

SPOTLIGHT EAST

Newsletter for Members of The East of England Area of NAFAS

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Area newsletter, in which we celebrate all that has been going on as we gradually start to resume our flowery activities. Slowly we've gone from "virtual" to "real"; face to face meetings, workshops, flower festivals and even a social distanced club show.

The June Council meeting was held virtually for the second time. Unfortunately, there was sad news – Holt & District Flower Club have announced their closure. **Amanda Seales, Norwich Group of Flower Clubs** had previously stated on social media:

"Our bank account was closed and Founder member and President, Ada Fisher, presented a cheque for £2,814 to Lorna and Rachael of the Treehouse Cafe. The Treehouse has been supporting the people of Holt throughout the pandemic, running a food bank, community fridge and giving free lunches to children. They are in the process of building various gardens around the centre and the money will be used to provide seating in the sensory garden. Several members attended the presentation and all were very happy to see the money go to such a good cause. Two of our members are now volunteering at the Treehouse and we hope to have a regular meetup in the cafe for coffee, cake and a natter.

The end of an era but no club can run without committee members."



Holt Flower Club presentation.

Carol Giffen, Chairman Cambridge Group of Clubs, had more upbeat news, revealing that the Group had been involved in a photoshoot for the Flower Arranger Magazine earlier in the Spring.

Because of the confidentiality agreement until the Spring 2022 edition is published, lips are sealed. But we did manage to persuade Carol to write a few discreet words to keep us going in the meantime:

"Back in 2019 at one of the Area Executive Meetings, Lesley Fairman, our then Area Chairman, mentioned that the East of England Area would be taking part in a photo shoot for the Flower Arranger magazine. My ears pricked up at this and I thought that's marvelous as we have so many talented arrangers in our area. She then went on to say that the Cambridge Group was the Group designated to take part, which as the Cambridge Group Chairman I found very exciting. Not much more was said over the next few months and then it was mentioned again just before Christmas; by which time we had Barbara Collins as Area Chairman.

The venue had been decided, it was someone's garden and was close to where I live. Ooh I thought that's fantastic I shall offer my services as tea lady.

After Christmas when the idea really started to take hold one or two little problems occurred. The first was that my services as tea lady were not required, in fact I was to be one of six people who would be taking part! Mild panic set in. The second problem was that in view of lock-down and the government guidelines at the time the venue chosen could not now be used and Barbara asked if I could find another one which was out doors. This, I thought, is a whole new ball game and the panic became a bit more pronounced.

Being an avid golfer, I wondered if my golf club would be a good venue, but the date the event was to take place was Good Friday and the day before that the government had decided we could come out of partial lock-down and the golf club was re-opened, so it wasn't to be. However, I had a brainwave. There is a garden centre / nursery nearby which had closed down a few years previously and the owner knew NAFAS well, and had taken part in the Chelsea Flower Show on a number of occasions. Fortunately, Jean Crane, Area President, knew him and rang him asking if the photo shoot could be held there. Providing the grandchildren weren't coming that day he said yes, we could and so the venue was decided.

I still had to find five more arrangers though as six were required in total. Once again in view of the government guidelines in place at the time, I had to get people who lived close by as travel restrictions were still in place.

After a few phone calls, I had five more names. We had to have two designs each which were to be sent to Barbara who checked to ensure we weren't all going to design the same arrangement and then awaited the day.

It was the strangest Good Friday I have ever spent, but what a fascinating experience. There was no need to be concerned as everyone was in good spirits and I have to admit I admire Chloe the editor and Ollie the photographer, who were both patience personified. Ever since I have taken greater care when taking photos because I felt I learned a lot from them both.

We were supposed to be three people taking part in the morning plus Barbara Collins and three more in the afternoon, plus Jean Crane. However, because Chloe and Ollie took such care over each photo, we overlapped; and whilst trying to ensure we all kept at least one metre apart, it was good to see so many friends from the flower world again.

As I am sure you will understand, I am not allowed to show any photos that I and some of the others took that day before the Spring edition of the Flower Arranger comes out; and which designs will actually be used I do not know, but I was led to believe that all the photos that were taken will be shown. I look forward to seeing them and once they are published, I shall give more details of the day and some behind the scene photos for the Spring edition of the Spotlight East.”



Zooming around the East of England

On June 14th **Norwich Flower Club** held a virtual Open Meeting

Coral Gardiner: “Nature’s Summer Palette”

Acting Club Chairman **Joyce Youngman** told us “Invitations have been sent to all the clubs in Area. We have a large meeting licence for this event, so everyone is welcome.

Norfolk & Norwich Horticultural Society is hosting the Zoom meeting, with Adele Kent (Costessey) co-hosting. This is a sort of celebration, as we look forward to the return of our traditional flower club meetings” Apologies were received from Katherine Kear, (National Chairman) Valerie Best, (WAFSA Coordinator) & Barbara Collins. Technical support was provided by Coral’s daughter, Becky working with her in the studio in Bath. Becky also provided the close-up shots during the Zoom and the photographs. Coral’s arrangements included “A cup of very milky tea” (a large cup container with lots of white flowers); “A wild flower meadow” – an informal parallel using meadow grasses, roses & honeysuckle (see photograph); a HUGE hand tie including alliums, calla & dracaena; a traditional urn using lisianthus, peonies & lilies. And a driftwood arrangement – “A Touch of the Beach”, but not necessarily Weston super Mare! For this Coral used sunset colours to create the Wow factor.



Stanway & District Flower Club has had a regular series of monthly zoom meetings. In June the demonstrator was Michael Bowyer, President of NAFAS. Brenda Eyers told us that Michael was outstanding. The meeting was a great success with over 60 in the virtual audience including a large party from NIGFAS (Northern Ireland Group of Flower Arrangement Societies) Brenda said that they were planning a social evening in July but wasn't too sure at that moment if it would go ahead. If it doesn't, we will just Zoom again. . (*Covid restrictions were not lifted as quickly as anticipated*)



New Creations Floral Design Club held a second virtual workshop with Alison Chambers from "The Design Studio", Manchester entitled "Plait & Fold" (<https://flowerstudiomanchester.co.uk>) Alison skilfully demonstrated 2 leaf manipulations – plaited palm leaves & folded aspidistra leaves, and then with amazing patience supervised the members as they struggled to follow her instructions. She had amazing patience and was happy to repeat & re-show the process until we'd all got the hang of it.

The second part of the workshop was to include the manipulations into finished arrangements. Alison shared her designs to the groups Facebook page, so that we could refer to them as we continued working after the end of the workshop – some of us worked for several days afterwards until we were satisfied with the results. The finished designs were then shared with Alison (who was delighted with them) and also the other participants and members of the group who hadn't attended.

(Photos next page)

Screen shots from Alison's demonstration. Below: Finished designs – Janet Dye



A real-life workshop is planned for 28th September at Woolpit Village Hall, tutored by highly qualified & creative tutor, Linda Knights. All covid precautions will be in place. We run 4 workshops a year. For more information and to join this friendly group please contact Stella Thornley stellamills@hotmail.com or Sue Astle susieastle@googlemail.com or 07799 430906

The Chairman's Challenge- Throughout the year National Chairman Katherine Kear has presented the areas of NAFAS with a floral challenge each month by providing a title and inviting areas to submit a design to illustrate that title. It does not have to be an arrangement, it can be a collection of items as an assemblage, a collection of plants, containers etc. The only limit is your imagination. Katherine explains she is "just trying to keep creative juices going and ensure the whole association remains active and interactive." Here are some of the East of England entries, which you may have missed:

1. Burn's Night (January) - David Thomson
2. A Spring Bonnet (March) - Jenni Baker
3. May Day Celebrations - Carol Giffen
4. Wedding time (June) - Giovanna Roberts
5. Happy Holidays (July) - Barbara Collins



The titles for the rest of the year are: August - A Picnic on the beach. September –Back to school. October-Here comes Autumn. November - Remember, remember the 5th of November

Dereham & District Flower Club have had a very active and successful summer, taking full advantage of the open- air activities available to plan a full club programme, despite the restrictions and uncertainties of the early summer months.

On 20th June club chairman Corinne Stewart opened her beautiful garden at Broadway Farm, Scarning for the National Gardens Scheme. Despite the heavy rain earlier in the day, the weather improved for the afternoon. Corinne told us that it was a joy to see the visitors smiling faces – so glad to be able to go out again and feel safe. According to the NGS handbook the garden is “a half-acre cottage garden surrounding a 14th century farmhouse... with a well planted pond providing habitat for wildlife ... a plants woman’s garden”. Corinne described the problems they had had with honey fungus, necessitating new planting schemes as they moved away from shrubs to hardy perennials. Radio Norfolk had arrived in the pouring rain to interview her about the event and set up the next clue for their Treasure Hunt programme. The clue was to be found in the new potting shed, which Corinne described as her “pride & joy” surrounded by clematis and roses. Despite the downpour she remained composed in her stylish mac & headgear (see photo)

The teas & plants stall were an excellent “crowd puller”, contributing to the overall financial success of the opening – just under £400 was raised for the charity.



Later that week, the first club event of the year was an evening visit to the beautiful Dunbheagen garden in Westfield, south of Dereham. This is also in the NGS handbook, described as having “extensive borders, island beds.....a riot of colour all summer...everchanging plantsman’s garden.” Club members described it as a stunning garden with lovely owners who treated us to tea and delicious cakes. The July club meeting was back at Broadway farm, with tea & cakes, and no doubt an opportunity for the helpers involved with the open garden to enjoy their surroundings at last. With 35 of the 40 members attending, and several new members joining, these outdoor events throughout the summer have enabled people to keep in touch, support each other and keep up with flower arranging news. The club has also been organising quizzes, recipes & competitions to lift their spirits.



Dunbheagen Garden has been a popular visit for several Norfolk clubs, including Aylsham & District Flower Club who also shared (similar) photos of their visit on social media.

Stowmarket & District Flower Club visited Fullers Mill Garden at West Stowe in mid-June. The NGS describe it as “an enchanting 7- acre garden on the banks of the river Lark. A beautiful site with light dappled woodland and a plantsman’s paradise of rare and unusual shrubs, perennials and marginal planted with great natural charm.” (Wow!)



Fullers Mill Garden/ photos Julie Head

In early August Crystal Dybal, Chairman **Aylsham Flower Club** enthusiastically wrote: "It's Monday again, another month and the sun is shining! On Saturday nearly 40 people enjoyed a wonderful club outing to Highview House at Roughton. What a beautiful garden, lovely tea and cake, not too much rain and lots of photos to last for several weeks! It was so good to see everybody. Thank you so much to the organisers for all your hard work, well worth it." The garden at Highview House is a well-established "3-acre plantsman's garden developed & maintained by the current owners over the last 40 years ... rose & shrub borders woodland garden, pond and bog area, orchard and small arboretum" (NGS)

You don't need a pandemic to organise and enjoy a club outing to a special garden. It's something to think about for summer 2022. Details of gardens which open for groups by arrangement can be found not only on the National gardens Scheme website <https://ngs.org.uk/find-a-garden>

but also on <https://www.opengardens.co.uk/about.php> which is a national directory of gardens & garden events.

Not all NGS gardens are immaculately “manicured”. **Beverly Moore, Herts & Essex Club**, visited an amazing wildlife garden - in the centre of town (Bishops Stortford) as part of The National Garden Scheme.

Beverly writes:

“The garden used to be part of the land of the old All Saints vicarage before All Saints Close was developed. The half-acre plot has been divided into areas with every conceivable aspect of wildlife requirement covered.

As the owner guided us around it was so interesting to learn how the garden had developed over the past few years – a very knowledgeable gentleman, his wife too.

At the back of the garden are four large compost heaps and as the cover was lifted, we could see several slowworms but we did not linger too long as there were pregnant females amongst the compost.



There is an ancient yew tree that may have been in this location for over 100 years. Dotted around the gardens were several stumps and logs, all a fantastic magnet for the insects and other wildlife.

All Saints Nature Reserve (continued)



The sun was starting to come out, so too the bees and other insects. The solidarity bees have plenty of places to lay their eggs from tree trunks, old Victorian walls and a rather magnificent bug hotel (definitely 5 stars!)



There were so many different aspects of this garden including a non-native area with delphiniums alongside beautifully scented roses. Beautiful seating to sit and relax. A truly wonderful couple of hours.

You might find this article interesting
<https://www.hazelwoodlandscapes.com/blog/case-study-wildlife-garden-project-bishops-stortford>

“Just a Peony – the story of our Garden” writes Barbara Collins

It is nearly 44 years since we moved into our house and we inherited a garden that consisted mainly of lawn. The previous occupants in the house had three teenage children, so plenty of lawn was essential for football and other games.

The plants in the garden totalled four!! A double white Lilac, a Laburnum, a Victoria Plum tree and a Peony.

At the time I was working full time for BT, spending my days in the Drawing Office plotting the positions of telegraph poles and manhole covers onto maps, amongst other “interesting” jobs. Now all that sort of work is on a computer so no need for a Drawing Office.

When I lived at home before I was married, flowers were always in the house as Mum flower arranged and Dad grew hundreds of bedding plants every year. It was good to help with the pricking out of seedlings, one of the most relaxing jobs that I have ever experienced.

Over the years the lawn in our garden was gradually dug up and flower beds added, and we even had a vegetable garden.

So, I never planned to work with flowers but everything changed when I injured my back, possibly moving concrete slabs in the garden! This meant that I was then unable to work at a drawing board on a high stool. I was then at home for some months deciding what to do next. I made fancy dress costumes for a couple of years and also had a time selling ladies lingerie. I really wanted to do something creative so I started a craft business, spending hours sewing and embroidering. I sold at Craft Fairs and met some wonderful friends. Then a friend asked if I could arrange some flowers for an event, yes, I said, not really knowing what this would lead to. I was hooked, I started to make artificial arrangements and then dried flower baskets to sell alongside the craft items.

The flowers just took over everything, so we started to plant the garden with shrubs for cutting. By this time, we had lost the Victoria Plum tree to disease and the Laburnum was not looking healthy so that was removed.

Gradually we had less lawn and everywhere we went we bought other plants to start to fill the flowerbeds. When we went to stay with people, they would offer cuttings and we have plants from all sorts of places.

Even when we have been on holiday and stayed at B&B's, as soon as they know you work with flowers, the offer of plants and cuttings was always there and something else to fill a space in the garden.

The lawn became so small we decided to remove it all - we do have some areas of gravel instead. It is not a garden for sitting in, it is a working garden and somewhere to spend time and relax. A walk round the garden is a good time to clear your head and think about all sorts of subjects.

Then one year the double white Lilac flowered but did not look healthy anymore. I was sad we had to remove it but that made space in our ever-growing garden. By this time, I had joined NAFAS and was being asked to help with Flower Festivals and events at our local flower club. In 2006 I made the decision to take my NAFAS Demonstrators Test and passed. Life has been very busy since

then and I am so grateful that we have a garden that is now full of shrubs and plants that I use in demonstrations.

From the original garden all those years ago we are left with "Just a Peony". For many years it did not flower and then just one flower, but this year we had five beautiful pale pink flowers. Sadly, I did not take a photograph but here are two pictures from the garden, the Hostas and the lush foliage.



Mary Holt, Past President Framlingham Flower Club writes:

"Lesley Thompstone, a much loved and respected member of Framlingham Flower Club passed away in May, after suffering from a stroke nearly 3 years ago, aged 79 years.



Lesley was a natural Flower Arranger and inspiration to many people. She grew up in Walsall where she was a member of Walsall Flower Club for over 30 years, being actively involved in the club at all levels, Secretary, Treasurer and President. Together with her cousin, they entered competitions at all levels, National, Area and together with many Flower Festivals and weddings.

She and her husband came to Suffolk in 2006 to be near her daughter and family and immediately joined Framlingham Flower Club. She was quickly co-opted on to the committee where she served over the years as Secretary, Treasurer and President. She was such an asset to us all and led a team for the Suffolk show and other festivals. Together with a colleague

she ran many workshops for members and even the experienced arrangers were eager to participate. She was an inspiration to us all.

Sadly, her flower arranging days came to an end when she suffered the stroke 3 years ago, but she was still keen and able to offer advice from her care home.

Lesley could turn her hand to anything creative, be it flowers, sewing and was a beautiful water colour artist. She is sadly missed but we have such lovely memories of her and her work”



Mary & Lesley (on the right) celebrating their success at The Suffolk Show, 2006.

Framlingham Flower Club were deeply touched by the wonderful tributes paid to Lesley by South Midlands Area of NAFAS and members of Walsall Flower Arrangement Club.

The summer may have got off to a shaky start, as we worried about the lifting of covid restrictions, but it's been a great season for roses Surely its true to say that all flower arrangers love roses, whether they are working with them, growing them or simply observing them in situ; which is why many clubs have traditionally held a club competition in June on the theme of roses. Often, it's a challenge to win the coveted rose bowl trophy, or to present the perfect cut rose in a vase. **Herts & Essex Boundary Club** have for many years held a competition in June, simply entitled "Rose, Roses, Roses." This year was no exception as 9 members took part virtually.



**Roses All the Way....
Lindi Carrington, (Framlingham Flower Club)**

Framlingham Flower Club has a very special affinity with roses, because for many years the approach to the town from the A12 was through vast acres of rose fields owned by Notcutts. And so, a rose festival developed in the village of Hacheston, just outside Framlingham.

The festival was the brain-child of Helen Brookes who noticed that Notcutts cut the roses from the rose bushes growing in their fields, to allow the bushes to develop more strongly ready for sale. Hacheston church was in desperate need of funds to repair the mediaeval building and gained permission for church volunteers to cut some of the roses from the bushes in a way that could be used to decorate the church. Local Flower Clubs (East Suffolk Group) were invited to undertake the arrangement of the roses in the church, while Notcutts kindly allowed their land to be used for parking and for a Craft Marquee. They also opened their rose fields for visitors to inspect the roses (including new varieties being developed ready for Chelsea, at which Notcutts gained many Gold Medals) in the years when the rose fields were at Hacheston.

After 2007, following changes to practices in the horticultural industry, the roses were sadly no longer available. Although a flower festival is still held in the village, Framlingham Flower Club staged the final festival entitled "Roses All the Way" - a celebration of roses in literature & verse. **Past president, Mary Holt**, remembers how proud she was of the club's work and their interpretations. Many members can still recall the overwhelming perfume that filled the church on that occasion. Less positive reminiscences are of lorry loads of roses arriving straight from the fields, extremely thorny and all requiring stripping & conditioning. You couldn't specify the roses for your design because it all depended on weather conditions as to what was available; your allocation of colour, size & type of rose was a complete surprise! Quite often the roses would suddenly shed all their petals just as you thought you were nearly finished for the day and you would have to start again with a different rose. If that wasn't bad enough, Mary reminds us that in the early days the flower arrangers would actually have to go the fields to cut the roses themselves!



Parkdirektor Riggers



Deben Sunset

I asked Framlingham Club members to share their thoughts about growing and using roses: **Co-Chairman, Jennie Carter** says that the soil conditions needed to grow the best roses, in my experience is clay. Our first house in Essex, was on the site of an old brickfield, so you can imagine how heavy the soil was. It did however grow some wonderful roses. The most striking of the ones we had was a "David Austin" climber, a lovely deep red in colour called "Parkdirektor Riggers". Being a new house, the grey toned brickwork was very stark, but this rose climbed freely on the front elevation and contrasted it very well.

Since moving to Suffolk, we have had really workable soil in Woodbridge which was not too good for our roses. Framlingham has seen us go full circle, back to clay again. We now have over 80 roses of varying types, which love the conditions that keep their roots moist most of the time. We inherited a lot of the roses most of them unfortunately we are not able to identify. Of the 25 plus we have added to the garden I would say the best are two climbers "David Austin" again; one is "The Generous Gardener" and the other "Compassion" both were thank you presents. It's lovely to walk past them and take in the scents they produce.



Generous Gardener



Compassion

Thinking of “special roses”, Framlingham member, **Sue Pike** says “I can think of 4 roses I've had:

Rosa glauca which was one of my mother’s favourites with its blue tinged foliage on a self-supporting frame; single pink roses - a lovely border plant.

Rosa Rambling Rector. I was a " Guardian" of one at the Mansion House (in Framlingham) Its white highly scented flowers could be smelled all the way up Church Lane & people would pause to enjoy its fragrance

Rosa Kiftsgate which, not realising its vigour, I planted in an urban garden & it climbed high up & over the fence to the neighbours Birch tree where it grew to an unreachable height!!

Rosa rugosa. I grew these as a hedge in my first English garden. It was much loved by pheasants for its hips. These also made excellent rose hip jelly, and when we were children, we used them to make "itching powder" We cut the hip in half and scrapped out the middle.

Distilled rose water is good in face or hand creams or added to bath water. I have also used it for pink Turkish delight.

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Itching-Powder>

<https://gardentherapy.ca/rose-water/>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/turkish-delight>

Asked about her favourites, **Club Secretary, Sheila Winton**, says “I have a special rose called Champagne Moment given to me more birthdays ago than I care to remember. It is a floribunda scented shrub rose going from soft apricot to white. It is trouble free, thornless, with glossy foliage and the buds seem to last well when picked. It will flower throughout the summer and go on until nearly Christmas if there is no frost. I have given it to other people for their 'champagne moments'.

I love roses. There are so many lovely ones, it is hard to pick a favourite. One is Madame Alfred Carriere which will clamber all over the place and up into trees, smells love and repeat flowers. I am also very fond of the roses that David Austin has bred himself, I have several in the garden

including The Generous Gardener, Crown Princess Margareta, and Lady Emma Hamilton, all of which smell wonderful. I think that nothing compares to roses when picked and just put in a jug, maybe with some honeysuckle, a true summer delight.”



Sheila's arrangement using favourite roses from the garden.

Sometimes flower arrangers struggle to use their homegrown blooms to full effect in their designs and worry that they do not last as long as roses from the supermarket or wholesaler. Spotlight East contacted Norfolk based florist, **Brigitte Girling of “Moss and Stone Floral Design”** for her advice and list of favourites. Brigitte has a huge following on social media and has been described by Victoria Clarke, commissioning editor of “Blooms” magazine as “One of the most outstanding florists who have emerged since the turn of the millennium”

Brigitte writes: “I think the first thing to mention about garden roses is that using them requires a shift in expectations. They will not last three weeks like a bunch from Tesco's and they will naturally hang their heads and look shy and gentle rather than stiff and starchy...which is precisely why I love them of course! That said, picked in bud form at the just beginning to open stage, you should get five to seven days from them if used in water. They do not appreciate being placed in foam nor their stems being bashed because this destroys the cells that take up water. They generally always have a glorious scent unlike their shop bought rivals, filling a room with deliciousness. And of course, exquisite form...ruffled petals, speckles and freckles and bouncy beauty. They are wonderful individuals full of charm and personality.

I have dry, sandy, nutrient poor soil but I still grow them with optimism and I relish every flower I produce! Mum, on the other hand, on her clay soil produces them in wonderful abundance and I am not envious at all...not at all! Anyway, I grow all of the following, some with more success than others. I grow them for colour, shape and scent and with an idea that I can blend them all together. Ensuring the colours can work together perhaps with some transition flowers is very important in my work.

(Brigitte's Mum is Sheila Winton from Framlingham Flower Club)



Photo; Brigitte Girling

Brigitte's list...

1. Chandos Beauty - a beautiful soft pink - good medium strength cinnamon scent
2. Honey Dijon - a bronze mustard with pinkish tones - light fruity scent
3. Just Joey - flouncy large copper orange heads - strong sweet scent
4. Julia's Rose -coppery apricot pink - light scent
5. Vidal Sassoon - almost light brown with an undertone of lavender - strong spicy scent



6. Mokarosa - orangey tan - moderate strength old rose scent
7. Jude the Obscure - light peach - strong fruity scent
8. Queen of Sweden - blush pink - light myrrh scent
9. Gentle Hermione - pale pink - strong myrrh scent
10. Jaqueline Du Pre - simple open flower ivory with pink stamens - medium strength lemon smell
11. Margaret Merril - another simple open flower white with a pink tinge - strong sweet scent (an absolute favourite)
12. Champagne Moment - pale blush apricot fading to off-white cream - light scent



"My roses are all from Peter Beales, David Austin or C & K Jones. (Photos from growers' websites)

I really hope that helps and that your members enjoy using what's out now in the garden rather than buying in. It is one of my greatest pleasures; simply using what nature is providing outside my back door! "

More about Brigitte's floristry work, courses & garden:

<https://www.facebook.com/mossandstone.co.uk/>

<https://www.mossandstone.co.uk/>

Instagram @mossandstonefloraldesign

<https://bloommag.co.uk>

With the changes in Covid restrictions and the reopening of many venues, clubs have been able to organise socially distanced workshops.

In July, **Dereham & District Flower Club** thought they would try something different ...

“Thank you, David from Larch Cottage Sculptures, for our recent fun and fabulous wire sculptures workshop.

We all said it was harder than it looked but still great fun. We had lots of giggles; the odd swear word but definitely a fun time. Everybody loved it. Thanks to David’s patience and help, we got our sculptures finished.

Here are a few examples of our hard work ... we did a mixture of hares and bees... and a photo of David hard at work.”



More information about David’s work & his wire sculptures:

<http://www.wrightflorist.com/wire-sculptures>

<https://www.facebook.com/larchcottagesculptures/>

In July & August we started to see flower clubs preparing to re-open, with several clubs holding their first meetings in members' gardens.



Cake & catch-up chat is definitely on the agenda!

Herts & Essex Boundary say “It’s great to be back”

Beverly Moore writes:

In August Herts & Essex Boundary Flower Club were able to restart their meetings and planned a social evening and in house competition. After so many months it was wonderful to welcome 30 members back for this evening, plus 3 visitors & one new member joining the club.

An imposed class was offered so that members, who had not been able to meet for so many months, could turn up with just their scissors.



Herts & Essex Boundary Flower Club - It's great to be back !

So, what’s involved in giving members something different instead of a demonstrator.?

In the past a small charge would have been requested to cover the costs but for this meeting members were given all components free of charge.

Member Nicky Thompson, a catering manager at a local primary school was responsible for compiling the items. Nicky also looks after our sundries stock and along with Leoni Braz they came up with the challenge of an imposed class without floral foam.

Catering size paper towel cardboard tubes were collected over several weeks.

Acrylic tubes, Aluminium wire & Spiders Web were taken from our sundries stock.

£1 Discount Store always a bargain for balls of yarn

A visit to the wholesalers to select suitable flowers - There were 8 taking part so flower bunches selected needed to be in quantities that would avoid waste.

Each person was given

8 Tubes

7 stems Gerbera

2 stems Spray Carnation
2 stem Kermit Chrysanthemum
10 Flexi grass
2 stem Eucalyptus
Green wires
Aluminium wire
Spiders Web
Ball of Yarn

Lots of laughter as they first spotted the components and asked 'Where is the oasis and the dish?' Members were given one hour to create a design.



Our members are always up for a challenge and we have been known to have as many as 40 members take up the imposed challenge, now that takes extra time to organise but it is still fun and always amazing to see how with exactly the same components no two designs are the same.

At the end of July **Orwell Flower Club** had their first meeting since the closure with a demonstration by **Vicki Hease** aptly titled **“Alfresco Summer”** The lucky raffle winners of the foam free arrangements won the containers as well. Vicki writes: “All 8 cupcakes and the teapot went into the raffle. Foam free with mesh inside. I was really pleased with the final design and it seemed to go down a storm with the ladies. The teapot was given to me as it had lost its lid so it was free. The cupcakes were left-overs from the workshop I taught, quite a while ago now, at the Education Association.



One lady said it had given her an idea for her 40th wedding anniversary celebration later on this year. In total that night there 20 floral prizes, so many ladies went home with flowery winnings.”

Sudbury Flower Club have been really busy!

Sudbury opened its door to celebrate a belated 65th Birthday with an inhouse event: 25 members feeling it was safe enough to attend, with the covid restrictions that were in place. 4 small talks by the committee with arrangement already made and to be raffled of afterwards. "Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed and Something Blue."

Philippa Mills opened with "Something Old", a talk on all the venues in Sudbury that the club had used in the past, along with all the old photos that have been neatly boxed into decades.



The oldest Photo – Sudbury Town Hall 1956 – sale of Christmas decorations with the Mayoress of Sudbury, the club President, and the club Chairman

"Something Old" The arrangement was in an old-fashioned container, made by Pat Leathers.



“Something New”: Leslie Fairman described how to do a landscape design for the workshop which would follow in 2 weeks’ time.

After a break for a glass Prosecco and the moist fruit cake made by Pat Leathers, Philippa Mills returned to centre stage for her talk on “Something Borrowed” - tales of neighbours asking to borrow a cup of sugar or can they have a bucket of coal, and the Subtle word change making all the difference.



Having borrowed the Borrowers book from the school library this was used for her arrangement of the little people under the floorboards. Borrowing the stand idea from the flower arranger summer 2018 Jenga towers by Barbara Smith and combined with Summer Party Bowl Summer 2021 by Nina Tucknott made a colourful reusable arrangement.

“Something Blue” - a quick recycled blue bottles and plate design by Brenda Graham, with a talk on an old photo of a blue boat design in the local church, and how she got the boat into the church from down the river. (Photo next page)



Brenda's blue arrangement

2 weeks later - our Morning and Evening workshop of the landscape designs!



Sudbury Flower Club



The club is now preparing for its annual club show with 5 categories for members to enter their designs and be judged by an official Judge on the 8th July. With viewing and refreshment to follow.

More from Sudbury, Phillipa Mills writes:

Sudbury Flower Club Show

The 8th July saw the club have their 2nd end of season show with 5 Categories to be judged by independent area Judge, Helen Bird. Still with Covid restrictions, members brought their exhibits and placed them in the areas which Brenda Graham and Leslie Fairman had marked out beforehand; while 4 members assembled their pedestal design on site in one and a half hours.

Everyone was able to social distance outside with refreshment while the judging was done. Helen kindly wrote comments for each exhibit as we unable to have a talk from her indoors this year.

Photos clockwise from left: "Suffolk Scene" a landscape - 1st Irene Morris; ""From the Garden" a foam free incorporating fruit & vegetables - 1st Brenda Graham; "A World without Flowers" an all-foliage design -1st Philippa Mills; Sweet & Low" to be judged from above – 1st Brenda Graham



Sudbury Show (continued)



Dramatic Effect Pedestal – 1st Fiona Adedotin



Overview of Show

Friendly rookie Demonstrator for hire to all kind flower clubs!

My name is Elizabeth Robertson, and after recently posting a short item on the International Friends of Floral Art & Design Facebook page (previously called Friends of NAFAS) I was kindly invited to write this article.

Now clubs are beginning to re-open and plan their events calendar, I would like to offer my services as a keen substitute demonstrator in training to all flower clubs in the east of England, should you have any gaps in your bookings. To offer you some insight, I will tell you a little about myself and my activities which led me here.

I am a freelance florist/flower arranger, based near Ely Cambridgeshire, where I live with my husband and 4 totally spoilt dogs and 2 cats. We reside in a remote corner of the fens near to the River Lark and endless acres of farmland. But for the many, many potholes, life here would be idyllic, but I guess one cannot have everything and to be honest we are pretty lucky really.

I love colour, and plenty of it! I also love flowers, foliage and lots of natural materials, especially curly wurley wood and branches and stones. My style of flower arranging is probably cottage garden and country lane all mixed into one colourful, tasty basket! I do love contemporary as well and relish a challenge with new and interesting materials natural or otherwise. I am endlessly surprised and fascinated at nature's beauty and skill, and love to try to catch even a hint of this in my work. Big Blousy baskets and door wreaths are two of my favourite subjects.

A good friend Margaret Dooling invited me to join Ely Flower club about 4 years ago and I quickly discovered the world of demonstrators! I was soon totally smitten, not just from watching these men and women at their wondrous work, but also by the exciting possibility that perhaps I could find out how to become one.

You see I love meeting people for a chat and some fun, and initially terrified though I am, I love to tell stories even more and having an audience is pretty much the icing on the cake for me!

I was put in touch with the lovely Anne Bell who provided me all kinds of excellent advice and encouragement and put my name forward to Programme Secretaries as a rookie demonstrator eager to practise.

In 2019 I completed several demonstrations in the region and accompanied by my sister Trish, my first demonstration was at Caister on Sea Flower Club whose members gave us a wonderful welcome! I have since been invited to return in 2022. Other demonstrations followed and I loved it and am so grateful to those that booked me!

I applied for a place on the NAFAS demonstrator's course to gain my certificate but no sooner had we enjoyed a taster day beginning of 2020, we had to wait for what seemed like an eternity while life was abruptly put on hold due to a certain pandemic.

This pretty much brings me back to now. If you would like to know more and want to book a keen demonstrator at short notice, please get in touch. I would love to hear from you and help if I can. Here's how you can contact me:

Elizabeth.enchantedflowers@gmail.com
<http://www.enchantedflowers.co.uk>
<https://www.facebook.com/Elizabeth.robertson1to1/>

Phone 07842 165 417



PS: I don't think you'll fall asleep during my demonstration, but if you do, I will take it as a compliment that I have made you feel right at home!

The Garden Museum in Lambeth, London SE1, has staged a significant exhibition this summer about the life and work of Constance Spry:

“Constance Spry and the Fashion for Flowers”

Unfortunately, a number of members have not been able to visit it as they still felt uneasy about travelling to central London. But here is a real treat – the link to the virtual exhibition.

<https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/exhibitions/constancespryonline/>

It starts with a short video from the curator Shane Connolly (royal florist) and then goes on to include other videos & archive photos from the exhibition. There is also an opportunity to buy the excellent guidebook. Exhibition ends 26th September, so there still may be a chance to book.



It's wonderful to see announcements of flower club re-openings coming in thick & fast; don't forget to submit the details of your club re-opening to the Nafas-east website (diary section). Now more than ever it's important to encourage your members back to meetings and to recruit new members to both club and committee. The next few months are going to be exciting times as we get our creative juices flowing again, in time for the festive season. Tell us about your first meetings, your workshops, and those special occasions that you had to postpone, but can now celebrate. The deadline for the Winter edition is November 16th for publication on 1st December.

Email your contributions to newsletter.nafas-east@gmail.com in Word format (for the written bit) and the pictures separately in JPEG format. Please do not embed the photos in the text as I find it takes longer to process the article – I want to spend much more time arranging flowers now!

Wishing you a very happy, creative & productive Autumn from all of us on the media team,
Lindi Carrington (editor)