

SPOTLIGHT EAST

Newsletter for Members of The East of England Area of NAFAS

Welcome to the September Edition of Spotlight East, packed with news of what members have been doing over the Summer months; returning to normal life, after lockdown? No, not really as some people are still shielding, whilst others are taking the first tentative steps towards socially distanced meetings, workshops and outings. Many are involved “virtually” with their club activities, entering competitions and enjoying “Zoom” talks together.

But first, a correction from the previous edition: the date of the Chelsea Flower Show at which the East of England, under the Chairmanship of Ann Knight was awarded a Gold Medal was of course 1988 - how time flies!

We start with an update on the progress our education course – **the East of England Certificate in Floral Artistry. Linda Knights, Education Officer**, writes:

We thought that we would update you all on the progress of this course. We had an induction day in January and with a full class of 20 signed up we had our first class in February 2020. It was a very friendly and happy day with a mixed group of flower arrangers. Almost to our March class and then lockdown. What a disappointment.

A private Facebook page was set up and 18 of the students joined. Lists of requirements and notes for the portfolio were posted. It is so difficult to explain on paper and takes forever to write what you could say in a few minutes.

We did two months and students posted their efforts and the two tutors commented. Facebook moves so quickly and you have to trawl down so far to find the information that was there yesterday. Sadly, we abandoned this idea.

Students are posting their arrangements on Facebook and most are enthusiastic and we can't wait to return to the classroom. We all admire their efforts in this difficult time and they are definitely improving and we are getting some pretty arrangements of garden plant material and a few bought flowers.

Some took the time to share fun Easter designs and also the wreath in support of the NHS. Well done all of you.

We are about to embark on the latest idea which is following a website [teachyourself.uk](https://www.teachyourself.uk) set up for just this occasion where students can work at their own pace. This website follows the contents of the course, although not in the order that we were going to do, but nonetheless the end results will be the same.

When we start again in January 2021 the students will have a better understanding and portfolio work will have been commenced.

We don't think that the website is a complete substitute for being in a class with tutor help and there is also the social aspect, but for us it will fill the gap. Going into the future we are going to continue to use [teachyourself.uk](https://www.teachyourself.uk) as it will be so helpful for both teachers and students. We may tweak it a bit but it does lessen our workload and gives students the opportunity to have the information in advance.

Perhaps others interested could have a look and maybe, for those that have difficulty in attending classes for various reasons, this could help them to get started in flower arranging.

<https://www.teachyourself.uk/>





Elizabeth Ablett, Woodbridge Flower Club, has been studying on the Floral Artistry Course. Liz writes about the experience:

This is a three-year course which will be done over a three-year period, in monthly workshops at the East of England NAFAS headquarters in Mildenhall. This is our first year where we will learn the basics of Flower Arranging.

In January me and a group of ladies decided to start the “Foundation of Floral Artistry Course” at Mildenhall and worked through to February, before Covid 19 appeared and sent us into lock down. All hope was not lost as our tutors trusted us with the responsibility of teaching ourselves with their help and guidance. At first as I'm sure everyone can understand I found being alone rather difficult, I missed the company of the other ladies and the face to face support from my tutors, I felt that I had lost momentum not helped by just having had a hip replacement in March I decided to have a short break.

When Linda Knights (one of the Course tutors) sent us a link from a Wix course on “Teach Yourself to Flower Arrange” which was approved by NAFAS. After reading it through I got my mojo back and jumped back in. The course is very incredibly detailed, there are eight practical sessions and eight portfolio instructions with guidance. I have found the practical instructions clear and easy to follow, when I read them properly, I tend to scan. I have stepped up to the challenge and occasional done a couple of the Practical twice to make sure I had got it right. On completing our designs, we upload photographs we have taken to our Facebook site where they may be judged by our tutors and peers.

I for one can say that I have learnt so much and would highly recommend for anyone wanting to build up their terminology and techniques to do the course.

Everyone agrees that the cancellation of all our flower arranging activities over the summer has had a devastating impact on us all; but what is increasingly clear is the importance of our gardens to us flower arrangers. We love our gardens! They have given us so much pleasure during the lockdown period and beyond - not just as a resource to provide flowers that were in short supply commercially, but as a place of fulfilment, a place to escape, a place to nurture the soul. Several of our members wrote to tell us what their gardens mean to them.

Jayne Lawson, Feering Flower Club writes about her ambitious project:

For many years I have hankered after a bit of garden where I could grow plants just for flower arranging to use in the house and flower club competition pieces but our garden is on a floodplain which limits what can be grown successfully and I have a chronic back problem so am a bit limited on what work I can do. Clearly, I needed some raised beds to enable me to do the required planting and nurturing and somewhere to put plants which might not cope with the wet winter conditions. Using a plan based on square and I-shaped beds and adding an existing wire gazebo as a centrepiece, I drew up a plan for a local firm to work from. They immediately hit on a problem, a general shortage of timbers and, much worse, that most of those timbers were warped. They

persevered but a 2 week build time became almost 6 weeks before the beds were built. The wooden sleepers had been bolted together with plastic liners inside the bed to minimise decay; pea shingle pathways atop garden membrane gave practical pathways in between the beds, wide enough for a wheelbarrow. Most of the beds are 3 sleepers deep but 2 were left as just two sleepers deep; these ultimately had more permanent planting and I do wish one of them had been filled with an ericaceous soil to give me a chance to grow different plants. In either event I find them so much easier on my back.

Once the beds were built, we filled them with a mixture of bagged soil, home-produced garden compost and soil conditioner. But as we moved into September and prime planting time, family matters brought progress to a complete halt. Fully intending to start planting in early spring I refined my planting plans over Christmas and pored over nursery lists and gardening catalogues. The soil settled yet more over the winter and as we headed off for a winter sun holiday, we were increasingly aware of a new illness originating in China. All too soon lockdown happened and not only was it impossible to get the extra soil we needed but all the garden centres and nurseries were shut down. Forget food and loo rolls – how would I get my plants?

To add to the challenge, I was suddenly struck by an idea – why not create a colour wheel? I decided that each of the 4 outer beds would contain plants in 3 colours. The first bed would be red, red/orange and orange. The second orange/yellow, merging into yellow and yellow/green. My favourite this year would be green, green/blue and blue. The final bed blue/violet, violet and red/violet. The central beds would feature clematis growing up the arbour and a range of annuals and bulbs, all white.

With lots of time on my hands I thought I could research suitable varieties ready for once the garden centres reopened but it was soon obvious that would involve a long wait so I started to source whatever plants I could; roses which had been destined for sale at flower shows, tiny barely-rooted salvia cuttings, plants out of last year's hanging baskets, random bits from neighbours, some collections ordered from mail-order companies and plant collections put together by hard-pressed nurseries. Some of the plants were excellent, others terribly disappointing. But whatever they were they were nurtured as best we could. The conservatory (normally free of any plants) became a substitute greenhouse and before long we had a temporary hardening off area full to bursting.

When planting finally got underway I was so grateful to find it all relatively easy on my back. I could work hours on end and even perch on the wooden edging if needed. Certain plants did better than others, some were wrong, the majority healthy, others positively unwell. A right old mixture and, rather frustratingly, not as representative of the colour wheel as I'd have wanted. Nonetheless the beds have been a riot of colour and looking after the plants during lockdown gave me a focus. As with any garden there have been disappointments but the joys have been greater. I hadn't grown dahlias before and now plan a larger dedicated bed for them. The airy white cosmos around the foot of the gazebo earned high praise from a garden designer friend. But the greatest reward for me has been the realisation that I could garden once more, especially into older age. The next task is to tweak the planting now that garden centres and nurseries are trading normally and to plan displays for next spring and summer. In fact, I've just ordered rather too many tulip bulbs.....

The finished raised beds, ready for planting



Adele Kent, Costessey Flower Club, has had an unprecedented opportunity to relax in her garden.

Adele writes:

As they say when one door closes another door opens. As lockdown firmly closed the door on demonstrations and flower clubs it provided the opportunity to spend more time in the garden, along with some beautiful weather.

Cutting shrubs that would normally be used for demonstrations, into a better shape than my normal cutting height! Tidying areas that have long been overlooked, weeding, being here to water regularly and doing all those odd jobs we never usually have time to do. Typically we have had some wonderful foliage I haven't been able to use for dems, but I have cut some for the house giving them a good drink in a bucket overnight and enjoying them – uneaten hosta leaves , huge phormium flowers and leaves- Beautiful dahlias, in fact we don't think we have ever had so much colour this late in the season.



All enjoyed when having a G&T and reflecting on jobs well done!

Who would have thought NAFAS ladies would take to Zoom as well as they have (haven't backgrounds on Zoom been interesting and informative!) "You are on mute", "You are still on mute", "Sorry I was on mute" being the quote of the day or "we can hear you but can't see you" or at my committee meeting when a lady sat for 23mins patiently waiting when I called her in but she hadn't clicked the video or sound !!

I am sure as with all of us, I have missed the fun, friendship and flowers and the 'gossip'.

Looking forward to getting together; take care and stay safe.

Adele.

Anne Bridge has shared her garden secrets with us –

Diary of a floweraholic during 'lockdown' 2020.

By Anne Bridge.

March 2020

Oh! Mr Johnson has written to us, "did we know that we were vulnerable and will be 'shielding'?" *Now there is an interesting word! I feel like a knight of bygone days*

and protecting my queen.... No, it's not that shield Silly me!

March 2020 Lots of paperwork to read from GP and local Council. Gosh lots of help there. This is looking serious...better look at my contracts for talks and flowers.

March 2020 Cancellation calls now coming in thick and fast for talks and mini demos. The calendar is starting to look very messy and my different coloured highlighter pens are suddenly redundant.

Late March 2020 Hubby not too grand and cannot get out to his beloved garden. Does that mean I become the greenhouses apprentice? Get organised and take on the challenge!

Check the seed box, set up propagator, purchase plant plugs for patio pots and planters, arrange for more compost and John Innes. ...Anniversary gift of latter from family delivered and deposited near greenhouse 2 ready for me to use, all done by this new defined dance craze called 'social distancing'. Love this new type of shopping, grazing over stunning quality plants in all colours and types..... can I have a go?

April 2020 Priority sow seed as instructed by Master Gardener. Tomatoes into pre-prepared seed tray, label, and place in propagator to germinate. Wet end of matchstick (not the pink bit) and pick up each precious seed individually well, that worked!

Sow Marigold seeds for patio pots into seed tray and place into propagator. Jobs done!



Am spray watering or base watering to keep soil moist. Good signs of germination on Tomatoes. Marigold seeds slower to show.

Late April. Tomato plants potted on and labelled. Various groups made for family collection when stronger.... *Social Distancing of course!*

Plugs arrived, Petunias in purple to contrast with my bright orange marigolds! *Boss cannot understand the Apprentice wanting to have a set colour scheme throughout the patio planting! Silly man ... you can tell he is not a flower arranger!*

What on earth am I going to do with the raised bed. It was not well thought out, too long, too, high. *Really need a solution as it is the one stop shop for every cat in the neighbourhood..... lightbulb PING!*

Order more wildflower seeds to add to my in-stock packets. *Inspirational, I hope..... get my lovely garden man to scatter said seeds, in abundance, after a quick rake over and taking out last years left over potatoes.*

May 2020and no 'casting a clout' just yet, still night-time possibility of frosts.

Putting bedding plant outside during day to harden off but back inside at night. *Love my head gardener he is so good with the directions!*



Tomatoes thriving...I think. Plant out containers and start to get Lilies out of Glasshouse 1 as they do not mind the cold. New bulbs to look forward to but no 'Show' to compete in. A few of the newbies showing signs of virus.....oh no.....apprentice, get it sorted! Removed and destroyed virus plants, sprayed others with 'lily beetle bug killer'! *Now on daily watch for the critters.... Heat of the day is best and in slippers! They react to noise, fall off stems onto their backs and cannot be spotted because of their brown undersides. (If you get one on the back of another one then you have hit the jackpot and they died VERY happy!)*

June 2020. No Norfolk show and the Asiatic lilies would have been absolute winners on the show bench.... *Have moved the pots onto the patio where Master Gardener can appreciate them from his chair. The almost black one is amazing, and we still have some oriental hybrids to follow with their intoxicating perfume.*



The raised bed has now been christened as the 'Raised Flower Meadow' and is giving us, the bees, and butterflies so very much joy! *...must be 20 plus varieties of flower in there and each day I see something new and exciting appear. Many have come to view, and this is possibly, my best ever light bulb moment! The fact that the 'Raised Meadow' is contained is its reason for success, but at just 12ft x 6ft and 3ft off the ground it has astounded everyone and will, hopefully, continue to do so.*

July 2020. Tomatoes now starting to crop! *Head Gardener says I have earned my certificate.*

A profusion of lilies and startling colour of planters on the patio. Mr B can see it all from the French windows and helps lift his spirits AND MINE! *I cannot imagine life without a flower so I now tell you about my secret delight.* Being let loose to order the seeds and plants that now decorate our garden I was enticed into purchasing 6 Gloriosa Rothschildiana tubers. John (Head Gardener, Mr B, Master Gardener and many more reverent names), had tried growing them for me over 20 years. A firm favourite for many years and prior to their more recent popularity, for me to use in flower arranging competition work. Having never been successful, I was forced to purchase as cut flowers at 'exotic' high premiums. Well, I put 3 into each large flower bucket, having made holes for drainage and 'crooked' the bottoms. Following the very concise instructions from the supplier, I waited..... and waited..... first one shoot.....then another, until all 6 were climbing onto their frames. I was and still am ecstatic and am still looking out at them, either side of the patio steps and saying" yes, I did that!" Of course, I didn't the amazing cycle of nature did it..... I just managed it, but doesn't it just make you love your plants and wonder at the power of flowers on our emotions and therefore our mental wellbeing?

August 2020. Has lockdown finished? Not for us but still enjoying the garden and our flowers.....happy gardening, arranging and LIVING, folks!

Anne Bridge



We were delighted to receive photos from several members of designs created from their own garden plant material. Linda Harman, Holbrook & District Flower Club, who in normal times would run monthly workshops for club members explains how to create two simple arrangements from the garden. Linda writes:

From a very hot and dry garden I picked crocosmia leaves, poppyseed heads five grey hosta leaves that the snails had kindly left me, fatshedera leaves, and the foliage from peonies.

Using an oblong oasis dish with a pin holder at one end of the dish, I placed the crocosmia leaves in the pin holder. This gives height to the arrangement. I then added the poppyseed heads at different levels for rhythm, followed by the hosta leaves to add a focal point. Fatshedera placed low down at the side gives balance and weight and the peony leaves hides the pin holder. I then filled the dish with water to give me a cooling water arrangement for a hot day.



We are being encouraged to arrange flowers without flower foam, it's not that easy but I have had a lot of time to experiment these last 3 months! This arrangement is a balancing act, but very effective when completed. You will need a low bowl or casserole dish (round or square), narrow Sellotape, a large amount of short stem foliage of different colours and textures and a few small headed flowers from the garden. Make a grid of squares over the top of the bowl with the Sellotape leaving gaps of 2 inches then

half fill the bowl with water. Now group the foliage, balancing it inside the grid. As you put more foliage in, it gets easier to keep it all upright. Keep going until you have a dome of tightly packed foliage adding just a few jewels from the garden placed amongst the foliage, you will have a long-lasting arrangement as the flowers can be easily replaced as they fade.



Sylvie Cooper, Feering Flower Club, writes about her “Amazonian” arrangement:

I've decided to call this my 'Amazonian' arrangement - not because Agapanthus are so tall and statuesque, like the South American women of folklore, but probably like me, in full lockdown, you had to use a certain online retailer a lot (other retailers are available!) and I accumulated so much packaging.

So, apart from religiously 'quarantining' it and then bagging for the recycling pick-up, I thought I would utilise some of it in a design, as I was in a 'making' mood.

I love the use of circles and spheres in arranging, so picked out complimentary coloured twine and 'sewed' a shape that in part replicated the shape of the Agapanthus, onto punched out circles of card in two sizes. I also left some of the circles natural and then



Sylvie's "Amazonian" Design

hot glued onto a copper wreath frame in a pattern that gave movement and then used the two twines to bind around the remainder of the ring.

I made a support post from wire to enable the design to be inserted into the foam, I also made a 'swag' of more circles by hot gluing into a shape to bring beneath the design – so the circles moved through the design and out.

The Agapanthus and Heuchera (which picked up the colour of the container) are from the garden – the Agapanthus have been fabulously tall and plentiful this year.

So, I suppose if I am basing my designs now on online retailers in lockdown, my next one is going to have to be titled 'Boots' tilicious!! **

Stay safe, stay well – Sylvie Cooper (Feering Flower Club)

**Or how about "Every little Helps"? Perhaps we could organise a virtual competition for our readers. See later sections for information

Pat Stammers, has been busy dealing with a great deal of NAFAS paperwork, but not too busy to share photos of her garden. Pat writes
“The Rhododendron is the best it has ever been and no Suffolk Show Competition in which to use it!!”



Sheila Cooper, Holbrook & District, tells us
“I actually enjoyed the first part of lockdown as the roads were quiet and Spring seemed to be all about sunshine and nature. We have an allotment so we spent many hours planting, followed by weeding and now reaping the harvest. It's been hard work though with the watering as I grow cut flowers.”



But not everyone is a gardening enthusiast; Gloria Godley, Caister-on-Sea Flower Club, sent us a different point of view:

During lockdown I read numerous stories in newspapers and emails sent to me, about how everyone's gardens have never looked better, and demonstrators who now have an abundance of foliage that they prune, and against their better judgement have had many trips to the tip with garden rubbish; months earlier they were asking programme Secretaries if members had foliage they could bring to club.

Well, let me tell you, my garden looks exactly the same, also unlike some of my friends, I have not turned into a "Master chef", nor have I had any "Bake off's", the nearest I have come to anything is "I'm a Pensioner Get Me Out Of Here", I haven't been on "YouTube" to learn Italian, Spanish, German, French or Mandarin, and I haven't knitted a Christmas Jumper ready for the big day.

What I have done is walk, and walk for at least 5 miles a day, I have taken these photo's to show others how blessed I feel to have this kind of "Gym" right here where I live, and to show that "the seaside" isn't all "Kiss Me Quick Hats" and sticks of rock. I am aware that not everyone is as fortunate as me.

Also, on my daily walks, I have come across Eryngium growing freely in the dunes, as well as Broom, and many varieties of Wild Flowers, I know when the winter comes, the walk along the beach and in the dunes will be completely different but still as beautiful.



A Light-Hearted Approach to Gardening.....

Beverly Moore & her husband David, (Herts & Essex Boundary Flower Club) were looking for a quirky idea for their garden. When charity shops reopened after lockdown, they saw two cream coloured chairs @£5 each in a local charity shop, a bargain too good to miss. David then set to with his project.



The old seat covers were removed, a new base with cut-out created, woodwork rubbed down and repainted black. A pot containing petunias were purchased from the reduced area at the garden centre and hey presto 2 quirky planters for the front garden at very little cost.

These additions to Beverly & David's front garden certainly bring a smile to the passers.



During the peak of the hot weather, Summer rainfall was almost non-existent for the most easterly parts of our Area; we asked plant expert Ruth Prior, Holbrook Flower Club, to recommend plants for flower arranging which are drought tolerant.

Ruth recommends:

- Eryngium Giganteum Miss Wilmott's ghost *
- Phormium Indian Chief
- Colecephalus Silver Sand
- Bergenia Tubby Andrews**

*Ellen Ann Willmott (1858 – 1934) was an English horticulturist and influential member of the Royal Horticultural Society. She was also renowned for her habit of collecting seeds when she visited, and dispersing them in the next gardens she visited.

**Tubby Andrews identified the potential of the distinctive variegated bergenia “sport” in the nursery and propagated it.



We were saddened to hear that Sandra Adcock, one of our popular East Suffolk demonstrators, died recently. Mandy Pryke writes on behalf of Wickham Market Flower Club:



Sandra Adcock.

1961 - 2020

In early August we learnt of the sad passing of our great friend, club member and brilliant demonstrator Sandra, after a long illness borne with immense courage and acceptance.

Sandra was a great asset to Wickham Market Flower Club, both as a member and demonstrator. At her inspirational “Hands on” workshops she regaled us with stories of her floating home on Neptune at Martlesham and her early employment as a Milliner, Florist, Flower Arranger and Book writer.

Members really enjoyed her meetings and always went home with precious designs made by them but with Sandra’s patient guidance.

Her Facebook entries were of amazing photographs of Sunsets, Sunrises and river scenes, flowers and many special photo memories made during the time of her illness. Getting the most from every moment. Always smiling, brave and positive.

Sandra's funeral service will be attended by her immediate family only, but donations to The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation can be made via the "Just giving" page on Facebook or sent independently. For details please see www.roycastle.org. This was a charity whose work Sandra was so passionate about.

We are so grateful to have known such a talented beautiful lady.



Wickham Market Flower Club

Getting Back to Normal (whatever that is!)

The gardeners amongst us rushed to the newly re-opened garden centres to buy everything on offer. In great abundance were trays of succulents, not just for the rockery or conservatory, but a must-have for flower arranging.



Succulents are ideal for using in arrangements where providing a source of water would be tricky



Beverly Moore, a member of Herts & Essex Boundary Flower Club, is a regular contributor to Floral Design magazine. The July edition featured an array of succulents and their uses in floral design.

Beverly's contribution shows one design using succulents from her garden.

'A Box of Delights' was the title earlier this year at one of Essex Boundary Club competition meetings and was an ideal design to be featured.

The other design placed a succulent inside a glass container to fill the void

To view the whole article, go to: www.floraldesignmagazine.com





Getting back to this “New Normal” means that we are having to do things differently – often “virtually”. We are beginning to see more flower arranging competitions and shows being organised on line; it’s a different kind of challenge. We asked members whether they had taken part in any “virtual” flower arranging competitions? Lindi Carrington writes about her first “virtual” experience:

The diary for Summer 2020 was looking amazing: visits to friends living abroad, concerts, Glyndebourne, the Suffolk Show, Bury St Edmunds Flower Festival, not to mention Area days & club meetings. All cancelled at a stroke. But worst of all, I found giving up my “domestic treasure” who has worked for me for more years than I can recall was more than I could bear. The novelty of cleaning my own home quickly wore off, despite Mr C’s valiant efforts with the vacuum cleaner. On the treadmill of constant cleaning, cooking & ironing, I became less human by the day (and not a very nice person to be locked down with) What I needed was a creative challenge – rather than working through the on-line tutorials that were available, I decided I needed to enter a flower arranging competition. So, I decided to enter the one organised by Friends of NAFAS* in early July. This was crazy! I’m not a very experienced competitor; the group has over 5,000 members; many of them are famous international florists, judges and demonstrators. But I decided to put as much effort into the organisation & planning of this virtual exhibit as I would have done for the Suffolk Show, for example.

**This Facebook page has now been renamed “International Friends of Floral Art & Design” which better reflects the membership and objectives of the group.*

I entered Class 4 on the schedule “Life. Free and Flowing” – no floral foam. There were easier, more straight forward titles, but (unfortunately) I never enter a competition thinking how I might win; what would show off my abilities to their best advantage.... In this case I rationalised that I had some flower stems of perpetual spinach which had gone to seed in a wild dramatic tangle; it would be the perfect response to the title and great fun to execute. The first things I realised were that it had to be a large exhibit (120 x 100 cms; height optional) and that the single photographic image to be submitted had to capture, and do justice to, the whole arrangement. This was followed by the realisation that such a large piece couldn’t be moved after completion and needed to be created “in situ”, where it was to be photographed – i.e. in daylight with a plain background. And so, the first few days were taken up with choosing the photographic location, searching for backdrops and practising camera shots at different times of day. The chosen “location” was in fact the back wall & worktop of the laundry room, hung with freshly ironed curtain lining. This decision meant that the washing machine and ironing board were out of action for several days (quite a relief really!)

Once I’d ascertained the space I needed to fill, arranging the spinach seeds, a couple of stems of hogweed and some curls of phormium into a glass bowl was probably the most effortless part of the process. The addition of flowers at the centre was more of a problem – still very few commercially available during lockdown. I’d had my eye on some interesting wild salsify heads, but they resolutely refused to open until the following week. In the end I chose alstroemeria from the garden, aware that for many in the FON group, garden flowers would be freshly picked anthurium, proteas or orchids. My initial preparation meant that photographing the design was straightforward, but the resulting images made me realise that I need to get to grips with the manual settings on the camera to achieve more depth of focus in the design. A photograph of an arrangement is very different to having the real thing on the show bench in front of you.

On the plus side, there was no need to pack and unpack the car. There was no kneeling on wet grass, no fear that the marquee would blow down overnight, no desperate search for the WC/coffee stall/water supply in an unfamiliar venue. And the best part of all – once the shutter had clicked on that perfect image, it really didn't matter if the whole thing wilted.



Beverly Moore was involved with the organisation of the FON competition, working “virtually” alongside judges from around the world. Her task was to make sure that all the entries were correctly identified before being sent to the judges:

Watermarking images

Numbering the exhibits - Just one part of organising a virtual competition.

As entries are received, they are saved, put into a folder for each Title, making sure to match the exhibitors name with the correct design. When all entries are received, they are watermarked with the Title and an Entry Number.

I use an app - iWatermark+ - but there are several apps or programmes available.

You can select the Font you require, the size, the colour & position of the watermark ensuring it doesn't block the image view.

The watermarked photograph is then saved.

Herts & Boundary Flower Club had planned to hold a summer show in August as part of their programme but sadly this had to be cancelled due to the current Covid-19 situation.

There were 5 classes in the show 'Petals & Prosecco'

"Wot No Foam!" - A design without floral foam

"Where Have All the Flowers Gone? - Foliage only

"Summer Sunshine" - Small scale design

"Bubbles & Berries - Imposed class

"Out of Lockdown - Imposed class

Members would have had the opportunity to create an imposed design or have brought the other classes already assembled. During judging a social evening was planned where Prosecco and Canapés outside in the summer sunshine would have been served.

In view of the cancellation the committee decided that perhaps members would still like to create a design, not for judging, but as an exhibition to be posted on their website and Facebook page and also for their archives which are looking a little thin on the ground this year.

For the imposed classes, members just came up with their own interpretation of the titles, although who knew when the show schedule was originally created, we would be still be in lockdown in August.

The feedback from those members who did take part was how much they enjoyed being able to arrange flowers again after so many weeks of lockdown.

All entries can be found by

visiting <http://hertsessexboundaryflowerclub.weebly.com> or find us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram.

To whet your appetite a couple of entries are shown on the next page.

Below are links to virtual competitions which have been organised by clubs in other areas/countries

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

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

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

Summer Sunshine' (Small Scale)
Heidi Lawrence



'Wot! No Foam'
Nicky Thompson

OUR FLOWER CLUB

The village hall is silent! No Flower Club today.
The blooming Covid virus has kept us all away.
Our Club is very friendly, we are a happy bunch.
But Oh! so disappointed when we had to cancel lunch.

Friendship, fun and flowers is the order of the day,
and soon we're "doing flowers" in our own peculiar way.
The Committee planned a wonderful year, now what are we to do?
Just think we'll have to use our brains and do the quiz from Sue.

With Dulcie we all travel, share her photos of the flowers,
her stories keep us occupied and pass away the hours.
This Covid is a nuisance, it causes hurt and pain.
But smile, keep well, keep happy, until Club meets again.

Written by Betty Jones, West Norfolk Flower Club

It is with immense sadness that we learnt of the death of Janet Elmy, past Area Secretary, Area Chairman and Area President of the East of England Area of NAFAS, peacefully at her home on Tuesday 18th August surrounded by her family.

Janet also served on the NAFAS National Publications Committee and was a long-standing member of the Ipswich Flower Club, serving as Secretary for many years. Fellow club members remember her with great affection, as kind, caring and supportive. She will be greatly missed.



Getting back to what we do - Flower Arranging!

So many of our members have really missed doing the Flower Rota for their local church, or taking part in decorating their place of worship for major festivals like Easter and Pentecost – after all this was how many of us were first introduced to flower arranging. Doris Schaay, Drayton Flower Club, writes:

The Church of St Peter Mancroft is a very large, beautiful City Centre Church beside the market place in Norwich which attracts many visitors. Like all other churches, because of Covid 19, it was closed early in March. In mid- June as it is such a large church where social distancing and a one-way system around the church is possible it was allowed to open again although no services could take place then.

June 28th was the Patronal Festival and the perfect time to reintroduce flowers into the church. Since then a rota of flower arrangers has been drawn up so that one pedestal is arranged at the High Altar each week. So unusual as, in normal times, there are pedestals at two of the altars and an arrangement at the font. Patronal Festival would have seen twelve arrangements throughout the church.

It is such a privilege to be able to arrange flowers in such a peaceful and beautiful building, and hopefully by Harvest Festival at the beginning of October we shall be able to fill the church with flowers again.



Sue Bunting, Feering Flower Club, writes about her involvement in an annual Church Flower Festival which was reworked to be Covid compliant. Sue writes:

St. Peter ad Vincula Church in Coggeshall normally hold their flower festival over the August bank holiday weekend. Sadly, this could not go ahead this year, however, not to be thwarted a few clever people encouraged the residents to decorate their houses and gardens for people to follow a trail around the village and visit the stalls at the Church, to raise some funds.

Sylvie Cooper and I were asked to create two pieces to hang on the gates of the Recreation Ground, we were happy to do so, and spent a lovely morning, socially distanced, doing something that we enjoy and have really missed, creating these pieces.



Follow the link to see more designs and tips about how to organise a festival in this way

https://coggeshallflowerfestival.org.uk/?fbclid=IwAR3D2RFD_RRwn3nRQgT8Mt2afaY2tu-f2wl54tICJKTIVTOS9iI1qtJ2c8M

Lynne Burrell sent a lovely photographic record of Aylsham & District's recent outing, with words by Crystal Dyball



A group of about 30 members, family and friends met on Friday 14th August at Walcott House on the Norfolk coast for a lovely, socially distanced garden visit. We were met by the owner of the garden who gave us a well-informed guided tour of the garden then we were let loose to explore on our own. It was so nice to meet up with everyone after such a long time. The afternoon ended with tea and cake or whatever we had each taken for a picnic, in my case it was a bottle of water!

Find out more about visiting this lovely garden

<https://thegardengateisopen.blog/2017/04/30/walcott-house-symmetry-and-space-33/>

Getting back to normal has involved clubs organising social distanced workshops in members gardens, under gazebos or in garages and outbuildings. And whilst virtual Zoom meetings have been the order of the day, Stowmarket Flower Club recently held their "actual" committee meeting in a grain store

Vick Hease, Stowmarket, writes about getting back to “normal”

My first class since lockdown, 10th August, only saw 3 ladies attending, due to some still involved in harvest, one lady had broken a bone in her foot and was in plaster and another had the funeral of her father that day.

Of course, it had to be one of those blisteringly hot days, but we were lucky to be the only ones in the community centre that evening, so social distancing was easy to follow.

I changed the program to create a foam free design using aluminium wire as our mechanics with a few flowers, 7 Roses or Dahlias, Crocosmia or Freesia, 5 large Ivy leaves or Heuchera, 3-4 long slim Lonicera stems and 5 grasses.

It was wonderful to be catching up with them and to be in different surroundings, but as I said it was blisteringly hot, and we were all rather on the wilting side by the time we had finished.

We all went home with delightful designs, which despite the heat have lasted a week or more



If you're not able to attend a creative workshop in person, why not look for inspiration online and share photographs of your interpretations with floral friends. These are a great series of videos from Wessex & Jersey Area of NAFAS:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RvS60KmrGE>

Hopefully club & Area meetings will be able to resume in 2021; here's something else to look forward to...

"THROUGH THE DECADES"

a celebration in flowers of

1000 YEARS OF THE ABBEY AT BURY ST. EDMUNDS

9th -13 JUNE 2021

with a Preview evening Tuesday 8th June 2021

We asked lead designer of this event, Vicki Hease, to tell us about this celebratory exhibition in flowers that was to have taken place on 15th - 19th JULY 2020, but postponed due to coronavirus. Vicki writes:

1000 years of the Abbey at Bury St. Edmunds is still to be celebrated in flowers, interpreted by an invited team of experienced flower arrangers depicting events relevant to their particular decades.

The decades range in centuries from 1020 -1120 depicting the Bury Herbal, Benedictine Monks through to 1920-2020 celebrating the new chancel tower and remembering WW2. The decades and centuries in between include King John and the Magna Carta, Handel's concert on the new organ, the shrine of St. Edmund and stained glass.

Also postponed to the same dates next year is another exhibition in the Cloisters, of old manuscripts and books, some belonging to the cathedral, others loaned for this event. (see below for more information about the manuscripts)

The Treasury, in the cathedral will also be open to visitors, where amongst other beloved items, an Ivory cross can be viewed; this same cross is being depicted in the 2nd bay, 1120-1220, but in a much larger form.

Please put the above 2021 dates in your diary for what we hope, covid permitting, will be a spectacular event, not only celebrating 1000 years of the abbey, but also, our return to arranging flowers in beautiful venues, something, not only we as arrangers, but also the general public have sadly missed during this pandemic.

Vicky Hease

More information about the manuscripts:

In 2020, Bury St Edmunds celebrates the millennium of the founding of the Benedictine Abbey of St Edmund by King Canute in 1020. A range of events was planned across the town: heritage, artistic, musical, religious and community celebrations. Due to the pandemic, these events have been moved into 2021 and the anniversary will be marked in due course. One exciting element of the celebrations is an exhibition in the Cathedral's Treasury called 'Secrets of the Abbey: History Returns'. Visitors will be able to see at close hand seven manuscripts, some with beautiful illustrations, which are the work of the Abbey of St Edmund scriptorium from the 12th Century. The manuscripts are on loan from Pembroke College, Cambridge. They were given to Pembroke College by William Smart, Portreeve of Ipswich in 1599. This will be the first time that the manuscripts have been seen in their place of origin since the dissolution of the Abbey in 1539.

Members of the public and school groups can visit the exhibition free of charge and learn about the story of the manuscripts, the life of the Abbey of St Edmund and the heritage of Bury St Edmunds. The Abbey of St Edmund was one of the largest in medieval Europe and the manuscripts represent the work of the Scriptorium at its height

Next time: We hope to hear more of your “virtual adventures” - club meetings, competitions, outings etc. and to see more of your own creations inspired by the changing seasons – Harvest Festival, Halloween The next edition will be published 1st December, so if you have some good ideas for floral Christmas decorations and arrangements do share them with us. Send your ideas, comments, reports etc simply formatted in Word with accompanying photos in Jpeg format, by 14th November to newsletter.nafaseast@gmail.com

Thank you to all our contributors to this edition; we couldn't do it without you!