

The University of Oxford

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**Botanic
Garden &
Harcourt
Arboretum**
Friends'
newsletter



Spring 2018

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Interpretation at OBGA

By Chris Thorogood

Following the great success of the Garden's first fully interpreted planting, '*Plants that Changed the World*', renowned designer Pia Östlund has been busy working on new interpretation boards for the Garden. The '*Plants that Changed the World*' theme has been extended to the glasshouse collection (see p4), and the Garden now has a long-awaited welcome board which is proving popular among our visitors. The New Year will see interpretation extend to the Arboretum in the form of a '*Threatened Tree Trail*'. This exciting new trail will comprise a series of interpretation boards to be installed beside flagship trees in our collection which are of conservation importance. The boards will highlight the significance of the trees by comparing them with well-known animals of equivalent conservation concern. We will also see Pia's work feature in the new '*Herbarium Room*' (née '*Exhibition Room*') this summer. This room, inspired by Linnaeus's Hammarby residency, will be transformed into a gallery for displaying material from

OBGA News



The new welcome board at the Garden

the Oxford Herbaria, complete with bespoke reproductions of key works from the Herbarium and Sherardian Collection in the form of curtains and wallpaper. In the longer term a significant advancement will be the installation of an extensive series of new boards to accompany the Garden's taxonomic beds to interpret the reorganised plantings in line with up-to-date, DNA-based classification. We look forward to seeing more of Pia's exquisite work in the near future.

Curiosity Carnival

By Chris Thorogood

On Friday 29th September last year, the Garden took part in the European Researchers' Night, branded '*Curiosity Carnival*'. This was the largest public engagement event the University of Oxford has ever seen. The event was dedicated to explaining research through interactive learning, and an opportunity for the public to meet researchers, ask questions and discover how research affects and changes everyone's daily lives. The night was a huge festival of curiosity - a city-wide programme of activities across University of Oxford's museums, libraries, gardens and woods. There was a wide range of activities for all ages and interests - live experiments, games, stalls, busking, debates, music, dance and a pub-style quiz.

One of the most successful features of the programme was the '*Botanical Wonderland*', here at the Garden, where things got curiouiser and curiouiser! Eighty six researchers and their assistants took part at the Garden, and thousands came to find out about their research. Thirty activities took place,

including a Great Research Bake-Off, in which researchers took up the challenge to interpret their research in the form of cake. Bakers used their creations as a topic of conversation about their research, from low-carbon housing initiatives and planet atmospheres, to traditional lace-making and personalised medicine. Meanwhile in the Lower Garden, a Quantum Story Corner introduced concepts of quantum physics to young children and adults, who explored theoretical concepts through story-telling using Philip Pullman and Alice in Wonderland. Scientists in the Walled Garden showed how stone, the very fabric of the city, is decaying and what science can do to help protect it. Nearby, in the Conservatory, scientists Dr Yan Wong and Dr James Rosindell took people on an interactive journey with their digital tool 'OneZoom', a tool which explores the tree of life in a completely new way, with the click of a mouse.

The '*Curiosity Carnival*' was an unprecedented public engagement success and brought new people from across the city to the Garden. Innovative and engaging feedback tools were employed on the day to measure the impact of the event, and close to 1,500 visitor responses were recorded. Virtually all the feedback was positive and the most popular words associated with the event were 'great', 'interesting' and 'fun'. An important legacy of the day, and its many months of planning, will be the fruit of the many new collaborative relationships that have been forged across the University.



Quantum Story Corner in the Lower Garden



A live artist's interpretation of the Curiosity Carnival

From the Director by Simon Hiscock



Farewell to Tom

The Botanic Garden recently said farewell to long-standing colleague, Tom Price. As Curator for the Garden, Tom developed a diverse collection of plants, working alongside a team of dedicated horticulturists and volunteers.

Tom originally trained in maritime science, however his growing love of plants drew him to botanical horticulture and saw him train at Waterperry Gardens, and later, the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, where he received his Kew Diploma.

For more than a decade, the plant collections have thrived under Tom's careful stewardship at the Garden. Tom leaves a legacy of influence and expertise - nowhere more so than the striking herbaceous border, the Hitchmough Merton borders, and the taxonomic beds in the Walled Garden. With a sensitive eye for colour, his talent for combining plantings sympathetically and beautifully is clear. In his work Tom expressed a determination and drive in pursuit of exceptional horticulture and the University is grateful for all he has given and achieved for the Botanic Garden over the years.

Tom was a keen advocate for the conservation work carried out by the Garden and was instrumental in working with the Oxfordshire Flora Group on several local species conservation projects. Tom initiated the Garden's ongoing Japan Flora Project which is now in its sixth year. Working with partners such as Toyama Botanic Garden and the Millennium Seed Bank, the project has been pivotal in documenting and collecting some of Japan's most vulnerable endemic plant species, and conserving them here at the Garden and Arboretum.

Tom is a passionate plantsman with a wealth of knowledge and expertise. He leaves the Garden to establish his own business, the Oxford Master Gardener, and we wish Tom well with all his future endeavours.

Twenty eight promises to be another exciting year for OBG. We are especially looking forward to the completion of work to transform the former 'Exhibition Room' into the 'Herbarium Room'. Phase one of the project: damp-proofing, plastering, redecorating, electrical reconfiguration, and restoration of the floor, was completed in time for the Christmas Fair (see below) and phase two began in January with the installation of new lights and a heating system. This will be followed by further decoration with Pia Östlund's unique botanical wallpaper and curtains, and the installation of restored and modernized display cabinets. All works are expected to be completed by April, with a provisional launch date set for July - most probably July 25th, Danby Day.

Outside in the Garden the reconfiguration of the taxonomic beds in the walled garden is set for completion this year and will be complemented with high quality scientific interpretation produced to explain this modern DNA-based classification of flowering plants developed by the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group (APG). We will also see WiFi installed across the Garden to open up new exciting possibilities for digital interpretation of the collections and the Garden's history. In the glasshouses, the Fern House will become home to our extensively expanded collection of *Nepenthes* pitcher plants, whilst the Carnivorous Plants House will be reconfigured and refreshed with new acquisitions. Both projects are vital to our plans for new research into the biology and evolution of carnivorous plants; we are grateful to the HDH Wills Charitable Trust and the Friends for funding these works.

Meanwhile at the Arboretum the shade frame (funded by the Friends) was completed towards the end of 2017 and will provide a valuable new resource for the team to raise and nurture sapling trees prior to planting out. Work will start shortly to install new compost

toilets near the barn as part of plans to further develop this area as an activity space for education and public engagement activities. We are grateful to a member of the Bobarts Group who kindly funded this environmentally-friendly facility. Towards Easter we look forward to the completion of the 'Threatened Tree Trail' which will take visitors on a richly interpreted tour of the Arboretum's rarest trees.

In January our much anticipated Physic Gin was officially launched at the Garden and at The Oxford Artisan Distillery (TOAD) in South Park (see: <https://www.spiritoftoad.com/>). This has been nearly three years 'in the making' as a collaboration between OBG and TOAD. The gin is inspired by Bobart's 1648 list of plants grown in the Physicke Garden. Most of the 25 botanicals in the gin are on this list and the remainder are grown in the Garden today. The Garden also provides many of the botanicals, including angelica, wormwood, a variety of different citrus, Sichuan pepper and rue. Physic Gin, which packs an incredible botanical punch, is available from TOAD and a variety of outlets in Oxford and will be available in the Botanic Garden shop (subject to obtaining a site license) from early March.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you who helped to make the Christmas Fair another great success. The Friends' tombola was one of the most popular stalls and the beautiful decorations in the marquee looked superb. Visitor numbers were up - 2659 compared to ~1700 in 2016. Once again Emmanuelle Berge (an independent event organizer) coordinated and managed the event which generated a healthy profit for the Garden. A total of 32 stall-holders were based in the marquee, hot food was provided by Chilli Dogs and Soho Pizza, hot drinks by



Jericho Coffee Company and mulled wine and Physic gin were available in the Conservatory. Music was again provided by the ever popular Horns of Plenty on the Saturday and by the Oxford City Brass Band on Sunday. Planning is already underway for this year's Christmas Fair, which we intend to make even better. So please get the dates in your diary now - December 1-2.



Christmas Fair stallholders

News from the glasshouses

'Plants that Changed the World' in the glasshouses

By Kate Pritchard

The 'Plants that Changed the World' display in the lower garden is now in its second year and establishing very well. This season has seen the display extend into the glasshouses to showcase a selection of the many exotic plants that have shaped modern human civilization.

In the tropical Lily House the display focuses on rice, *Oryza sativa* and the desert banana, *Musa cavendishii*. Rice feeds more people on the planet than any other plant and was the first crop plant to have its genome fully mapped. The desert or cavendish banana varieties are by far the most widely available, because they



are the easiest to transport rather than having a superior taste. More than 110 million tonnes of bananas are produced globally each year, and more than 1000 local varieties exist.

Coffee, cocoa and cotton plants are grown in the Palm House and part of the 'Plants that Changed the World' display. Visitors can learn some incredible facts about these plants and more - did you know that when first introduced to Europe, cocoa was thought to be more suitable for pigs than people? Or that Victorian criminals faked black pepper? And that modern varieties of pineapple have been developed to fit in a tin?!

Kew visit November 2017

By Lucinda Lachelin

Louisa and I visited Kew at the end of November to meet some of the staff at the Lower Nursery. Our aims were to quiz them on their growing techniques, to see if they had spare plants which are on our wish list, and to take a look at their aquatic and *Nepenthes* displays in the Princess of Wales House (PoW).

We were successful in meeting all three of these aims, and returned with a fine collection of plants in the back of the Skoda. These included a young specimen of *Amorphophallus titanum*, a small *Dracena draco*, a mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), several orchids and bromeliads, and an assortment of other plants to add to the collection. A repeat visit will take place this year to find out about some of Kew's growing methods in greater depth, and to collect plant material that was not available on our November visit.



Mangroves (*Rhizophora mangle*) in the PoW, Kew



Chester Zoo's *Nepenthes* Highland nursery house

Chester Zoo visit to see National Collection of *Nepenthes*

By Louisa Hall

In November I visited Chester Zoo to see the National Collection of *Nepenthes* pitcher plants. They house over 2000 specimens including 130 species and hybrids, which are divided into highland, intermediate and lowland nursery houses. I met with horticulturist Paul Leach, who gave me a thorough insight into how they cultivate their vast collection and who patiently answered my many questions. The information gathered will help us to cultivate our own expanding collection of *Nepenthes* pitcher plants in the coming months.

RHS Orchid Committee meeting and visit to the Herbaria

By Kate Pritchard

In September the RHS Orchid Committee held one of their monthly meetings at the Department of Plant Sciences. The meeting was followed by a visit to the Oxford Herbaria with Stephen Harris, who gave the committee a taster of some of the treasures therein. The Glass team and the trainees were also given the opportunity to attend the meeting. A number of awards were made at the meeting, including an Award of Merit that was given to a cultivar of *Miltoniopsis roezlii* called 'Victoria Village'. The species was first described in 1973 and is native to the cloud forests of Panama and Ecuador. With line breeding, cultivated specimens have larger flowers with a deeper shade of yellow, than those found growing in the wild. The flowers of cultivar 'Victoria Village' in particular are a vibrant shade of canary yellow.

Arboretum news

By Ben Jones



The new shade frame at the Arboretum

With thanks to the generous support of the Friends, I am pleased to say that our new shade frame facility is now in place. This also includes a significant upgrade to the operational area, including additional concreting which connects the front of the tractor shed area to our wood-chip mulch bays. Situated within our operational area, the new shade frame will house all of our young temperate woody plants. All of our Japan project plant material is raised at the National Pinetum, Bedgebury, and as soon as the material is ready to leave the glasshouses or poly-tunnels, we will look after them at the Arboretum. Young plant material will be housed in the shade frame for a full season to harden off, before their planting in the following season. Drip irrigation will keep the plants suitably

watered and the shade frame will also provide protection from our peacocks, who have a tendency to use young plants as a perch from time to time!

During the winter months we graze the meadows as part of their ongoing management. This year we have almost 200 Castlemilk Moorit store lambs, who will spend their time on both Pylon Meadow and in Palmer's Leys. The sheep cut back excess grass and their cloven hooves push down seeds from species such as yellow rattle, helping them to take hold. Yellow rattle parasitises grasses and makes way for other plant species to flourish in the meadow. The Castlemilk Moorit is a rare breed of domestic sheep, and during the early years of the twentieth century the late Sir John Buchanan-Jardine began a breeding

programme on his Castlemilk Estate in Dumfriesshire. Using Manx Loghtan, Moorit Shetland and Wild Mouflon, he developed a breed to beautify his parkland and provide fine, kemp free Moorit-coloured wool.

In other news, I am very pleased to say that Guy Horwood and Luke Rowland have passed their Professional Tree Inspection (PTI) course. Not only is this a very well regarded industry recognised qualification, it is notoriously difficult to pass. The exams covered a range of topics from legal frameworks, identification of principal fungal decay organisms to hazard evaluation and decay detection equipment. In addition to this, the exams included a range of practical exercises.

If you would like to get involved at the Arboretum you can find lots of information on our website www.harcourt-arboretum.ox.ac.uk, under the 'Get Involved' section. If you would simply like to hear more about the exciting work going on at the Arboretum, you'd be very welcome to join our monthly insight tours which take place on the first Wednesday of every month at 1.30pm. There is no fee and no booking required, just turn up!



Fungi Foray

By Catherine Vivian

Our Fungi Foray took place on Sunday 8th October at the Arboretum last year to celebrate UK Fungus day. The foray was led by Professor Richard Fortey, who is the President of the Fungus Survey of Oxfordshire. Richard was a very engaging and knowledgeable speaker and was pleased with the turnout of both fungi and forayers! We had more than fifty participants on the foray, including both adults and children.



Castlemilk Moorit sheep in the meadow at the Arboretum

Planning 'Plants that Changed the World' for the year ahead

By Ali Quantrell

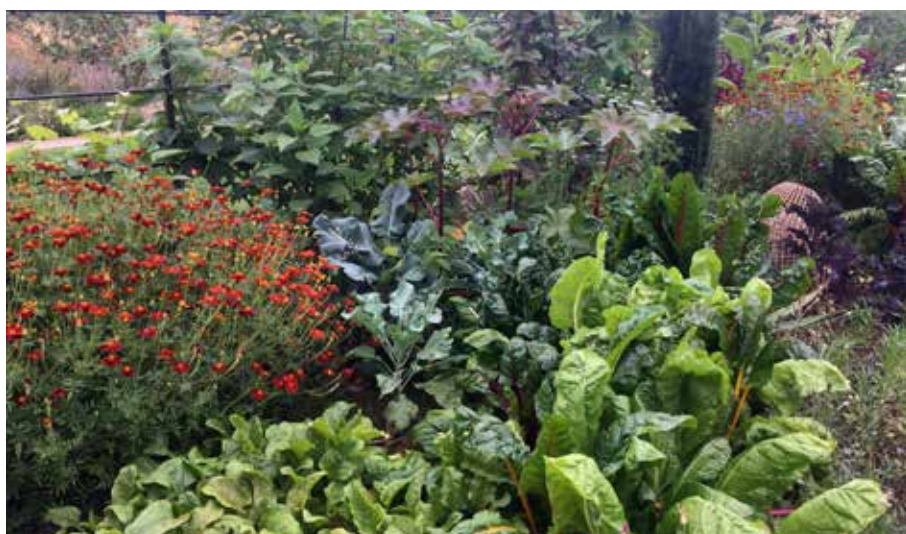
In the quieter, wintery days when the wind is whipping and the snow is settling, it is the perfect time to be planning for the year ahead. It is a very exciting time, especially when planning one of the newer areas of the garden, 'Plants that Changed the World'. This area is focussed on annual and tender plants, presenting the opportunity to try new combinations, new plants, and to improve on the display from the previous year. A highlight from 2017 that will be repeated this year is the bulb fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*). We are all familiar with the bulb-like vegetable that is favoured by many a TV chef, but last year it was allowed to go to seed. The dill-like flowers were a beautiful, rich yellow, held aloft on stout stems with feathery green leaves. They were one of the last plants to be caught by the winter weather, and were still a joy to see in November.

Two new additions for us this year will be Vietnamese coriander (*Persicaria odorata*) and buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*). Vietnamese coriander is a tough plant with lemon-scented leaves, and is often used fresh in salads or as a key flavouring in Vietnamese soups and stews. Buckwheat was on the planting list for last

year's display but germination failures put paid to it then. Buckwheat is commonly used as a wheat alternative for coeliacs, and has seen a resurgence in popularity in recent years.

The 'Plants that Changed the World' beds are an ideal space for trialling new cultivars in the collection. Dahlias earn their place in these beds due to their

popularity as a cut flower and also for their culinary use. This year we will try out some new cultivars which may then be bulked up for the herbaceous and autumn borders in 2019. Of particular interest are the anemone-flowered *Dahlia* 'Purple Puff', the pale pink waterlily-flowered *Dahlia* 'Bracken Ballerina', and the pink and yellow cactus-flowered *Dahlia* 'Ivor's Beauty'.



The 'Plants that Changed the World' border last summer

The Will and Lyra bed

By Jamie Todd

Under the Cornelian cherry (*Cornus mas*) in the Lower Garden is a bench which has become a place of pilgrimage for many visitors to Oxford. It is a significant location in Philip Pullman's 'His Dark Materials' trilogy in which characters Will and Lyra can meet between their respective worlds. Thanks to generous funding from the Friends, the bed under the Cornelian cherry has now been replanted to reflect this literary significance. The new shade planting was influenced by two further locations which Lyra visits in the books,



The 'Pullman bench'

namely Lapland and Svalbard. Plants evoking the boreal forests of these northern climes have been selected with a focus on those which evoke the colours of the Aurora Borealis, such as *Polemonium*, *Geranium* and *Digitalis*.

The botanist Carl Linnaeus undertook a tour of Lapland in 1732, receiving a stipend 'to investigate in all three kingdoms of nature, the healthiness and inconveniences of the country, with a description of the mode and life of the inhabitants'. Linnaeus set off alone from Uppsala on May 12th, aged 25, carrying a short dagger, a spyglass, and a parcel of paper stitched together for drying plant material. He travelled by horse, foot and boat and covered 7,713 km, a journey which took 4 months. Linnaeus's *Flora Lapponica* was published in 1737. The account included 534 species.

Linnaeus did not bring back many specimens from his trip but some of the material he did collect is held by the University of Oxford Herbaria. All of these specimens were initially given to Johann Dillenius, the first Sherardian Professor of Botany, following Linnaeus's visit to the Oxford in May 1736. One of the species he collected, *Rubus arcticus*, is also represented in the new planting.



The newly planted Will and Lyra bed

Replanting the eastern wall border

By Ruth Calder

Last autumn we completed the replanting of two borders along the Garden's eastern wall to extend their interest throughout the year. Following the relocation of plants from these beds in previous years, they had become a little sparse after the spring. The northern half of these beds was planted with a mixture of shrubs and perennials for year-round appeal. The southern half was a more challenging site because of the adjacent hornbeam, which makes it dry and shady. We therefore planted resilient species from the North Border here to give continuity, including *Asarum europaeum* and *Euphorbia amygdaloides*, and added others on a 'trial basis' to see if they thrive. We hope that heavy mulching and the use of seep hose irrigation will mitigate the dry conditions whilst these young plants establish. Other plants of interest in these beds include *Kirengeshoma palmata*, a Japanese member of the family Hydrangaceae, and *Dryopteris erythrosora*, a fern with unusual bronze-tinted foliage. Topiary yew balls to match those in the North Border will also be planted this year.



Rafflesia comes to Oxford

By Chris Thorogood

Rafflesia is the largest flower on earth. The most spectacular of the 30 or so species which grow in the rainforests of Southeast Asia is *R. arnoldii*, which produces flowers which can measure up to an incredible 1.5 metres across, and weigh over 10 kg. Not only is it gigantic, rafflesia has a peculiar and rather sinister life history. The plant is parasitic and steals nutrients from the roots of tropical vines. It has no chlorophyll, leaves or roots, and spends most of its life embedded within the tissues of its host plant as a network of fibres. When mature, it eventually sends up its enormous blooms on the rainforest floor which unfurl from gigantic, cabbage-like buds. These extraordinary flowers have evolved to look and smell like rotting flesh to attract pollinating flies. The monstrous size of the flower may have evolved as a powerful means of broadcasting its smell across the dingy rainforest floor to attract flies from far and wide.

Cultivating rafflesia is a long-term ambition of the Garden, like many botanic gardens worldwide. But owing to its parasitic life style, its rarity and its very particular requirements, no one has yet succeeded in propagating rafflesia outside of its native Southeast Asian rainforests. Rafflesia flowers are very rare in the wild. For that reason, I created a life-size

replica of the plant that we displayed at the Garden for just 8 days - the length of time the plant blooms for. The ambition was to give people as close an experience as possible to seeing one of the most enigmatic species in the Plant Kingdom, that few are fortunate to see in the wild.

The replica was a '3D oil painting', constructed from layers of cardboard, papier-mâché, and plaster. The detail was added with modelling clay and finished with oil paints, to make the replica as botanically accurate as possible. We displayed the flower in a beautiful wooden box constructed by Guy Horwood and Luke Rowland at the Arboretum, on a bed of vines, with a backdrop of tropical, potted plants. The model generated significant social media activity, was featured on BBC One South Today, BBC Oxford radio news, and a live BBC Facebook Live, and brought many new visitors to the Garden.

We plan to grow parasitic plants at the Garden in the future. For now though, this replica has hopefully served as a glimpse into the weird and wonderful world of these 'vegetable vampires'. You can find out more about this model and the biology of rafflesia in our Facebook Live video: www.oxfordsparks.ox.ac.uk/content/facebook-live-worlds-largest-flower



Chris Thorogood with his life-size replica of rafflesia

Buddha's hand

By Chris Thorogood

Citrus is used for much more than to make orange juice. Eau de Cologne, Cointreau, Earl Grey tea, marmalade and sun-tan oil are just some of the uses of this economically important genus. Indeed citrus cultivation is the most important fruit industry in warm parts of the world such as Australia, California, South Africa, Israel and the Mediterranean Basin. In Asia, citrus fruits have also been used in local and commercial medicinal preparations for centuries. *Citrus medica* is a particularly large-fruited species which can be seen growing in the Conservatory at Oxford Botanic Garden, and was the first species in this important genus to be introduced to the Europeans. Alexander

the Great took it to the Mediterranean; the plant then featured in Roman frescoes in Pompeii. In the eighth century, an intriguing form of *C. medica* with fruits possessing finger-like processes, was introduced to China where it is still used to scent rooms and to flavour tea. This form of the species called *Citrus medica* var. *sarcodactylis*, is still sold by florists in the Mediterranean today as a curiosity, where it is often fancifully called the 'Buddha's hand'. Our very own specimen of the Buddha's hand at the Garden has been encumbered with several spectacular fruits this spring, and is proving to be a popular feature of the Conservatory.



The 'Buddha's hand' fruit

After School Programme for Teenagers

By Sarah Lloyd

At the end of last year the Botanic Garden ran a series of evening events called 'Talk About Plants'. These were specifically for teenagers to find out more about plant science research. Each evening, an expert spoke for about half an hour. Steve Kelly began the series by describing his group's research into genetic and biochemical plant adaptations that have the potential to improve the productivity of rice. Chris Thorogood went on to explain the evolution of carnivorous and parasitic plants. Finally Simon Hiscock spoke about the development and importance of biodiversity hotspots. After each talk the speaker posed three questions for discussion. Young people then developed their understanding and opinions by listening, thinking and talking and sharing ideas in small groups. Discussions were facilitated by 'early career' scientists from the University department of plant sciences.

There are a variety of reasons why this opportunity was so important for teenagers, and why opportunities like these have so much public engagement potential. Each session is made up of different activities that appeal to different people in the group. Participants have access to an exceptional resource and experience high quality university teaching in an accessible format.

Young people choose to come in their own time and their interest in plants, which can be quite niche, are valued and nurtured by everyone taking part. Each evening was very different from a lesson at school and had an informal atmosphere. Participants felt comfortable and confident, and reassured that they weren't going to be put on the spot and embarrassed by what they didn't know - a potential barrier to engagement for the age group in question.

At the end of the final session, Simon asked why botanic gardens are important for the conservation of biodiversity. One of the students from Oxford Community College explained that people generally don't act until they feel the impact themselves and the damage has been done. It's important that there are public places where people can encounter the concerns about the environment before it's too late. Simon then asked the 15 year old if he wanted a job!

It is so refreshing to work with young people in this way. In the right circumstances they develop a good understanding, see things clearly and express themselves incredibly well.



The plant science masterclass series was funded by Gatsby Charitable Foundation

'Splendid Seeds' in the Botanic Garden

By Emma Williams

Last September, Science Oxford and the Garden worked in collaboration to deliver a family workshop called '*Splendid Seeds*'. Science Oxford offers lots of hands-on family workshops, so the Garden was a natural choice to lead a joint workshop about botany. Because it was held in the autumn, there was an array of natural beauties and surprises waiting for families to discover.

The session started with a mini tour of the Garden to search for plants laden with seed pods, including an exploding seed pod, that took everyone by surprise, and sticky seeds pods that inspired the invention of Velcro. In the '*Plants that Changed the World*' beds there were plenty of edible seeds such as sweetcorn and green beans to find and unwrap. There was also the chance to see important fruits and seeds from the Rainforest, such as cocoa, and the biggest seed in the world, the coco de mer.

Back in the Conservatory, families found out how seeds germinate, looking for the first roots and first sets of leaves. They dissected flowers to find out how they are pollinated and where seeds develop, played a 'seed matching' game to assign seeds to familiar vegetables, and discovered a seed that can plant itself - the wild oat seed, which has an 'arm' that spirals when wet, and twists the seed down into the soil! Once we had found out about seeds, we used them to make tasty bird feeders to keep our feathered friends fed in the run-up to winter using sticky fat and seeds, mixed by hand, and smeared into pinecones. Whilst that was being done we used seeds of *Zea mays* to make a snack for everyone in the form of popcorn!

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, particularly the activities, which were very hands-on. The session was so successful that we have decided to work with Science Oxford again in April to explore the science of growth.



Making it a 'Green' Christmas

By Emma Williams

We all tend to get a bit excited about the onset of Christmas and decorating the Botanic Garden Christmas tree here! This year we ran our Green Christmas session where pupils from local schools can find out about the traditional Christmas plants that adorn our houses and the tropical spices that enrich our festive fare. Over the years we have found that pupils are terrified of standing underneath the mistletoe, just in case they have to kiss anyone! But once they have seen one bunch of mistletoe they are very good at spotting it in other trees around the Garden. The spices in the Palm House

wake up everyone's senses. Clove certainly represents a 'marmite' situation - usually half the group love the smell and the other half can't stand it! They are often surprised to find out that it's actually a small unopened flower bud. The main take-home message from this session is that we can have lots of fun at Christmas, but we still need to think carefully about how we deal with our waste after the event, hence the 'Green' Christmas theme. We get pupils thinking about how they can re-use and recycle their cards, wrapping paper and Christmas trees. The figures are staggering: we send around 7 million

Christmas cards in the UK alone and wrap up 83 million square meters of wrapping paper (that's about the same area as Disney Land!).

One of the nicest aspects of the session is that pupils get a chance to make decorations from the beautiful dried flowers, leaves and seed pods that we collect throughout autumn from the Garden. We ask them to make two decorations, one to take home and one to leave on our tree here. By mid-December the tree in the Conservatory looks splendid with its array of natural decorations, just showing that sometimes natural beauty is the best!

Friends' Section News

From the Friends' Chairman, Sarah Taylor

Since the AGM and our last report to Members, we have given the Garden a further £75,000 in support. We have paid for additions to both the Garden's and the Arboretum's plant collections, to the tune of £30,000: this is fundamental support. The Garden cannot be world class unless it has a rich diversity of plants, as well as a unique concentration on certain species (eg *Euphorbia* and *Nepenthes*). We also provided basic support in the shape of a heavy-duty shredder and chipper for the Arboretum at a cost of £6,800, the old one having given up the ghost. Another central role of the Garden is education and we provided teaching equipment worth £3,300 as well as the next phase of the beautiful and attention-grabbing interpretation boards designed by Pia Östlund, costing £17,000. We paid over the latest instalment for metal edging of £4,200. Finally, we transferred donations from Friends of £15,000 for the replacement benches in the Walled Garden.

Every two years, as a matter of routine, we put up our subscription rates. The money you pay us to be Members is our main source of income and so crucial to our *raison d'être* of supporting the Garden. The increase this time, in line with inflation, is less than 4%: the annual single membership fee, for example, goes up from £34 to £35.

As you know, in addition to the regular donations funded by your membership, we have special appeals for particular projects. The paths at the Arboretum, as you will no doubt have noticed, are in a terrible state and urgently need rebuilding to allow access for both mothers with children in pushchairs and disabled people in wheelchairs: it is, for instance, most unfair that these visitors cannot see the bluebell woods. We will be asking you all for help in the coming months, so watch this space!

From the Friends' Secretary, Anna Nasmyth

At their Board Meeting on 17th January 2018, the Directors approved a motion to put to the members a change of the charity's name. The proposal is to drop "Harcourt" and to rename the Friends, "The Friends of Oxford Botanic Garden & Arboretum". This will bring us in line with the name now used by The Garden and Arboretum. Anyone wishing to comment, please write to me (anna.nasmyth@googlemail.com) before the end of March 2018.

The Directors also approved a preliminary investigation into the conversion of the charity's Charitable Company status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO),

which will be available for charities of our size from 1st June 2018. This will simplify administration and reduce costs. Any comments to me please (as above).

Friends for Friends - Rebecca Mather, Membership Secretary

This year we are launching a new initiative - Friends for Friends. This will be an exciting new opportunity for Friends to meet each other and enjoy each other's gardens, with a cup of tea!

The first gardens to be opened will be in North Oxford hosted by Maura Allen and Jennie Turner and will be open on Sunday 24th June 3.00-5.00pm. This will be followed by my garden in Old Marston, open on Sunday 9th September 3.00-5.00pm.

The primary focus will be an opportunity for Friends to come together. I hope that there will be a richly diverse range of gardens to be visited. There will be no particular criteria for opening. Gardens will be anything from NGS standard to work in progress. I am hoping that you will give me lots of advice and ideas in the garden that I am renovating. There will be no charge but voluntary small donations to the Friends funds will be welcome.

Please keep an eye out for further details on the website and in the e-bulletin. These events will only be open to Friends and we shall ask you to let us know if you plan to come. This venture will depend on you for its success! If you would like to host a Friends for Friends event in 2019, please let me know. It would be very good to plan a spring garden event!

Help us secure more Guided Tours in 2018!

The introduction of volunteer garden guides was one of Simon Hiscock's earliest innovations. There are now 18 trained volunteer guides who can offer three different types of tour i.e. introduction to the Garden and its collections, introduction to the Arboretum and a tour of the Garden describing the history of its development.

In 2018 we would like to have more bookings from local clubs and organisations.

Many of our Friends belong to other local interest groups and societies with members who might enjoy a modestly priced one-hour tour. Please help the Garden by proposing they consider a tour of the oldest botanic garden in the UK led by a trained tour guide. All the details on how to make a tour booking can be found on the Botanic Garden website: <https://www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk/guided-tours>. For any questions, please contact our administrative team on 01865 610305 or email groupbookings@obg.ox.ac.uk

Don't forget your membership card

when you come to visit the Garden and 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.

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 Seonaid Danziger at seonaidscd@gmail.com

Please note

The Garden and Arboretum are closed Monday mornings until 12.00 noon (excluding June, July and August). The glasshouses are temporarily closed for restoration work. Please check the Botanic Garden's website for more details.

Events

First Friday of the Month

Coffee Mornings

Friends' coffee mornings are on the first Friday of every month (except January and August) and are an opportunity for Friends to get together. All coffee mornings begin at 10.30am in the Garden's Conservatory followed by a tour at 11.00am. There is no fee and no booking is required, just turn up. The next dates are:

April 6th, May 4th, June 1st and July 6th.

Please note that we shall also be having three coffee mornings at the Arboretum:

Friday April 27th 'Bluebell Time'

Friday June 22nd 'Summer Meadow'

Friday October 12th 'Autumn Colour'

- **All are at 10.30am, with a tour after coffee**

Dear Friends

Help is needed on a regular basis to run the Coffee mornings. Helpers would need to come two or three times a year, couples or several friends together would be ideal. It would entail setting up, serving coffee, meeting and greeting and clearing away. They would be given support. If you could help at this very popular morning event we would be most grateful. Please contact Jane Annett on 01865 862939.

**Saturday 21st April,
10.00am to 4.00pm**

Spring Fair Harcourt Arboretum Volunteers and cakes needed!

This lovely event, at the peak of the bluebell season, is organised by the Arboretum staff and we are supporting them by running the Teas Tent, where we will be selling homemade cakes and bakes and serving hot drinks. If you would like to help us by either donating your time or your cakes (or both!) please contact Maura Allen on mea@armitstead.com or 07772 127029. We divide the volunteering times into two hour slots starting at 10.00am and finishing at 4.00pm. We value all our volunteers hugely and appreciate the time that is given to raising money for both the Arboretum and Garden.



Tuesday May 1st, 5.00 to 7.00am

May Morning 2018 at Oxford Botanic Garden

A very special event only available to the Friends and their guests

See the Garden in the early morning and hear the heavenly sound of the Magdalen choristers followed by peals of bells from Magdalen Tower to welcome in the Spring. With a complimentary hot drink and croissant, you can enjoy an event that is particular to Oxford in the peace and comfort of our beautiful Garden. Introduce your friends to this wonderful place on a very special day and be a part of a 500-year old tradition in our almost 400-year old garden.

**Entry via the Rose Lane gate
between 5.00-5.30am**

**Cry Havoc, Morris dancers perform
5.15-5.45am**

**Friends £12, guests £16 and children 15
and under £5**

- **Ticket includes a complimentary coffee, or hot chocolate or tea and a croissant with homemade jam**
- **Extra croissants £1.50, warm bacon and cheese baguettes £2.50**
- **Bubbly will be available from £3.50 a glass from a stall run by the Garden staff**
- **Please fill in the order form enclosed with the newsletter and send by post**



**Sunday May 27th,
11.00am to 3.00pm**

Plant Sale 2018 at Harcourt Arboretum

**Arboretum gates open at
10.00am and close at 5.00pm**

11.00am - 3.00pm: plants for sale

£2 per person over 15

My first experience of the Friends' Plant sale was in 1998 when walking my twins of less than a year, around University Parks I stumbled across a lovely white tent surrounded by plants and filled with lovely friendly people selling a wonderful array of donated specimens for very reasonable prices. I managed to fill up every corner of the double buggy and staggered home with my treasures. I was hooked! I watched and waited for the next one (I was still not a Friends' member) which appeared two years later. After it moved back to the Arboretum having outgrown the site and I joined up and began to volunteer on the tea tent meeting the ever-smiling Mary Isaac who by that time was running the event. Little did I know that in 10 years time I would be in charge of it.

Our biennial Plant Sale is the biggest event in the Friends' calendar helping to raise money for the Garden and the Arboretum. This is now our single largest fundraising event and in recent years has raised about £9,000 net each time. ALL our plants are donated from a variety of sources - the Botanic Garden, many generous Friends, College Head Gardeners (many who have been stalwart supporters), University Parks and some local nurseries. We sell almost every type of plant: hardy and tender perennials, vegetable and herb plants, shrubs, trees, grasses, ferns, indoor plants and annuals.

- **Entry £2 to plant sale area**
- **Tombola**
- **Friends' Famous Tea Tent**
- **Pig Roast and other hot food**
- **Scouts' wheelbarrow valets**
- **Lots of parking**



© Colin Roberts



Would you like to help? You can in many different ways and you don't have to know anything about plants!

By donating plant material for dividing and potting up;

By donating plants ready potted up;

By raising plants from seed - vegetables, annuals etc;

By donating cakes for the Tea Tent;

By helping to label and price plants at the Arboretum on Wed 23, Thu 24 or Fri 25 May;

By helping at the sale on the Sunday May 27th. There is plenty of work for non-gardeners on the day!

- Plant stalls
- Friends' refreshment tent
- Tombola
- Welcoming visitors
- Cash desks

We have different people to contact. If you do not have access to email please call Maura on 01865 311711 or 07772 127029 for any of the areas below

Any plant related donations:
Maura Allen
mea@armitstead.com

Refreshments and cake donations
Sally Orriss
sallyorriss12@gmail.com

Volunteering the week before or on the day
Carol Maxwell
cmawell11@gmail.com

Tombola donations
Harriet Bretherton
harriet@brethertonfamily.com

**Wednesday 27th June,
6.00 to 8.00pm**

Friends' Annual Summer Party

Every year we hold a summer party for the Friends, either at the Garden or at the Arboretum, to thank you for your continued support in raising money and awareness for both sites. We will be at the Garden again this year on the evening of Wednesday 27th June from 6.00 - 8.00pm.

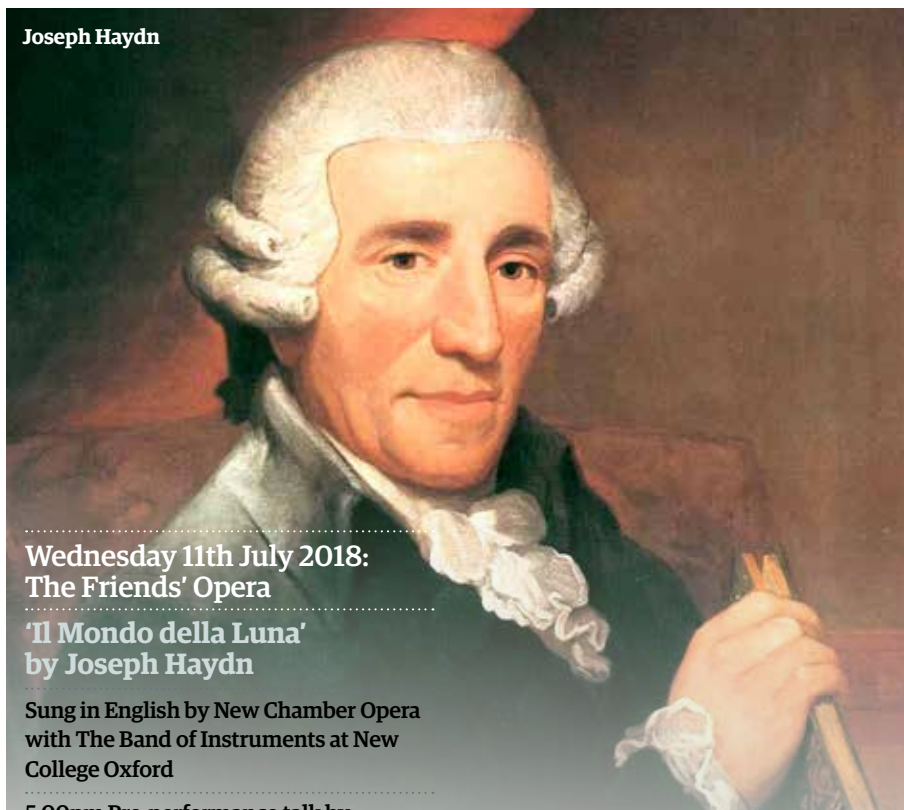
Take a stroll around the Garden in the early evening with a complimentary glass of bubbly and see the Merton and Herbaceous borders in all their early summer glory. Or take a tour with our specialist guides (whose subjects include: the Garden's history, the

Citrus collection, Literary trail, important trees in the Garden and much more). The tours offered will be advertised on the website before the party.

We are delighted to say that TOAD (The Oxford Artisan Distillery) will be providing a gin tasting for their Physic Gin, based on seventeenth century botanicals harvested from the Garden itself.

If you plan on attending please do RSVP, either via the website or by mail, on the booking form in the newsletter, as this is a huge help for catering purposes. We are very happy for guests to come along with you (a maximum of two per Friend please) and see the delights of the Garden and the benefits of becoming a Friends' member.

Joseph Haydn



**Wednesday 11th July 2018:
The Friends' Opera**

**'Il Mondo della Luna'
by Joseph Haydn**

Sung in English by New Chamber Opera
with The Band of Instruments at New
College Oxford

5.00pm Pre-performance talk by
Prof Michael Burden, Director of
New Chamber Opera

6.30pm Opera performance in the
Warden's Garden (open from 6.00pm)

The comic opera 'Il Mondo della Luna', written in 1777, is a delightful mix of satire, comedy and magic, set to lovely music. The story concerns a rich old fool, who is opposed to the marriage of his two daughters and their maid to three impecunious men they love - and their efforts to outwit him.

The opera will be performed in the lovely surroundings of the Warden's Garden at New College, or in the chapel if wet. There will be a 75-minute interval for picnicking in the cloisters.

- **Tickets: £44 to include a welcoming glass of sparkling wine in the cloister garden; £3 for the pre-performance talk.**
- **Tickets: please use the enclosed booking form and return to:**
- **Friends' Opera: Freya Jones, 35 Cuddesdon Road, Oxford, OX33 1JD**

Garden Visits

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

This summer's programme of visits is very varied, with five gardens not visited before. As visits get booked up quickly, please return your postal booking forms as soon as possible and we'll look forward to seeing you at some of these wonderful gardens.

Friday 4th May, 2.30pm

Private visit to Wormsley Estate Walled Garden

Stokenchurch, High Wycombe,
Bucks HP14 3YE

By kind permission of The Wormsley Estate

This special visit to the Wormsley Estate Walled Garden opens our Friends' summer programme. Dating from the mid-1700s, the 2-acre garden was originally designed by Richard Woods, contemporary of Capability Brown. Neglected for the better part of a century, the gardens were brought back to life when Sir Paul and Lady Getty commissioned distinguished garden designer, Penelope Hobhouse, to redesign this beautiful space. Penelope divided the space into garden rooms, enabling visitors to move from 'room to room' exploring features such as the beautiful rose garden, croquet lawn, magnificent pergola and the 'Green Theatre'. Pimms and nibbles served at the end of the visit.

- Friends £20, guests £25
- Maximum 50



Wormsley Estate Walled Garden

Sunday 13th May

Coach visit to view Exbury Garden's Rothschild Rhododendron Collection

Exbury, Southampton SO45 1AZ

By kind permission of Exbury Gardens Limited

8.30am: Coach departs
Oxford Redbridge Park & Ride

5.30pm: Approx arrival time back
at Park & Ride

Exbury Gardens are a spectacular 200-acre site, world-famous for the Rothschild Collection of rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias displaying a riot of colour at the time of our visit. The Gardens were the inspiration of Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, whose vision, dedication and resources created one of the finest woodland gardens in the country. We will be given a tour by the Head Gardener, Tom Clarke, lasting 2 hours. This visit involves lots of walking, though there is also a miniature steam train. Refreshments not included. There are two cafés or bring a picnic.

- Friends £40, guests £45
- Maximum 50



Rhododendrons, Exbury

Friday 8th June, 2.30pm

Private visit to Friar Park

Friar Park, Badgemore,
Henley-on-Thames, RG9

By kind permission of the owner

An exclusive opportunity to visit Friar Park. The rockery, which will be at its peak when we visit, was meant to remind the original owner of the Alps, with its meadow, scree and cascade. There is a woodland walk, a lake and exceptional planting schemes. The Head Gardener will take us on a tour of the garden. Refreshments included.

- Friends £30; Visit only open to Friends
- Maximum 15



© National Trust Images-Marianne Majerus

Climbing roses, Mottisfont

Saturday 16th June,
11.00am or 2.30pm

Private visit to Moat Farm

Water Lane, Ford, Aylesbury HP17 8XD

By kind permission of Mrs P Bergqvist

This is a new garden to us and we're delighted to be invited to visit. A country garden with herbaceous borders, perennial flowers, roses, hostas, interesting trees and water: a moat that flows through the garden and a blind moat through the arboretum. Small walled garden with vegetables. Refreshments included at morning and/or afternoon visits.

- Friends £15, guests £20
- Maximum per visit 20

Monday 25th June

Coach trip to visit Mottisfont followed by The Island

Mottisfont, Romsey, Hants SO51 0LP

By kind permission of The National Trust

9.00am: Coach departs
Oxford Redbridge Park & Ride

6.00pm: Approx arrival time back
at Park & Ride

The walled gardens at Mottisfont are home to the world-famous National Collection of pre-1900 old-fashioned roses, which reach their peak in June. These roses tend to flower just once a year, so their full summer blooming is an extraordinary sight. As well as the rose garden, there are ancient trees, the Test river and the house to visit. Refreshments not included so bring a picnic or visit one of the cafés.


The Island
2.15pm
The Island, Greatbridge, Romsey, Hants SO51 0HP

By kind permission of Christopher and Sarah Saunders-Davies

The Island, owned by a Friend, Sarah Saunders-Davies and her husband, Christopher, is 6 acres of expansive yet secluded garden bordering the fast flowing river Test; a mini-Paradise. Derek Collins, the Head Gardener, will introduce us to the pleasure gardens, herbaceous borders, and an arboretum. Tea included.

- **Friends £33, guests £38**
- **If not a National Trust member, additional £11.00 cash required for admittance to Mottisfont.**
- **Maximum 50**

Thursday 28th June
Private double visit to Ablington Manor followed by Awkward Hill Cottage garden
2.30pm
Ablington Manor, Ablington, Glos GL7 5NH

By kind permission of Mr and Mrs Robert Cooper

This visit of two contrasting gardens starts at Ablington Manor in its tranquil setting. The 4-acre garden, through which the river Coln runs, surrounds the 16th century Grade 1 listed manor house (not open). There are herbaceous borders, a small walled garden with rose pergolas, large lawn, woodland garden, small meadow arboretum, unusual yew topiary and two gazebos for tea, which is included.


Ablington Manor garden
5.00pm
Awkward Hill Cottage, Awkward Hill, Bibury, Glos GL7 5NH

By kind permission of Mrs Victoria Summerley

Another first for our Friends, Awkward Hill Cottage is a garden in progress. The owner, Victoria Summerley, will welcome us with an introductory talk. Over the past six years, Victoria has created a garden which complements the surrounding countryside, offering year-round interest. A wildlife pond with waterfall is home to frogs and toads and pollinator-friendly plants dominate the borders; grasses add movement. The result is a garden full of vibrancy, shapes and texture. Drinks and nibbles included.

- **Friends £30, guests £35**
- **Maximum 30**



© Nevada Summerley

Awkward Hill Cottage garden
Tuesday 3rd July, 2.30pm
Private visit to Upper Chalford Farm
2.30pm
Upper Chalford Farm, Chinnor, Oxfordshire, OX39 4NH

By kind permission of Mr Paul and Mrs Jane Rooksby

And yet another first visit for our Friends! Upper Chalford Farm is a Jacobean farmhouse (not open) surrounded by its garden of old roses, shrubs and perennials. Unusual trees, an ancient black pine, and Caucasian wingnut tree. Hidden areas with different plantings. Spring fed ponds and a stream with damp planted banks; reclaimed woodland with treehouse, bog garden and wild flower meadow. Topiary, wildlife ponds and conservatory, sundials. Cream tea included.

- **Friends £15, guests £20**
- **Maximum 30**


Wadham College
Wednesday 11th July
Private double visit to Wadham College followed by Rhodes House
10.30am
Wadham College, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PN

By kind permission of the Warden and Fellows of Wadham College

A double visit of particular interest because part of Wadham College's gardens was sold for the building of Rhodes House. Wadham's Head Gardener, Andrew Little, will show us round the varied gardens within the college grounds. Amongst Wadham's tree collection are a silver pendant lime, tulip tree, ginkgo, dawn redwood, tree of heaven, incense cedar, Corsican pine, Wollemi pine and rare Chinese gutta-percha. And in the greenhouse, a 200 year old dessert Black Hamburg vine still provides grapes for the college. Refreshments on arrival.



Rhodes House

2.30pm

**Rhodes House, South Parks Road,
Oxford OX1 3RG**

By kind permission of the Warden of Rhodes House

The design of both the house and garden is typical of the Arts and Crafts style employed by country houses in the early 20th century. The gardens at Rhodes House cover approximately two acres, comprising a series of differently themed planting areas surrounding the main building. These include a large formal lawn, mixed shrub borders, grass garden, a long herbaceous border, and various smaller borders adjacent to the house filled with mixed planting. In addition to this, there is a private garden area for the use of the Warden, which contains a sunken lawn, rose arch, cut flower garden and ornamental potager.

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

Friday 20th July, 2.00pm
Private visit to Chivel Farm
**Chivel Farm, Heythrop,
Oxfordshire OX7 5TR**

By kind permission of Mr and Mrs J D Sword

Having lived at Chivel Farm for nearly 40 years, the owners' challenge is to keep their garden refreshed. A beautifully created country garden with extensive views, designed for continuously evolving interest. A late garden so many roses will still be flowering. Also a wide range of clematis, phlox, agapanthus, hardy and shrubby salvias and many unusual perennials in colour scheme borders. Although a dry garden, an irrigation system allows the growing of hydrangeas, particularly serrata varieties which will be in flower. Refreshments included.

- **Friends £15, guests £20**
- **Maximum 40**

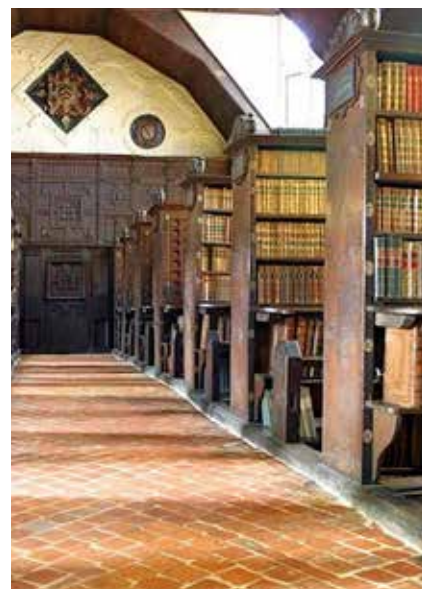
Friday 27th July
**Private double visit to
Merton College Garden and
The Old Library followed by
the Merton Borders at the
Botanic Garden**

1.30pm

**Merton College, Merton Street,
Oxford OX1 4JD**

By kind permission of The Warden of Merton College,
Sir Martin Taylor

Merton College's Head Gardener, Lucille Savin, will lead the tour. An all year round interest is created by a mix of familiar and unusual bulbs, perennials and shrubs. Summer seasonal displays use exotics overwintered in the greenhouse, or grown-on cuttings. Native wildflowers love the shallow alkaline soil and a highlight is the lavender border - a magnet for bees. The garden provides herbs for the college kitchen and quadrangles provide rooms within the garden. The Old Library building,



© Colin Dunn (Scriptura Ltd)

Merton Library

dating from 1393, is the oldest continuously functioning library for university academics and students in the world. Refreshments will be served.

3.30pm

Merton Borders at the Botanic Garden

By kind permission of Professor Simon Hiscock,
Director, Oxford Botanic Garden & Harcourt Arboretum

The idea for the borders was first proposed in 2011 when James Hitchmough, who was then designing the London Olympic Park plantings, was approached with a view to redesigning a large area in the southern part of the Garden. The result was the wonderful Merton Borders covering three different plant regions; North American prairies, Eurasian and South African. Now well established, the borders more or less look after themselves, with a minimum input from the Garden staff. They are at their most striking and colourful in mid-summer. A member of the Garden staff will take us on the tour.

- **Friends £20, guests £25**
- **Maximum 28**



Merton Borders

The Bobarts Patron Group

By Helen Potts
and Jennie Turner

For over 14 years the commitment of the Bobarts Group has provided extra financial support to the Garden and Harcourt Arboretum. Our members 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. Our aim is to visit the widest possible range of gardens in terms of style, size and location and we are helped in this by the generosity of the garden owners and those who work in the institutions whose gardens we visit. We are grateful to them for their time and knowledge they share with us.

Our 2018 programme begins at home in Oxford in March with a visit to the Department of Plant Sciences. Dr Stephen Harris and Serena Marner will give us a talk on the History of Collecting, be it of edible, useful or medicinal plants. Material from the collections of the Sherardian Library and Oxford University Herbaria will be used by way of illustration.

Just after Easter we will go to Chelsea Physic Garden, London's oldest botanic garden which was first established by the Apothecaries in 1673 to grow medicinal plants. We will enjoy a tour of the plant collections within the sheltering walls of the garden on arrival, followed by lunch in the garden's Tangerine Dream café and then move indoors to the archives where we will be shown botanical illustrations, early photographs and historical garden ephemera.

In May, one of our members and a Friend will very kindly open their gardens for us in Great Milton. Both gardens have been created by their owners over many years with a huge variety of features so we will savour vegetable gardens, courtyards, wild flower meadows, herbaceous borders and splendid views, to mention just a few of the treats in store.

As has become usual, we will have an all-day visit in June. This year we will go to Kingham, with lunch in a private room at a nearby pub to fortify us. Kingham Hill House garden was originally designed by Rosemary Verey in the early 1990s and boasts avenues of trees, a water garden and lake, and splendid views across the Evenlode valley. Kingham Lodge garden includes an area of acid soil with countless rhododendrons and azaleas, a recently completed Moorish garden, a box parterre, ponds and unusual planting.

In July we shall visit another garden belonging to a Bobarts member in the Chilterns near Great Hampden where we will be able to see the results of considerable replanting and redesigning with roses, herbaceous and cottage borders, woodland and secret gardens. However, we begin our afternoon with a 2-acre mature garden in nearby Little Hampden. Court Field House garden was originally laid out in the 1920s and boasts a large kitchen garden, herbaceous beds, rockery and shrubbery and a wild flower meadow too.

Later in the year we have plans to visit gardens near Newbury, Chedworth and Banbury. The 2018 Bobarts Day will be at the Harcourt Arboretum in late September.

As we approach the 400th anniversary of the Garden and University Herbaria this extra support that the Bobarts Group provides is even more important, so please consider joining the Group.

To find out more about becoming a member, please do contact friends.administrator@obg.ox.ac.uk



Chelsea Physic Garden pond rockery

**The Friends of Oxford Botanic Garden
and Harcourt 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 weekdays.
This Newsletter was edited by Chris Thorogood and Carol Maxwell. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Board of the Friends or the Visitors of Oxford Botanic Garden.



Calendar

April

Friday April 6th, 10.30am

Coffee morning

Saturday April 21st, 10.00 - 4.00pm

Spring Fair, Arboretum

Friday April 27th, 10.30am

**Coffee morning at the
Arboretum - 'Bluebell Time'**

May

Tuesday May 1st, 5.00 - 7.00am

May Morning

Friday May 4th, 2.30pm

**Visit to Wormsley Estate
Walled Garden**

Friday May 4th, 10.30am

Coffee morning

Sunday May 13th

Coach visit to Exbury Gardens

June

Friday June 1st, 10.30am

Coffee morning

Friday June 8th, 2.30pm

Visit to Friar Park

Saturday June 16th,

11.00am or 2.30pm

Visit to Moat Farm

Friday June 22nd, 10.30am

**Coffee morning at the
Arboretum - 'Summer Meadow'**

Monday June 25th

**Coach visit to Mottisfont
and The Island**

Wednesday June 27th, 6.00 - 8.00pm

Friends' Summer Party at the Garden

Thursday June 28th,

2.30pm & 5.00pm

**Visit to Abington Manor
and Awkward Hill Cottage**

July

Tuesday July 3rd, 2.30pm

Visit to Upper Chalford Farm

Friday July 6th, 10.30am

Coffee morning

Wednesday July 11th,

11.30am & 2.30pm

**Visit to Wadham College
and Rhodes House**

Wednesday July 11th

New Chamber Opera

Friday July 20th, 2.00pm

Visit to Chivel Farm

Friday July 27th, 1.30pm & 3.30pm

**Visit to Merton College Garden
& Library followed by the Merton
Borders at the Botanic Garden**