



Derbyshire Group

NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2025

Contents

NEWSLETTER	1
Autumn 2025	1
From the Chair	3
Editor's Note	4
Cover picture: Aster 'Little Carlow'	4
Dates For Your diary	4
Coach trips	5
Spring pictures from Coton Manor	5
Newby Hall visit June 2025	6
Mad Garden visits	7
Felley Priory	7
Yew Tree Bungalow	8
Norwell Nurseries	8
Astrantias	10
Conservation Scheme	10
National HPS	12
HPSD Accounts	15

FROM THE CHAIR

From the Chair

This summer has seen months of sun and little rain and although I loved sitting about in the garden, by late summer it looked far from its best. However, as September came so did the rain and my garden is finally recovering. The Autumn flowering plants are in full bloom; the *Japanese anemone* 'Honorine Jobert', *Polygonum amplexicaule* 'Album' and *Aster x frikartii* 'Mönch' have been flowering for weeks. The roses this year are fantastic and still flowering prolifically. One of my favourite autumn flowering plants is *Heuchera villosa* 'Autumn Bride', which was bought at an HPS Derbyshire plant sale a year or two ago. So, to whoever supplied that plant, it's a stunner.

In September we hosted the Hardy Plant Society Annual Lecture Day and AGM at Eastwood Hall, and I have had some lovely feedback from members across the country to say how much they enjoyed it and how friendly the Derbyshire team were. Val Bourne has sent her thanks to you all for the lovely day, she 'bought some brilliant plants and saw a lot of old friends'. The HPSD Plant Sales table was particularly popular, and the raffle was a sellout. I am delighted to say we raised enough money to buy a Spear and Jackson Garden shredder for Berry Brook House Gardening club, Berry Brook is a facility for adults with learning difficulties.

We have enjoyed a range of good speakers at our monthly meetings and had an extended meeting in April to celebrate the first 25 years of Hardy Plant Society Derbyshire; it was lovely to remember all the people who have made this group what it is today. Our May Plant Fair was successful and well attended and continues to be the main fundraiser for our group. In June we had our second garden trip of the year to Newby Hall, it was a fantastic day, as always it was brilliantly organised by Ian Evans. Over the summer we had three 'Meet at Destination' trips the first in July to Felley Priory, the second was in August to Yew Tree Bungalow Garden in Tansley, and then in September a visit to Norwells. These were all lovely days, all planned and organised by Pauline Little. As we go into October and onwards, we return to Shirland Village Hall for our programme of speakers organised by Linda O'Neill. We are always keen to hear about anything you would like us to look at adding to our calendar of activities; just let us know if you have any thoughts.

I am delighted to say that Jenny Southwell and Stuart Kitchen have attended the HPS Plant Conservation scheme meetings and will be looking for local members to help bulk the plants up. Our popular membership secretary Mike Vardy has stepped down after around seven years in the role; he has done a really fantastic job of managing our membership information and subscriptions. We won't be saying goodbye to him as he will still be an active member, welcoming new members to the group. Anne Wilkinson will be our new membership secretary and it's great to have her on board, she will become a familiar face at the HPSD membership table next to the door. I think we have an excellent committee of enthusiastic volunteers, and it helps that everyone is very friendly. We would welcome anyone who wants to join us or wants to attend our next meeting in November as a visitor.

At the end of the year, the HPS subscription will rise to £27 (single membership) and £33 (joint membership). However, our Derbyshire subscription will be held at its current level of £5, with monthly meeting charges of £2 for members and £5 for visitors. You will be given more information nearer the time.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at our October Meeting.

Ann

EDITOR'S NOTE

Most of the articles in this edition relate to trips and visits, we've had a busy year. Many thanks to those who contributed articles.

COVER PICTURE: ASTER 'LITTLE CARLOW'

Aster 'Little Carlow'

I watched the bees feasting on the centres of the flowers. It was fascinating to watch, as 90% of the time they visited the yellow centres and avoided the maroon centres.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

18th October – Roger Roberts – 'The Alluring Beauty of Japan's Gardens and the many Cultural Idiosyncrasies'

15th November – Martin Stott – 'The Story Teller Garden'

13th December – Nick Hamilton - Title to be decided

Coach trips

Summer is the time for garden visiting, and this year we have had three very different MAD garden visits as well as two coach trips. It is always a bit challenging to people to put pen to paper so great thank to those who stepped up this time. It really isn't that difficult especially if you have a few photographs.

SPRING PICTURES FROM COTON MANOR



NEWBY HALL VISIT JUNE 2025



MAD GARDEN VISITS

(For anyone new to HPS, MAD means Meet At Destination, so no transport provided, just a nice trip out at a nice garden with nice people.) Ed

FELLEY PRIORY



Our first MAD (meet at destination) visit of 2025 was to Felley Priory Gardens on Tuesday 15th July, and after temperatures of 25°C plus in the 3rd heatwave of the year, IT RAINED. However, we Hardy Planters are made of sterner stuff and fourteen of us turned up in waterproof shoes etc with a

selection of colourful brollies that looked like psychedelic mushrooms moving around the gardens.

The priory was founded in 1156 and has a chequered history. The Chaworth-Musters family have owned the property since 1822 and it was in 1974, on her marriage to Major Robert Chaworth-Musters, that Maria began to create the 2.5 acre gardens as they are today, using many of the features already in situ. The house is currently lived in by their granddaughters.

Because of the sloping site the gardens are terraced with views across the rolling countryside leading to a beautiful bluebell wood, at its best in the spring, as is the orchard which has a stunning display of rare daffodils

An area on the bank of the pond is the most recent alteration where a grass bank has been removed and eight acers have been underplanted with purple sedum. Unfortunately, the rose garden had lost most of its blooms but that was compensated for by a neighbouring border of vibrantly coloured agapanthus. Yew topiary divides the garden areas. There are many herbaceous borders, the four main ones in the front of the house were a vision of purple and pink phlox interplanted with a wide variety of plants of complimentary colours. On the lower terrace are pergolas with roses and clematis.

The gardens are enclosed by brick and stone walls and the South-West wall is believed to be part of the Priory boundary. They are covered in climbing plants with drifts of white hydrangeas at their base.

To the front of the house is a huge Jargonelle pear tree heavily laden with fruit; next to which was a magnolia as high as the house with flowers the size of tea plates.

We all retired to the tearoom for home-made refreshments, before exploring the nursery which stocks a good variety of plants, some rare and unusual plus cottage garden favourites at reasonable prices.

Patricia Harris

YEW TREE BUNGALOW

Our 2nd MAD visit on a rather overcast afternoon was to Yew Tree Bungalow , Tansley. We were greeted by Jayne the owner who explained the 1/2 acre plot was previously part of the family farm.



Firstly the bungalow was built in the centre of the sloping plot of land. The garden was then created around it over the next thirty years, with a wide range of planting to suit the different areas of the garden. This included trees (many unusual) and lots of

borders with a wide variety of shrubs and herbaceous perennials and annuals added to give extra colour. A shady area at the top of the garden was planted with a large variety of ferns. There was also a very productive fruit and vegetable garden.

As we sat and enjoyed our refreshments (Jayne's delicious home made cakes) evidence of its former connection with farming was noted by a number of milk churns and milking units filled with flowers.

Jean and David Andrews

NORWELL NURSERIES

MAD Garden Visit 21 September 2025

Our third and final visit took place on a gloriously sunny Sunday afternoon at Norwell Nursery near Newark, Nottinghamshire. The nurse is owned by Andrew and Helen Ward. Andrew is also a well-known and knowledgeable garden speaker.

Andrew and Helen have created a garden alongside the nursery over thirty odd years, from what was initially, a challenging site; it lies in a frost pocket and with cold heavy clay soil. It is now a plantsman's paradise.

Andrew led us up the garden path from the entrance, pointing out plants of interest along the way, such as a fine stand of Helianthus 'Lemon Queen', a Rosa 'Bonica', which flowers for months, and on a corner an Aster (now Symphotrichum) 'Jane Ward' named after Andrew's mother. This was raised on the nursery and stood out for having dark stems, an airy habit and good blue-mauve flowers.



At the summer house we sat in the sunshine overlooking some of the sand beds which have been created over the last five to ten years. Andrew showed us and talked about a selection of perennials which looked good and are invaluable at this time of year – Aster 'September Joy' (raised on the nursey) and Erigeron 'Summer Snow'. A Phlox 'Kirmesländer' had the most beautiful scent and a white

flower with a pink eye. And of course, as we move into autumn, hardy Chrysanthemums. They have a superb range of colours with some flowering late into November, for example 'Mrs Jessie Cooper', a vivid magenta pink with a yellow eye.

As an aside Andrew said that plants with men's names do not sell well, unless they are in flower, strange but true! Geranium 'Derrick' and Phlox 'Paul' were two such; a shame as they are good plants. Andrew said that Amsonias are good for autumn colour after their blue flowers have faded.



We then had a tour of the garden, mainly of the sand beds of which Andrew has created around thirty now. Plants which formerly struggled or faded away after a couple of years now thrive, especially Salvias and Gauras (now Oenothera), which appreciate the sharp drainage. Also, the fact that sand beds confer an extra 5°C of hardiness is a contributory factor. A lot of the beds have been created by mounding sharp builder's sand on top of the clay in a free form style, others have a retaining brick wall. One contained an impressive display of the

Japanese Blood Grass, Imperata Rubra. Another species that like the sand are the Sedums (now Hylotalephium) particularly 'Red Cauli' and 'Matrona'.

The tour of the garden led back to the summer house, where tea/coffee and cake awaited, and afterwards a chance to buy plants, thus rounding off a most enjoyable afternoon.

Thanks very much to Pauline for organising the garden visits, all very different and with plenty to discover.

Linda O'Neill

ASTRANTIAS

Searching for the double Astrantia

I noticed some plants of Astrantia 'Gill Richardson' have semi-double flowers and I noticed that feature in one I had, in my garden. So seed was saved, and after sowing, most of them germinated and I ended up with a few hundred seedlings. All were potted up individually and grown on, some would flower in the first year and some would need longer. They want growing on for a few years before starting to judge them.



The excitement started when the first began to flower; no doubles, so I have not succeeded in my original goal, but one produced a large red semi-double flower on a young plant. This one has been given a special spot with some good compost and fertiliser added, so I would have to wait till next year or the year after.

I started selecting any that looked good, it has taken a few years for them to start showing their potential. Some were planted into my allotment where they soon romped away. Now I had to choose the ones I really liked. I asked my friends Andrew and Helen Ward from Norwell Nurseries at Norwell near Newark (who have the national collection of Astrantias) to visit and pick what they thought would be worth growing on. We

selected some and they are now growing some on at Norwell.

For those of you who have not visited their Nursery, you will get a warm welcome. Andrew is a very knowledgeable plantsman. Some of the Astrantias have also been selected by a company that will bulk up the different varieties so they will be available to everyone.



For now, all the different varieties have been in flower in my garden, and they have looked a picture. I know the colour pallet is only Red, White and Pink but I started looking for size and shapes as you will see in the pictures.

It has been a great journey, growing the Astrantias from seed; I hope you will enjoy the final results with me.

Thank You Trevor Edwards

CONSERVATION SCHEME

If you enjoy growing Hardy Plants, perhaps you might consider participating in the Hardy Plant Society Conservation Scheme. So many hardy perennial plant varieties are becoming threatened as more modern, mass-produced plants flood the market. By growing, propagating and distributing plants entered in the Conservation Scheme, it is hoped that rare plants can be evaluated and preserved for future generations.

The aims of the scheme are to:

- **identify hardy perennial plants** in need of conservation. Usually, this means plants which have fewer than four entries in the RHS Plant Finder, or those deemed worth preserving but not in the Plant Finder at all;
- **assess** whether the plants identified are truly good garden plants;
- **identify growing conditions** which encourage the plants to thrive in different parts of the country;
- **identify suitable propagation** techniques for the plants;
- **propagate and distribute** conserved plants to other HPS members, national plant collection-holders and nurseries.

Participating in the scheme will involve the following:

- **grow** plants from the active Conservation Scheme list;
- propagate one or more plants to share with other scheme participants;
- observe and report back any interesting information or growing tips (this won't involve any paperwork);
- suggest possible plants to add to the scheme.

Commented [AC1]: Changed for consistency with section above

Hardy Plant Society Derbyshire has participated in the scheme in the past. If there are any members that have Conservation Scheme plants growing in the garden – it would be great to hear from you.

I attended the recent National Plant Exchange and hope to bring some plants to the next HPS Derbyshire meeting to find them new homes. If you would like any further information or would like to get involved in conserving plants, please get in touch: Jenny Southwell (E-mail: jen.southwell1121@gmail.com).

NATIONAL HPS

Annual Lecture Day/AGM 2025

A very personal view from Pauline Little, Derbyshire Group

Probably for you, the first thought of the ALD/AGM was when you bought your ticket; it was a bit different for the Derbyshire HPS group (HPSD). You might say our preparation started in 2000 when the group was first formed, as the event has become part of our 25-year celebration. I would like to say that the preparation was straightforward, but far from it. After diligent research we booked a venue in Buxton right in the heart of the Peak District, but horror of horrors they had to cancel all events due to structural issues with the roof.

So back to the drawing board, and we decided to go for Eastwood Hall, originally on our shortlist but discounted as it is just in Nottinghamshire (shhh). It proved to be a lovely venue with great facilities and easy accessibility, and the chocolate cookies were wonderful.

A band of volunteers looked after the PA system, organised nurseries to sell plants and the tombola, acting as stewards and so on. As of Monday 8th, we had eight suppliers lined up to sell plants and hardware, but alas, like ten pins they fell away one by one, all with genuine reasons for withdrawal, so that by Saturday morning we were left with just three and our own HPSD plant stall. Having had no general meeting since our plant sale in May, we had no idea what plants would arrive, but arrive they did, and we were very glad of the spare tables from the cancelled nurseries to display the wonderful array of plants.



I also volunteered to provide some flowers, after all what is an HPS event without garden flowers! With some trepidation I raided the garden, again and again as we produced some arrangements which were much appreciated.

Finally, the day arrived with about 160 visitors booked and also 60 on zoom for the AGM itself.

Our first talk from **Steve Bustin** was a great start with a strong '5' theme. Steve kept us well entertained with '5' personal (garden related) disclosures, gradually leading into his city garden in Brighton, which is in a very exposed position on deep soil over limestone. He gave us '5' regret plants he should never have introduced like *Physalis* and especially *Acanthus*, then '5' key plants including *Arundo donax*, and finally '5' plants that won't grow for him including *Sanguisorba* (for me almost on my regret list).

Commented [AC2]: I wasn't sure why this was the only name in italic

The garden gradually acquired less lawn and more and more plants, many in pots and it became a 'stress' rather than a joy. I am sure that many of us can relate to this, as our plantaholic tendencies take over, and holidays in the summer become a thing of the past.

An extension, which took up a good portion of the garden led to a radical rethink leading to simplification and a better choice of plants and I suspect a big dent in the bank account!

Steve and husband John are not afraid of colour and also have a collection of quirky bits and pieces including parts of the old Brighton pier, an old wall basically made from 200-year-old, contemporary rubbish.

Steve described his garden as his happy place, I wonder how it will change over the next ten years.

This was followed by the AGM, a very interesting meeting, our 68th AGM. Once we got to the section concerning the proposed subscription increase, Stuart Senior gave us a potted financial history, explaining that until three years ago the books had always balanced. There was no deficit and so no requirement to raise the subscriptions as we had a good cash reserve. This all changed with the development of the new website, the game-changer was the requirement to handle financial transactions especially direct debits, which require the retention of personal data. In our modern world, cyber security presents a real risk and it is very expensive to provide a secure site which does not compromise our personal data. Additional contributory factors were postal and printing cost increases.

At this point the new treasurer Tom Fenton took over with the explanation of the proposed new subscription and how that will help mitigate the deficit. Further revenue is expected to be generated by sponsorship, donations and further cost savings especially relating to changes to the Journal.

A full review is being undertaken including external input as it is recognised that we need to pay for knowledge we don't have, for example IT, and for impartial advice. This will direct what our future ten-year plan should be.

Val Bourne, our incoming President, was very keen to stress that it is not all about money and that we should not lose sight of the priceless value of friendship and fellowship.

The reasons for the subscription increase were very well presented and resulted in the vote being carried.

Our next talk was from **Troy Scott Smith** who gave us a potted history of his 35-year gardening career through the gardens he had worked at and visited.

He started at Sissinghurst where the model has moved from volunteer-led to introducing top professionals and "*propagating gardeners*" as well as plants.

He grew up in a family of naturalists not gardeners and his plant observations in the wild have informed his gardening.

Commented [AC3]: I'm not sure what this means either and have changed it to what I think it means. Presumably they are not propagating gardeners - painful!

He then took us on a tour around many famous gardens from Munstead Wood to Claude Monet's Giverny garden. The message was to keep it simple, incorporating stalwart plants and mixing wild and cultivated plants.

Particularly impressive was the change from a time-consuming lawn edge to an all-year border taking just four hours a year to maintain.

He took us around Bodnant, where he showed us that even exceptional gardens don't last for ever and the 100-year-old rose terraces have been replanted with soil being replaced. Work in such a large garden needs to be paced out over time, even when storm damage occurs.

The talk continued with so many gardens to visit, a real inspiration.

The final talk was from **Val Bourne** (pictured below with Roy Lancaster)



Val's garden is another garden in a difficult position (but with great views) with strong southwesterly prevailing winds and a very cold elevated position. An old map showed the site as 'The Hovel in the Waste'. Funny how difficult positions seem to produce great gardens, I put it down to the range of suitable plants being more limited, and failures increasing selectivity by the gardener.

The theme of the talk was colour and Val was keen to emphasise the effect of light on colour through the seasons. So, low winter light picks up detail and deepens colours, but bright white is tricky in summer in overhead light and needs to be in semi-shade. Blue is an evening star.

Another priority for Val is growing to encourage wildlife so in addition to being 100% organic, there is dense planting to encourage ground beetles that feed on slugs. Many plants are left uncut over winter to host insects. Many pictures showed butterflies and bees enjoying the plants.

Val encouraged us to plant for foliage rather than just flowers and to examine details in flowers such as stamens, buds and stems and use their colours as complements to other plants. She observed that pastels generally go well together, I was very complimented that she had noticed that the flowers of the mauve *Aster* 'Little Carlow' and the apricot rose ('Lady Emma Hamilton') used in the ladies' loos followed this advice. In contrast the dark splashes of colour in summer give a pop of colour and a touch of red is always good.

Another message was that adjacent colour in the colour wheel can be rather bland and contrast is more exciting: don't be afraid of orange. A good spring combination is blue and acid yellow as in *Pulmonaria* 'Blue Ensign' and Bowles golden grass.

More than anything: 'Plough your own furrow and enjoy yourself'.

At the end of the afternoon Steve thanked Roy Lancaster for his many years as President and gave us the welcome news of Val agreeing to be the new President.

Finally, we owe a great deal to **Ann Franks** who as Derbyshire chairman led us through the process with calm resolution despite the trials and tribulations of organising a great day.

Thank you, Ann.

HPSD ACCOUNTS

The accounts for the year follow on the next page, many thanks to Mike Bone for his ever-efficient handling of the Club Funds.

THE HARDY PLANT SOCIETY DERBYSHIRE GROUP INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/07/25

RECEIPTS	Y/E 31/07/25	Y/E 31/07/24
Annual subscriptions	539.00	567.00
Meetings fees	1127.00	1003.00
Raffle proceeds	405.00	341.50
Annual Plant Fair	2658.00	2978.60
Coach trips	3153.00	3156.00
Book, card, etc. sales	513.10	517.35
Plant sales	297.10	311.85
Donations	174.18	0.00
Bank interest	338.06	213.86
Miscellaneous	7.37	
TOTAL RECEIPTS	9211.81	9089.16
EXPENDITURE		
Speakers' fees & expenses	1673.80	2401.10
Hall hire: monthly meetings	492.50	391.00
Hall Hire: Committee Meetings	97.75	53.40
Hall Hire: Plant Fair	62.50	63.50
Refreshments	147.57	57.74
Refreshments re 25th Anniversary	469.99	
Coach trip	2924.00	3166.75
Book, card etc, purchases	203.44	399.29
Raffle prizes	196.90	116.39
Plant Fair: Stallholders' share	1511.60	1683.20
Printing & photocopying		30.00
Postage, stationery	13.60	66.91
Website	109.98	109.98
Appreciations	174.50	7.00
Charitable Donations	150.00	0.00
RHS subscription	47.00	45.00
AGM Refunds	50.00	
Committee expenses	0.00	0.00
Asset purchase	354.61	
Square reader charges	3.68	
Misc expenses	22.80	26.20
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	8706.22	8617.46
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR	505.59	471.70

Details of 2026 Coach trips and MAD garden visits will be included in the Spring Newsletter.



Articles Needed for the HPS Newsletter.

Please send to

plittle@hotmail.co.uk