



Derbyshire Group

NEWSLETTER



AUTUMN 2018

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Front Cover Illustration: **Weevil**

Photographed by: **Ian Evans**

PROGRAMME FOR 2018 – 2019

Sept. 15	Humble Umbels	<i>Brian Ellis of Avondale Nursery</i>
Oct. 20	Creating a Tropical Garden using Hardy Plants.	<i>Michael Fisher (Plant Revelations)</i>
Nov. 17*	Revitalising Vita	<i>Troy Scott Smith</i>
Dec. 8	Flower Power Fairs Followed by CHRISTMAS NIBBLES	<i>Judy Popley</i>

Jan. 19	The Wonderful World of Weeds	<i>Sally Smith</i>
Feb. 16	It's Not All About Flower	<i>Paul Green of Green Leaves Nursery</i>
Mar. 16	Growing & Showing Herbs	<i>Malcolm Dickson of Hooksgreen Herbs</i>
Apr. 27	Topical Tips	<i>Andrew Mikolaiki</i>
May 18	PLANT FAIR (11.00 am to 1.00 pm)	

--- SUMMER BREAK ---

Sep. 21	The Patch: A Garden for All Seasons	<i>Jim Almond</i>
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NB **The dates in red signify a change from the usual meeting day.**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR??

Dear Editor

Whilst my sole pair of gardening gloves (twenty five years old, Woolworth's Winfield brand, bought in the sale) continue to perform sterling service, they inevitably have lost their new appearance. However, my wife compensates for my genteel shabbiness by owning some splendid:-

- Lightweight, mid weight and heavyweight gardening gloves
- Winter, summer, autumn and spring gardening gloves
- Different coloured gardening gloves for each day of the week
- Best pairs of gardening gloves for when visitors arrive
- Designer gardening gloves for special occasions, notably Megha gloves for royal weddings

Her 'gloveliness' is beyond compare. Many are Showa gloves purchased from the excellent HPSD gardening sundries sales stall, and the consistent annual increase in the profitability of the manufacturer of Showa gloves bears testimony to her support. Consequently, I feel my efforts are somewhat lacking in comparison. Notwithstanding the fact that my gloves have years of wear left in them, do you think that I should adopt a more expansive approach and invest in a second pair of gloves from your stall?

Puzzled,
Pinxton

Editor's reply:-

Dear Puzzled

A most perplexing problem. It would seem that your wife has entered the digital age with enthusiasm whilst you retain your analogue tendencies. On balance, I think that it may be time that you cast aside some inhibitions and invest in a second pair of gloves. It would be advisable to ensure that they do not colour clash with any of your wife's gloves, however. Ed.

Notes from the Chair

I hope that this beautiful summer which we have had, has not caused too much havoc in your gardens. At least we escaped without a hosepipe ban even though our lawns may well have looked a little scorched.

Doesn't time fly when you are having fun? By the time you read this we shall be staring the AGM in the face (October Meeting) and we **MUST** have a nomination for a new Chair(*man, woman or person*). Please put your minds to this, and Celia has the necessary forms for nomination(s) which must be returned to her at least 14 days prior to the AGM That means by **October 6th 2018**. Bear in mind that to nominate someone you must have a seconder as well as yourself and YOU MUST ASK YOUR NOMINEE'S PERMISSION TO PUT THEIR NAME FORWARD.

I hope that you will receive this issue of your Newsletter at the September meeting which means that while there are articles regarding the Day Trips in this issue, any report of the Weekend Trip will have to wait for the next issue. That trip took place after we had gone to press.

Our new Day Trips Organiser seems to have got off to a flying start, I understand (*see pp.4-7 & 15-17*) and our new Joint Membership Secretaries have worked extremely hard to bring our records up-to-date and contend with the new directions regarding use of records (*see the article on pp.11-12*). This year our membership details exactly matched the National HPS records for our Group!

As my term as your Chairman comes to an end and as there seems to be much reluctance to take it on, I have decided to turn my 'acting' position as editor into a regular position. If you have any article in your mind, please do write it and send it on to me (preferably, but not necessarily, by email). **MY EMAIL ADDRESS HAS CHANGED. IT IS NOW:** revdgmith@btinternet.com

It will be Christmas next!!!! Do you want a Christmas issue?

God bless.
Graham

DAY TRIPS 2018 – 1a

Wednesday 13th June, 2018 - Wentworth Historic Walled Gardens, Rotherham and Heslington Manor, York

Written by Sylvia Marshall

Every Trip with Derbyshire Hardy Plant Society is a pleasurable experience. Martin's trips were well planned and interesting and I am sure more than me wondered if anyone was going to be able to match him but Lyn did a superb job and I am sure Martin would agree with me. On this trip the driver was exceptional, he was pleasant and set out his expectations from us and also told us the format for the day so we knew exactly what we were doing. The members are pleasant and prompt and we have no hassles waiting around for folk who are late back to the bus.

Wentworth garden centre is incredibly organised, clean and tidy and there is a wonderful retail therapy experience awaiting you if you are so inclined. The coffee shop is delightful and I am sure offered food to suit everyone with coffee and a biscuit to a full breakfast if you wanted it and lots in between. As we were in Yorkshire it is evident that they cater for large appetites as even the shortbread biscuit was large. The historic walled gardens are lovely to walk round. It is a shame that some water features were awaiting maintenance and were empty but I am sure the work is necessary.



DAY TRIPS 2018 – 1c

I actually put Lynn's debut as outings organiser as a triumph and many thanks to Lynn!, I enjoyed both Wentworth the wonderful walled gardens and the exceptional flower arrangers garden at Heslington Manor. Some words that epitomised both were sense of serenity, peace, calm, soulful and love and perfection. The artistry of the wonderful George Smith in not only his fantastic floral arrangements but also in the planting and design of the various aspects. What a wonderful welcome he and his friend gave us. The courtyard garden was amazing and depicted exactly the Mediterranean theme. I loved the courtyard with unusual *ferns* although bit tricky to walk on! Those cobbles! and especially the pebble garden. I love the recycling theme and a very unusual *fern* was to be spotted there as well as the exquisite *acer*. I wish I had Linda's fantastic knowledge of the plant specimens, but for me simply to enjoy the ambience and the companionship of the fellow members is sublime and so lovely to have a chance meeting up with various people wandering around and an exchange of views. All very positive I might add. Once again thanks to Lyn for a superb day.

Rosy Harman

MEA CULPA

Over the past 2 weeks, I have been having considerable difficulty with my e-mails. There have been some which I have not received; some deposited in my 'Spam' folder and thus ignored for many days; some arriving incomplete or garbled.

Added to all that is my own incompetence in that there have been so many articles about the Day Trips this year – people really have enjoyed them – that I fear that I may have confused some articles or – even worse! – combined some articles.

If I have, please, please forgive me (it will NOT happen again) and let me know what has gone wrong and I promise you that there will be a correction and apology in the next issue.

I may have got it all right but I have a 'horrible feeling in my water' that I haven't. Now that my term as Chairman is coming to an end, I shall be able to concentrate just on the Newsletter. I have also changed my email address (see p.3) - Graham

house the country squire would live in in TV dramas, built behind a high stone wall and sits in the centre of the ground with a wide gravel drive to the front door.

The garden is divided into rooms by brick walls and the rear boundary is mature trees. It's obviously a garden designed for colour all carefully matched with focal points of strong colour in containers. The lawns short and edged and the borders full of plants, *peony*, *iris*, *delphinium* in flower with *hostas*, *foxglove*, *candelabra primula* and many other as background. The walls are draped in climbing plants, *clematis*, *rose*, *wisteria*, *variegated ivy* and, at the rear, is a pond surrounded with *iris*, *campanulas*, *peony* and other moisture loving plants.

Tea and biscuits were taken in a cool arch loggia; very pleasant on a warm afternoon. We returned to the coach and were personally waved good bye by George.

Our thanks go to Lynn Wood for organising the visits. Well done, We hope it is the first of many. (Though I did see Martin hovering!!)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The recently introduced General Data Protection Regulations require Derbyshire Hardy Plant Group to update its data protection policies and issue a revised Privacy Notice to its members.

To comply with the Regulations the Group has added that Notice to the Group's website. It may be accessed by following the on-screen instructions.

The Notice will also be on display at Group meetings

There was a lovely flock of fallow deer and Michaela and I sat on a bench for a while just watching their antics. What a pleasant time we had there.

We then moved on to York to George Smith's 3 acre garden at Heslington Manor. He is an internationally famous flower arranger and horticulturalist who received an MBE for his services to flower arranging in 2004. The gardens are renowned for their distinctive collection of *roses*, *irises*, *poppies* and a wide variety of foliage plants including *hostas*, *ferns* and *decorative grasses*. This is the third time I have visited this particular garden and although the layout is spectacular and there is lots to see I don't think it was looking its best this time. There were lovely areas around the house and with George's studio providing a lovely vista when the studio doors were open. Whether it was the time of the year, beds further away were not as interesting as I have seen in the past. I have a feeling that, as this is the last year this garden will be open to the public, it may be that George himself is not spending as much time working outside due to his good age and that will come to us all

On past visits we have also been able to go into the manor house and look at his flower arrangements both upstairs and downstairs and this has been a real treat but alas this was not available this time. There has also been a nursery in the past but that seems to have finished too.



Thank you Lyn for arranging such a good trip and I am sure everyone booked on the next one - in July to Stone House Cottage Garden, Worcestershire and John Massey's garden at Ashwood nurseries - is looking forward to another great day out.

**Saturday 14 July 2018 - Stone House Cottage Garden and Nursery and
John's Garden at Ashwood Nursery**

Written by: Marie Williams

We left Alfreton Services at 7.45 am in a full coach, on a beautiful day and headed to Worcestershire. Thoughtfully, Lynn had arranged a comfort stop at Hopwood Services, before our first garden visit, as the facilities there are very primitive.

Stone House Cottage Garden is a delightfully quirky garden, set in a very peaceful location, near to Kidderminster. It was created in 1975, in an acre of an abandoned walled kitchen garden. The garden is divided into different "rooms" by large hedges, which make it ideal conditions for growing the large variety of rare and unusual plants. The selection of plants is vast, perennials, shrubs and climbers. The climbers are shown off to the best advantage by the many brick follies built in the garden, for the plants to scramble up.

On first glance, the garden appears to be a bit wild and chaotic, but look closer and you will see that the plants are perfectly arranged in groups to complement each other. Louisa, the owner, has planted and maintains the garden on her own, a daunting task due to its scale and plant diversity. She was happy to answer any questions we asked her, as she is very knowledgeable - a real plantswoman.

The attached Nursery was well stocked with plants from the garden and charged at very reasonable prices, it is reputed to have one of the largest selection of rare plants for sale in the country. Our members took full advantage of the plant sale, as could be seen in the rather full boot of the coach! I would thoroughly recommend this wonderful garden, which is open this year only until 1st September, Wednesday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm.

Wednesday 13th June, 2018

Wentworth Gardens – by Steve Gascoigne

We departed from Alfreton on a sunny morning for a quick journey up the M1 to Wentworth Gardens, this is both a restored garden and a successful retail garden centre.

The restored garden is built in the old kitchen garden and pleasure grounds of Wentworth Hall. The gardens have been restored over the last thirty years totally self-funded.

The entry to the garden is through the garden centre. The first garden is a continuation of the path, through a wisteria arch and spring garden with alliums and clematis climbing the walls. To the right is a silver birch grove under planted with hosta, euphorbia, heuchera and hellebore. This is followed by a sunken rock garden with cascade and pools surrounded with ferns, hostas and candelabra primula.

A formal Italian garden with crossing rills and pyramid topiary yews surrounded by clipped lawns is sunken besides the garden centre. There is small rose garden as well as roses trained on walls, also a short woodland walk through mature trees the paths being marked out by logs with coarse wood shavings for the paths.

The garden is well maintained, all the lawns cut short and edged and the borders weed free.

The garden centre has a large range of good quality plants and landscape materials.

The restaurant is extensive with a varied selection of choices as we left just after noon the queue stretched the length of the counter, obviously well known for its quality.

Heslington Manor – by Steve Gascoigne

This is the home of George Smith the famous flower arranger, a very dapper person, he gave an introductory talk and wandered in the garden with us answering questions and giving advice. The manor is very typical of the

THIS EMPTY PAGE IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN INSUFFICIENT
MATERIAL IS PROVIDED.

I AM CERTAIN THAT YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS.

LETTERS; ARTICLES; PICTURES; AMUSING STORIES;

ADVICE; HANDY TIPS; QUESTIONS; SERIOUS STUFF

– that is what an editor needs from the members.

The next visit was to **John's Garden at Ashwood Nurseries** and was a complete contrast to the previous garden. It was set in three acres and is John Massey's private garden, located on the banks of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal. It is only open to the public a few times a year for charity.



*I don't remember seeing the member
in black on the coach – ED.*

The garden is immaculately planted and tended, with deep borders, island beds and shaded woodland areas. A selection of herbaceous perennials, shrubs, trees and alpine are all thriving and looked stunning. The beds are planted right up to edge of the canal and it wasn't unusual to see a narrow boat gliding past. The summer garden was well stocked with *hydrangeas*, *clematis*, *grasses* and a wonderful display of cottage garden favourites. This is a garden that would be well worth a visit at any time of the year, as the selection of plants was huge. John's Garden will be open this year again on 18th August and 29th September.

Ashwood Nurseries, which is next door to the garden, has a large selection of plants for sale at typical garden centre prices. There is also a café and gardening shop.

It was a good day, but I think we were all happy to return to the air conditioned coach, as the temperature soared.

Our thanks should go to Lynn Wood, for finding these two contrasting gardens for us to visit, and the efficiency with which the day was organised.

OBITUARY – VERNON ELLIS

As no doubt you are already aware, Vernon Ellis passed away earlier this month, after a very long and difficult illness. He, and his wife Ellen, have been members of Derbyshire Hardy Plant Society for as long as I can remember, which is some 16 years or so. Both Vernon and Ellen have been massive supporters and contributors to the success and sociability of the group, and indeed to our growth in numbers. The members they introduced from Wingerworth made our early day trips and holidays viable, and gave our group a tremendous boost. I believe Vernon could be described as the patriarch of the group. His vision and experience will, I believe, never be equalled, and he will be sadly missed.

As his outstanding three year term as Chairman of the group was coming to an end, he approached me after the meeting and said " I want you to be our next Chairman ", to which I agreed, subject to vote. Half an hour later I realised that this would be next month (at the AGM). I had no idea what I had let myself in for, or what the job entailed.

Vernon proved to be a great mentor, not that we always agreed, or indeed sang from the same hymn sheet, but it worked well, as we both had the best interests of the group and its ongoing success as our motivation.

Vernon remained a member of the Committee, latterly as our Publicity Officer, until a year ago, when he said that it was time to go!

His enormous contribution and support, even when he disagreed with the direction we took, was solid and dependable. What a shining example he has been- Vernon, you will be greatly missed and Ellen, we will try to support you.

Martin Brown

***We have, recently, also heard of the death of: **Norma Way** – RIP (Ed.)

The Pindos mountains are covered in forest, interspersed with frequent wild flower meadows. It is a magical place where one can stand and admire the view (fig 4) without a telegraph pole, pylon, house, fence or any other

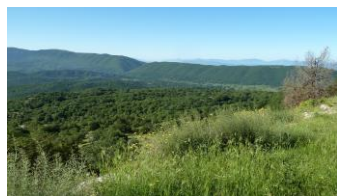


Fig. 4

man-object getting in the way. There is a constant hum of insects, which reminded us of what we have lost in the UK over the past 50 years.

Butterflies flitted around in abundance and there were all sorts of beetles and other bugs (*see cover*). We frequently had to stop the bus to allow tortoises to cross the road! Many villages have erected posts to support nesting storks (fig 5 opposite).



Fig. 5

The flora is very rich and we saw including *bee orchids*, (Fig. 6) *red lizard orchids*. The roadsides were and there were countless varieties of which we are familiar with in the UK endemic to the region.



Fig. 6

many orchids, *helleborines* and covered with *Orlaya* wild flowers, some of and some of which are



Fig. 7

A feature of the Zagoria are the amazing bridges (fig 7) which hardly look as though they would support a person's weight! We ate our lunch one day on the banks of the river Acheron, which is believed to originate in the underworld and is therefore the river Styx of mythology!

Ian Evans.

INSPIRATIONAL GARDENS – 2

Epirus – *written by Ian Evans*

Anne and I visited Epirus at the beginning of June with a small group to see the wild flowers of this beautiful region of Greece. Epirus is the westernmost region of Greece, stretching from the coast opposite Corfu up the border with Albania towards Macedonia, and we were based in the Zagoria district which is a gloriously unspoiled part of the Pindos mountains.



Fig. 1

Zagoria famously contains 40 villages (*Fig. 1*) constructed from the local layered limestone, which provides a lovely and easy to use building material. It has a rich history and is known for its resistance to the expansion of the Ottoman empire, which got bogged down in these mountains and never truly conquered them.



Fig. 2

The villages all look very similar due to the common building material and new buildings are still built in the traditional style. Every village has a central square sheltered by a huge oriental plane tree, under which relaxing lunches can be eaten in the local tavernas.

We stayed in the village of Monodendri (*fig 2*), which is famous as the base for venturing into the Vikos gorge, which claims to be one of the two deepest gorges in the world. At one point we looked down into the gorge from a point above a 1300m vertical drop (more than the height of Snowdon!) (*fig. 3*).

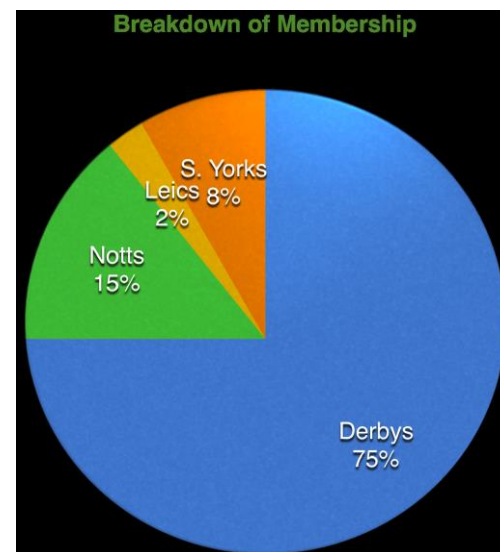


Fig. 3

The Dark Arts of being Membership Secretaries 9

By Mike and Sallie.

“Derbyshire born, Derbyshire bred, Strong in the arm...” As it happens not all of our membership are from Derbyshire! Between a fifth and a quarter of the Group hail from parts beyond the Derbyshire border. With the aid of the sort of technology that will eventually take us to Mars and beyond we can show you a pie chart that neatly illustrates this from our current membership list



Derbyshire spreads from lush countryside in the south to the challenges of the Dark Peak to the north and west so we have to admire those members who make the trip to our meetings from places such as the Hope Valley and Glossop. Equally we mustn't forget those who make the journey from south of Nottingham and the Nottinghamshire/Leicestershire border. A couple of members threw up a smokescreen by moving from Nottinghamshire to South Yorkshire but they were quickly traced and are now back in the fold.

Be assured that no-one moves from Derbyshire to another Group without we receive a substantial transfer fee.

Why do people from outside Derbyshire want to belong to our Group? We can only explain from our experience. Before the Derbyshire Group was formed, living just over the border in Teversal, we had the choice of joining either the Nottinghamshire or South Pennines Groups. Both met in the evening. At the time the Nottinghamshire Group met in West Bridgford, South Pennines somewhere off Eccleshall Road in Sheffield. For us each entailed a journey lasting the best part of three quarters of an hour through city traffic in the dark in the depths of winter.

Therefore when the HPS contacted us to tell us that they were looking into forming a Derbyshire Group and that the initial meeting would be in Darley Dale on a Saturday afternoon we jumped at the chance. In fact we were taken aback when we arrived at the Village Hall to find that so many had come that we struggled to find a seat. We've belonged ever since, so if that means we're founder members that will explain our regal bearing though, as we're sure you'll have recognised, we do try to fit in with everyone else.

Family commitments and the tribulations of life have meant that we've attended more often some years than others but we've never considered leaving the Group and recently have become Membership Secretaries. As such our main duty is to collect the annual subscription.

Subscriptions are due in January but to avoid a rush in the New Year we start taking them in November. Unfortunately some members overlook theirs so have to be reminded. This is often a gentle nudge but it quickly became apparent that we were actually the Committee's attack dogs, savaging members who are slow to pay, leaving it to others to rub virtual Savlon onto the wounds. Look, we're not politicians, we don't set out to be popular.

It's better that members get a mauling from us than we send round our Sicilian relatives who can be very persuasive. Should you find yourselves in

that situation we suggest that you have the espresso machine warmed up and primed and have in a good supply of fresh cannelloni ready for that knock on the door. Even better, make a note on the calendar and pay your subscription before then.

Derbyshire is a thriving group, the membership always hovering around the 140 mark and overall a nicer bunch of people you'd be hard-pressed to come across. Gardeners as a whole tend to be pleasant people to get to know and our membership is a step up from that. We derive great pleasure from coming to the meetings, learning something new about plants and gardens in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and on top we get to enjoy the company of some great people.

We'd urge all of you to step forward and take on one of the many roles that keep the Group functioning. It's tremendously rewarding and is the best way to meet other members and feel part of our amazing group.

NOW YOU KNOW WHO TO BLAME!

Referring back to **Johns Garden** (*see p.7*), a group of us wandering around the garden, full of admiration, bumped into the Senior Assistant to John and, having introduced ourselves, complimented him on the garden. John himself came along later and joined the conversation.

However, he didn't arrive until the Assistant had implied that John can sometimes become fixated on some new plant, shrub or tree. Indeed, he said that if ever there is a national shortage of any garden plant etc. it will almost certainly be due to John finding something new and buying up the whole stock.

That is when you are truly passionate about your gardening – or does it mean you are a little 'sad'.