfall:	41.6 mm
Rainiest day:	24.8 mm on 5 <sup>th</sup>	Rainiest day:	14.5 mm on 27 <sup>th</sup>
Rainless days:	13	Rainless days:	23-24
Highest Max Temp:	16.0 °C on 25 <sup>th</sup>	Highest Max Temp:	27.6 °C on 8/9/23 <sup>rd</sup>
Lowest Max Temp:	6.1 °C on 5 <sup>th</sup>	Lowest Max Temp:	11.4 °C on 13 <sup>th</sup>
Highest Min Temp:	9.6 °C on 11 <sup>th</sup>	Highest Min Temp:	11.9 °C on 6/8 <sup>th</sup>
Lowest Min Temp:	1.1 °C on 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lowest Min Temp:	-0.3 °C on 1 <sup>st</sup>
Nights with air temp below freezing (0.0 °C and below):	0	Nights with air temp below freezing (0.0 °C and below):	1
Windiest day date: 13 <sup>th</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup> Direction: WNW/NNE Wind speed: 29 MPH		Windiest day date: 13 <sup>th</sup> Direction: NE Wind speed: 25 MPH	
Wakehurst Place Weather:	<b>May</b>	Wakehurst Place Weather:	<b>June</b>
Month's total rainfall:	12.2 mm	Month's total rainfall:	42.8 mm
Rainiest day:	7.9 mm on 1 <sup>st</sup>	Rainiest day:	10.2 mm on 17 <sup>th</sup>
Rainless days:	27	Rainless days:	13-15
Highest Max Temp:	29.7 °C on 26 <sup>th</sup>	Highest Max Temp:	35.0 °C on 25 <sup>th</sup>
Lowest Max Temp:	12.9 °C on 11 <sup>th</sup>	Lowest Max Temp:	15.0 °C on 18 <sup>th</sup>
Highest Min Temp:	15.1 °C on 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Highest Min Temp:	19.3 °C on 25 <sup>th</sup>
Lowest Min Temp:	2.2 °C on 12/14 <sup>th</sup>	Lowest Min Temp:	6.2 °C on 6 <sup>th</sup>
Nights with air temp below freezing (0.0 °C and below):	0	Nights with air temp below freezing (0.0 °C and below):	0
Windiest day date: 11 <sup>th</sup> Direction: NE Wind speed: 30 MPH		Windiest day date: 29 <sup>th</sup> Direction: SW Wind speed: 21 MPH	
Wakehurst Place Weather:	<b>July</b>	Wakehurst Place Weather:	<b>August</b>
Month's total rainfall:	32.2 mm	Month's total rainfall:	60.6 mm
Rainiest day:	9.6 mm on 25 <sup>th</sup>	Rainiest day:	16.8 mm on 19 <sup>th</sup>
Rainless days:	18	Rainless days:	17-19
Highest Max Temp:	36.4 °C on 31 <sup>st</sup>	Highest Max Temp:	38.1 °C on 8 <sup>th</sup>
Lowest Max Temp:	17.6 °C on 4 <sup>th</sup>	Lowest Max Temp:	16.0 °C on 29 <sup>th</sup>
Highest Min Temp:	18.4 °C on 31 <sup>st</sup>	Highest Min Temp:	22.6 °C on 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Lowest Min Temp:	9.0 °C on 29 <sup>th</sup>	Lowest Min Temp:	8.7 °C on 31 <sup>st</sup>
Nights with air temp below freezing (0.0 °C and below):	0	Nights with air temp below freezing (0.0 °C and below):	0
Windiest day date: 4/5 <sup>th</sup> Direction: WSW Wind speed: 20 MPH		Windiest day date: 22/26 <sup>th</sup> Direction: SW/NW Wind speed: 25 MPH	
Wakehurst Place Weather:	<b>September</b>	Wakehurst Place Weather:	<b>October</b>
Month's total rainfall:	39.7 mm	Month's total rainfall:	227.4 mm
Rainiest day:	23.0 mm on 30 <sup>th</sup>	Rainiest day:	39.8 mm on 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Rainless days:	23	Rainless days:	4-6
Highest Max Temp:	31.7 °C on 14 <sup>th</sup>	Highest Max Temp:	28.8 °C on 21 <sup>st</sup>
Lowest Max Temp:	14.3 °C on 25 <sup>th</sup>	Lowest Max Temp:	10.6 °C on 4 <sup>th</sup>
Highest Min Temp:	18.0 °C on 16 <sup>th</sup>	Highest Min Temp:	15 °C on 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Lowest Min Temp:	5.8 °C on 25 <sup>th</sup>	Lowest Min Temp:	4 °C on 10 <sup>th</sup>
Nights with air temp below freezing (0.0 °C and below):	0	Nights with air temp below freezing (0.0 °C and below):	0
Windiest day date: 19 <sup>th</sup> Direction: Unknown Wind speed: 21 MPH		Windiest day date: 8 <sup>th</sup> Direction: WNW Wind speed: 20 MPH	
Wakehurst Place Weather:	<b>November</b>	Wakehurst Place Weather:	<b>December</b>
Month's total rainfall:	80.4 mm	Month's total rainfall:	164.7 mm
Rainiest day:	33.8 mm on 14 <sup>th</sup>	Rainiest day:	33.0 mm on 26 <sup>th</sup>
Rainless days:	5-6	Rainless days:	4-5
Highest Max Temp:	19.3 °C on 7 <sup>th</sup>	Highest Max Temp:	12.6 °C on 17 <sup>th</sup>
Lowest Max Temp:	7.8 °C on 26 <sup>th</sup>	Lowest Max Temp:	2.1 °C on 31 <sup>st</sup>
Highest Min Temp:	14.4 °C on 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Highest Min Temp:	10.9 °C on 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Lowest Min Temp:	1.0 °C on 20 <sup>th</sup>	Lowest Min Temp:	-1.6 °C on 31 <sup>st</sup>
Nights with air temp below freezing (0.0 °C and below):	0	Nights with air temp below freezing (0.0 °C and below):	7
Windiest day date: 16 <sup>th</sup> Direction: WSW Wind speed: 40 MPH		Windiest day date: 30 <sup>th</sup> Direction: WSW Wind speed: 35 MPH	

Data kindly provided by Carol Hart, who records the details at Wakehurst

©RBG Kew, Wakehurst

## Kew Guild Medal Recipient: Peter Holman

by Jean Griffin

I recommended Peter as a Kew Guild Medal recipient having been an associate of his for many years.

As Chairman of South and South East In Bloom and co-Chairman and Executive Trustee for London In Bloom he is an enthusiastic facilitator of all things horticultural. Peter has a wide range of experience from Parks Management, and bedding designs to good old-fashioned gardening, something we sometimes tend to overlook!

First and foremost, Peter is a plantsman and a communicator. His work for The Bloom in all its different areas is exceptional and, as an ambassador for the RHS, is never one to put over a point or two in order to protect the interests of Bloom Entrants and Horticulture in general. I am pleased to have him as a colleague and good friend.

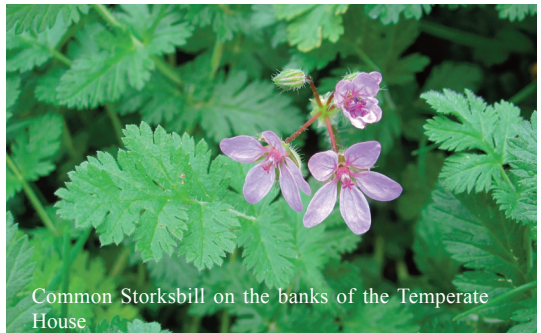
## The Return of a Native

by Sandra Bell

In the gloriously warm, sunny weather of late May 2018, visitors were able to enter Kew's newly-restored Temperate House for the first time following the years of closure. From outside the building looked breathtaking, rising majestically above its surroundings on bright green, turfed banks. The clear spaces of the interior could be enjoyed to the full and photographed without obstruction and as the public flooded in, eyes raised in admiration, it is not at all surprising that a very minor miracle taking place right underfoot may have passed almost unnoticed. One of Kew's rarer wildflowers, Common Storksbill, *Erodium cicutarium*, for which the banks of the Temperate House had long been a stronghold re-emerged to resume possession of its old home.

During the years of restoration, the banks were inaccessible and used in part as a storage area for building materials of various kinds as well as for access to the building. The grass on the remainder of the banks was allowed to grow long. None of these conditions was at all suitable for Common Storksbill. It revels in poor soil which dries out in summer to the detriment of the grass, leaving bare patches free of competition in which it can germinate and grow. Before the restoration seeds were collected and stored as part of a larger initiative sponsored by the Bentham-Moxon Trust with the intention of re-establishing Common Storksbill when conditions became suitable again. However, when the banks were prepared and new turf was laid it soon germinated unaided from the soil seed bank growing through gaps in the turves as their edges shrunk. Once through, the seedlings thrived forming rosettes of delicate, fern-like foliage and then produced their pink, starry flowers.

Common Storksbill has two adaptations which have helped it to colonise and survive on the Temperate House banks over the years. The first of these is explosive seed dispersal which can propel seeds as far as 500 metres from the parent plant. Some of the many seeds produced fall onto bare soil where they can germinate although many others must find areas that are unsuitable. In addition, each seed



Common Storksbill on the banks of the Temperate House



retains the elongated, drying floral style which twists around once the seed lands effectively drilling it into the ground to find moisture below the dry surface. This may sound a bit far-fetched but you can see it easily by watching the seeds if you collect a few or watch some excellent video footage on YouTube. Given these advantages it is surprising that Common Storksbill is such a rare wildflower in the Gardens and the surrounding areas, especially since it has become an invasive weed in some parts of Australia and the United States after inadvertently being introduced there.

Since its welcome reappearance in 2018 Common Storksbill has continued to flourish on the banks of the Temperate House. I am grateful to phenology volunteers Liz Noble and Helen Marriage who have watched over its progress through the pandemic during 2020 while access to the Gardens has been restricted. They report that it is doing well, expanding in numbers and flowering profusely. The set-back of the restoration has been overcome and Common Storksbill is happily re-established.

### **Life Cycles** by Graham Burgess

When I took on post of Supervisor at Arboretum South, I inherited a rule that only The Curator and Assistant Curators could ride a bicycle in the gardens. So, based on what I learned walking about from one end of the garden to the other to check on my workers, sometimes a lot of time wasted, I made an application for the rule to be changed so I could speedily come upon the workers. It was accepted.

### **Standing Astride Three Continents without a Visa – An Account of a Trip to Mongolia** by Pamela Holt



Mongolia, a central Asian country, is three times the size of France stretching from the Altai mountains in the west to China in the east with a population of 73 million animals but only 3,000,000 people. Since its independence in 1961 this mainly nomadic country has a fast-growing economy with its capital Ulaanbaatar sporting an eclectic mix of buildings from curving modern edifices, Russian style blocks and crumbling Tibetan temples to traditional “Gers” otherwise known as Yurts to the Russians and uninitiated.

I visited this amazing country in August 2019 in the company of five other travellers through an adventure company. Being met at the airport by a smiling English speaking young student hoping to become a business analyst and finding I was to spend two nights in a smart modern hotel with excellent facilities, the trip got off to a good start. From tours of the capital’s art galleries and museums to a folk

singing and traditional dance concert rounded off with a communal meal in a local restaurant, set the scene for the start of a cultural, trekking and mountaineering trip.

Trekking out from Base Camp



Pamela on ascent of Mt. Nairamdal



lunch was eaten under a makeshift shelter before we trudged back downhill through mud and flooded tracks. Staying in a modern hotel enabled our soaked boots and clothing to be dried out ready for an early internal three-hour flight the following morning.

My first mountain, Tsetseguun 2,256 metres, is situated in Bogd Khan National Park approached initially on paved roads then dirt tracks south of the capital. Walking through flower studded meadows and larch woodland, to emerge onto a wilder open scenery with granite boulders, we reached the summit outcrops as torrential rain started. Our

Arriving in Olgiy an hour behind the capital we were met by our transport and called at a local shop to purchase gifts for local herding families we were to meet later. After five hours off-roading across the steppe through dust storms and rain, we arrived in twilight at our first camp. The damp atmosphere and midges were reminiscent of Wales or Scotland. Next morning camp was dismantled and we set off for a three-hour drive to the gates of Altai Tavan Bogd National Park. Here all baggage was loaded onto Bactrian camels while we set off on foot with our guide crossing a swollen river barefoot and finally spying the frontier range from a high vantage point four uphill hours later. From here it was downhill to reach base camp situated to the right of the Potaniin glacier at 3,100 metres. The tents were already up, our baggage unloaded and our young cook preparing the evening meal. Many other groups were also camped in the vicinity. After a morning on the glacier honing our skills with the Mongolian mountain guide the next day we sorted our gear ready to ascend to high camp the following morning.

Carrying our personal gear, sleeping bag and mat we set off along the path parallel with the lateral moraine until we were able to join the glacier. At first dry and then snow covered where the rope was brought into service. At this point I was surprised to see our horses hobbled, standing dejectedly on the ice as the porters continued on foot with tents and cooking equipment. Steadily gaining height we arrived at 3,600 metres where our high camp had been established beside a rocky knoll on a sloping snowfield. A violent thunder storm and heavy snowfall during the night with low cloud and light snow the following day meant resting in camp or making a snowman with other mountaineers.



Our main objective was the highest mountain on the frontier ridge Mount Khuiten 4,374 metres but the recently deposited snow meant our plans changed to Mount Nairamdal 4,180 metres which was a straight forward but safer plod. As our two ropes each led by a Mongolian guide assembled on the summit, we were able to take photos proving we were standing on three continents at once, Mongolia, Russia and China. On the descent we all stopped as our guide launched a drone and a Mongolian mountaineer snow boarded from the summit we had so recently left. The next surprise was seeing horses in the snow by our high camp tents. After a brief lunch, the tents were dismantled, kit packed and our descent began. Once onto the dry glacier we unroped and made our way down to the moraine path. I was the last to arrive back in camp stopping to photograph the camels grazing near the glacier and the lovely alpine flowers. I took a rest day indulging in a shower with a jerry can of hot water and bowl within a tiny tent cubicle whilst the rest completed Malchin Peak 4,037 metres a nearby slag heap of a mountain.

We trekked back via the beautiful White River valley which enabled the group to experience Kazakh hospitality. We entered the Ger where the herdsman sat on his bed and we sat on a rug on the earth floor as his wife fed the stove in the centre with wood to heat the water and milk. Ornate wall coverings and decorative bed covers made for a colourful and cheery interior. The herdsman and his family offered mare's milk, homemade vodka and curd cheese nibbles which we watched the daughter make. The son placed a tray of these piped creations onto the roof outside to air dry in the sun. We left our gifts and continued along an increasingly fertile valley where grass was being cut and hauled away for hay.

Our last night under canvas was at the gates of the National Park where we departed in our bus the following morning to visit another Ger where an eagle hunter lived. He was out cutting grass so his daughter did the honours while we waited on his return watching her brother play with the pet cat who didn't seem to mind having its ears turned inside out! Dad turned up on a motorbike, donned a striking velvet robe and fox fur hat before taking the group to the nearby river where his eagle was tethered. Wearing an enormous leather gauntlet, he held the bird aloft after covering the head and offered us the opportunity to also hold the bird. I declined but took photos of this giant creature. Arriving in Olgi late afternoon we unloaded our baggage and entered a guest house offering twin bedded rooms with hot showers and fresh towels. Soon we were whisked away across the town to a very decorative Ger where a lovely meal was served and a local folk music group entertained us. The next morning we visited a museum and toured the markets and shops before eating in a local restaurant. We flew off in the afternoon to Ulaanbaatar to spend our last two nights at the same hotel for last minute shopping; sight seeing including one of Mongolia's newest landmarks - an enormous silvery metal statue of Chinggis (Ghengis) Khan astride a horse with a lift inside rising to 40 metres, and final slap-up meal before saying goodbye to Mongolia.

## **Pandemic Story**

by Udai Pradhan

2020, saw the world on the onset of a colossal global re-set. It was time of extremes where devastation caused by the pandemic was immediate and real, presenting unprecedented crisis to health, food and socio-economic systems worldwide leaving everyone deep rooted in fear and uncertainty. But we are humans and when we look into our history, pandemics have forced humans to imagine and re-create their world anew. In Kalimpong, Darjeeling and the Sikkim Himalayas, even as waves of uncertainty washed over our small towns and villages, people quickly got over the preliminary trepidation and began to slowly and steadily adapt to the new changes.



Winnowing the paddy after harvest the traditional way

Thanks to the age old cultural tribes that are still prevalent in the Himalayas for the wise ones amongst them, along with our elders, played crucial roles in changing our thinking from “What can I take from this world” to “What skills or gifts do I have that can contribute in a sustainable way to serve all life in the transpiring new world?” They also advised us that it was time to mend our ways and for once, to revere

and honour Mother Earth as a living entity, for everything is innately connected to it. So even as the world systems began to collapse, for many of us it was time to get over the initial fear and begin working internally, become more self-aware and in turn practice making choices that would help support life around us.

The lockdowns saw grandparents, parents and family members coming together joyfully and volunteering to teach children (and those willing to learn) hands-on traditional skills, whether they be art, craft, carpentry, medicinal, culinary, agro-horticultural etc. that had been fast fading or disappearing. Long forgotten skills of growing organic food crops, pickling fruits and other organic vegetables, growing and resourcing medicinal plants, creating cosmetics from naturally grown plants and fruits, weaving, baking, sewing etc. all made a comeback. The lands that were once barren soon became lush and green. Even as young students and many others made their way back home to the hills from the cities, new experiences were introduced in conjunction with the traditional for more efficiency. People young and old, found themselves getting involved in learning the different skills and opening local and online businesses to support their income too.

Through all these changes, the most blissful lot were the ones who were absolutely ignorant of Covid-19 or the immensity of its effect on lives! At our own home (as I am sure in many



*Oroxylum indicum*, a medicinal plant used locally. The flowers can also be consumed as a delicacy.

other homes throughout the world), the grandchildren were literally in a state of joy and bliss for they had never experienced such a long holiday from their schools! Our dear faithful helper for almost four decades whom we call “Appa” (meaning Dad) proudly wore his mask but did not really know why he was wearing one. He told us since everyone was wearing one – he wore it too! We explained to him but we do not think the reason really sank in. And so Tej and I decided to teach our lot whatever we could. We realized that some form of discipline had to be

maintained at home so while I was teaching the grandchildren how to grow their own plants and take them for nature walks around the nursery and the wooded area of our home to teach them about environment and nature, Tej was keeping them busy with their studies in all innovative ways possible. She also taught them basic housekeeping and cooking so they would become self-reliant in the long run. The



Tej teaching how to cook 'selrotis', a traditional dish made of powdered rice to our daughter -in-law Upashna as Satyam our son watches on

lockdown provided me much time to venture into my own writings as well as attend to my Orchid nursery in full zest because of which the results have been immensely fruitful.

Hemlata, our oldest daughter felt that she could not stop art classes for the village children so although the art school remained closed throughout lockdown, she initiated classes on her little terrace garden for students who were willing to continue with their art education while conforming to the covid rules and regulations.

What I observed was that the Pandemic had made us come together more strongly as family and community like never before. We learned to observe and deal with our emotions, become more compassionate and patient, appreciate the smallest of things that we normally take for granted and live more fully in the spirit of love and togetherness. We all learned that money is not everything and that not all important knowledge comes through printed pages or the internet. Sometimes it becomes crucial to experience it hands-on in order for the lessons to sink in deeply. Besides, our responsibility now is to urgently rethink and work towards the future of our environment: only then can we ensure a better future for generations to come.

I leave you with a big question now: Do we want to go into the new world with a fear driven mindset or can we learn and wisen up through the Pandemic experience and move forward? The choice is in your hands. Take time to change to healthy habits. Consume food that grows from the earth rather than the ones in tins, plastics and cans. Better still, grow them if you can! Movement as we all know is a time tested medicine so walk in nature, connect deeply to it. Practice yoga. Dance with the children, play, relax, have fun, breathe...for life at the end of the day is one big spiritual experience!

## Maintaining the Arecaceae collection of the Palm House

by Will Spoelstra

With this article I want to share with you some highlights from our Arecaceae collection in the Palm House at Kew. It has been a challenging year for everyone, but amidst the stress and uncertainty of the pandemic, I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to escape each day into this fascinating glasshouse. The plants themselves have continued to thrive, perhaps more comfortably than ever this winter as the doors seldom open to allow

the cold draft in. Today the Palm House holds circa 1300 accessions and 1100 taxa, nearly 50 of these are classified as critically endangered and over 100 others are either vulnerable or endangered. Along with the palms, it is home to much of our woody and herbaceous tropical collection, over 100 cycad accessions and has traditionally showcased plants with economic and ethnobotanical uses.

There are close to 300 palm specimens in the glasshouse, encompassing 250 accessions and 168 different species, many of which are threatened in the wild and of strong conservation interest. A few of these include:

*Ravenia moorei*. Endemic to the Comoros Islands and critically endangered. Our specimen is male and pollen has been collected in the past. However, there are very few female plants left in wild or known in cultivation.

*Carpoxylon macrospermum*. Found in the lowland forest of Pacific Island Vanuatu.

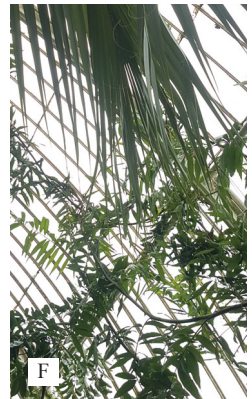
*Tahina spectabilis*. Endemic to North-West Madagascar, it is commonly known as the suicide palm, as when mature it will use all its energy to flower itself to death and produce enough fruit for the population to persist. This species was discovered as recently as 2007 when photos were sent to Kew for identification.

The palm family (Arecaceae) comprises nearly 2600 species and is second only to the grass family (Poaceae) in economic importance. There are native palms to every continent except Antarctica. Although most come from tropical or subtropical environments, they can be found growing in an array of habitats and often have striking features that make them an iconic element of the tropical landscape. Once described by Linnaeus as the 'Princes of the Plant Kingdom', there is something to see in every corner of the Palm House.

- *Chambeyronia macrocarpa* (A). The national tree of New Caledonia. Known as the flamethrower palm.
- *Bismarckia nobilis* (B). A Madagascan endemic. The stunning blue/grey fan shaped leaves make it a majestic specimen tree.
- *Hyophorbe lagenicaulis* (C). Endemic to Mauritius and one of three *Hyophorbe* species in our collection, all of which are critically endangered in the wild. This one flowers well in the glasshouse and produces a lot of seed. Commonly known as the bottle palm.
- *Pinanga densiflora* (D). A clump forming, understorey palm with mottled leaves. One of several species in the Asian section of the house.
- *Caryota urens* (E). A species of fish-tail palm from South Asia. The inflorescence can be tapped for its sap (used to make sugar). Fast becoming one of the dominant palms at the top of the glasshouse canopy.
- *Desmoncus orthacanthus* (F). Covered in nasty spines, the climbing stems of this rattan palm are used for weaving baskets.
- *Pritchardia pacifica* (G). One of several *Pritchardia* species in the collection, this specimen has now grown above balcony level and we hope for flowers soon so that we can propagate it.

Due to the variable environmental conditions under which each species grows naturally, we endeavour to learn as much about our plants as we can to improve the maintenance of the collection. We want to know seasonal irrigation requirements, shade tolerance, growth rate and eventual size along with anything else that will help us. The Palm House is designed to produce a climate akin to that of a tropical rainforest so most of the palms we keep in here enjoy the hot and humid air generated by our automatic heating and misting





systems, supplemented manually by plentiful groundwater and fertiliser at least once a week. On top of this we mulch the beds once a year with garden compost produced in the Kew Service Yard.

Other maintenance tasks include pest and disease control and minimal pruning to remove overhead risks and to reduce very dense crowns, allowing more

light into the understorey. Each year we create the space to plant several new additions such as *Livistona rotundifolia* var. 'sumawongii', planted last year. These are usually taken from either the North or South entrance where we keep a potted display as a reference to the days when the Palm House first opened and before the beds were introduced. This display is utilised as a halfway house between being grown from seed in the Jodrell Glasshouse and being planted out.

Along with caring for all the other plants in the Palm House, our team look after the Water



Lily House. This is a lot of work for only two permanent members of staff, so in addition the team is strengthened by four volunteers who join us once a week along with the Kew diploma students and apprentices who join us for three or four month placements.

One of the biggest challenges for us is the propagation and renewal of the palm collection. Not all the palms mature enough to flower and fruit before they reach the top of the glasshouse, an issue for the solitary stemmed species which will be removed before they break the glass ceiling. We are reaching that stage again for some of our tallest and most popular palms in the house and plans are in place to have three large specimens removed this year. This includes the Cuban royal palm *Roystonea regia* from which we are having to chop back the new leaves emerging from the crown. Fortunately, in this instance we have one more specimen of this species left but it is not always the case. We are putting in the groundwork now to improving the collection, with a future restoration in mind, by strengthening connections with other institutions with a view to developing new seed exchanges.

However, we do not always have to look elsewhere to strengthen the collection and recently we have made progress with in-house propagation. Nearly all propagation of our palms can only be done by seed, although we have had some success with the division of clump forming genera such as *Arenga* and *Pinanga*.

We are always on the lookout for new emerging inflorescences which will be closely monitored for fruit and seed development. Ripe fruit is collected and taken to the Jodrell Glasshouse for the seed to be sown. We were excited to find these palms flowering for the first-time last year, all of which are singular specimens in our collection: *Johannesteijsmannia altifrons*, one of the most beautiful in the collection, native to Borneo and the Malay Peninsula. *Arenga undulatifolia*, perhaps our most stunning species from this genus. *Syagrus botryophora*, one of the tallest in the house, now a real possibility that we will collect and germinate the seed before it must be cut down.



Will Spoelstra and *Roystonea regia*

Several species need that extra little bit of help to become fertilised as the pollination strategy varies across the family. About a third of the species in the Palm House are dioecious and therefore require separate male and female plants. Many of these belong to the genus *Chamaedorea*, under which we have the most species in the collection. We do not always have a male and female plant however, when we do, we will collect pollen from the male which will be cold stored, before being used to pollinate the female when the flowers are ready. The same process can be used for monoecious species (separate male and female flowers on the same plant) when there is an interval between the opening of the male and female flowers.

My colleague Solène Dequiret has put a lot of research into this and we are now reaping

the rewards as shown by the successful germination of seeds from dioecious palms *Kerriodoxa elegans* and *Chamaedorea ernesti-augusti*.

While we have made the most of this unique opportunity to have the Palm House all to ourselves, it has

been a very strange experience and I welcome the day we will once again open the doors for the public to enjoy this magnificent glasshouse too.

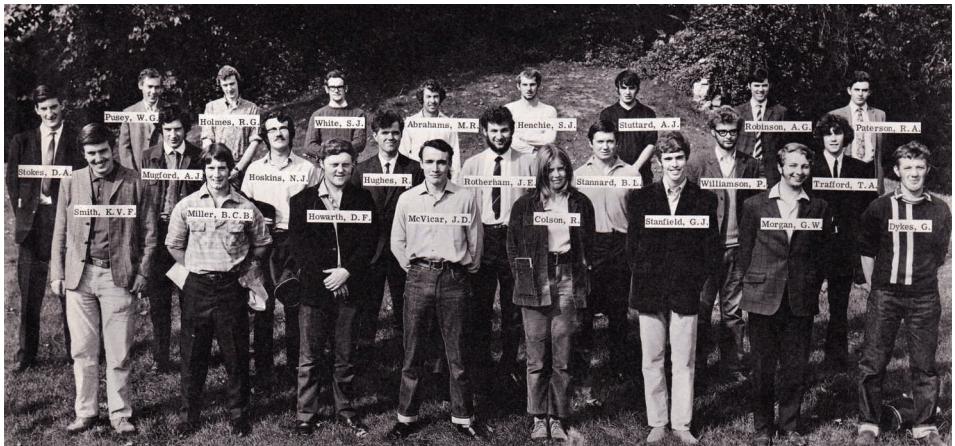


## Young Oaks - Fifty years to the day!

by Alan Stuttard

The thing that horticulture teaches us is that from a seed great things can grow and they often take many years to achieve maturity, the mighty Oak being a prime example. Now I do accept that the meeting of a group of students in Kew Gardens may be stretching this analogy somewhat, but I do hope that you can allow the artistic licence to continue, whilst also spotting the similarities.

Gareth Stanfield and Gerald Morgan, along with a further 22 students of Course 8, met on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1970 in the Jodrell Lecture Theatre in the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, to enrol on the three year Diploma Course. There is even photographic evidence of that day with all 24 students lined up and named for posterity! Many years later it was Gareth and Gerald who were the ones amongst us who remembered that 2020 was fifty years since



Kew 1970. Image reproduced with the kind permission of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens

that important date. They also felt that an event, which for many had such an impact on their lives, could not be allowed to pass without being appropriately celebrated (*this was the seed*).

They then set about contacting all the known members of Course 8 to find out whether there was any interest among them for meeting up in Kew Gardens with the intention of celebrating our “Golden Anniversary”. Remember that early 2020 was the start of the Covid 19 lockdown arrangements and none of us could be sure that such a planned event would be able to go ahead. It was then realised that we met to start the course on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September 1970 and that 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 was also a Monday. This felt like a sign from the Gods that not only was the idea good, but also it was bound to be a success. Gareth and Gerald had received enough support from members of the course to indicate that they should go ahead with the planning of our celebrations (*germination of our seed*).

Luckily enough, one of the members of Course 8 was Stewart Henchie who had spent the whole of his working life involved with Kew and was a born organiser. He picked up the baton, ably supported by Phil Williamson and they set about making the arrangements for our anniversary on the 28<sup>th</sup> September. Stewart’s contacts within Kew were extremely useful and an event was developed that managed to meet all of the Covid rules and this wouldn’t have been possible without the help and support of members of the present Kew staff. Again, as luck would have it, for a whole plethora of reasons, only six members of Course 8 could make the planned meeting. This was somewhat fortuitous because, as you may recall, the national Covid 19 rules from 25<sup>th</sup> September on were governed by “The Rule of 6”, therefore not permitting groups of larger than six to meet together. Once again this led to us feeling that the Gods were definitely smiling on us (*initial cultivation of our seedling*).

At 10am on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September a very select body of Course 8, made up of the following members, met at the Queen Elizabeth Gate:- Stewart Henchie, Gerald Morgan, Keith Smith, Brian Stannard, Alan Stuttard, Philip Williamson. The day was destined to be a huge success with every part being enjoyed by all the group. The weather was fine, the company superb and the gardens were looking majestic in their subtle colours of early autumn. The group walked all day, told stories of silly memories and tried hard to undertake botanical identifications, with varying levels of success. What was so wonderful was that the fifty years that had passed just seemed to fade away and we all reverted to being the students of 1970. For those that were unable to make the day, I can assure you that you were all remembered and much discussed throughout the day.

We made our way to the location where the original group photograph of Course 8 was taken and took up our allotted spaces for the 2020 version. It seemed incredibly fitting that a record of the day should be made and it somehow acknowledged the often-stated comment “that once you become a member of the Kew family you are in it for life”. I’m sure you readers will all agree that we have all worn incredibly well and that there is no difficulty whatsoever in recognising the participating members. This must be down to horticulture being a career that is both good for the body and the soul!

As the morning moved into the early afternoon, we congregated at the refurbished Pavilion Bar and Grill for refreshments before we would end our day of reminiscences and travel home. But ahead of our final farewells Stewart had one more surprise for us all. He had arranged that once seated and enjoying our lunch he would take a call from Leo Pemberton, who was Director of Studies back on that first day of 28<sup>th</sup> September 1970. Once over the surprise we all chatted most enthusiastically with Leo creating yet another round of memories and conversations which did seem to be the “icing on the cake” for our fifty



year anniversary event  
(*our seed had grown to maturity*).

It has been pointed out to me that although fifty years may be a long period of time for the members of Course 8, it is a very short period of time in the life of an Oak tree. Most Oaks, at that age are just beginning to produce their first acorns and therefore my analogy may be somewhat

stretched. All I can say to this is please forgive me and I would suggest that the members of Course 8, fifty years ago, must all have been “Young Oaks” of the student world!



Back row: Stewart Henchie, Alan Stuttard. In front: Keith Smith, Brian Stannard, Gerald Morgan, Philip Williamson.

## Committee Deliberations

by Richard Ward

Meetings during 2020 were challenging due to the effect of Covid-19. The Committee met face to face in the Kew Guild room in the herbarium on 24<sup>th</sup> February, then through Microsoft Teams on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 22<sup>nd</sup> May and 23<sup>rd</sup> July, and through Zoom on 24<sup>th</sup> October and 9<sup>th</sup> December. Agendas and reports are circulated to Committee members prior to all meetings, and Minutes circulated afterwards. Minutes are eventually deposited in the Guild archives at RBG Kew for posterity.

As ever, many varied discussions took place: It was agreed that a stock list of old Journals would be placed in the Kew Guild room cupboards and the Secretary would keep an online version updated as and when old Journals were sold off; archiving of Guild digital photos; annual dinner arrangements; Twitter account; nomination of future Trustees; general finance matters pertaining to updating for the CIO and Constitution; Kew Guild prizes; membership and subscriptions; Associate membership; general membership matters; Kew Guild medal nominations; Award Scheme travel bursaries, and other Award matters; online Journal and website news ideas; procedures for obituaries of members; Guild charitable donations; reports from student year groups, Guild support for them, and liaison with the School of Horticulture; Guild outside visits and social events; updating of membership list; AGM arrangements (Minutes on the website, and sent to all members); insurance; risk policy.

## 100 Years Ago

by Richard Ward

The 1920 Journal reported that there were 382 Life members of the Guild. (they paid a one-off fee of £2!) Receipts for the year totalled £71. Twenty-five members had died in the service of their country during the war. A sub-Committee made recommendations for the erection of War memorial tablets to be fixed on the back wall of the Temple of Arethusa at Kew. Three commemorative trees were planted nearby. The AGM was held in the Dean Hotel, Oxford Street in London prior to the annual dinner. It was proposed and agreed that members should be allowed to bring their wives to future annual dinners. Husbands of

lady members would also be allowed. There were two dissentients. 'They would not of course attend the Annual Meeting.' The annual dinner was held for the first time in five years, due to the war. 103 members attended. A new flagstaff was erected at Kew to replace the previous Douglas fir trunk that was put up in 1861. 1,019,479 visitors visited Kew in 1919. There were enthralling news stories from Kewites from all around the world telling of their triumphs, and failures, and hopes for the future...

## Gustav Krumbiegel

by Richard Ward



Photo courtesy of Alyia Phelps-Gardiner-Krumbiegel

Journal readers may recall our efforts in documenting the life and career of past Kewite Gustav Krumbiegel (1865-1956) in recent Journals. Last year his great grand-daughter Alyia, who lives in south London, met up with Ganesh Shankar Raj, Director of Inner Eye World films in Bangalore, and the idea of a documentary film about GHK's life and landscape work in India was proposed. Ganesh provided script ideas and in late December Guild Journal Editor Sparkle, and I, were able to contribute to some filming at Kew and with mentions about the Guild. The Karnataka government gave a facelift to Gustav's grave in 2016 (see photo) and on her twice-yearly visits to India Alyia's first stop is always to the grave to lay a sandalwood garland. *Guild members may be interested to read 'Lalbagh, Sultans' garden to public park' published in November 2020 and authored by Vijay Thiruvady, trustee of Bangalore Environment Trust, India. - Ed*

## News of Kewites

**Early on in the year we invited all members, several times, to send us their Covid-19 stories, as being part of our history. Inevitably almost all contributors mentioned Covid-19 when they sent us their news, and thus we reprint their stories in the usual way. And thank them.**

**At the start we have reproduced, with permission from their Editor, and the author, a timely reminder that appeared in Horticulture Week's Opinion page in early January 2021, topically entitled 'A happy and healthy new year.' "There has never been a more important time to share our concerns and support each other." The author is Martin Emmett, horticultural training consultant, strategy director at Tristram Plants (Farplants Group) and lecturer on the Diploma course at RBG Kew:**

There is a particular poignancy in wishing those around us a "happy new year" under the circumstances. Last year was the epitome of a globally unhappy year and it is important that we now look to the future with anticipation of happier times to come. Recent years have seen the horticulture sector becoming more closely associated with providing the resources for good health and improved well-being. The performance of garden centres, since the lockdown, demonstrates the public's growing appreciation of this. While supporting the mental well-being of others, we must not lose sight of our own. Many regard horticulture as a lifestyle choice, a career that is meant to avoid much of the stress and



anxiety of modern life, and so it can be, but not always. The unique combination of events in 2020 brought unprecedented levels of stress on all levels of employment within our sector. Some issues were more unique to horticulture. Not everyone will understand the pressures associated with dealing with perishable stock or a project that has missed its seasonal delivery window.

When the pressure is on, it sometimes helps to share some of your problems with others who understand what you are going through. This applies to our personal and our professional lives. There has never been a more important time to share our concerns and support each other. Remember also that work pressure can be particularly intense on those at the beginning of their careers. In my career as a lecturer, I was constantly concerned at the number of students, from all forms of full-time education, who seriously struggled in their first post-graduation employment. Talented individuals can still have difficulty in finding their feet and may not get the emotional, as well as technical, support they need to get established.

I freely admit that my own career had a rocky start – as some may remember. I was lucky. I found others who could be my professional mentors and their guidance and support pulled me through. So let's make 2021 a year of well-being within our sector and start by watching out for those around us who might need a little more support than they are currently getting. Also, we must not be afraid to ask for help ourselves when the going gets tough. Let's be ready to put some action behind our words when we are wishing others a "happy new year".

**Rebecca Bower:** This has certainly been a very strange year and I couldn't have imagined it as I spent January and February doing all the usual things of seeing family and friends, going out for meals and trips to the theatre and cinema – how we took it all for granted! Although talk of a virus was increasing, I set off on a three week Exodus holiday to southern India at the beginning of March. It started well and I enjoyed all the sights and sounds as we travelled across the country from Cochin on the west coast to Chennai, via the Nilgiri Hills and Mysore, and down the east coast through Mahabalipuram (amazing rock carvings) to Pondicherry. By then things were getting increasingly difficult with many sights closing and it was clear we couldn't continue with the second half of the trip. After much to-ing and fro-ing Exodus managed to get us on flights home and we arrived back in the UK on the Friday just before the national lockdown was announced on the Monday! Since then, like everyone else, I have spent a lot of time at home, in my case Exeter, filling my time with my various Trustee roles (lots of Zoom meetings), volunteering at the Foodbank and doing my scrapbooks – now up-to-date instead of over a year behind – for the first time ever! My only other holiday was an enjoyable week's walking along some of the south-west coast path in Cornwall in September.

My sister Anna and I tested positive for Covid-19 at the end of October – probably caught at our gym or the bar where we watched Exeter Chiefs' two matches to become European and Premiership Champions – big celebrations. I only had mild symptoms and am completely better, but Anna's turned into long Covid and for many weeks she was fatigued with little energy, but fortunately is now almost fully recovered. I am now looking forward to the roll-out of the vaccination programme and, hopefully, getting back to some travel later in 2021!





Richard Boyne with a *Dendrophthoe* in Narrabri

**Richard Boyne:** I left the UK in the middle of 2019 after several years of working in the Digital Collections Unit. Luckily, I got back into digitising shortly after I landed, because the Queensland Herbarium (BRI) was capturing specimen images from high-priority families. I knew that this project wouldn't last the whole year and I was interested in working outside of my comfort zone. So, when I learned about vacancies at agricultural research stations in the distant town of Narrabri, New South Wales, I decided to take the plunge and go. The region also looked like an amazing place for bushwalking, and I was right!

I got there in mid-March, shortly before Queensland closed its border with New South Wales. Not long after that many parts of Australia were in lockdown. Luckily it didn't affect our work too badly and we never had any cases in the Narrabri Shire. Though a lot of places closed down during the height of the pandemic, we could still exercise outdoors, which

for me meant lots of time botanising in the local nature reserves. The best ones in the area are the Mt Kaputar National Park and the Pilliga Forest.

The Mt Kaputar National Park consists of extinct volcanoes and has a very wide range of vegetation types. The low gullies have plants associated with temperate rainforests, while the high exposed points have sub-alpine vegetation. These can all be viewed in one visit. One non-botanical highlight is the local species of pink slug (*Triboniophorus sp. nov.* 'Kaputar'), which I have yet to see with my own eyes, but I live in hope!

The Pilliga forest is mostly on sandstone and dominated by cypress pines and ironbarks. It was a source of timber in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and now is important for tourism, conservation and, controversially, gas extraction. Sadly, gas extraction is due to be expanded this year, despite protests from many locals over environmental impacts. The Aboriginal people of this region, the Kamilaroi, still have a custodial role over some sites there and they've been strongly opposed.

One group of plants that I came to love here is the mistletoes in the family Loranthaceae. One species that I identified as *Dendrophthoe glabrescens* was particularly abundant and produced huge bunches of bright orange flowers in the spring. Being hemi-parasites, large numbers of these can be bad for the hosts, but they're also an important food source for birds and butterflies.

This region was badly affected by the bushfires that started in late 2019. It was very clear when viewing the forests from mountaintops and towers. I met people who fought the fires and it was very scary. The more fire-tolerant plants are slowly recovering, but it will be a while before the canopy gets to the way it was before. The opening up of so much forest will change the floristic assemblages here for quite a while, probably in favour of heath, scrub and grassland plants. Fortunately, fires are less of a danger this season, partly because of La Niña and partly because there's not much fuel left! The next fire season is likely to be bad. As well as all the botanising I did outside of town, I enjoyed garden-fresh produce from the sharehouse that I was staying at. It had a large backyard that was divided into a section for ornamental plants and a section for edible plants. The soil there was generally

poor, with patches that had too much clay and patches that had too much rubble, but by selecting the right plants for the right spots and building up garden beds with lots of organic matter, they managed to be self-sufficient for most of their fruits, vegetables and herbs. Most of my host family were Cambodian, so I tried delicious homemade foods like candied wax melon, pickled mustard greens and barbecued okra.

It was an interesting experience working in agricultural science over the past ten months. I've learnt a lot about cotton farming and about future methods in weed management (which might involve robots and lasers), but I think botany is where I really belong. I plan to move somewhere else in Australia this year and begin studying for a higher degree. Araceae might be a nice family to specialise in. I'm sure I'll find some excuse to visit Kew and use its collections in the near future!

**Graham Burgess:** There has never been an article in The Kew Guild Journal focusing on a virus. Of course, Kewites in specialist areas know about them. About thirteen years ago during a visit to Kew to do some research for an obituary I met David Cutler, then key person in The Linnean Society. I asked him if there was a risk that a bacteria or virus could evolve that could kill us all off in a few months. His answer, "yes, but there is another risk". "What", I said. His reply, "It could already have evolved and is in the ice waiting to melt". So as a Kewite I have been affected big time. The New Stonehenge project has a budget of between £24-£43 million pounds and we had an investor lined up. Then along came the hybrid between Brexit and Coronavirus and that knocked it on the head.

Something else with potential for national and international results was Helloallwines (see website <http://www.helloallwines.co.uk/>) featured in last year's Journal, page 467, again delayed. Inspired by an idea in California a new world festival, The Helloallwines Festival, was planned to be launched towards end of Summer 2020. The plans to build vineyards based on two glasses of wine either side of a bottle went into abeyance. The Helloallwines Mazes can, yes, be in vineyards but also temporarily sprayed onto grass in public open spaces. So many Kewites may be in a position to initiate this when we escape from lockdown.

A follow-up plan of special bottles of wine being spread countrywide for everyday folk to consume at organised wine sippings was almost completely stopped by the Covid-19 restrictions. We did do something, and that was to design an iconic and unique outfit for the first Helloallwines Princess, Maria Wright. She cycled into the historic town of Whitchurch in Hampshire and handed over special bottles to The Mayor. Who knows when each 750ml bottle will serve 35 participants at special toasts? So, a session if participants pay £5 to join in could result in £175 per bottle. The profit can then be divided amongst the Hosts and a Charity with a small amount also towards marketing and management. Potentially good earnings for participants and this could include nationwide toasts for special charity organisations. Part of the handover could link to another project and that is the creation of an Arctic Seat to commemorate a hero who experienced Arctic Sled Dogs and went onto love dogs with involvement at Crufts. The seat will have icebergs in the design but opportunities for local people countrywide to attach medallions with their dog's names on them. Then a toast to support a dog charity.

**John Edmonson (Acanthophyllum Books): Books flying off the shelves online.** As a bookseller who relies mainly on online sales, the lockdown period saw an upsurge of orders from all around the world, especially the USA. Sadly, COVID-19 caused the cancellation of most of this year's book fairs, but the search for new stock never stops, and although book fairs are a good place to find quality books at reasonable prices (often more sensible than those seen online) we have been fortunate to have some good offers of collections.

Of particular relevance to Kew was the library of the late David Frodin, which I picked up in February from his flat in Gloucester Court, Kew. There was no lift to the top floor, but some keen young helpers were summoned by Aljos Farjon from the herbarium tearoom to assist with the removal of the boxes. While in London I also managed to pick up a mild dose of COVID-19 (in February, note) before lockdown, but without major symptoms. My other horticultural foray was to Anglesey in July. Socially distanced business calls were allowed in Wales, but this was a challenge on account of the sheer number of books. The whole house had to be cleared - there were groaning bookshelves in every room bar the loo - and it needed my wife's three-horse trailer to carry away all the books. The library belonged to the former Librarian at Bangor University and his wife, also a librarian, and both were keen gardeners. Two of the books were so uncommon that they weren't to be found in the Lindley Library; this only happens very rarely.

**Jim Emerton:** Since retiring from horticulture, my career is on the ascendent as an author, poet, philosopher and pigeon racing enthusiast, adopting a creative, original and objective approach to my dedicated interests. I have reached the finals of The Mensa World Poetry Competition, my nine books are doing well, where my 11 years as a student in multifarious subjects are bearing fruit. The secret is to live to realise your dreams. I count rogues, ruffians and professors as my many friends and mentor many people on a humanitarian level. In terms of personality, I am both existential and individualistic. Good luck to all my eccentric friends out there in the external world.

**Alex George:** In Western Australia the combination of our geographical isolation and relatively small population has been a boon in dealing with the coronavirus. During the most vulnerable periods the Australian States and Territories closed their internal borders and imposed various restrictions. As an indication of the vast size of this country, closing our State border of 1164 miles/1874 kilometres involved only two main checkpoints! Few



*Calothamnus quadrifidus* (Myrtaceae), introduced to English gardens by Peter Good, 1803

cases were recorded here. Towards the end of the year some restrictions were relaxed but have been reimposed following new outbreaks in New South Wales and Victoria.

Because I work at home and have a good local shopping centre I was not greatly affected. I made some local excursions, on one of which I discovered a large population of *Verticordia endlicheriana* (a yellow featherflower, Myrtaceae), previously unknown despite being just 60 miles from Perth – how much we have yet to learn about our flora.

For almost 20 years I have been assisting with the Western Australian Exploration Diaries Project which has the goal of locating, transcribing and publishing the diaries and journals of everyone who explored new country in this Colony after its establishment in 1829. Their journeys ranged from a few days to many months. My main task is to interpret the plants mentioned in the journals. At that time most were still unnamed so the explorers gave them nicknames, likened them to something they recalled from 'the Old Country', occasionally obtained a local indigenous name. It's quite a challenge and requires knowledge of our flora and landscapes. Some are easy to identify, some impossible. This year we completed a volume of diaries of journeys in the North-West and Kimberley





*Verticordia endlicheriana* (Myrtaceae), Julimar Forest, Western Australia

between 1850 and 1890, adding to five volumes already published.

My book *Western Australian Plant Names and Their Meanings* sold out and I prepared a new edition. As another indication of the work needed on the flora of the State, in just 18 months some 200 species have been added to the flora. I continued to work on a new edition of the journal of Peter Good who

collected seeds for Kew during the voyage of Matthew Flinders to Australia in 1801–03. Many were raised successfully and recorded by William Townsend Aiton in the second edition of *Hortus Kewensis* (1810–1813).

**Jean Griffin: Not for me.. the dreaded virus!** I returned from New Zealand as the first lockdown was announced! That was a bit of a shock after the freedom of the South Island. As you may know I am part of the BBC Radio Kent Gardening Programme, broadcasting, I hope, words of wisdom to fellow gardeners across several counties. At the first lockdown the radio station immediately sent me an audio microphone so I could work from home to avoid disruption of their most listened-to programme. I thought, along with others, that this would be a temporary measure but nine months down the line I am still in my sitting room every other week talking to listeners who are in the same ‘boat’!

The magic of growing plants, disastrous and successful, has made life more bearable for many of us. Community and allotment gardening projects have flourished with innovative ways of finding ways to make space for people. Home growing has flourished and, by talking to many of our listeners, people who have never thought of growing anything have found the magic of plants, of sowing a seed and watching it grow and harvesting the produce or, just taking pleasure in flowers they have planted when stocks became available. The children on the small estate where I live grew potatoes in bags during the summer and then again got growing Christmas potatoes.

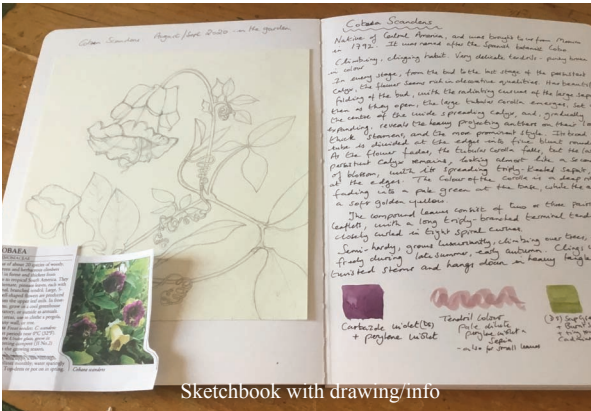
My allotment and garden along with my dog have all kept me sane, some might say that is impossible but the love of plants and animals is a wonderful relaxation for body and mind. Keep safe everyone and I hope to meet up with you all once more at The Kew Guild Dinner.

**Judy Hancock: *Cobaea scandens* in Lockdown.** Many of us will have stories to tell about our lockdown experiences, both good and bad. Fortunately, my experience falls under the ‘good’ category and concerns my love and appreciation of *Cobaea scandens*.

I have always loved gardening and after retiring from my role as Administration Officer in the School of Horticulture in 2015, I have been able to spend more time in my small suburban London garden. Although small, I cram as much as I can into it. Somehow I always manage to find room for ‘just one more plant’! I have a small grow house (not



*Cobaea scandens* climbing silver birch



Sketchbook with drawing/info



Watercolour painting of *Cobaea scandens*

grand enough to call it a greenhouse) where I have been growing lots more plants from seed, including *Cobaea scandens*. What a joy to see the size of the seed! Lovely, large sunflower size and therefore very easy to sow. Germination was excellent and I soon had a number of healthy seedlings ready to plant out.

Some weeks later, I had another surprise when they flowered. I couldn't believe something so beautifully exotic could happily grow in my suburban English garden. The more I looked at the flower, the more interested I became in finding out about it. In every growth stage, from the bud to the last stage of the persistent calyx, the flower is rich in decorative qualities, which also appeals to my (non-botanical) love of painting and drawing plants and flowers.

My fascination with *Cobaea scandens* led me to paint it and do some research into it. I found

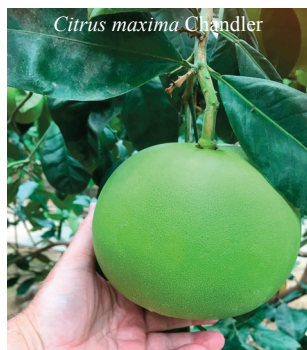
a lovely description of it in a reprint of J Foord's "Decorative Plant and Flower Studies for Artists & Craftsmen, Dover Publications, New York: "Native of Central America and brought to us from Mexico in 1792. *Cobaea scandens* has beautiful folding of the bud, with the radiating curves of the large sepals; then as they open, the large tubular corolla emerges, set in the centre of the wide spreading reveals the heavy projecting

anthers and their long thick stamens and the more prominent style. Semi-hardy, grows luxuriantly, climbing over trees etc. Flowers freely during late summer, early autumn (as I write, mine is still flowering on 11<sup>th</sup> November). As the flower fades the tubular corolla falls, but the large persistent calyx remains, looking almost like a second form of blossom. The colour of the corolla is a deep rich purple fading into a pale green at the base, while the anthers are a soft golden yellow....long terminal tendrils (one of my favourite parts of the plant), curled in tight spiral curves". I have always been a 'plantaholic' and in these particularly difficult times, plants and gardens have been of great comfort to



many of us. Hopefully hearing about my love of *Cobaea scandens* will encourage you to plant some seeds for better times to come.

**David Hardman:** As a year 2020 will be remembered in history for many reasons not least the COVID-19 virus that affected millions of people throughout the world. Many people saw their dreams of travels scuppered with the enforced need to stay at home. However, in September I was fortunate to travel to Tuscany with a Bournemouth U3A group after our original trip had to be cancelled in July. Our trip included garden visits to Villa Marlia and Villa Garzoni, opera in Lucca as well as opportunities to venture to Florence and other towns close to our base in Montecatini Terme. Nearby in Pescia we



*Citrus maxima* Chandler



*Citrus aurantium*  
foliis variegatis



*Citrus medica* Digitata

visited the Hesperidarium, a citrus garden and nursery founded by Oscar Tintori. Its large greenhouses cover two thousand square metres displaying hundreds of different varieties of citrus plants including ancient cultivars, gigantic, contorted, fingered, horn-shaped and elongated exemplars: tiny spheres the size of marbles, huge trees with both bi-coloured fruit, variegated leaves and a marvellous variety of citrus blossom. Had we visited in spring we would have enjoyed a heavenly olfactory experience from the extraordinary perfume of orange, lemon and many other citrus blossoms that saturate the air. Zagara is the name for lemon and sweet orange blossom but by association also for the fragrance itself. The fragrance of bitter oranges is called neroli.

The name Hesperidarium derives from Greek mythology's Hesperides, the nymphs of the evening or sunset, the daughters of the West, who tended a garden in the ancient world, located near the Atlas Mountains. Citrus fruits are generally thought to have originated in India, China or Southeast Asia and were first cultivated around 2,500BC in



Giardino Garzoni

China. The original fruits are believed to have been the *citron*, *pomelo*, *mandarin* and *papeda* all other citrus fruits are derived from different combinations of the hybridization of these four.

Citrus eventually reached Italy in the form of the citron about 70AD, brought by the Jews fleeing the destruction of Jerusalem. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with the advent of the Medici family the cultivation of citrus plants began in Florence. The rarest and most bizarre varieties became noble collectors' pride and from Florence the fashion of citrus cultivation expanded across all the European courts. These ancient Tuscan varieties and other rarities from all over the world are part of the Oscar Tintori citrus collection and well worth visiting, similarly the opportunity to sample the delights of the orange and lemon liqueurs should not be missed.

**Pamela Holt (1971):** As 2020 progressed many events were cancelled or rescheduled, like the Guild Ireland trip, from visits, my charity and voluntary work, my cousin's daughter's big wedding in Hexham Abbey to the many bookings I had for giving garden talks. In fact, I judged just one Flower Show albeit on a reduced and spaced-out scale. I carried out much creative work in my garden including slab laying, garden arbour construction and planting a pot bound grape vine to grow over it.

With the hot dry summer in the South East many bunches of grapes were my reward. During July I did manage to undertake my biennial Tree survey for a local girl's school and on a wet October day conducted a tree walk and talk for the Surrey Hills Society, observing the rule of six. Most travelling was out, unlike 2019 but a snatched week in Turkey in late September was memorable for the heat, cultural visits and plenty of sea swimming from a local family-owned boat. So, I have written more about my Mongolian trip instead, mentioned only briefly in the last Journal.

**Colin (Kew 1965–1968) & Penny Jones:** Towards the end of March 2020 our son Christian who is a manager for a large food distribution company and a Key Worker, became unwell and was sent home from work. He was unwell with Covid-19, together with his wife Paula, for about two weeks. Paula recovered but just when Christian thought he was getting over Covid 19 he took a turn for the worse and eventually he was rushed into hospital with severe breathing difficulties and was put on oxygen in the intensive care unit for five days. After a number of tests, it was established that he had several blood clots throughout his body some having moved to his lungs and was put on anti-coagulant drugs to deal with the clots. Thankfully his stay in hospital saved his life and he was sent home with a supply of drugs.



During this time we were all in lockdown and were not able to visit him but we thankfully were able to 'Face Time' him most days until eventually we could visit him. Gradually he recovered and regained enough strength to be able to return to work during the second week in May. When Christian was taken into hospital, he thought that he was not going to get better as he was so unwell at the time. Penny and I are grateful to all the NHS staff that treated him in hospital and for the many people that were involved in the prayer chain that was set up during this very stressful time, which included Kewite Graham (Harold) Heywood and his wife Eira. We hope that this Covid-19 Pandemic will eventually be kept under control and we can all get back to some sort of normality.



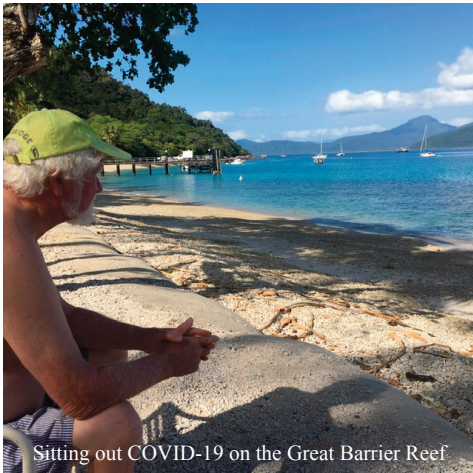


**Reg Leach:** Well what a year we've all had to endure! This year my PSA blood readings increased and I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. I opted for surgery to remove the prostate and I'm pleased to say all is well now. What a fantastic NHS we have! I would urge all gentlemen to have a regular PSA blood test to ensure you are okay.

As a judge for South & South East in Bloom we were unable to meet entrants on-site this year to view all their hard work. We opted for desktop judging, based on the previous year's results, with entrants sending in their folio of work and listing their achievements in the last year. Entrants were really pleased that they were able to enter in 2020 in spite of Covid-19.

Now that I am feeling fitter my allotment has been a great distraction from the realities of life. I had a spectacular crop of tomatoes as well as many other fruit and vegetables. Neighbours very kindly helped out on the allotment while I was laid up. Community spirit here has prevailed. Best wishes to everyone for 2021. Let's hope for a year of some normality.

**John Maddox (1961/63):** Almost anticipating lockdown, and wishing the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment Museum Trust to recognise both VE and VJ Days in May and August respectively, I liaised very early with the Luton Parks manager who was embarking on the development of a new, but small arboretum, adjacent to the Wardown Park central museum. Being keen to support his idea, as Chairman of the Regiment Museum I arranged donation of two sapling trees, *Ginkgo biloba* and *Prunus* 'Tai Haku' to be his first plantings. This was, in turn, supplemented by two more trees from my Rotary Club, *Fagus sylvatica* and *Tilia cordata* (Winter Orange) with others from The Institute of Landscape Architects, nine trees celebrating their anniversary year. All this before we had to self-isolate during those soaring temperatures of July. Glad to confirm that all trees are thriving. Best wishes to both and all who remember me. ©John Maddox



**Jim Mitchell (1966):** Having been almost completely unaffected our year has been spent reading about the development and spread of Covid-19 and thinking about our family and friends who have had to cope with the shocking virus. Living many miles away from any outbreaks I have turned from first hoping it would be only like a serious outbreak of influenza until now realising the impact it is having in Europe and America, and it's hard to believe the discomfort it is having. It was also hard to take seriously at first when three state premiers took extreme actions and closed the state borders, which made them very popular, only to open them immediately after their re-elections to Parliament.

This is the first time for many a year we have been unable to travel internationally, but have tentatively booked a cruise from Brisbane to Southampton for 2022 hoping that life will have returned to some form of normality, but are not holding our breath.

**Tony Overland: Operating a plant nursery business during the Pandemic!** We will certainly remember 2020 as the year in which the Covid pandemic significantly changed our business operations. The previous year had been one of our most successful. My son Andrew started a nursery in 1994 specialising in hardy perennials. A few years later his twin brother Philip joined him and then my daughter Carole. New activities were introduced, group tours of our gardens, a busy tearoom, plant fairs, licensed weddings ceremonies, special events, open days and a touring caravan site.

The year started off well with regular customers returning, good sales and plans in hand to develop further business activities. Then lockdown happened! Overnight, no customers, no events, no tearoom, no income! Everything we had worked for stopped! At that time in March our display tables were brimming with thousands of plants ready to be sold. We had three part time staff and three family members to support. We decided to start a click and collect service, developed our website to display all the plants and associated garden items we had for sale. We actively promoted the service through social media. Items could be ordered, paid for and a time slot booked for collection, all online with little direct customer contact. We invested in Covid-secure equipment. We altered our sales method taking mainly card payments online.

Now virtually all sales are plant oriented, although income levels are lower we have been able to redefine activities to match the prevailing conditions. We set up an online operation; throughout the UK, learning in the process packaging techniques, searching out suppliers and parcel delivery firms. The experience has focussed the business toward its original objective - the production and sale of quality plants. With these changes we have time to further develop the business and more importantly our online outlet is operating 24/7. We are uncertain about what the future will bring, but we believe that a determination to change and adapt to new methods of operation will be the key to success in the future.

**Udai Pradhan:** Dear Friends old and new, as we leave behind the pandemic year filled with confusion, trauma and pain, a profound story I read recently titled “The bridge on the River Choluteca” by Prakash Iyer allowed me to view the pandemic under a different light. It was the story of a 484 metre long bridge over the River Choluteca in Honduras,



Keshab C. Pradhan and Udai with *Paphiopedilum* Keshab Chandra Pradhan

Central America – a region well known for extreme weather conditions. A Japanese firm was asked to build a bridge that could withstand the extremities of the weather, including floods and hurricanes. The bridge, after it was built, was indeed an exceptional one until hurricane Mitch hit Honduras! While all other bridges were swept away, only this one survived. Unfortunately, the road leading to it and the road leaving it were swept away by the floods and the river too changed its course! So, in the end the bridge became *a bridge over nowhere*. The author beautifully uses the example of this bridge as a metaphor to speak to the readers about the world that is drastically changing and how understanding and adapting to these changes becomes crucial for us to move forward. He says “We focus on the bridge. And ignore the possibility that the river underneath could change course.” Think about that too. ‘Built to last’ might have been a popular mantra. But ‘build to adapt’ could be the way to go.” The pandemic has surely forced each one of us to follow this very direction!

Here in the Himalayas, although the spread of the coronavirus was not as drastic as in other parts of the country and elsewhere in the world, major panic did set in at the beginning which led us to alter our thoughts and lifestyles. There were radical re-adjusting, re-learning, and adaptation in order to become a part of the changing new world. I had recently ordered a book on *Terrestrial Orchids* by Naresh Swami that had to be quarantined for 24 hours before I could lay my hands on it! Who would ever have imagined in the past years that simple things like books that were purchased from elsewhere in the country or abroad required quarantining for 24 hours?

Just before the lockdowns, we paid a visit to the Wayside Nursery, Sikkim in order to meet Mr. Keshab Chandra Pradhan (VMH), my uncle, who is a pioneer in Orchids, Primulas, Rhododendrons and other plants. I wanted to present to him a *Paphiopedilum* hybrid that I had created and named in his honor for his immense contribution to the world of plants. He was overjoyed to see the perfect large burgundy flower and to receive the Certificate of Registration from the RHS. Later, he wanted to show us his collection of Orchids and other plants in the well-maintained nursery. It was a treat for the soul to go around his miniature Botanical Garden with all the exciting Orchids, Oxalis, Clivias, Rhododendrons, and an orchard of some 50 new varieties of Oranges from Japan and other places!

Amongst his Orchid collection, we ventured upon a *Cymbidium* hybrid that particularly caught my attention. It was *Cymbidium* Devon Odyssey ‘Wendy’, a hybrid from our Himalayan parent, *Cymbidium devonianum*. My uncle very generously gave me a whole plant with flowers which connected us to Keith Andrew - who coined the Plush Danglers for the *Cymbidium devonianum* hybrids. Also while at Kew, I had bought two seedlings of *Cymbidium* James Drysdale with *Cymbidium devonianum* which was named by Keith



*Cymbidium* Devon Odyssey



*Cymbidium devonianum*

as *Cymbidium Dryden*. Later, as President of the Rotary Club of Kalimpong, I had the opportunity of creating another *Cymbidium* hybrid using *Cymbidium Dryden* and *Cymbidium eburneum* as parents and naming it after the then International Rotary President, Herbert Graham Browne. Keith's theory on Orchids was 'being able to see beyond what you are looking at'. The RHS recognised his



Dr. Henry Noltie talking to Hemlata about her paintings



had done of the Blue Amaryllis as well as other works in her portfolio that comprised largely of paintings of Orchids in their natural habitat.

On 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2020, our joy and excitement knew no bounds when Hemlata was invited to receive the West Bengal Government's prestigious Award the 'Bongo Ratna Award' ('Bongo Ratna' meaning the Gem of Bengal) by the Chief Minister, Ms. Mamta Banerjee during the the Uttarbanga Utsav (Uttarbanga Festival) in recognition of her contribution in the field of art, conservation and education in the Himalayas.

In February 2020, Tej (my wife) and I visited the Agri-Horticultural Society's Flower Exhibition at Siliguri, West Bengal and immensely enjoyed the brilliant array of plants that had been displayed by the local growers comprising Orchids, Roses, Chrysanthemum, Dahlias and other seasonal flowers. There were stalls where we also bought Ferns, Orchids and Bromeliads. Tej shares my keen interest in growing plants and she doubles up the joy with her every contribution in our nursery. She has green fingers and everything that she plants seems to thrive. From growing seasonal plants to creating bonsai plants, to maintaining a wonderful vegetable garden she does it all! Besides, she keeps getting seeds, saplings and cuttings of trees and bushes and she either plants them at the nursery, or if she has enough to spare, she distributes them to those interested. Her enthusiasm is

achievement by awarding him the prestigious Gold Veitch Memorial Medal.

On 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2020, Dr. Henry Noltie of Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, U.K. (who is also our good friend) came visiting after a period of nearly 20 years. As we went around our plant nursery, he wanted to see the Windermere Palm. I showed him the *Trachycarpus* in its natural habitat near our house. Thereafter, I showed him the Blue Amaryllis (*Worsleya procera*) growing on a stony ledge next to our house. The plant came from Brazil and so I had re-created the habitat akin to that of its natural habitat. Henry was a curator at the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens and had authored a book on Indian Botanical Drawings. He was deeply touched and excited to see the painting that Hemlata



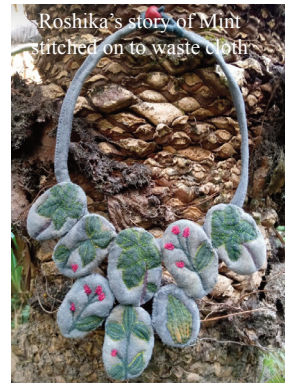
Agri-Horticultural Society's Flower exhibition at Siliguri, West Bengal



simply contagious! March saw us going through the lockdown so we stayed at home. I kept myself busy with plants and writing, while Tej took over the homeschooling and grooming of our grandchildren. She has a creative and innovative way of teaching them so they always end up having fun whether at work or at play! Her traditional culinary skills have always been appreciated so she made time to teach the same to other family members also. The nursery thrived as I could give personal attention and time to it. I was thrilled when *Paphiopedilum harrisianum* bloomed for almost three months this time! It is one of my favourites because of its variegated leaves. It was a gift from Ganesh (Ganesh Mani Pradhan) during the 1980s and I consider it a 'heritage plant'. *Paphiopedilum harrisianum* was a hybrid originated by Veitch and registered in 1869! It is a cross between *Paphiopedilum barbatum* x *Paphiopedilum villosum*.



*Paphiopedilum harrisianum*



Roshika's story of Mint stitched on to waste cloth

Just before the pandemic, Alyen Foning and Girish Arora, visiting tutors to Hemlata's Art School, helped set up the departments for Accessories and Textile Design at the school. Alyen and Girish have been working towards nature documentation and conservation through their own art practices and have been teaching the students the ropes. Traditional methods of documentation like the forgotten art of storytelling and techniques like stitching, block printing, vegetable dyeing etc. were introduced. Roshika Sharma had sketched the habitat of the local mint (*Mentha spicata*). Her assignment after that was to do a thorough research of the mint which took her into an old mythological story about this plant. The key word for her was "old" which reminded her of fossils. The final jewellery (a lovely neck piece) she strung together was from waste materials like old t-shirts etc. bringing in a fossilized look with the story of mint 'etched' on it. The results were astounding! These young students were coming up with a unique body of creations that gave a different approach to natural history documentation.

Hemlata's Art school remained shut during the lockdowns but it gave her more time to focus on her own research and paintings. As the months progressed though, and she found the village children loitering around aimlessly, she brought some of them together, helping them out with general education as well as teaching them art on her terrace garden. Three of her senior-most students continued their classes in Accessories design with the visiting tutors while completing their internships in Botanical Art with Hemlata. In November, as the lockdown was lifted in the hills, she began offering short certificate courses in botanical



Tej tutoring our youngest grandson Yuvaan



Udai transplanting seedlings at his nursery

art/illustration to research scholars and college students from the hills as well as to select students from other states. The Botanical Survey of India, Kolkata, West Bengal was the first to send one of their young members, Rima Chakravarty, to complete this course. It was a proud moment for the art school and for those of us who have seen Hemlata striving for the last 12 years in order to establish this department at the art school!

Towards the end of the lockdown, we observed many positive changes that had occurred all around us. Nature had been given an opportunity to rejuvenate herself. The beauty of the silence was invigorating and appreciated by many. Pollution had lifted in the major towns and cities and people were excited with the sightings of the blue skies after a long period! The fields that were once barren were irrigated and organic crops, vegetables and fruits sprouted everywhere! Young people who had returned home due to the pandemic were

lending helping hands in family businesses and ventures and were coming up with innovative ideas and strategies to begin life anew. The wise grandparents and elderly people in the villages were only too happy and proud to share their invaluable skills, knowledge and experiences with the young generation so they could understand their roots better and also find their footings in the hills once again. Nature was thriving like never before. It was indeed a time of great change for us!

As we leave behind 2020, may we have the courage and faith to usher in the New Year with the simple yet profound Apache blessings -

*“May the sun bring you  
new energy by day,*

*May the moon softly restore  
you by night,*

*May the rain wash away  
your worries,*

*May the breeze blow new  
strength into your being*

*May you walk gently through  
the world and know its  
beauty all the days  
of your life.”*

Stay safe everyone. We truly hope that this pandemic will in due course become the reason for a better, healthier and more joyous world!

**Richard Ward:** In our Editorial in last year's Journal we urged Guild members to send us their experiences of the Coronavirus pandemic; and we mentioned this on the website too. Such an awful virus that literally affected the whole world needed to be recorded for posterity by Guild members for Kew Guild members as far as it affected them. Rather like those who fought in the last war it seems that the bad memories get pushed away, and thus I made a few notes in June. For me, at the age of 80, it could have been a lot worse.



At lockdown in late March we were classed as 'vulnerable' so within three weeks we had weekly food deliveries from Sainsbury's; milk was delivered in bottles to the door; and we were allowed out only for urgent shopping, and once a day for exercise. Happily we had had the wettest winter for years, followed by the sunniest/driest spring on record in the south-east, and for those of us with gardens, and allotments, it was a blessing. I read that Suttons Seeds sold 25 times more seeds than usual; and one company saw a 1000% rise in mail-orders for young vegetable plants. With all nurseries (and Kew Gardens) closed until early June it became a challenge to find veg. seeds and composts although into April mail-order became the norm. It's hard to remember way back in mid-March that there was panic buying and shortages of essentials' such as pasta, toilet paper, wipes, and face masks. For a short time, many authorities closed their public parks.

As I write in mid-June all pubs, restaurants, cinemas and most leisure facilities are still closed; we are still only permitted to socialise in groups of no more than six, and the Kew Guild Trustees meeting will shortly be held on Zoom. Fast-forward six months to the end of the year! I struggled but embraced new technology to stay connected. Online shopping has almost become the norm. Happily, as Covid-19 restrictions were tightened those working outdoors were allowed to do so more freely. In my semi-retirement I took to making a few 'horticultural' videos for Kew Horticultural Society to keep busy and spread the word. In mid-summer we bought three chickens and now I'm growing veg. on our allotment for them as well as the family! In late September, just before travel restrictions



were re-imposed, Wiena and I had a few days' holiday to visit family members; and enjoyed tea, cakes and a piano reception at the home of Brenda and John (Log) Whitehead in Wales. Most other contact with Kewites has been electronic or telephonic. Our heart goes out to all those wonderful skilled people who are involved in horticulture, agriculture, leisure, science, and research who struggled against appallingly difficult situations this year. Our professions are more appreciated now. Thank you.



### John Whitehead: Botanical Peregrinations to all the Countries in the World.

More people have been up into Outer Space than have visited all the countries in the world. I was amazed by this statement when I watched a BBC travel show in 2020. The TV programme featured possibly nearly 100 adventurous travellers who had been to all the countries in the world. A young man named Sam, who was on a world mission having continuously visited 183 countries, was unfortunately stuck on the Pacific Ocean island of Tonga and unable to continue his travels due to the dreadful spread of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020.

The United Nations recognise 196 countries together with their territories, comprising 237 in the world. My global botanical peregrinations total 232 countries and territories, that is not yet including the Gaza Strip and the islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon. My origin stems from below sea level on the drained Fenlands. The river Nene flowed on a bank above a field away from Four Chimneys farm, where my mountain to climb was a solitary oak tree. The farm had drinking water from the roof and the buildings have now gone but the oak tree is still visible on Google Earth. In winter the annual flooding of nearby Whittlesey Mere, reflected images of Peter Scott's flight-filled skies of wildfowl. Exciting journeys with my Art Master, Mr Driver from the Duke of Bedford School, Thorney, was when he often took me bird watching. Travelling at weekends in his little Austin A30 car to the Dog-in-a-Doublet Lock, where the tidal sea salt water meets the freshwater of the river Nene, was excellent for spotting Black Terns and Slavonian Grebes.

Botanical expedition planning began when starting my student days at Kew in 1969. We were instantly exposed to an explosion of diverse plant experiences and knowledgeable staff, all in one special historical place, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, one of the foremost botanic gardens in the world. In 1970, David Trevan and I were awarded the very first Alpine Garden Society Travel Scholarship for a plant collection expedition to the mountains of Macedonia. Graduating at Kew in 1972, I was awarded a prize for the best Landscape Garden Design, and the Thornton Smith Travel Scholarship to the Seychelles Islands to study the impact of ecotourism on the endemic flora. This provided the opportunity to collect plants for Kew which included the Double Coconut *Ludouicea maldivica*, the largest and heaviest seed in the world.

Having completed my travels to all 196 countries in the world over a period of 46 years, the last country was to East Timor in 2016, exploring the endemic *Eucalyptus orophila*



View of Mt. Everest and Brenda, at Rongbuk Monastery, Tibet, 2018 ©John Whitehead

forest. During my travels at many airports, it was always a race against time to sketch plant designs on a dozen or more postcards, often with colourful botanical stamps, to send back to the UK. I hope to catalogue all my botanical cartoon peregrinational postcards, which I sent from many countries and donate a set to the Archives of the Kew Guild. Iconic journeys to the Top of the World were completed by visiting the Mt. Everest south base camp in Nepal in



1977 and north base camp in Tibet in 2018, surviving the intense cold and lack of oxygen. During the Nepal trekking expedition to Mt. Everest base camp, I collected seed of the Himalayan Pine *Pinus wallichiana* in the forest below Namche Bazaar and now the fine specimen of my 43-year-old pine is growing near the Jodrell Laboratory at Kew.

The philosopher, poet and pigeon guru Jim Emerton called me phlegmatic...and I had to reach for a dictionary! But the success of my botanical peregrinations is partly influenced by...Roy Lancaster the world plantsman's favourite saying 'Happy Days'... the phenomenal accessible global travel made possible by Frank Whittle, the inventor of the jet engine! © John Whitehead

## Obituaries

*Our thanks to Graham Burgess for his assistance with obituaries - Ed*

### **Peter T Bridgman**

13<sup>th</sup> June 1933 – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Peter's first job was in the Tax Office which he could not find any interest in. He found that Kew Gardens had vacancies for garden boys and was pleased to obtain one. After a period, the Curator Bill Campbell suggested he should obtain experience outside Kew in public parks so he went to work in Regent's Park. Following a period here he returned to Kew again as a garden boy, then eventually entering the two-year student course.

He was very keen on classical music and had a very large collection of recordings. He was Music Secretary while at Kew and in later years arranged music afternoons at his home with the 3As organisation. As a teenager he became interested in folk dancing, becoming so knowledgeable he was able to remember off by heart the calls and dance-movements of many dances. He was in great demand in the folk-dance world. For many years he was a member of the Charlbury Morris Dance Group.

Keith Toft adds: "many of you will have had advice and plants from him. He could not resist sowing seeds and propagating for the plant stall. My garden holds many memories of him, as well as anecdotes he told with each plant. He was always interested in other gardens and gardeners and supported the Charlbury Garden Society for many years. He was on the committee for 30 years and President for the last five years. He was in great demand as a judge throughout Oxfordshire and beyond. When he competed, he always ran out of mantelpiece space for prize cups. He will be missed by a great many gardeners."

Brian Morgan who worked with Peter for some time in the National Agricultural Advisory Service adds: "Peter was a dedicated professional Horticultural Advisor. He entered the National Agricultural Advisory Service (MAFF later ADAS & DEFRA) about 1965/66. His advisory work took him firstly to East Sussex then Gloucestershire, finally to the three counties of Oxon, Bucks & Berks until he retired. Peter had a wide general knowledge of horticulture and plants, gained mainly from Kew and other locations via London Parks and Weed Research Organisation. His sound and practical application of advice and excellent communication skills made him very popular with growers and nursery people. He maintained a keen interest in all new experimental techniques which encouraged him to carry out observational trials and field studies across his specialist interests in glasshouse production and nursery stock. He insisted on seeking out those training courses most applicable to his work and was very good at sensible, down to earth practical application of new methods and their financial implications."

Peter was highly respected by members of the horticultural industry. His warm, gentle manner also gained him popularity with his colleagues and we shall remember him fondly for his good humour and interesting hobbies of folk dancing and classical music. Peter sadly passed away due to Covid-19, and we send our sincere condolences to his friends and family.

### **Stephen Bristow**

22<sup>nd</sup> May 1951 - 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020



*Photo courtesy of Andrea Bristow*

Born in 1951 in the south of England, Stephen spent his early years studying horticulture. He worked at The Waterperry Horticultural School near Oxford. He met Andrea in 1975 and they married in 1979. He entered Kew in 1977 as part of 1<sup>st</sup> year intake. It was not long before he invested in something that became a key part of his life and the lives of many others. Yes, Mutual Improvement. He played a key and active role in The Mutual Improvement Society. He was Chairman 1979/80 and his annual report revealed his competence in mutual improvements involving other people.

Roy Lancaster attended one of his events and said "best £1 I have ever invested in".

Academically he was proficient and when he received his diploma in 1980 he received a credit. He left Kew in 1980. The same skills were then exercised in the Nile Province and in 1984 he became Project Manager for Green Deserts Ltd. He recorded eating, chatting and drinking with Sudanese nomads and this was with locals of all ages. He was involved there for four years.

Andrea and Stephen had a lovely family. They set up The Greenwood Country Park, initially 16 acres and it opened in 1993. So, it linked to his basic training at Kew but also tuning into international topics and of course understanding what people of all ages and races enjoyed. Currently sold on but a marvellous asset inherited, <https://www.greenwoodfamilypark.co.uk/>. Stephen was awarded an MBE and the park won many awards including some of the highest tourist ratings. One year 135,000 people visited.

Sadly he spent a few years struggling with cancer and passed away at their home in Llansadwrn, Anglesey. There was a funeral on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Stephen was the proud father and father-in-law to Daniel and Sarah, Martin and Leah, and Chris and Intan. He was also the cherished grandad of Dewi, Aled, Max and Ludo. We send our deepest condolences to his wife Andrea and their children plus four grandchildren.

**Ray George Coulter Desmond**  
**MBE, FLS, Honoris causa**  
 (1925 – 2020)



©RBG Kew, originally published in 'Kew: The History of the Royal Botanic Gardens', by Ray Desmond

Ray was a notable science librarian and archivist and a remarkable historian of botany and bibliographer of natural history. He was born in Newport, Monmouthshire, Wales in 1925. On leaving school he went straight into The Royal Air Force and saw active service in Europe and the Far East during the Second World War. After the war he studied librarianship at Loughborough College (now the University of Loughborough), Leicestershire, before taking his first job as Reference Librarian at Walthamstow Public Library in North East London. Whilst there he published a small book on local newspapers with The Walthamstow Antiquarian Society. Writing in the preface the chairman, Annie. R. Hatley, summed up Ray's professional approach that continued throughout his life, thanking him for "the meticulous and authoritative treatise" and noting "its entertaining human touches as well as the aptness of its scholarship".

From there Ray moved to the Tropical Products Institute Library of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in Gray's Inn London. He was appointed as the first professionally-qualified librarian at The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in 1961. As Chief Librarian he designed and co-ordinated the new Main Library. This involved the moving of every book, periodical and pamphlet box from the confusion of rooms and corridors throughout the herbarium and the calculation of the shelf-spaces needed to provide a single systematic arrangement of all the stock in the new library. He established the Archives at Kew.

He joined The India Office Library and Records as Deputy Librarian on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1973 shortly after completing his Master's Thesis on Plant Illustration in British books and periodicals of the nineteenth century, for which he was awarded a distinction and the Cowley prize from the University College London, School of Library, Archive and Information Studies. His interest in photographic history led to a book on photography in India during the nineteenth Century and joint authorship of two other publications. In the 1980s Ray oversaw the transfer of the management and administration of The India Office Library and Records from the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Office to the British Library and the subsequent integration of the staff of the British Library's oriental collections. He retired as Deputy Keeper 9<sup>th</sup> August 1985. Another former colleague Catherine Pickett stated that "the extraordinary breadth of his interests and his infectious enthusiasm co-incided with a period of fast-moving changes within the institution, developments to whose success he contributed in no small measure".

In retirement he held a Bentham-Moxon Research Fellowship at The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and was awarded the Kew Medal for "outstanding merit" in 2009. Ray served as President of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History (now The Society for the History of Natural History) from 1975-1978 and on the Council from 1964-1975 and 1978-1981. He was awarded Honorary Membership in 1990 and the SHNH Founders Medal in 1994. He was a Founder member of The Garden History Society

serving as their Vice President and Chairman as well as Honorary Librarian. He led a tour of Moghul gardens in India in 1984. As a member of The Linnean Society Library Committee (1977-1997) and Honorary Archivist (1986-1996) he was elected Fellow Honoris causa of The Linnean Society London in 2001. From 1977 Ray was the author of almost a book a year and the last published was *Great Natural History Books and their Creators*. Published by the British Library in 2003.

In 2002 he was awarded the MBE for services to garden history. His two reference books *Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturists* and the *Bibliography of British Gardens* have proved invaluable to researchers with the 1994 edition of the Dictionary (with the assistance of Christine Ellwood) winning the 1994 Library Association McColvin Medal as outstanding reference book of the year. In 1993 Ray co-authored '*A Century of Kew Plantsmen*' with Nigel Hepper to commemorate 100 years of the Kew Guild.

Ray is survived by his wife Biddy and daughter Margaret (by his first wife Betty, who died in 1978). Granddaughters Josephine and Hannah share in so many memories, some not included in this brief obituary.

*Thanks to Fiona Ainsworth, Mrs Margaret Foster, Professor Gren Lucas and Dr E. C. Nelson for helping the compilation of this Obituary.*

## **Kenwyn Francis Rowarth Pearson**

**FCIHort Dip Hort Kew**

**6<sup>th</sup> May 1952 – 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2020**

**Plantsman and Horticulturist**

by Gareth Manning

After completing his formal education at Cawston College in Norfolk and his initial horticultural training at the Norfolk School of Horticulture, Kenwyn started his career as an apprentice with Laxton and Bunyard nurseries. Work there included staging and staffing the stand at Chelsea flower show. 1971 saw him move to Lancashire College of Agriculture at Myerscough to undertake the National Certificate in Horticulture, whilst there he participated in a range of student organisations.



The big move came in 1972 when he started on the Kew Diploma course at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. Again, participation with the student's union, fete committee, student newsletter and Kew Club were some of the many ways he helped with student life.

At the gardens he achieved qualifications and a high standard of horticultural education. He is also fondly remembered for organising and cooking a Christmas day meal for the staff. The successful event saw meal portions being transported round the gardens from various mess rooms, under the coordination of Kenwyn. All the staff working that Christmas had an excellent lunch. Having successfully completed the diploma course, he continued to work at Kew, until gaining employment with Milton Keynes New Town Development Corporation. He worked in the landscape section assisting in the planting and green structure that



eventually became Milton Keynes, with some wooded areas now of course being mature woodland. In 1978 he was appointed to the position of Head Gardener to the Cadogan Estate in central London, this involved the modernisation, mechanisation, maintenance and development of many gardens with a variety of sizes and issues. For example, the garden in Sloane Street was above an underground car park, rather limiting plant choice. Dutch Elm disease and the Great Storm of 1987 resulted in the estate losing many mature trees and needing his judgement as to what was safe or what needed urgent attention.

After leaving Cadogan he became a professional consultant and worked with local authorities and a number of clients with private gardens up and down the country, advising on redevelopment and maintenance. He also became an inspector for City and Guilds and Edexcel looking after standards in Horticultural education. During this period, he became a Liveryman with the Worshipful Company of Gardeners and a Freeman of the City of London. Regrettably ill health forced him to give up work in 2005, and there followed nearly fifteen years of ill health concluding with him living in a nursing home near Horsham and eventually losing the ability to communicate. He died of a stroke aged 68 years.

Kenwyn dedicated his spare time to a wide range of horticultural organisations, he was a constant supporter of Perennial from when the Kew student fete supported the then Gardeners Royal Benevolent Society, becoming a Trustee and Vice Chairman as well as Director of GRBS Enterprises. He was a founding member of the Professional Gardener's Guild with whom he also helped found the PG Trust. He was Vice Chairman/Director of Plant Heritage (then known as NCCPG) from 1988-1995, Secretary to the Kew Guild (1994-1999, 2006-2011) and Vice President in 1998. As a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture he served as a Council member from 1991 to 1997. He was a Bloom judge for London in Bloom (Trustee 1997), The London Gardens Society, South and South East in Bloom and a committee member of London Metropolitan Gardens Society. He also served as a moderator for the RHS exams in 2003 and was part of the review panel of the RHS MHort in 1993.

Kenwyn took his mischievous sense of humour to all situations and loved to socialise. His parties during Chelsea week were legendary and all who came to know him would attest that they have all lost a great friend and colleague. Due to the current Covid-19 situation a funeral is uncertain. Kenwyn will eventually be laid to rest in the family plot in Ribchester, Lancashire.

# The Kew Guild Statement of Financial Activities For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

		UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	RESTRICTED FUNDS	ENDOWMENT FUNDS	TOTAL 2020	TOTAL 2019
	Note	£	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM:</b>						
<b>Incoming resources from generated funds</b>						
Donations and legacies	2	763			763	36,209
<b>Income from Investments</b>						
Investment income and deposit interest	3	15,370	7,894		23,264	23,053
<b>Income from charitable activities</b>						
<i>Advancement of horticultural and botanical knowledge</i>						
Events and other membership activities:						
Membership subscriptions		9,734			9,734	9,664
Annual Dinner		61	-		61	3,032
AGM Soiree		-	-		-	
Other events and income		22,487	-		22,487	1,267
<i>Encouragement of horticultural and botanical education</i>						
Awards and prizes:						
Donations and legacies	4	-	-		-	-
<b>Total income and endowments</b>		48,415	7,894	-	56,309	73,225
<b>EXPENDITURE ON:</b>						
<b>Expenditure on Charitable activities</b>						
<i>Advancement of horticultural and botanical knowledge</i>						
Events and membership activities:						
Website project		433	-		433	449
Journal of The Kew Guild		4,777	-		4,777	5,453
Annual Dinner		184	-		184	2,954
AGM Soiree		-	-		-	-
Newsletter		68	-		68	-
Presidents' name bars		-	-		-	150
Presidents' medals		-	-		-	760
Archivist		105	-		105	738
Other events and membership activities		22,292	-		22,292	1,127
<i>Encouragement of horticultural and botanical education</i>						
Award making: Awards	5	500	6,500		7,000	9,697
Prizes	5	825	-		825	600
Student fellowship		341	-		341	-
Kew Guild Medal		450	-		450	359
Grants to institutions		8,500	-		8,500	3,000
<b>Other Expenditure</b>			-			
Membership database		1,051	-		1,051	(2,653)
Administrative costs		3,721	-		3,721	6,555
Other expenditure		3	-		3	-
<b>Total expenditure</b>		43,250	6,500	-	49,750	29,189
<b>Net Income/(Expenditure) before investment gains/(losses)</b>		5,165	1,394	-	6,559	44,036
Net gains/(losses) on investments:						
Unrealised movements on investment assets	8	31,514	6,437	9,887	47,838	113,461
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		36,679	7,831	9,887	54,397	157,497
Transfer between funds		(8)	8	-		-
<b>Net movement in funds for the year</b>		36,671	7,839	9,887	54,397	157,497
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>						
Total funds brought forward as restated	12	639,127	114,745	154,586	908,458	750,961
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	12	675,798	122,584	164,473	962,855	908,458

## The Kew Guild Balance Sheet As at 31 December 2020

	Note	2020		2019	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Investments	8		795,819		747,981
<b>Current assets</b>					
Stock of Kew Guild medals		3,969		4,416	
Debtors	9	5,740		5,545	
Cash at bank and in hand	10	166,956		162,765	
<b>Total current assets</b>		<u>176,655</u>		<u>172,726</u>	
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	(9,629)		(12,249)	
<b>Net current assets or liabilities</b>			<u>167,036</u>		<u>160,477</u>
<b>Total net assets or liabilities</b>			<u><u>962,855</u></u>		<u><u>908,458</u></u>
<b>The Funds of the Charity:</b>					
Endowment funds	12		164,473		154,586
Restricted funds	12		122,584		114,745
Unrestricted general fund	12	197,464		181,679	
Unrestricted designated funds	12	<u>478,334</u>		<u>457,448</u>	
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>			<u>675,798</u>		<u>639,127</u>
<b>Total Charity funds</b>			<u><u>962,855</u></u>		<u><u>908,458</u></u>

The financial statements will be approved by The Trustees on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 following the completion of the independent examination. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the Guild's financial affairs. For further information the full Annual Report and Financial Statements, including the Independent Examiner's Report, should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from Linda Baharier, 1 Castlehill Cottages, Outwood Lane, Bletchingley, Surrey, RH1 4LR.

*The accounts for the original Kew Guild charity (306064) and the new Kew Guild CIO charity (1174033) will be provided as separate financial records to the Charity Commission. However, for ease of reference they have been combined together for the Journal.*

# JOURNAL OF THE KEW GUILD

## Index to Volume 17, 2016–2020

Prepared on behalf of the Trustees of The Kew Guild by Alex George, ‘Four Gables’, 18 Barclay Road, Kardinya, W.A. 6163, Australia; a.george@murdoch.edu.au

Entries for RBG Kew (Kew Gardens) are here indexed under the Gardens’ full name, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, with a separate set under Wakehurst Place. Some features of the Gardens are indexed individually, e.g. Millenium Seed Bank. Scientific names and titles of publications are in *italic*. A page number in **bold** indicates an illustration, and one in *italic* indicates authorship of an article. Plants are indexed when some information or a photograph is given but not if mentioned in passing.

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