



## **HPS trip to Abbeywood - by Ian Evans**

Abbeywood is a 45 acre wooded estate near Delamere in Cheshire. It was purchased in 1987 by Harry Rowlinson, who loved the surrounding countryside and the views of the distant Utkinton hills. With much hard work and considerable expense, he and his wife, Lynda, have transformed the area around the house into a series of compartmentalised gardens, each on a different theme, and the work continues with a recently planted arboretum and plans for a woodland garden. They now have two full-time gardeners and a part-time assistant.

Martin Brown organised a day trip to this garden for the Derbyshire HPS on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. It was a comfortable coach trip and the weather was kindly for most of the day, the rain holding off until we were ready to leave Abbeywood. There was a Plant Hunters plant fair on at Abbeywood the day we visited, and our members duly filled the coach with purchases. Unfortunately, as this was the first time Abbeywood had hosted such an event, they underestimated the attendance and their restaurant was quite overwhelmed by the number of customers! However, the staff worked hard and were very helpful, and with the renowned good humour of garden visitors, everyone got fed. The food was very good and the time waiting for it was well occupied with a glass of their excellent wine!

The original walled garden has been transformed into an exotic garden full of tender and other rare plants. A formal structure of low box hedges is planted out each spring with such spectacular plants as several types of banana, Daturas, Fuchsias and Geranium maderense. Other semi-tender plants are left in place over-winter but protected against the worst of the weather, such as Tetrapanax, Cordylines, Lobelias, tree ferns and Trachycarpus palms. All remaining space is filled with exotic herbaceous plants, including a range of Dahlias, Solanums,

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**ONE IN FIVE PLANTS  
ARE THREATENED  
WITH EXTINCTION.  
IT'S A GROWING  
PROBLEM**

Cotswold Garden  
Flower catalogue

# A Plant of Interest: *Cornus Kousa Chinensis* 'China Girl' by Nigel Needham



*Cornus kousa chinensis* was recommended as a very good garden subject by Andrew Humphris of Wollerton Old Hall in his informative and entertaining talk on trees and shrubs at our December meeting. His endorsement prompted me to write this article. Andrew said that the Chinese varieties of *Cornus kousa* were generally slightly hardier than their North American counterparts, and particularly recommended the 'pink-flowering' variety Miss Satori, which looked absolutely gorgeous in his slide. However, my only specimen is the extremely popular variety

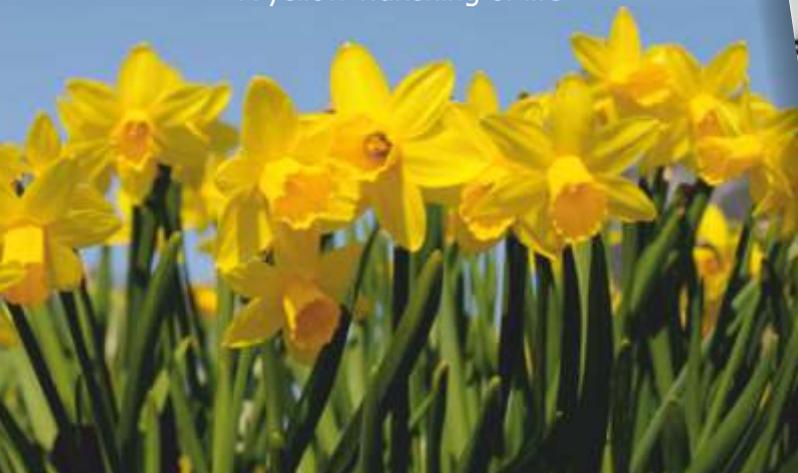
'China Girl', which has creamy white 'flowers' (technically bracts, of course) in June. I bought the plant after some deliberation because the natural habit of its mid-green, slightly pointed leaves appeared somewhat droopy to me, and not unduly appealing. However, the prospect of a specimen laden with bracts persuaded me to buy it, and I have now come to admire this leaf formation: it is a little different. The bracts have improved in quantity each year, and this summer gave a magnificent show which virtually hid the leaves below. Their colour changes to a deepening pink as time progresses: a lovely bonus. In late summer/autumn small, strawberry-like mid/deep red fruits appear. Andrew confirmed that they were edible but did not recommend eating them, a view I wholly endorse! However, they did prove very useful for our neighbour's children when they created a miniature garden in a seed tray. Another bonus is the autumn leaf colour: orange/red. The

skeletal winter framework is pleasant but unremarkable.

My tree has proved totally hardy to date. Research shows it to be hardy to minus 15 degrees Centigrade though it may not be totally hardy in open/exposed sites or some central/northern locations. The bracts are said to be more profuse when the previous summer has been hot and dry. Ultimate height and spread are 7 metres (22 feet) and 5 metres (15 feet). Mine has not yet reached these proportions, but has flourished so well that the head gardener lodged a formal complaint that the leaves overhung the garden path, necessitating a side-step and (in wet weather) resulting in wet clothing. A mandatory pruning followed, and I await the spring with anticipation to see if I have managed to root any cuttings from the lopped material. I hope that I have: I would love to be able to share this excellent plant with others.

## 'Golden Promise' by Jean Grant

Winter jasmine  
flowering in February  
reminds me  
That Spring is yellow here.  
Daffodils, forsythia  
saffron crocuses  
lichen on greystone walls  
and sunshine.  
A yellow awakening of life



### Top Tips for selling plants

1) If possible the plants should be in proper plastic pots as this looks more professional.

2) All plants do need to be double labelled. One label with the name of the plant, if you are not too sure of the correct botanical name that is not too important. The other label needs to have your name and the price you are charging for the plant. Labels written in ink are much easier to read than those done in pencil. This is really helpful to the volunteers who are taking the money. Please give prices in multiples of 50p as this makes it so much easier to add up.

3) It is best that any plants which need re-potting are re-potted at least four weeks before the sale so that they are well established.

## HPS trip to Abbeywood continued - by Ian Evans



Ricinus and Cleomes. The effect is almost overpowering, with the range of bright colours, huge leaves, shapes and smells. Noteworthy is a Paulownia, coppiced each year, which has the largest leaves I have seen anywhere, even the equivalent plants in the long border at Wisley look stunted by comparison!

A wooden gazebo frames the gap through a high yew hedge, through which is the pool garden, which was designed by David Stevens ten years ago to take the place of an old tennis court. This is a formal garden based around a long pool with parterre and lawns. The highlights are two large ceramic urns at one end which are surrounded by a sea of red *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Firetail'. Through a gap in the hedge between the two urns is the Chapel garden, a secretive little garden done mainly in greens and whites.

Proceeding beyond the pool garden between tall brick-built pillars one reaches a long pergola running at right-angles to the main garden axis, and ahead are the main herbaceous borders, leading to a prairie garden whose magnificence belies the fact that it is only a year since it was first created. The ebullience of the prairie garden planting is brilliantly set off by the immaculately maintained lawns which provide the walkways between the beds, and by a line of *Thuja occidentalis* 'Smaragd' which provides a dramatic back-drop.

Marked on the useful map provided by Abbeywood is an area described as the Woodside garden, shown as having a number of flower beds amongst the trees. However, this turned out to be a dream for the future which doesn't yet exist. All we found was a wooden wolf lurking in the woods!



A recently created arboretum was the setting for the plant fair and provided parking space for the many visitors. The trees were not labelled, which was slightly annoying, but gave rise to much discussion among the budding dendrologists walking round! We called at Trentham Gardens on the way home, but unfortunately the heavy rain discouraged further garden viewing, and much tea and ice cream was devoured instead.



### Ref the Eucalyptus Tree by Dorrell Harrison

Thanks to my fellow Hardy Planter for her reply to my recent article, also note her comments of right plant, wrong place. I have started burning the Eucalyptus wood on my wood burning stove, filling the air around the village with a Heady Fragrance. Rumour has it that the local over sixties group can breathe so much more easily they have thrown away their Zimmer frames and joined the local Ceilidh dance group.

Sadly the local resident "Koala Bear" has had to move to another garden to supplement its diet (perhaps heading towards Lea).

Unfortunately my efforts to try to make a Didgeridoo out of the wood seemed to have failed, however on a more positive note Eucalyptus wood does make excellent Potash.

# The Visit - by Dorrell Harrison

Five years ago when my wife and I retired we decided to join the "Small Woods owners group". We have lived at Nether Close Farm for thirty years, but due to lack of time and bringing up our family, the only time we did any work in the wood was when a tree was in a dangerous condition (ie leaning over a public footpath).

After a particularly interesting visit to another members' woodland, my good lady suggested that we could host a visit for fellow members. I foolishly went along with the suggestion thinking nothing would come of it.

The event organiser was contacted and they made a date to inspect the woodland (comprising of Oak/larch/silver birch/rowan/sycamore and holly). A slight panic crept in and we decided to do a bit of forestry work so it didn't look too neglected. At the inspection we were asked about our plans for the future of the wood, at this stage I did not have any. Still this did not matter too much because I was convinced that he (the event organiser) would think it unsuitable.

**All these ideas seem ok if you have a team of workers but two OAPs do not have quite the same effect!**

Three months went by before we had an email confirming the event was on, This is when we had a reality check, deciding that a plan of action was required to prepare for the visit in April 2015.

We decided to cut a series of connecting paths through the wood, open up large areas by felling trees and clearing fallen timber to encourage bio diversity, wild flowers and ferns. All these ideas seem ok if you have a team of workers but two OAPs do not have quite the same effect. The only way we could tackle



the work was to work four hours a day, twice a week.

It was January so there was not much to do in the garden. This proved to be one of our better ideas, working in the wood, in silence (apart from the noise of the chain saw) and not seeing any one, made us realise that we should have done this years ago.

Arrangements were made for a friend to bring his Shire horse to pull logs out of the wood to give members a demonstration on how to tack up the horse and different methods of timber extraction - this proved to be a real talking point with everyone on the day

April seemed to arrive very quickly, I had it in my mind most members would be "Eco Warrior" types, what a surprise for me, it seems that woodland owners come from all walks of life, being just as enthusiastic about trees as my fellow Hardy Planters are about plants. Many discussing the types, age and height of various trees and some actually hugging the trunks and looking up into the canopy. Another debate was on how to fell "hanging" branches by hand winch which also proved interesting.

After approximately two hours the party returned back home for refreshments, afterwards they looked around the garden for a while no one commented on the weeds and not one Latin name was quoted (thank goodness).

**Woodland owners come from all walks of life... many discussing the types, age and height of various trees and some actually hugging the trunks and looking up into the canopy.**

One of the members asked if I could supply him with a few small Holly bushes for the Heritage wood near Derby. In October we dug up a hundred and sixty for planting, so fingers crossed that they take, hopefully we shall be able to inspect them in 2016.

## Abbeywood Estate - by Robert Hawkesworth



A SUNDAY start! We had to check twice on our calendar to make quite sure and I was quite relieved to see the coach in place as we arrived in the car park at Alfreton. To be fair we were not the only ones who had re-checked our diaries! As always, we were soon on our way, a shorter journey this time, out into Cheshire, Abbeywood lies close to Delamere. As an added bonus there was to be a Plant Fair on the same day we were there with some well known nurseries to be present. The estate is owned by Harry and Lynda Rowlinson; it was acquired by them in 1987 and they knew that with a great deal of hard work and the necessary vision they could make it into a wonderful family home. It is certainly set in splendid countryside with great views all around. Once parked, we made our way through the garden cafe and out into the gardens and estate.

Passing through the café you enter the Orangery and out into the tropical garden, here were some very attractive and unusual plants, including one which none of us in our small group could identify at all. It was just over waist high with leaves, all of which bore a vertical, very sharp orange coloured spine. I would not like the job of pruning it! This tropical garden obviously was set in a very sheltered spot, but we were all amazed at the healthy plants all around us. Identification proved very difficult and would require far more horticultural knowledge than Barbara and I have, I am sure that there would be some of you however who would be much better placed than us in that regard. All I can say is that it was a very attractive part of the garden and extraordinarily colourful. A tropical garden in Cheshire does make you raise your eyes! The Pool Garden adjoins the Tropical Garden and contains a long reflecting stretch of water and is surrounded by planted box parterres. I find it very difficult to describe the colours and textures of this part of the garden; it would take someone with a far greater gift with words than I, to do this part of the garden justice. You then go through the Pergola Walk and into the Herbaceous Borders, in late August they were colourful with Kniphofias, could I recognise 'Tawny King' as one of them? Closer to the ground Sedums, which may well have included 'Autumn Joy'. We, and especially I, are losing our memories for plants and plant names. We were especially impressed by the Agapanthus plants, many being grown in the open borders; we have not been very successful with them at all. We have tried pots and open ground and have never had any real success with either. This is all part of learning isn't it? If at first you don't succeed try, try again. The Prairie Garden links from the Herbaceous Borders and was first planted last year, it has slightly sloping ground and plenty of sun. Being open it has, in addition, wind which will blow the grasses and other flowers around. Altogether we were impressed with this garden and will certainly return.

The Plant Fair was attended by numerous nurseries, including some well known names such as Bob Brown and our members made good use of the various stalls. Altogether this was a very good day, even the rain held off until we were back travelling down the M6 en route for Trentham Gardens and a welcome cup of tea.

## Annual Plant Fair

Each year we hold an annual plant fair, this year on 21 May. This is one of our main sources of income so it's important that this tradition continues. However, we need help to make it run efficiently. It's hard work but very enjoyable and there is always a 'buzz' in the hall. Helpers can make cakes, sell cards, make tea, help with parking, take money, grow plants and man the stalls.

Fewer and fewer people are growing plants to sell. You don't need to be an expert, few of us are, we are just enthusiastic growers who enjoy sharing plants and talking about them. The plants don't have to be unusual, just well grown and in good condition. Why not grow a few and bring them along. You don't have to fill a table! For our top tips for selling plants see page 2!

Doors open at 11am, but if you are selling or helping you can arrive at 9.30 to set up. Table covers are provided. One third of all plant sale money goes to the HPS the other two thirds is yours, with a cheque being sent to you a couple of days after the sale.

Why not have a go? It's fun and you make money to buy more plants - a win-win situation!



# I bought my Wife a Black Negligee - by Nigel Needham



I bought my wife a black negligee. Actually, this is a white lie, but I nearly did, and I'm sure that this is a claim that many a husband or other lady's admirer would be proud to make. I refer, of course, to the purchase of the stately *actaea simplex* (atropurpurea group) 'Black Negligee'. The opportunity to buy this plant arose this summer at the highly recommended Avondale Nursery at Baginton, Coventry, which Jean and I were privileged to visit as guests of Wingerworth Horticultural Association. Nursery owner Brian Ellis was a delight to chat to, and so helpful, and he told me that, as good as this plant was, he preferred the variety *actaea simplex* 'James Compton'. However, he advised, sales of 'Black Negligee' far exceeded (or should I say 'outstripped'? sorry, couldn't resist) those of 'James Compton', probably due to its appealing name.

During the same visit, we also discovered *sanguisorba* 'Stand-Up Comedian'. This name certainly gave us a laugh, and we thought that we might buy it. However, we then saw the similarly humorously named *sanguisorba hakusanensis* 'Lilac Squirrel' with its beautiful blue/grey foliage and bought this instead. We

had not previously bought a *sanguisorba*, perhaps because we thought their flowers to be not sufficiently 'pretty' and/or significant. How wrong we were. 'Lilac Squirrel' was quickly planted (I must have had an off day: new purchases usually have to join the queue waiting for the demise of an existing occupant) and not only delighted us with its foliage but also a long-lasting display of exquisite lilac flowers. They were charming, and I can understand Brian's catalogue comment on them: "Everyone's favourite".

Reflecting on these experiences later made me wonder how much the name of a plant influences its sales. We know that plant breeders love to name new varieties after celebrities, but does this really result in significantly extra sales and profits? Does a quirky name appeal to plant buyers? 'Black Negligee' and 'Stand-Up Comedian' certainly appealed to us, but in the end we did not buy them.

For amusement, I later tried to think of some humorous/unusual/quirky plant names and also tried to find some in catalogues. Avondale's catalogue revealed that we could have bought *sanguisorba tenuifolia* 'Pink Elephant'

or *sanguisorba* 'Beetlewings'. Other sources revealed *festuca glauca* 'Golden Toupee' and *hemerocallis* 'Little Red Hen'. I would love to see all of these and try to associate the plants with their names. Food can be a theme in naming flowers, as I discovered by finding *campanula punctata* 'Beetroot' and *echinacea* 'Tomato Soup'.

However, if your preference is sweet to savoury, then how about *iris* 'Gingerbread Man' or *epimedium wushanense* 'Caramel'? Of course, our national British trait of talking about the weather cannot be forgotten when plants are named. Thus, I found *thalictrum aquilegia folium* 'Thundercloud' and *polemonium* 'Purple Rain' which naturally had to be followed by *campanula latifolia* 'Splash'. Are *crocsmia* 'Lucifer' and *crocsmia x crocsmiiflora* 'Honey Angels' compatible? After all, relatives don't always get along. Perhaps *thalictrum* 'Black Stockings' displayed with *epimedium elongatum* 'Enchantress' or *ranunculus* 'Brazen Hussey' would go nicely with the aforementioned 'Black Negligee'. They could possibly result in *echinacea purpurea* 'Fatal Attraction'. As for *echinacea purpurea* 'Virgin', I'm not even going to go there! I don't want to

## Plants for Free by Janet Norman

It may not have been a wonderful summer in 2015 but it's been a bumper one for self sets around the garden. So many have appeared that I thought I would do a list for myself.

First I still have antirrhinums and primula denticulata from the previous owners of fifteen years ago: Both are welcome, as are the foxgloves, forget me nots, marigolds and primroses which fill the spring gaps and can be discarded later when you need the space. Some plants I find difficult to grow from seed so I am very grateful to find the seedlings under the parent plants of trilliums and disporum smithii. They can then be potted up and brought to the plant sale.

Cerinthe purpurascens grows everywhere for me, especially in the mower danger zone at the edge of the lawn. I scatter the seed where I want them but they won't germinate, so they have to be transferred to safety when they are big enough. I remember Helen Yemm asked if geranium palmatum self sets around here, well it does for me. A very cold winter will finish off, a few but under the conifer hedge some will survive as do geranium Bill Wallis and harveyii, a South African native.

Strangely not all plants that produce large quantities of seed also produce seedling self sets. Delphinium for one, I can say I have never found one in the garden but grown in seed trays they are like mustard and cress. One of my favourite plants at the moment is Beesia calthifolia. Mine came from the HPS trip to the Courson in France. It is evergreen with gorgeous glossy heart shaped leaves and the flowers are held on a white wand, similar to a tiarella. It produces copious seed for many months but I have only managed to grow one plant from it.

As for the prolific seeders we have aquilegias, hellebores, dierama pulcherrimum, and campanula hoffmanii, that's a few for a start and the very worst or best according to your point of view is verbena bonariensis. This plant has more or less invaded the whole garden and this year I had to cut it down whilst still in flower to avoid a complete takeover next year. I still love it to bits though.

Also, verbascum creticum made a welcome reappearance this year after a few years: It is biennial, scented and comes from the Mediterranean.

These are just some of the plants that arrive along with the ivy, holly and yew provided by the birds, free of charge, but you can collect your own seed and send it to the HPS seed exchange as I do. This year was not particularly good as many seeds were late ripening but I still managed between 40 and 50 packets and it's a great way of trying out new varieties you can't get anywhere else, so why not have a go when the seed list comes out, try something different.



propagate schizostylis coccinea  
'Maiden's Blush'.

After all this, I have to confess that I love the quirky names that some plants are given. I don't think that these names alone will make me buy the plants concerned, but I do feel that they add to the lightness, humour and pleasure of gardening. Long may they continue.

ED: How about you? Why not tell us about your favourite quirkily named plants in our next newsletter?

- 1 sanguisorba 'Stand-Up Comedian'
- 2 campanula punctata 'Beetroot'
- 3 crocosmia x crocosmiiflora 'Honey Angels'
- 4 thalictrum aquilegia folium 'Thundercloud'
- 5 actaea simplex (atropurpurea group) 'Black Negligee'
- 6 ranunculus 'Brazen Hussey'

## Dates for your Diary

Date	Event	Location
16 April	<b>Iris for the Natural Garden</b> by Alun and Jill Whitehead There will be plants for sale	Shirland Village Hall 2pm
7 May	Day trip to <b>Kathy Brown's garden</b> at Stevington Manor near Bedford and Plant Hunters' Plant Fair at Donnington-Le-Heath Manor House.	Details tbc
21 May	<b>DHPS annual Plant Fair</b>	Shirland Village Hall 11am- - 1pm
5 June	Day trip to <b>Hodnett Hall</b> and Plant Hunters' Plant Fair	Details tbc
24-27 June	<b>DHPS holiday to Norfolk</b>	Details tbc
17 Sept	<b>Late Bloomers</b> by Martin & Janet Blow	Shirland Village Hall 2pm

WEATHER MEANS  
MORE WHEN YOU  
HAVE A GARDEN.

THERE'S NOTHING  
LIKE LISTENING TO  
RAIN IN THE NIGHT  
AND THINKING  
'I WON'T HAVE  
TO WATER  
TOMORROW'.

### Brain teaser...

Let's say you have a garden. On day one, there is only one weed. If the number of weeds doubles every day, and the garden is full of weeds on the 30th day, how many days will it take to fill the garden if we start with two weeds?



29 days. It's just like you started on day two.

### Capability Brown

The Duke of Leinster wanted Capability Brown to remodel the surroundings to his great mansion Carton in County Kildare.

Despite His Grace offering him the enormous sum of £1000 on landing in Ireland, Brown found himself unable to accept, for, as he put it, he had not yet finished England.



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### Editor's Note:

If you have an article that you would like to see published in the newsletter, please send as a Word document to: [alisonfarnsworth@btinternet.com](mailto:alisonfarnsworth@btinternet.com) or by post to:

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Please send photos (as separate attachments) too if you have them.

**Cancellations:** If a meeting has to be cancelled due to adverse weather, details will be posted on the website [www.HPSderbyshire.co.uk](http://www.HPSderbyshire.co.uk) or please contact Celia Weaver on: 01773 824446 or email: [celia24c@gmail.com](mailto:celia24c@gmail.com)

**Reminder:** If you would like to receive your copy of the HPS Derbyshire newsletter by email, please let me have your name, address and e-mail address so that I can add you to the list.

Thanks once again to Emma Oaks for designing the newsletter.