

The University of Oxford

108

Botanic Garden & Arboretum

Friends'
newsletter

*Celebrating
400 years*

Summer/Autumn 2021



From the Editor

By Chris Thorogood



Tulipa clusiana in the Rock Garden



Tulips in the Rock Garden

We have over 40 different forms of tulip growing at Oxford Botanic Garden. Unusually, the cool, sunny weather seems to have brought all of them out in synchrony - along the riverbank, around the tree trunks and among the rocks: indeed the whole Garden was splashed pink, claret and cream this spring. Those in the newly planted Rock Garden were particularly vibrant and bode well for an impressive display of Mediterranean flora planted by Mark and his team this year - the best is yet to come.

Whilst the frosts kept some of the tenderer plants in check, the collections have prospered under the care of our horticulturalists under glass. At the time of writing, a curious bronze-coloured Canary

Island foxglove (*Digitalis canariensis*) is pushing its way assertively out of the thicket in the Upper Range. More familiar perhaps are the cocoa pods and pineapples that have important educational, as well as ornamental value. And just a few metres from these, spiral ginger (*Cheilocostus speciosus*) has been coiling its way out of the undergrowth, while exotic bromeliads (*Billbergia zebrina*) created pink explosions overhead. Best of all, visitors will be able to enjoy many of these displays once again, now that the glasshouses are reopening. Do look out for the beautiful new transfers on the glasshouse doors designed by Pia Östlund.

Meanwhile at the Arboretum, Ben and his team have been busy planting a tapestry of rhododendron cultivars and conifers with important conservation value along the Serpentine Ride. Five hundred visitors appreciated these in April, along with a carpet of native bluebells, at the Spring Awakening



Canary Island foxglove in flower in the Upper Range of the Glasshouses

event led by Tegan Bennett; those who reached the Woodland Barn at the far end of the Arboretum will also have enjoyed seeing a charcoal burn and Apprentice Arborist Will Blake dangling (safely) from the treetops.

Marking the 400th Anniversary of the foundation of the Botanic Garden, a new exhibition called *Roots to Seeds* has opened at the Bodleian. The exhibition reflects on four centuries of botanical research and teaching at the University. Lauren Baker has worked closely with DPhil and undergraduate students at the University who have created engaging video content on themes including Plants in Space, Green Cities and Overlooked Crops.

Finally, congratulations to Nienke Abbing for the successful delivery of the 400 Trees, a campaign supported by local community groups, volunteers and Friends of the Botanic Garden and Arboretum. The campaign will leave a lasting legacy for generations to come.



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Transfers on the glasshouse doors designed by Pia Östlund



A pineapple in flower, grown for education purposes

From the Director

By Simon Hiscock

In the last Newsletter at the start of 2021, I reported that, despite being in another lockdown, the Garden and Arboretum were open and we were still hopeful of staging all planned physical events to celebrate the Garden's 400th anniversary. However, in March amid ongoing uncertainties about the pandemic, the difficult decision was taken to postpone the majority of the physical events planned for this July to July 2022.

We will therefore launch a year of celebrations from 25th July 2021, which will culminate in a week of festivities beginning on 15th July 2022 with the mini 'Encaenia style' event originally scheduled for 25th July this year. The marquee will then be used for a week of events and activities themed by the day around Heritage and History of OBG, Literature, Botanic Gardens and Botanical Science, Art, Food, and Wellbeing. The following people have extended their offers to participate in 2022: Alice Oswald (who will perform new material inspired by the Botanic Garden), Raymond Blanc, Professor Sir Peter Crane (former Director of Kew), Ian Limmer (Peter Beales Roses Ltd), Pia Östlund and friends, the Oxford Lieder Festival and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Events will also be scheduled for the Friends, Bobarts' and Danby Patrons' groups. As events are confirmed, details and booking information will appear on our website - see the new home page created by Digital Content Officer Franco Santarsieri at <https://www.obga.ox.ac.uk/>.

However, the dates for some events in 2021 were fixed, especially those associated with the 400th anniversary exhibition, *Roots to Seeds: 400 Years of Botany at Oxford* at the Weston Library. This exhibition was officially opened by Professor Sir Paul Nurse FRS to an online audience on 17th May. Bodley's Librarian, Richard Ovendon, presided over the event, which included a panel discussion with the Exhibition Curator, Dr Stephen Harris, me and Professor Nurse, which was chaired by Magdalen College President, Dinah Rose QC. The exhibition (currently with social distancing restrictions in place) runs until the end of October with associated education and engagement events taking place online or in a scaled-down format at the Botanic Garden and Weston Library.

On 14th May some of you may have tuned in to an episode of Radio 4's Gardeners' Question Time aired in celebration of the Garden's 400th anniversary. The programme, recorded in early May, featured Chris Thorogood and Mark Brent as part of the panel and discussed the newly reconfigured rock garden referencing the late 18th-century expeditions of John Sibthorp and Ferdinand Bauer in the eastern Mediterranean.



Tulips in the Rock Garden

The cold dry April has meant that this year's flowering season has been delayed by around three weeks. This meant that the 'Spring Awakening' event at the Arboretum in late April only just caught the first flush of bluebells which were at their best during May when the rains finally came and temperatures started to rise. This brought a real awakening of blossom at both the Arboretum and the Garden, where tulips in particular have been a delight.

Celebrations of the 400th anniversary during 2021 have not worked out the way we had planned, but instead we have a full year of celebratory events beginning rather fittingly on the day the Garden was founded 400 years ago.



Spring Awakening

News from the Garden

By Mark Brent

It is probably fair to say that spring hasn't gone exactly as planned for more reasons than one. There has been a consistent chill in the air, and warm days in March and April have been rare. Flowering in the Garden appears to be at least three weeks later than it was last year. That said the flower displays have not disappointed. The magnolias escaped the worst of the frosts with *Magnolia denudata* and *M. x soulangeana* putting on an extended show in April. The experimental massed bulb planting along the riverbank has been well received, and the four-month succession of flowering bulbs offers a new attraction to a formerly moribund part of the garden. Alongside the cowslips the diminutive lemon yellow *Narcissus* 'Hawera' is proving to be the final highlight as the meadow grass gradually takes over and the camassias come into bloom. In recent years pyramid orchids have begun to establish along this section of the riverbank and we will give the wild flowers time before mowing and removing the hay in mid-summer.



Narcissus and tulips in the Rock Garden

The replanted Rock Garden is providing its best ever display. The careful layered planting of bulbs, shrubs and perennials by Russell Beeton is delivering a wonderful Mediterranean feel for visitors entering the



The Rock Garden in early April

Lower Garden. Further species, some with important conservation value, are now growing on from seed received from other botanic gardens in the propagation houses to augment the collection.



The bulb display along the riverbank



Tulips overlooking the Cherwell

Tulipa clusiana
var. *chrysantha*
in the Rock Garden

Camassia in flower along the banks of the Cherwell



Orobanche minor var. *pseudoamethystea* in the parasitic plant bed

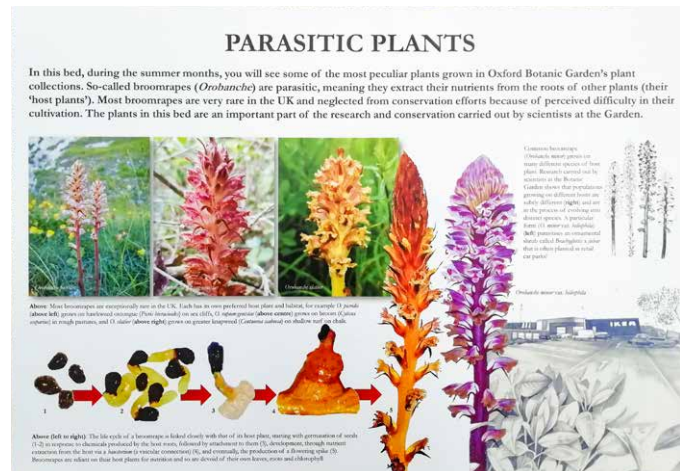
The raised timber bed constructed to display our new collection of parasitic broomrapes (*Orobanche*) is now planted with various species not grown in botanic gardens before. Collected from the shingle shores of the east Kent coast, *Orobanche minor* var. *pseudoamethystea* is already developing flowering shoots on the sea holly it is infecting. Close by, a newly installed interpretation panel describes in detail the biology and life cycle of *Orobanche*.

In collaboration with Peter Beales we have developed a new Oxford Physic Rose to celebrate our 400th anniversary; this has now been planted around the Garden. We are gradually building the rose collection

throughout the Garden, to highlight connections with literature, and the origins of garden roses. Several roses have been introduced to the Plants that Changed the World display to explain the ancestry of garden roses, and their horticultural development through crossing. This display also provides a historic reference to the work of the former Director, Professor Cyril Darlington.

Ruth Calder who has worked at the Botanic Garden for ten years, firstly as a trainee and then as a Botanical Horticulturist, has moved on to new pastures. Ruth was involved in establishing the informal displays of the Walled Garden including the Literary Garden, which references our many links to authors such as Tolkien and Lewis Carroll, as well as botanical connections to the works of Shakespeare.

In the coming weeks and months we look forward to the relaxation of Government guidance enabling us to reopen our Glasshouse doors, and welcome back volunteers to the Garden once more.



Parasitic plant bed interpretation panel



Tulipa saxatilis in the Rock Garden

Living fossils in the Rock Garden

By Chris Thorogood

Haberlea rhodopensis is a rare plant that is native to the mountains of northern Greece and Bulgaria. It belongs to a very ancient lineage of plants in the gesneriad family (Gesneriaceae) that includes African violets. Its ancestors are long extinct and most of its closest relatives today grow further east, in the Himalayas. As such, this plant has been dubbed a 'living fossil' (a name used to describe plants and animals that have remained unchanged over long periods of geological time). Large clumps of the



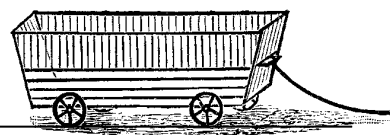
Haberlea rhodopensis in the Rock Garden

plant can be seen growing out of fissures in the rock, immediately to the left, on entering the Lower Garden. Our talented

horticulturalists have also managed to propagate it, so we look forward to seeing more of it in bloom in the future.

News from the Glasshouses

By Kate Pritchard



Cart for hot coals. *Gardeners Chronicle* v23 1885

Over the last 400 years, gardeners have performed nothing short of horticultural alchemy at Oxford Botanic Garden. The Bobarts put their horticultural skills to good use, breeding plants to increase income for the Garden, as well as for teaching. Today we continue to grow plants used for teaching, however our remit is much more inclusive and ambitious, growing plants to engage all visitors with the scientific wonder of plants.

In the last year, there have been striking parallels with events during the first decades following the establishment of Oxford Botanic Garden as a physic garden in 1621. At the time of the plague outbreaks of the 1660s, gardeners continued to tend the collection of plants the Garden's Keeper, Jacob Bobart the Elder, had started to amass from his appointment in 1642. During the dry but cold spring this year, the glasshouses have been a welcome refuge and we have been transported to other climates via the collections we cultivate. Horticultural colleagues Richard East, Ruth Calder, Lucinda Lachelin, Louisa Hall and Head of Horticulture Mark Brent, have been at the Garden throughout the pandemic, tending the collections with dedication and care.

Anecdotal evidence from the 17th century provides stories of unpredictable weather patterns and extreme weather events. Descriptions of successive drought summers, wet summers, bitter winters, crop failures and famine make the horticultural achievements of gardeners during this period all the more extraordinary. Collaboration and innovation would have been critical against this backdrop, and Bobart was well-connected, receiving and exchanging



A bromeliad (*Billbergia zebrina*) in flower in the Rainforest House

new plants regularly. *Agave americana* was an exotic succulent grown at the Garden as part of a collection of plants needing winter protection. We still grow agaves under glass today. *Pachypodium lamerei* is another exotic succulent we cultivate at the Botanic Garden. This plant originates from the species-rich, dry, succulent forests of western Madagascar. In nature, it grows at elevations up to 1,200 metres, where sea fog from the Indian Ocean condenses on the spines and drips onto the roots at the surface of the soil.

To extend the range of succulents and other tender plants that could be grown, the first permanent glasshouse was constructed at the Garden in 1670. This was followed by further construction and today there is no need to drag carts of hot coals through the glasshouses on chilly nights! The urgent challenge now is to be able to continue to maintain and develop a diverse collection,



Thaumatocephalum bipinnatifidum in flower

representative of biodiverse ecosystems beyond the UK's temperate climate, with inefficient glasshouses, whilst striving to meet the University's target of Net Zero Carbon by 2035.

As well as tending the collections whilst battling the elements and avoiding the plague, Bobart produced a catalogue of plants growing at the Garden. Today we catalogue the plants we grow using a database. Using information provided by Plant Records Officer Sarah Edwards, we have analysed the glasshouse collections to assess what we are cultivating now, and acknowledge OBG's historical collection legacy.

OBGA continues to exchange plants to support education, research, conservation and the beautiful spaces created for visitors to appreciate and enjoy. If you are able, do visit and see these plants from around the world thriving in the heart of Oxford!



Pachypodium lamerei



Agave ferox in the Arid House



Agave montana

News from the Arboretum

By Ben Jones



Rhododendron 'Goldinetta'

Those of you who have visited recently may have seen that the plantings at the far end of the Serpentine Ride have now been completed. These include many new accessions that are already putting on a vibrant display. The planting of this historic landscape in the Arboretum has been designed to be visually appealing across the seasons, and also include a balanced age structure that includes young, semi-mature and mature plants. Plants of particular horticultural merit in the scheme include *Rhododendron* 'Butterfly' and *Rhododendron* 'Goldinetta'; these beautiful floral displays have been combined with plants of conservation value. These include species such as *Picea koyamae* (Pinaceae), a Critically Endangered conifer from Japan, *Platycarya strobilacea* (Juglandaceae), a relative of the edible walnut; and *Taiwania cryptomerioides* (Cupressaceae), an Endangered conifer with an unusual



Rhododendron 'Butterfly'

distribution spanning Tibet, China, Myanmar, Vietnam and Taiwan. Several wild-collected accessions from our Japan collections have also been incorporated into the display.

Our Apprentice Arborist Will Blake continues to excel in his apprenticeship and in his contribution to the Arboretum team. Will has recently passed several chainsaw assessments, and is showing great promise in his tree climbing abilities. Under close supervision, Will is now training to use a chainsaw from a rope and harness, and has assessments scheduled for mid-July this year.

With restrictions easing, the team has been able to carry out health and safety-related tree work identified during our tree safety inspections. These works involve aerial inspections, removal of deadwood over paths, and in some cases, the dismantling and removal of large specimen trees assessed to be too hazardous to remain in our collections. These works are carried out across both sites, and can also include more remedial tasks such as vertical mulching, decompaction, and cable bracing.

I am very pleased to say that our Volunteers have returned to the Arboretum, with two separate groups now assisting with the maintenance of the tree collections. Our regular mid-week group have returned on Wednesdays, capped at six people to ensure compliance with COVID guidance. We are also supporting Farmability, which is an outdoor land-based programme for people with learning difficulties and autism. Farmability run their sessions once a week on a Thursday, and are currently working on projects based in the woods of Palmer's Leys. Since their return in April, these sessions have gone from strength to strength, and I am hopeful that this is the start of a fruitful partnership between the Arboretum and Farmability.



Will Blake climbing

Education at OBG

By Tegan Bennett, Nienke Abbing and Lauren Baker

Spring Awakening at Harcourt Arboretum

The Spring Awakening took place at the Arboretum on 24th April. Nearly 500 people enjoyed the unseasonably balmy weather, hurdy-gurdy music, food, drink, activities for children and stalls against a beautiful natural backdrop. Visitors had a choice of delicious food from Nutmeg + Thyme, Sole Luna Pizza, Coopers of Oxford and Celia's café, and Lola the vintage ice cream van was a popular addition to the event. Stalls included two local sellers from Nuneham Courtenay village: Fallow and Fields

who specialise in hampers of local deli produce, and Nuneham Pottery, designed and handmade by Margie. Other stalls included Bunny and Bear, a colourful Oxford-based childrenswear brand that promotes fun and curiosity; and Lula James Woodworking Creative, designers and makers of furniture based at the Sylva Wood Centre in Long Wittenham.

The Arboretum team demonstrated their work to the visitors including a charcoal burn and tree climbing. Families enjoyed 'making' peacocks, creating chalk and charcoal pictures, and bubble wands, all supported by our fantastic volunteers at the family friendly stall. For adults there was beer from Church Hanbrewery and samples of Physic Gin at the gin-tasting stall. The feedback was universally positive and it was rewarding to see so many happy people enjoying their time at the Arboretum and engaging with the work we do. We look forward to our next event that takes place on 19th June in celebration of our wildflower meadows.



Bluebells at the Arboretum



Watercolour classes at the Garden



Will Blake demonstrating tree climbing



Charcoal burning at the Arboretum

The Oxford Botanic Garden Great Potato Challenge

The Primary Education team has been working with schools to help them learn more about where their food comes from by growing their own potatoes. Eleven schools in areas of high multiple deprivation in Oxford city were offered the chance to sign up to the Great Potato Challenge with seven schools opting to take up the opportunity. Growing bags, compost and seed potatoes were delivered along with instructions to guide the schools through all the steps needed to 'grow their own'. There will be prizes for the schools that grow the biggest crop, the heaviest total harvest and the heaviest single potato. Good luck to everyone taking part!

Winter Lecture Series Success

Following the successful online delivery of the Autumn Science Lectures, we ran our entire Winter Lecture Series online between January and March. These were also a great success and reached a larger audience total than would have been possible in person. Highlights included Adam Frost's poignant musings on the inspiration behind his garden design, and Sue Stuart-Smith's advice on gardening for mental wellbeing - something that has become ever more important in the last year.



Adam Frost

impact and climate change relating to dietary choices. These are topics with which young audiences engage wholeheartedly and they are now embedded in the National Curriculum. During these joint study days, students will divide their time between the exhibition at OUMNH and the Botanic Garden to understand the impact of food production, and examine research into future food security.

We have collaborated with the Bodleian Library to develop the *Roots to Seeds* exhibition. Thirteen DPhil and undergraduate students came forward to create video content on research areas they are passionate about, including Plants in Space, Green Cities and Overlooked Crops. Their work has culminated in a beautiful finish to the exhibition - the future of plant scientists by future plant scientists. The exhibit opened to the public on 18th May. Find out more here: <https://visit.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/event/roots-to-seeds>. As part of the collaboration we've also launched the 'Into the Green' Poetry Project, in partnership with renowned poet Alice Oswald. This project has been designed to encourage children aged 11-16 to write poetry that celebrates the wonders of plants, gardens and green spaces.

GLAM collaborations

We have joined forces with Oxford University Museum of Natural History (OUMNH) on several projects. For Plant Appreciation Day we produced a blog on the evolution of plants, which showcased fantastic fossils from the Museum alongside their living relatives that exist in our collections. To read the blog, please go to <https://morethanadodo.com/2021/04/13/the-evolution-of-plants/>.

We have also collaborated to produce joint study days around OUMNH's *Meat: The Future* exhibition, which focuses on environmental

400 Trees for the Future

In celebration of our 400th Anniversary, Oxford Botanic Garden ran a campaign to plant 400 trees around Oxfordshire to create positive, long-lasting change. Since the start of the 400 Trees campaign in October 2020, we have partnered with local and national initiatives to reach our goal, including the Community Action Group 'Harvest@Home'. We are proud to say that we have now exceeded our target.

On 20th April 2021, Harvest@Home received 420 fruit and nut trees from the Woodland Trust. In order to provide 'food security from the ground up' to support vulnerable families, a large number of trees were planted in community

gardens and playgrounds in Kidlington, and handed out to people across Oxfordshire.

Friends of the Botanic Garden and Arboretum, John Brimble and Jenny Atkinson, have helped us significantly. They planted 100 trees alongside local Tree Warden volunteers at Hinksey Heights Nature Trail. Now, visitors and Tree Wardens can enjoy the trees and hopefully, soon, pick the fruits of their labour.



400 trees Hinksey Heights



Franco Santarsieri, the new Digital Content Officer

I am delighted to join the team at Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum. As a childhood fan of Phillip Pullman's *Dark Materials* series, it is a pleasure to work in the setting that inspired such magical stories. I am particularly excited to arrive during the Garden's 400th anniversary year, and the Digital Content Officer role will be a unique opportunity to document and share all that OBGA does.

I have a background in music and volunteered with Cheltenham Festivals for their Jazz Festival while studying. Working on creative projects led me to train as a teacher after finishing my degree. I then worked for a lovely junior school for the next six years and enjoyed my time as 'Mr. S'. Conventionally, I taught the children English and Maths, Reading and Writing, Art and Science, all the while delivering with the liveliness and enthusiasm of an NQT (Newly Qualified Teacher). An appetite for creativity never left me, even when teaching grammar (children respond well to satire), and I was interested in the potential of digital enhancements in teaching. This involved making documentaries about India, filming music videos and recording songs, stage performances for the end of year shows with Jack and the Giant and making bots dance. Who knew that learning could be so engaging?

I am only six weeks into my new role here at OBGA as I write, yet I am planning for the year ahead. I am excited for what is to come and have made a start on digital trails, new visitor experiences, photography projects and ideas for events that I cannot wait to share with you in the future. I am also introducing new processes to streamline our digital offering, and improve accessibility, to increase our audience engagement.

Moving to Oxford has opened up new avenues for me. It has allowed me to think about what I want to do and has given me the chance to apply myself to a very worthwhile cause. I find myself among a dedicated and passionate team. I look forward to supporting the work of the Garden and Arboretum in a historic year.

Friends' Section

News

From the Friends' Chairman,
Sarah Taylor

Thirty Years of the Friends

The Friends of Oxford Botanic Garden were officially launched on a freezing evening in April 1991. They had been formed in reaction to one of those recurring crises in universities' funding which at the time was leading to some University Botanic Gardens being closed. The Curators (governing body) of the Garden, chaired by Dr Josephine Peach and advised by the new Superintendent, Timothy Walker, decided to do three things: form an independent Friends' organisation (to be kept at arms' length lest they try and take over the running of the Garden!), introduce charging for entry, and exhibit at the Chelsea Flower Show: a three-pronged approach to raising funds and the profile of the Garden. All three ventures proved to be resounding successes, with four gold medals at Chelsea (all enabled by the Friends), and the finances of the Garden immeasurably improved over the years.

An extraordinarily high-powered and well-connected group of people got involved. The original steering committee consisted of Anthony Smith, President of Magdalen College as Chairman, Charles Ludford as Treasurer, Timothy Walker as Secretary and driving force behind it all, Baruch Blumberg, Master of Balliol, Oliver Impey (who had

helped found the Friends of the Ashmolean in 1969), Lady (Jill) Parker, Elizabeth Parker-Jervis, Walter Sawyer, Mary Spiller, Christopher Gibbs and Dudley Good. By the time of the first meeting of the Friends in 1991, HRH Prince of Wales had agreed to be Patron and Dr David Horrobin and Sir Crispin Tickell were Vice Presidents. Other influential supporters included Sir Simon Hornby and Primrose Warburg. University feathers were ruffled by such high-level support for what they saw as an unimportant department and the Keeper and Chairman of the Curators were summoned by the Vice-Chancellor to explain themselves, which they did satisfactorily on the basis that all those involved were connected by a common interest in gardening. The Chancellor agreed to be our President.

By November 1991, there were already 600 Friends. Shortly afterwards, June Stephenson, Sue Shacklock, Valerie Laphorne and Leslie Cowan joined the committee. They were each to play a huge part in the continuing development of the Friends. Valerie acted as Secretary until 2004, Leslie as membership secretary until 2007 (his wife Doreen became Treasurer in 1997), and Sue ran the garden visits programme for many years. In shades of things to come, two early contributions by the Friends to the Garden were for a greenhouse (the one nearest the conservatory on the riverbank) and a hard path at the Arboretum. However, the main drive was to raise an endowment for an education officer for the garden, something Timothy was passionate about. June Stephenson launched the appeal in July 1992, handing over to Rachel Hood in 1996. It

took 12 years to raise the money and in 2004, £358,533 was handed over to the University: a stupendous achievement. The membership by then stood at over 2,300 (now 3,450). The Bobarts Patrons' group was launched by Jennie Turner, another milestone.

From the start, Friends benefitted from a beautifully presented and informative newsletter, initially quarterly and latterly three times a year and from access to an extraordinary array of private gardens to visit. The time and effort put in by a legion of volunteers, of an extraordinarily high calibre, over the last 30 years has been immeasurable, and the mutual help provided to and by garden staff has also contributed hugely. However, once the number of Friends rose well over 2,000 it became clear that we could not wholly rely on volunteers for the day-to-day running, and from 2008 it became necessary to pay for a part-time administrator.

There have been just five Chairmen of the Friends since inception: Anthony Smith (1991-1994), Lady Parker (1994-2001), Bill Pack (2001-2004), Richard Mayou (2004-2017) and Sarah Taylor from 2017 onwards. They have overseen the growth of an extremely successful group that has provided immense support for the Garden, through good times and bad.

The ultimate measure of the success of the Friends is revealed by a trawl through the archives which reveals that we have given the Garden at least £2.8m over the last 30 years. On top of that, we are holding £270,000 in our Paths Appeal Fund: over £3m raised so far to help the much-loved University of Oxford Botanic Garden & Arboretum.

Events

Membership and Friends Gardens for Friends

By Rebecca Mather

We very much welcome all the new members who have joined in the last few months. How wonderful it is to be able to visit the Garden and Arboretum in these times, to enjoy the surroundings and to meet family and friends and to go as often as you like! Remember Gift Membership all through the year and not just for Christmas so that we can continue to grow our community of Friends.

In 2018 we had started a successful venture for Friends, opening our own gardens for other Friends. This raised a small amount of money for OBGA through the sale of tea and cakes but mainly was an opportunity to meet and see one another's gardens. Unfortunately, this all had to be cancelled last year but it would be great to be able to start thinking ahead for next year, ideally planning for visits in May and September. All gardens, large and small, are of interest so if you would like to do this, please contact me (rebecca.mather28@gmail.com). There are always volunteers to help with teas!

Some people have offered to help with manning a Friends' stand in the Garden during the week of 25th July, when there will be various events at the Garden to mark the start of the year to celebrate 400 years since the Garden was founded. If others of you are interested please contact me (rebecca.mather28@gmail.com) as more help is needed.

Friends of Botanic Gardens Forum (FBGF)

By Harriet Bretherton

The FBGF has now got a website, www.fbgf.org. You can read the Aims and Objectives of the organization. The first two - to support the wider interest of Botanic Gardens and encourage information exchange and sharing of experiences - are the most important.

You can also see the 18 members of the Forum and their websites under Members.

But most important of all you can read the FBGF Newsletter 3 on the website. It is under News and Read our latest newsletter. Newsletters 1 and 2 are Previous Newsletters.

To get to the FBGF website, type www.fbgf.org in your browser. Google won't produce it at the moment.

First Friday of the Month Coffee Mornings

We hope to bring back our coffee mornings at the Garden and Arboretum from August and we are exploring the necessary arrangements to do so safely, in line with Government and University guidelines. Please continue to check the Friends' events page of the website (<https://www.obga.ox.ac.uk/friends>) for updated information.

Special message to all gmail users

Gmail has a disconcerting way of filtering messages into different categories. You may miss emails from us because they have been filtered into the Promotions or Update categories. It is advisable to apply a filter to move any emails from Friends' Administrator to force them into your Personal or Primary Inbox. In particular you may not receive your emailed copy of the newsletter magazine that is published three times a year. The dates this is usually sent out are as follows:

Mid-March / Early July /
Early November

If you need any help with applying a filter to move our emails into your inbox then do contact the Friends' Administrator: friends.administrator@obg.ox.ac.uk

Don't forget your membership card

when you come to visit the Garden or Arboretum. Our ticket office staff do not have access to the membership database (for data protection reasons) and can't let you in free of charge if you don't have your membership card!

Message to all email users

If you are not receiving regular e-bulletins with news of Friends' events by email, it will be because, for some reason, we do not have your current email address. Please send an email with your name, to the Friends' Administrator at friends.administrator@obg.ox.ac.uk.

Friends' Summer Raffle

About the Event

We are delighted to announce that the Friends' Summer Raffle is now officially open!

The raffle will help raise much-needed funds to improve the paths network at the Arboretum, and we have been very lucky to receive many wonderful prizes from our kind supporters.

Enter the
Summer Raffle at
[https://app.galabid.com/
botanicraffle](https://app.galabid.com/botanicraffle)



Highlights include:

- Dinner for two at the Mansion House or at a City Livery Hall, with the Worshipful Company of Gardeners
- Several beautiful giclee prints by members of the Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum Florilegium Group
- A 400th anniversary rose by Peter Beales
- An annual digital pass to the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
- A half-day tuition for up to four budding botanical painters with Tracey Howell, OBGA Florilegium member



A £100 voucher towards a piece of your choice made for you by Tony Thomson, Oxford jeweller and silversmith



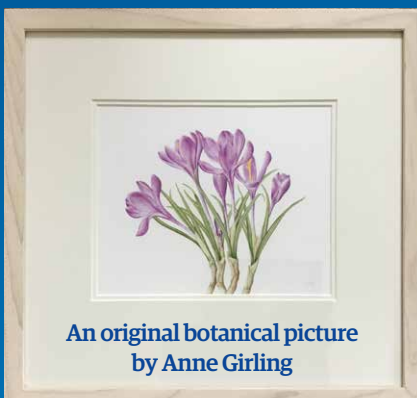
An evening tour of the Chapel and Grounds of Rycote Park, followed by wine and nibbles in the Barn. For up to six people



A £200 Burncoose Nurseries voucher



A half day garden/planting design consultation, followed up with a drawn-up plan, with professional gardener and garden designer Mirjam Chappell



An original botanical picture by Anne Girling



A photographic half day for up to four people in the Botanic Garden, with experienced photographer Helen White as your guide

and many more fantastic prizes!

Please see right for details of how to enter the raffle and purchase tickets, which cost only £2 each, and for a full list of prizes

If you have any queries, please contact Anna Donger 07702 885 829 or Ann Binns 07792 349 507

How to enter the Summer Raffle

1. Go online to <https://app.galabid.com/botanicraffle>
2. Register to buy your tickets, which cost £2 each
3. Once you've registered, you will receive a verification code to activate your account
4. Buy your tickets! **The raffle will be drawn on Tuesday 31st August with email notification to the lucky winners**

Friends' Garden Visits

By Harriet Bretherton, Pauline Coombes, Jane Annett, Esther Whiting and Diana Naumann

We hope the autumnal gardens we've organised for you are either new or maybe old friends you would like to visit. Two are postponed from last year, two others are characterful gardens of great interest and charm. And the fifth is a special 400th anniversary visit to Dauntsey, in honour of Henry Danvers, 1st Earl of Danby, in recognition of his generous founding of 'a physic garden' at Oxford in 1621.

Thank you again for your continuing patience and generosity during the past months because, without you, there wouldn't be a programme of Friends' visits! And thanks also for the valued support we've received from two colleagues, namely our Ticketing Administrator, Freya Jones, and the Friends' Administrator, Isabella Raeburn.

Also, much gratitude to the owners and gardeners who welcome us, giving generously of their time and expertise.

And lastly, if you know of any gardens you'd like to share with other Friends through our visits programme, please email details to: harriet@brethertonfamily.com

Visits: Because we still have your and our health and safety at the forefront of our planning, we remain guided by advice provided by garden owners, the Botanic Garden and the Government in terms of numbers, physical distancing, facilities, refreshments availability. Therefore, should the gardens or the FOBGA feel it is unsafe, or it is contrary to Government regulations at the time, elements within each visit may change or not go ahead as planned. Coach trips will hopefully take place again in 2022.

Booking tickets online: Due to unforeseen hiccups, this is still not in place. It may be before the year's end. To Book Visits - see enclosed Booking Form.

Seeking New Member to join the Garden Visits Team

Would you like to join the small Oxford-based volunteer team who research, book and create the Friends' yearly programme of garden visits? If you'd like to know more, please email either harriet@brethertonfamily.com or diana.naumann@icloud.com

borders as well as a Mediterranean border and extensive lawns. Also, if time permits, we will see some of the Meadow, hearing about both the progress to re-establish lost wild flowers and the trial of disease-resistant elms. A Cornish Tea will be served.

- Friends £20, guests £25
- Maximum 30

Wednesday 8th September, 2.00pm

A welcome return to Bourton House Garden

Bourton-on-the-Hill, Nr Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos GL56 9AE

By kind permission of Mr and Mrs Quintus

Bourton House Garden is an award-winning three-acre garden with a special atmosphere. Our visit begins with a welcome from the Head Gardener, Jacky Rae, after which you can continue visiting on your own. Created as a series of 'rooms', the garden is planted with style and creativity. Imaginative topiary (including a knot garden, parterre and topiary walk) and the shimmer of water features (including a raised Basket Pond from the Great Exhibition of 1851) create a tranquil setting. In contrast magnificent, and often dramatic, wide herbaceous borders (including a

Friday 3rd September, 2.00pm

Private visit to Christ Church Gardens

St Aldates, Oxford OX1 1DP

By kind permission of The Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of Christ in Oxford of the Foundation of King Henry VIII

The Gardens and Meadow at Christ Church all lie within a Grade I listed landscape, one of only three in Oxford. John James, Head

Gardener will take you round the gardens, visiting Tom Quad, the largest quad in Oxford and three gardens not normally seen by the visiting public. The Cathedral Garden lies to the north of the Cathedral. Recently replanted shrub beds have a medieval medicinal planting scheme combined with a Harry Potter twist. Next is the Pococke Garden with its magnificent oriental plane tree and subtropical plantings. And The Master's Garden has traditional herbaceous



Christ Church Gardens



The White Garden, Bourton House Garden

© John James

'white room' and 'warm' beds which positively fizz with colour) have many rare, unusual and exotic plants to interest visitors. The garden is particularly fine in the summer and early autumn months when the use of tender and semi-hardy plants extends the flowering season up to the first frosts. And don't miss the Shade House, admired by Adam Frost during his visit for Gardener's World. And to end, a Cream Tea in the stunning 16th-century Tithe Barn.

- **Friends £20, guests £25**
- **Maximum 30**

**Thursday 16th September,
10.30am**

Friends Only Visit to Dauntsey Park House

Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 4HT

By kind permission of Emma and Gio Amati, the Parish Church Council and the Woodbridge Churches Group

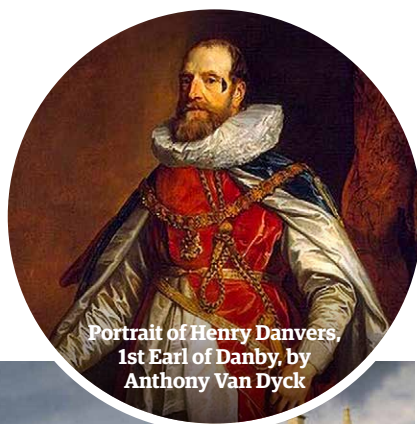
400th anniversary private visit to honour the 1st Earl of Danby, founder of the Oxford Botanic Garden

Henry Danvers, 1st Earl of Danby, established a physic garden in Oxford in 1621. During this 400th anniversary year we honour the Earl's memory by visiting his tomb in the Church of St James the Great, Dauntsey. There will be a welcome talk, some music, the grounds of Dauntsey Park House to explore and refreshments. A memorable occasion during this special year.

- **Friends £35**
- **Maximum 20**



Abbey House Garden



**Portrait of Henry Danvers,
1st Earl of Danby, by
Anthony Van Dyck**

**Thursday 16th September,
2.00pm**

Visit to Abbey House Gardens

Market Lane, Malmesbury SN16 9AS

By kind permission of Rufus and Christen Pollard

A five-acre garden descending from the abbey ruins into a wooded valley with stream and ponds. The top two acres are



Dauntsey Park House with the church of St James the Great



St Timothee

relatively flat, formally laid out with raised beds, pergola and topiary. The lower part has a good variety of trees with underplanting, bamboo grove, a footbridge and viewing mound. The sound of water is everywhere. Although not a 'private' visit, it includes a guided tour by one of the owners and refreshments at the Coy Carp Café.

- **Friends £20, guests £25**
- **Maximum 30**

**Thursday 28th October,
10.30am or 2.00pm**

Private visit to St Timothee Garden

St Timothee, Darlings Lane, Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 6PA

By kind permission of Sarah and Sal Pajwani

This is a 'new' late autumn visit for the Friends. The private two-acre garden was created from scratch over the past 12 years by its owner, Sarah Pajwani. Designed to look good at all times of the year, the visit includes a fully illustrated talk by the owner highlighting key foliage shrubs, superb late flowers and the ornamental grasses which keep things interesting at this time of year. This is followed by looking round the garden, with Sarah available to answer questions. Refreshments included. A wonderful way to end this 400th anniversary year.

- **Friends £20, guests £25**
- **Maximum 23**



© Sarah Pajwani

The Danby Patrons' Group

By Maura Allen

It has been a joy to finally arrange the first event for our Patrons' Group for almost 18 months. In late June the group will meet for deliciously themed Mediterranean food and wine and explore the new Flora Graeca Garden with Prof Simon Hiscock, Dr Chris Thorogood and Mark Brent, the Garden's curator. They will hear all the about the vision and planning needed to bring this new and important section of the Garden to actuality on, fingers crossed, a glorious midsummer evening.

Our Danby Patrons have supported and enabled Prof Stephen Harris's book *Roots to Seeds* which accompanies

the Bodleian exhibition of the same name. Covid permitting, we hope to have an evening with Prof Harris and enjoy another private event with a tour of this 400th anniversary exhibition in the Weston Gallery together with delicious refreshments.

If you are interested in joining the Danby Patrons' Group which supports both the Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum and Plant Sciences Herbaria please do follow the link below or email me on mea@armitstead.com, <https://www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk/join-danby-patrons-group>



Thursday 30th September at 7.00pm

The Friends' Annual General Meeting

We are hoping to hold the Friends' AGM in The Riverside Pavilion at St Hilda's College. Please see the enclosed Agenda. Should it once again be impossible to hold a physical event, we will hold the meeting via Zoom. We will notify everyone whose email addresses we have. For those of you who have not given us your email address, please check on the Friends' page of the Oxford Botanic Garden & Arboretum website. We will post an update on that page nearer the time. We regret that we will not be able to notify anyone by post.

The Bobarts Patrons' Group

By Helen Potts

We are very pleased to see that our members have continued their generous support for the Bobarts Patrons' Group over the last 15 months and we would especially like to welcome those who have joined us recently. This extra financial support for the Garden and Arboretum is hugely appreciated by all who work there.

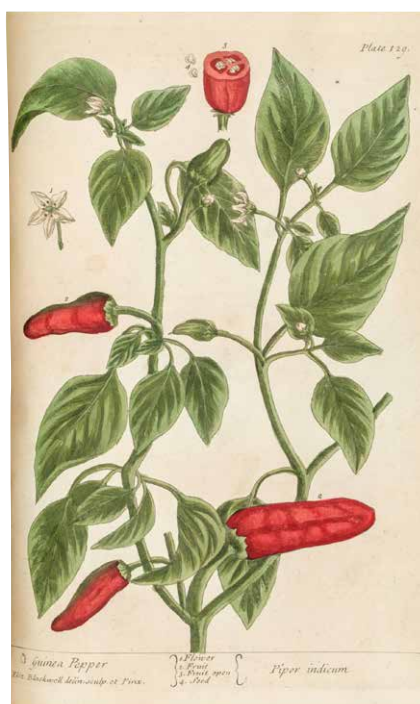
Inevitably, we have been unable to meet in person so far, but this year in a first for the group, Prof Stephen Harris very kindly gave an online talk from the University Herbaria titled 'From the wilds of the world to the English home' on the introduction of tropical and subtropical plants as house plants (c. 1650-1850). This fascinating talk was illustrated with stunning images from the University Collections.

Actual visits begin in early June, all being well, with a visit to Woodperry House and College House, in Stanton St John, then a

midsummer drinks party and garden visit in Iffley. In July we will be returning to a garden in Warwickshire where we will see changes made by the owner, who is a garden designer and FOBGA Danby Patron. We have two more visits postponed from earlier this year now planned for August and September, to Green Templeton College and Englefield Gardens, near Reading. We are keeping our fingers crossed for the three-day visit to Norfolk gardens in September, postponed from last year.

I am extremely grateful to Claire McGlashan, a long-standing Bobarts Patron, for stepping forward to help me run this very special group. We have decided not to plan more visits for this year whilst some uncertainty remains but will concentrate our efforts on putting an attractive programme in place for next year when our lives have settled down again.

Our members, and the Danby Patrons' Group, enjoy all the benefits of the Friends plus a programme of small group visits to the University collections and to some of the best gardens and estates in the area. We aim to visit as wide a range of gardens as possible in terms of style, size and location and are very grateful to the generosity of those garden owners and their teams who welcome us, sharing their time and knowledge with us.



Specimen of *Capsicum* probably collected by Bobart the Younger in the Oxford Physic Garden with an image from Elizabeth Blackwell's *A curious herbal* (1737-1739).

Calendar

2021

Please check on the website:
<https://www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk/upcoming-friends-events> for the latest news regarding forthcoming events.

July

Wednesday 14th July, 6.00pm

SOLD OUT

Private visit to Radcot House

Tuesday 27th July, 2.00pm

SOLD OUT

Private visit to Malverleys

August

Friday 6th August, 10.30am (tbc)

Coffee morning, Botanic Garden

September

Friday 3rd September, 10.30am (tbc)

Coffee morning, Botanic Garden

Friday 3rd September, 2.00pm

Private visit to Christ Church Gardens

Wednesday 8th September, 2.00pm

A welcome return to Bourton House Garden

Thursday 16th September

10.30am Visit to Dauntsey Park

2.00pm Visit to Abbey House Gardens

Thursday 30th September, 7.00pm
Annual General Meeting, Riverside Pavilion, St Hilda's College

October

Friday 1st October, 10.30am (tbc)

Coffee morning, Botanic Garden

Thursday 28th October, 10.30am or 2.00pm

Private visit to St Timothee Garden

**The Friends of Oxford
 Botanic Garden and Arboretum,**
 Rose Lane, Oxford OX1 4AZ.

All Friends' enquiries, including those about Friends' events, should be made to the Friends' Administrator.
 Tel: 01865 610303

E-mail: friends.administrator@obg.ox.ac.uk

Web: www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk

The Friends Office is staffed on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. This Newsletter was edited by Chris Thorogood and Carol Maxwell with help from Isabella Raeburn. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Board of the Friends or the Visitors of Oxford Botanic Garden.

