



**CORNWALL GROUP
NEWSLETTER FOR
April 2017**

Last week I decided that it was time to put winter aside and get on with the spring gardening. For the first time this year I was able to walk over the grass without feeling it sink slightly beneath my feet. That hasn't stopped the cold wind blowing, but there is a bud coming up on the *Trillium*. Just the one but I'm not going to complain. Trilliums really don't like drying out, and there has been no chance of that this winter. I wasted many years on dry 'bulbs' before I finally accepted that it was worth paying the extra for established plants in pots.

While peering intently at the amazing things pushing up through the ground something tapped me on the shoulder, and for a moment I thought it was (very polite) zombies. The moment passed in a flash as a large white petal from the *Magnolia* above hit the floor. I hadn't even realised it was flowering. The next morning the rain had returned like a dear friend who has come down on holiday and stayed just a single day too long. I have always loved you, and I will remember that once you are finally on the road home again. So the rain came like an old friend, but the afternoon cleared and with the *Magnolia* scattering petals it was a perfect time for a garden visit. Caerhays, here I come.



Caerhays Castle.



View to the sea.



**The woodland garden,
planted along the valley.**

Caerhays Castle sits at the head of a narrow valley and has a picturesque view of the sea to the south. The gardens lie behind the house and are now mostly on the west slope of the valley. The east slope was originally included in the garden, but it was abandoned after the second world war. In recent years work has resumed, clearing and replanting. In time it will be re-opened as part of the main garden.

The house was built sometime around 1810 for the Trevannion family by the architect Sir John Nash who was also responsible for Brighton Pavillion. At the same time the stream in the valley was dammed to form a lake. By the 1830's the Trevannions were bankrupt with gambling debts rumoured to be the cause. There was little or no upkeep of the house until the 1850's when the Williams family bought it. The estate had been auctioned in a number of lots but Michael Williams had been able to secure most of the original estate. The roof on the Dining Room had fallen in, and substantial work had to be done to make the house habitable.

Towards the end of the century the first plantings were made in the garden, and this coincided with the great era of the plant hunters. Caerhays received seed from the expeditions of both George Forrest and Ernest Wilson and plants from those collections remain in the garden today. One of the key challenges that the gardeners face is identifying

these significant plants and propagating them because many of them are coming to the end of their natural life.



Magnolia x veitchii .



Magnolia 'Mr Julian'.



Magnolia doltsopa .

The first Magnolias were planted in 1897 and today the garden is famous for the flowering spectacle of the mature trees. One of the National Collections of *Magnolia* grows here. This tree of *M. x veitchii* (*M. campbellii x denudata*) was planted in 1921. It produces large numbers of vigorous, upright 'water shoots' from the branches and originally these would have been pruned out, because it was believed they reduced flowering. Nowadays there isn't the time or labour for this work but the flowering performance of the tree doesn't seem to have been affected.

New hybrids are being made every year with the tree Magnolias but it is not easy work. Squirrels are a pest, and will take the seed before they are ripe enough to harvest. Once they have been harvested safely and the seeds germinated, it will be four years before the seedlings grow large enough to plant into the garden. It can take up to 40 years for them to flower so it pays to be patient. Trees that are not worth naming are cut down to give space for the next seedlings, there are always plenty more coming along.

The most recent new cultivar has been 'Mr Julian'. The tree had been overlooked for many years, but when studied from the hillside above, it was clear that it was a good plant. It is being propagated now and will be released for sale in the next year or two.

At the top of the garden, a large old specimen of *M. doltsopa* (previously *Michelia doltsopa*) was scenting the air for many yards around. It was introduced from Yunnan in 1918 by George Forrest.



Camellia x williamsii
'Monica Dance'.



Camellia 'Cornish Snow'.



Camellia japonica 'Adelina Patti'.

Camellias also play an important part in the garden at Caerhays, and the Williams family have played an important part in the development of modern Camellias. The first hybrids between *C. japonica* and *C. saluenensis* were raised here by J. C. Williams and named *C. x williamsii*. Some of those original seedlings such as 'St. Ewe', 'J. C. Williams' and 'November Pink' are still popular cultivars today, but the family has continued to raise good plants. 'Monica Dance' is a more modern cultivar, raised in the garden at Burncoose near Redruth (another Williams garden, and home to the nursery of the same name). The double pink flowers are streaked with dark pink and grow on a large but well shaped bush.

Camellias are vigorous plants and the gardeners have no qualms about cutting them back hard if they become too large. The plants grow away strongly afterwards and flower more freely. They try to cut them to leave a central trunk, and a large branch on either side so that the bush will have a good shape when it regrows.

C. 'Cornish Snow' is another hybrid raised in the garden, with *C. cuspidata* being one parent. In my garden it isn't very vigorous, but here in its birthplace it made a magnificent and elegant shrub without the lumpy heaviness of the *C. japonica* cultivars. A pinkish flowered plant was raised at Hilliers from a very similar cross and named 'Winton'.

I was also very interested to be shown *C. 'Adelina Patti'* by Michael Levett, who was very kindly showing our group around. The pink flowers are lightly veined with red and have white margins to the petals. It sports frequently, and the bush we were shown had both red and white flowers growing on it as well. Eventually these sports will take over, and the plant will be removed and replaced, but for now it makes a very interesting specimen.



Rhododendron 'Cornish Red'.



Rhododendron 'Caerhays Crossbill'.



Rhododendron falconeri .

It is impossible to imagine a Cornish woodland garden without Rhododendrons. At Caerhays they are found in all sizes, from low ground covering evergreen azaleas to giant trees. *Rhododendron 'Cornish Red'* is a vigorous hybrid between *R. griffithianum* and *R. williamsianum* first planted in the garden in 1921. It is used throughout the garden as a windbreak to protect other things. It is cut down in sections every 5 to 6 years so that it never gets too tall. If it reaches 50-60ft it can blow over in a storm, such as the 'hurricane' in 1990 which blew over many of the original shelter trees on the hillside, and which has resulted in sections of the garden being cleared and replanted.

Older Rhododendrons are cut back hard like the Camellias. The rough barked species take it quite well, 80% of them regrowing vigorously. The smooth barked species are not as forgiving, and only 50% of them come back after cutting back hard.

Rhododendron 'Caerhays Crossbill' was looking perfect in the afternoon sunshine (all thoughts of rain long forgotten). It is a hybrid of *R. spinuliferum* and *R. lutescens* raised in the garden. It is floriferous and distinctive in its yellow and peach shades but it has yet to find favour on the show bench.

In a sheltered valley woodland it is not surprising to find that the large leaved Rhododendron species prosper. *R. falconeri* was looking wonderful, the russet indumentum on the undersides of the leaves glowing in the light of the setting sun. It was introduced from Sikkim by Sir Joseph Hooker in 1850, one of many plants he introduced as part of his botanical expedition to India. In 1865 he was appointed Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.



Stachyurus chinensis .



Pinus radiata.



New planting in the field .

Caerhays manages to be a perfect blend of the picturesque, the traditional and the unexpected and is well worth a visit during the opening season, there is always something wonderful to see. For me the best plant of the day was *Stachyurus chinensis*, the pale

primrose flowers cascading from the branches and catching the spirit of both the sunshine and the recent rain. Definitely a plant for the Cornish weather, it also appreciated the protection of a windbreak of ancient *Pinus radiata* more than 150 years old. Unfortunately most of the pines toppled in 1990 causing mayhem in the top of the garden. It took many weeks to clear the debris, and a large section of the garden was replanted as a consequence. Approximately five miles of Cherry Laurel hedge run through the garden now to help break the force of the wind. They are cut back by hand on a 5 to 10 year rotation to keep them young and resilient.

After the 'hurricane' a strip of the adjoining field was planted with woodland trees to protect the new plantings, but gardens develop and new plants arrive. Space was needed for the latest *Magnolia* hybrids to keep the National Collection up-to-date. Eventually the whole field was taken over and shelter belts planted. New plants have been put in, but of the first 100 *Magnolias* planted only 10 or 15 have survived in the exposed conditions. Camellias have been tougher, and although they are a bit yellowed they will grow out of it once the trees start to provide some shade. They have been planted to provide some low shelter for other young plants as they develop, and the surplus will be removed as the garden develops. Michael estimates that it will be another 5 or 6 years before it is possible to plant any *Rhododendrons* among them, it is still too windy for them to survive.

Already the garden is looking to the next step. The new plantings in the field are separated from the rest of the garden by a block of woodland, and there are plans to clear the trees and plant the area so that the new section of the garden is better connected to the old.

The day started with rain lashing through my garden. I watched it through the window as my porridge was cooking. Just the sort of weather that suits tree ferns but not so good for gardeners. Fortunately the weather changes as fast as the garden at this time of the year and there is a great joy in the unexpected.

I did not imagine that I would end the day with a cream tea in this remarkable castle, set in a magical pink woodland.



Dicksonia antarctica .



Caerhays castle...



...and gardens .

LAST MEETING

New Garden Worthy Plants. by Bob Brown.

This month it was a pleasure to welcome Bob Brown to talk. He had originally intended to talk about 'Hardy Ferns' but unfortunately he had misplaced the pictures so instead he talked about 'New Garden Worthy Plants'. In the event, we were very lucky. Bob gets to see a great many new plants through his nursery, Cotswold Garden Flowers, but also in his role as a trial judge with the RHS. He is adamant that a new plant has to perform well in gardens to be worth having and he introduced us to many plants worth considering.



***Digitalis* 'Illumination Pink'.**



***Primula* 'Innisfree'.**



***Podophyllum* 'Spotty Dotty'.**

New plants are essential to commercial nurseries but it is also important that they are garden-worthy. Unfortunately many novelties have not been trialled properly before they are introduced. *Digitalis* 'Illumination Pink' was one of last years introductions, a hybrid between the common foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea* and *D. canariensis*, one of the perennial foxgloves from the Canary Isles (that used to be *Isoplexis* but are now shown to be part of *Digitalis*). Unfortunately the Canary Island Foxglove is not hardy and neither is the hybrid, so although it was introduced with a great fanfare, it isn't a good garden plant.

Primula 'Innisfree' was introduced a few years ago, and although it is a strong grower, Bob feels that the dark flowers have little impact in the spring garden.

Podophyllum 'Spotty Dotty' has also been available for a few years but it is an excellent new plant with clusters of garnet flowers hidden beneath the large mottled leaves.



***Echinacea* 'Art's Pride'.**



***Echinacea purpurea* 'Razzmatazz'.**



***Echinacea purpurea* 'Green Jewel'.**

A lot of new *Echinacea* hybrids have been bred in recent years. 'Art's Pride', a hybrid between *E. paradoxa* and *E. purpurea*, was the first. The orange flowers are typical of the hybrid between these yellow and purple species. *E. paradoxa* comes from the northern states of the American mid-west and regularly experiences temperatures as low as -50degC. It is very cold hardy, but at these low temperatures no pathogens survive. In warmer winters it is killed by crown rot and the hybrid suffers the same fate in the UK. People from outside might imagine that Cornwall is a paradise where it is possible to grow anything but 'Art's Pride' shows a different side of 'hardiness' - it is killed by winters that are too warm!

Echinacea 'Razzmatazz' is a "double" form of *E. purpurea*, the flower head is made up entirely of ray florets. Bob finds it easy and perennial but the flowers always seem to have a brown eye which he doesn't like. It was discovered by a Dutch grower producing the typical form for the cut flower market. It was a single plant growing in a field, and he had it tissue cultured. Unfortunately buyers at the Dutch flower auctions didn't like it so it was introduced as a garden plant. 'Green Jewel' is another selection of *E. purpurea* which seems to be a good garden plant with dramatic flowers.

There is a trial of *Echinacea* going on at present at Wisley with 160 cultivars planted already. Any that die will be replaced with new varieties and by the end of the trial we should have a good idea of which will be perennial in our climate. Duplicate trials are being conducted in Boskoop and southern Poland.



Thalictrum ichiangense .



Eryngium 'Jos Eijking'.



Choisya x dewitteana
'Londaz' WHITE
DAZZLER.

There has recently been a trial of *Thalictrum* at Aberglasney in south west Wales. One of the things the trial showed was that *Thalictrum* don't like the wet! *Thalictrum ichiangense* has been a good recent introduction. It grows to about 20cms tall and has a gently spreading rhizome. It has pale lilac flowers and small purple leaves. *Eryngium* is another genus that can be hard to cultivate. They like well drained moist soil. *Eryngium alpinum* can be difficult to grow, but the cultivar 'Superbum' is a good plant, with striking feathery blue flower heads. 'Pen Blue' and 'Jos Eijking' are both much easier to grow with excellent colour flowers. Both are more reliable, returning year after year.

Acanthus can be a problem in gardens, seedling freely. On summer evenings Bob can sit in his garden and hear the ripe seeds popping out of the seed heads. *Acanthus spinosus* 'Ferguson's Form' is a compact improvement on the species. It came from Keith Ferguson and the most remarkable thing about it is that it is sterile so it doesn't produce seedlings.

There have been a lot of *Choisya* forms introduced in recent years, but WHITE DAZZLER is the best of them. A hybrid between *C. ternata* and *C. arizonica* from the south west USA. The hybrid has thin leaflets and is very cold hardy with good shape. It flowers abundantly in spring with a repeat showing in autumn.



Anisodonteia 'El Royo'.



Erodium 'Spanish Eyes'.



Dianthus 'Memories'.

Anisodonteia 'El Royo' has been one of the best recent introductions. It is a tall narrow shrub, making a neat column but it is constantly in flower (perhaps with a slight lull in June).

Eventually it will get too old and leggy and it may not regrow if cut hard back but it is easily replaced from cuttings. *Erodium 'Spanish Eyes'* is another plant that can flower for twelve months of the year which makes it good garden value.

The recent RHS trial of *Dianthus* showed that there are some really good new cultivars being bred. Caroline Vaughan is one of the best breeders and she has introduced *D. 'Memories'*, another plant that will flower throughout the year. It is a very neat grower and unlike the old 'Mrs Sinkins' it doesn't ever have a split calyx. It looks like any other *Dianthus* but it performs much better in the garden.

*Epimedium* 'Amber Queen'.*Lamprocapnos spectabilis*
'Gold Heart'.*Linaria* 'Peachy'.

Bob didn't really like *Epimedium* until some of the modern cultivars were bred. 'Amber Queen' from Robin White flowers for him from September to May and has good foliage. The combination of good flowers and excellent foliage has resulted in some good new garden worthy plants. 'Arctic Wings', 'Akebono' and 'Spine Tingler' are all worth looking for. *Epimedium* 'Sandy Claws' from Darrell Probst in the USA has red spiky foliage throughout the year.

Bob's son Edmund grows *Sambucus* and currently has 168 kinds in his collection, all grown in a grid pattern and spaced 4.25m apart to suit the mower he uses! He breeds them for scent and flavour. There is a large market for Elderflower Cordial, and many have been bred for flower in Austria. There are many different scents and flavours, including almond. A hybrid between *Sambucus nigra* 'Thundercloud' and *S. nigra* 'Aurea' has resulted in *S.* 'Milk Chocolate' which continues to produce heads of elderflowers until Christmas.

Carex 'Evergold' is an excellent old cultivar but when Bob had it micropropagated he found some variations which have been called 'Everoro', 'Everillo' and 'Everest'. The last of the three is pure white in the centre of the leaf, where 'Evergold' is golden. At the other extreme of colour, *Dahlia* 'Karma Choc' is a very dark flowered form that has become very popular and performs reliably.

Lamprocapnos (*Dicentra*) *spectabilis* has been popular for a long time, but the yellow foliaged 'Gold Heart' is quite new, and surprisingly the combination of pink flowers and yellow foliage seems to work. 'Valentine' is even newer, and has scarlet and white flowers rather than the usual pink. It is not a plant for a limey soil.

In 1897 a rural Norfolk vicar travelling on a local train saw a double flowered Oxe-eye Daisy from the window. He pulled the communication cord and collected a root. By 1904 it was being grown in California where Lester Burbank created a three-way hybrid to produce the Shasta Daisy. All of the old cultivars come from that original hybrid but recently breeders have been producing new cultivars, including some with yellow flowers.

Unfortunately the new developments have all been short-lived in the garden. An exception had been 'Shapcott Summer Clouds' which was bred specifically as a perennial for garden use rather than as a flowering pot plant.

Linaria purpurea is another old garden plant, seeding freely once established. Recently is has been crossed with *L. dalmatica* to produce a range of new cultivars. The best of them is 'Peachy' which is reliably perennial and sets almost no seed.

A bewildering array of new plants. At the end of a very entertaining talk I am amazed that Bob had the energy left to judge the Three Stems competition (he is much funnier than my notes, I'm sorry to say)!

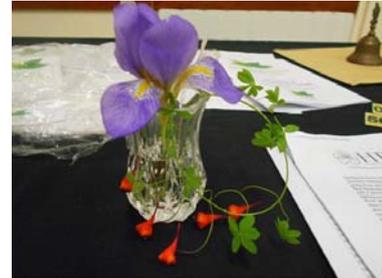
There was some sensational colour for the season, and some charming spring flowers. Phil Gadd won with a vase of *Chaenomeles* flowers. None of us had the courage to offer any more of an identification. Bob selected them as the winner and added "A quince!". Jean Gadd came second with a group of red Camellia flowers, a perfect formal double. Simon Waterhouse was third with *Iris lazica*, *Clematis armandii* and a charming trail of *Tropaeolum tricolor*. Bob said that he knew someone in Evesham who was growing the *Tropaeolum* commercially. The flowers are used as decoration in cocktails!



1st. Phil Gadd
Chaenomeles .



2nd. Jean Gadd
Camellia.



3rd. Simon Waterhouse
Iris lazica
Tropaeolum tricolor
Clematis armandii

Oemleria cerasiformis was brought in by both Jo Waterhouse and Sue Lake. It is a lovely early flowering shrub that isn't seen often enough in gardens. Brian Hiley brought in a fascinating vase with *Senecio petasites*, a *Rhododendron* and *Fuchsia* 'Golden Arrow'. I was amazed to see a large brightly coloured hardy *Fuchsia* in flower at this time of the year (and thank you for the cutting, Brian)!

John Mann brought in a selection of *Pulmonaria* with 'Blue Ensign' and 'Redstart' making a fine contrast, but in my garden at least this week belonged to the daffodils, and Peter Howard's *Narcissus* 'Snipe' was as beautiful as any I have seen.



Senecio petasites ,
Rhododendron and *Fuchsia*
'Golden Arrow' from Brian
Hiley.



Fuchsia 'Golden Arrow'. *Narcissus* 'Snipe' from Peter
Howard.



Janet Symons showed a beautifully subtle vase, the sharp green of *Euphorbia robbiae* picked up in the green centre of a Hellebore, and the softest lilac *Vinca* imagineable, which she thinks could be *V. acutiloba*. Gilly Mann had an equally subtle blend, the palest of warm tones lit the flowers of *Rhododendron* 'Crossbill', slightly richer in *Pieris japonica* 'Valley Rose' and slightly more lilac in *Daphne bholua* 'Jacqueline Postill'.



Oemleria cerasiformis.



Pulmonaria 'Redstart',
'Trevi Fountain' and 'Blue
Ensign'.



Rhododendron 'Crossbill',
Pieris 'Valley Rose' and
Daphne 'Jacqueline Postill.

Bob Brown brought some lovely plants with him to sell, I hope you all managed to find something new and interesting for this year. I was particularly pleased to see *Euphorbia rigida*. It is larger growing than *E. myrsinites* but has the same long stems and fantastic almost succulent leaves. It prefers a sunny place, and at the moment that seems highly unlikely in Cornwall, but the rain will stop eventually and the *Euphorbia* will be amazing.



The display table was packed with spring flowers. Daffodils have come to a peak in my garden this week, so I can't resist the delightful and tiny 'Elka' brought in by Pam Dormand and raised originally by Alec Gray at Kehelland, near Camborne.

John Mann brought a tray filled with his wonderful Hellebore flowers. He has them in an astonishing variety and there was a beautiful anemone form picotee, the pale tepals and nectaries perfectly outlined in mulberry red.

I wanted to show off, so I brought in a pot of *Corydalis solida* 'George Baker', not because it is rare or difficult but because I have finally got one to grow outside. In my dreams I have a carpet of salmon-red under my trees, in reality I have a single short flower spike, but it's a start!



Narcissus 'Elka'



Helleborus x hybridus
seedlings



Corydalis solida 'George
Baker'

OTHER EVENTS LAST MONTH

Some things never change. The Show Season has started despite the weather.



***Leucadendron* 'Safari
Sunset'.**



The show hall...



**...and a tea-party in a seed
tray.**

West Cornwall Spring Show, Marazion. 3rd March 2017.

West Cornwall Spring Show is the first local show in the county and brings together the remarkable assortment of talents to be found in the county. For many years it was dominated by the magnificent crates of cauliflowers from the local growers, competing for prizes. The cauliflowers are a thing of the past, but the floral classes have expanded and the childrens classes always manage to produce a smile.

Local nurseries also put on a good display with a special emphasis on those borderline plants that do so well in local gardens. Penberth Plants showed some lovely South African bulbs, Stephen Mules at Lower Kenneggy Nursery had a beautiful compact *Grevillea* that I would have tried if I had anywhere to put it, and I saw a plant of *Buddleia colvillei* 'Tregye' on Nick Lock's stand. It is the best form of an already remarkable plant. Kelnan Plants display of Restios is always astonishing, and Surreal Succulents are pioneering new ways of growing succulent plants in the home and garden. Ron and Kit Lindsay once again brought out a display of orchids and I apologise to the lady with the wonderful daffodils - I didn't get the nursery name!



That sinking marquee.



***Rhododendron* 'Vuyk's
Hybrid'.**



Magnolias being reckless.

RHS Spring Flower Show, Rosemoor. 11th - 12th March 2017.

At last the weather has started to feel spring-like. I arrived at Rosemoor with the sun almost shining, and it stayed almost shining almost all day. I was pleased to see that the new exhibition centre was almost finished. It didn't quite make it in time for the Spring Flower Show but we are still hoping to see it in use at the AGS show on 1st April. With their usual calm efficiency the RHS moved the show into the part of the old marquee that stands on the lawn behind the education centre. Unfortunately it soon became clear that the foundations of the marquee were sinking into the lawn and the show was re-sited in the education centre. I imagine someone somewhere had a sleepness night over it all, but the RHS are at their best when common sense takes over, and the unexpected venue turned out to be a triumph. As a

photographer I appreciated the quality of the light, but it was also a well arranged display, spread over a couple of rooms with just the smallest overspill.

My favourite exhibit, possibly of all shows ever, was *Rhododendron* 'Vuyk's Hybrid' staged on the hob of a cooker in the kitchen. It was wonderful, space was tight!

This show has its roots in the old *Rhododendron*, *Camellia* and *Magnolia* show. In the Education Centre the *Magnolias* were putting on a great display. It's a pity that they wilt so rapidly after picking, but the flowers are so astonishing they are worth seeing even as they droop. The usual suspects all appeared. 'Caerhays Belle' is still my favourite in the "Excessive, bordering on Ridiculous" class (one vase), but many of us were very impressed with a single bloom of 'Aurora'. It had well shaped flower in a clean bright pink with a paler flash in the heart of the tepal. Not a hint of the sinister vinous purple that makes some *magnolias* look mournful when the sky turns angry.



***Narcissus* 'Andy Blanchard'**



***Rhododendron* 'Vuyk's Hybrid'.**



Camellias in the lecture room.

The Lecture Room in the entrance building had been called into service to house the Daffodils and Camellias. This year the classes for dwarf daffodils were very well supported and I am driven green with envy. Many of the wee wonders are only available for love, not money, and I don't think my chances are good (boo-hoo)! I had to slake my lust for tiny daffodils with Ron Scamp, who sent me home with a pot of 'Tiny Bubbles' and his catalogue of temptation to keep me going through the daffodil-free months of summer.

The *Rhododendron* classes were well supported, and it was delightful to see all the pinks and purples in their true colours. The old marquee was a lovely and complex experience, the flapping of the side panels always added a frisson of excitement to any show, but it was delightful to see exhibits released from its mustard-tinted gloom. For the first time I enjoyed the sparkle that comes from *Rhododendron irroratum* 'Polka Dot'.

The classes for a single camellia flower are always worth careful study. My highlight for the year was 'Spring Mist' with minute pale pink double flowers. What can I say, I like the tiny ones. 'Gwenneth Moray' also caught my eye, a white flower with a central boss of lemon petals. Very like 'Jury's Yellow' but somehow brighter.

I had a bite of lunch and a walk around the garden and when I returned to the show the sky had misted over, but the colours had intensified. A marvellous day.



The bandstand.



Vase of *Aloe* flowers.



Exhibits in the main hall.

Falmouth Spring Flower Show. 18th March 2017.

I do love a show with a bandstand, don't you? Falmouth Spring Flower Show is held in the Princess Pavillion with all its amenities, not the least of which is the bandstand. The nurseries and commercial stands are arranged under the glass roofed veranda that surrounds the lawn. Inside the hall the show had the usual astonishing displays of camellias and daffodils. There were also classes for *magnolias*, cut foliage and assorted classes for pot

plants interposed between the childrens miniature gardens in trays and a class for decorated shoes. Everything you might expect and an astonishing number of things you really wouldn't.

My favourite exhibit was a vase of cut *Aloe* flowers with half a dozen species on show and a single *Sarracenia* flower as though the ensemble needed something even more exotic. I loved it, it was insane (and I'm not going to say anything about the floral art classes except "Jolly well done")!

The lighting of the hall is always interesting - the only natural light that gets in squeezes through the keyhole in the door. The hall has the feeling of an ancient music-hall, lit with arc lights and filled with noise and the hysteria of the crowd. A shiver of excitement added by the thought that the whole thing could burn to the ground at any moment. Of course it won't. The lights are actually modern halogen bulbs, casting deep shadows but posing no risk. I thought the pictures would be terrible as a result but I was wrong. I have picture after picture of daffodils caught in bright shafts of light and in the background, sinister shadows where ancient things lurk.

Good thing they have a cafe, I needed a manly capuccino with chocolate sprinkles to calm the palpitations.



Plant sale in the Pannier Market.



A familiar face.



***Primula allionii* in variety.**

Plant Heritage Sale, Tavistock Pannier Market. 19th March 2017.

Tavistock is only just over the border into Devon, so it was not surprising that a number of members made it to the Plant Heritage sale in the Pannier Market. Pam Dormand brought the same good cheer to proceedings that she brings to selling raffle tickets at our meetings. Nice to see you Pam, lovely white *Watsonia* as well.

A lot of nurseries were in attendance, some familiar from sales in Cornwall, others that rarely venture south over the border. Spring flowers appeared in force, some beautiful double primroses from Millwood Plants and I was especially pleased to see that Hidden Valley Nursery (Devon) had some unusual Celandine cultivars - 'Brambling' and 'Tortoiseshell' both with wonderful patterns in the leaves in brown, green and silver. Among the most delightful things my favourite was a tray of *Primula allionii* cultivars in shades of white, pink and lilac from Tale Valley Nursery. Just the thing for a Sunday morning.

Those with a taste for bacon butties were also well catered for!

Plant Finder.

Nina Paternoster has drawn attention to the wealth of garden plants that our members grow. Some plants are very rare and some difficult to get hold of as they are not fashionable or do not suit the quick turnover of garden centres. She thinks we should tap into this great resource.

If you are looking for a particular plant and having trouble finding it, mention it to Nina or alternatively send it to me at the newsletter and I will include it here.

Nina is kicking things off:

"I am looking for *Phlox stolonifera* 'Fran's Purple'. I saw this in Keith Wiley's book "Designing and Planting a Woodland Garden". I love Phlox, but the snails and slugs do too!

According to Mr Wiley this plant is more pest resistant. If someone has a spare plant could they bring it to the Members Plant Sales table at the next meeting where I can collect it.

Perhaps if there is more than one, other members might be interested.

My e-mail address is cornishprimroses@gmail.com if you would like to contact me to co-ordinate plant supply. If every member grows it, that may be too many to fit in my garden!



COMING EVENTS

If you know of events coming up that might be of interest to the members please let me know so that I can include them. cornwallhps@gmail.com

Hardy Plant Fair. Saturday 6th May 2017. 10.00 - 2.00pm.

The Hardy Plant Fair is coming. Please don't forget that it is on the **Saturday** again. This is a big fund raiser for the Cornwall Group, and helps us to keep subscription rates down, so please come along and support the nurseries attending. If you have spare plants you have propagated or divided, please consider giving them to the Members Table.

Hardy Plant Society Early Spring Plant Fair.

East Lambrook Manor, Saturday 25th March.

See the website for details. www.eastlambrook.com

Daffodil Show at Trelissick.

Trelissick, nr. Truro, Saturday 25th March, 10.30 - 5.30, Sunday 26th March 10.30 - 5.30.

See the website for details. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/trelissick

Wisley Spring Plant Fair.

Friday 24th, Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th March, 9.30 - 4.30pm.

See the website for details. www.rhs.org

Early Daffodil Competition, Wisley.

Tuesday 28th, Wednesday 29th March in the glasshouse.

See the website for details. www.rhs.org

RHS Spring Plant and Orchid Show, Vincent Square.

Tuesday 28th March 6-9pm, Wednesday 29th March 10-5pm, Thursday 30th March 10-5pm.

See the website for details. www.rhs.org

Visit to Lamorran gardens, St. Mawes, TR2 5BZ.

Thursday 30th, March, 2.00pm.

Cornwall branch of Plant Heritage have invited HPS members to join them in a visit to the gardens at Lamorran, meet at the entrance at 2.00pm.

The new head gardener will welcome us and answer any questions. We get the chance to see the garden a few weeks before it opens for the season.

The charge for admission has been reduced to £7.50 for us.

Alpine Garden Society Show, Rosemoor.

Saturday 1st April 2017.

The largest Alpine Plant show and sale in the south west. New venue at Rosemoor this year.

See the website for details. www.alpinegardensociety.net

Cornwall Garden Society Show, Boconnoc.

Saturday 1st April 2017. Sunday 2nd April.

Cornwall's largest show and plant fair.

See the website for details. www.cornwallgardensociety.org.uk

Wildside.

7th, 8th and 9th April 2017, 10 - 5pm.

The gardens at Wildside are opening in April for the first time this year. They are expecting the Magnolias and spring bulbs to be at a peak.

See the website for details. www.wileyatwildside.com

The Daffodil Show, Wisley.

Tuesday 11th, Wednesday 12th April in the Pinetum Marquee.

See the website for details. www.rhs.org

Sticker Plant Sale.

Saturday 15th April, 10.00 - 1.00pm.

Plant sale in Sticker, near St. Austell.

**Please would you let me know of any garden shows, open days or other events that may be of interest to our members so that I can include them in the next newsletter.
All other content gratefully received.
cornwallhps@gmail.com**

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please note that subscriptions were due on 1st January. Can I remind those who have not yet paid to do so at the next meeting or send payment to the treasurer, Jane Hopkinson, Trewinney Barton, Mevagissey, Cornwall PL26 6TD.

Single, £12, joint £20.

Those unpaid by the middle of April will be removed from the membership list.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 5th April 2017. 7.00 for 7.30pm.

Roger Turner fom Gloucestershire will be talking about "Lust and Loveliness in the Garden".

ADVANCE NOTICE

Wednesday 3rd May 2017. 6.00 for 6.30pm.

A visit to Shirley and Ray Clemmo and their garden, Sibby Cottage, Tregrehan Mills.

Saturday 6th May. 10 - 2pm.

SPRING PLANT SALE. Truro Cattle Market, Newquay Road, Truro.

Wednesday 7th June 2017. 6.00 for 6.30pm.

A visit to Lucie Nottingham and her garden, Trenarth, Constantine.

Please let me have any items that may be of interest to the members so that I can include them in the next newsletter.

News items, upcoming events and photographs especially cornwallhps@gmail.com welcome.

Please let me know if I drop any clangers!

John Sirkett