

SPOTLIGHT EAST

Newsletter for Members of The East of England Area of NAFAS

Since the Spring edition of the newsletter, it has been encouraging to see our East of England members emerging from lockdown with renewed creativity and enthusiasm. One of the first opportunities for this was the staging of the first **NAFAS Virtual National Show**, in April. Preparations were underway long before this, with the 12-class schedule available in mid-December, applications by mid-January and a final submission date of 19th February. This long lead time, understandably necessary for the judges & organisers, was quite a challenge for competitors who were working on the overall show title of "Springtime". It was the most miserable time of Winter; the country in lockdown again; precious little in the garden and no opportunity for creative browsing at the wholesalers or florists. Despite this, many members took the opportunity to compete for the first time, without the worry or expense of a long journey to a venue, and were joined "virtually" by a good number of more experienced colleagues.



The Area was well represented. The show launched at the beginning of April with 3 weeks of online talks, demonstrations & workshops, (still available online) culminating in the release of the competition results and the photographs of the entries. By the final week of April, it did at last feel as though "The Happy Time of Singing Birds" (second part of show title) had come. The full results are published on the Area website. Here are glimpses of all the East of England entries. You will notice the Juniors have "swept the board" of winners, yet again. It's great to know the future of flower arranging rests with them.





Simple Beauty

Lynda Davis



Maureen Johnson



Moment in Time

Barbara Collins



Barbara Collins



First Blush of the Day

Jean Eagling



Linda Clark



New Awakening

Brenda Evers



Adorned Beauty

Sarah Bacon



Equinox

Yvonne Wagstaff



As You Like It

Lindi Carrington



As You Like It

Lindi Carrington



As You Like It

Lindi Carrington

And here are the designs from our amazing Juniors



We've had success in International Competitions too.

Brenda Evers, Stanway Flower Club, contacted us to say "I am delighted to share with you my recent entry in The Garden Club of Toronto Virtual Competition "Re-Connections" which was opened to flower arrangers around the world.

The class was "Bursting Out" and the design space allowed was 5.25 inches width/depth/height. A rather unusual size for British/NAFAS designs. I took third place in the class and I am thrilled!"



Lindi Carrington was awarded VHC in the IFFAD (International Friends of Floral Art & Design) March Medley Competition – Class 1 entitled "Round the Corner". She was delighted with this result against such experienced competitors, and pleased, given the lack of garden plant material, to be have conjured a design out of nothing – half a discarded ring base, a few phormiums, some dead moss and the dried crespedia left over from her entry in the National Show. (photo next page)



Many clubs continue with their monthly club competitions.

Beverly Moore writes:

“Each month during the last lockdown Herts & Essex Boundary Flower club members were given a challenge. In February it was to create a design using the Pantone Colours of the Year for 2021” – Ultimate Gray & Illuminating (yellow)

Perhaps you are wondering what this means? Here are some extracts from the Pantone.com website to help you ...

“For over 20 years, Pantone’s Color of the Year has influenced product development and purchasing decisions in multiple industries, including fashion, home furnishings, and industrial design, as well as product packaging and graphic design.

The colour mood for 2021 is: *“Practical and rock solid but at the same time warming and optimistic, strength and positivity. It is a story of colour that encapsulates deeper feelings of thoughtfulness with the promise of something sunny and friendly.”*

“The Pantone Color of the Year selection process requires thoughtful consideration and trend analysis. To arrive at the selection each year, Pantone’s colour experts at Pantone Color Institute comb the world looking for new colour influences. This can include the entertainment industry and films in production, traveling art collections and new artists, fashion, all areas of design, popular travel destinations, as well as new lifestyles, playstyles, and socio-economic conditions. Influences may also stem from new technologies, materials, textures, and effects that impact colour, relevant social media platforms and even upcoming sporting events that capture worldwide attention.

Pantone Color Institute is the business unit within Pantone that highlights the top seasonal runway colours, selects the Pantone Color of the Year, forecasts global colour trends, and advises companies on colour for product and brand visual identity. Through seasonal trend forecasts, colour psychology, and colour consulting, Pantone Color Institute partners with global brands to effectively leverage the power, psychology, and emotion of colour in their design strategy.”



As you can see, Herts & Essex' designs are right "on trend". Their March challenge was a little more straightforward – Motivated by Middelino.



Starting Slowly

The coming of Easter and the return of church flower arranging was the opportunity many flower arrangers had been waiting for. It had been particularly disappointing not to be able to "do our thing" at Easter, Harvest and Christmas 2020



Jenni Baker's delightful Easter Bonnet style design

Members of Herts & Essex Club decorated Manuden Church,



Great Ellingham Flower Club welcomed Easter with their colourful array of outdoor decorations



Not all churches were open at Easter; Stella from Werrington Flower Club focused on the outside.



Church Flower Arrangers are now getting back to their rotas to celebrate the major festivals in the church calendar.

Area Demonstrator, Moira Neville, tells us about her latest project - **Reclaiming the Land**

It's been a long-haul project, refurbishing a neglected 60's bungalow, a building site for 3 years and until recently, a caravan parked in the front garden. The house was not habitable.



Happy Husband having fun.....

However, the Covid pandemic wrought many changes, in lifestyle and perceptions. Finally, following the recent sale of our Soham home, we transitioned to live full time in Suffolk.

The caravan has gone; now a challenge, ground clearing of building supplies, but progress is being made! Our previous home had an enclosed sheltered town garden. A former car park, gardening was with a pick and fork through hardcore and rubble. Very free draining, it suited drought tolerant plants. My first real garden! Here interest in plants grew, a real bonus, when embarking on flower arranging, to access plant material.

Like many, starting as a Church flower arranger, then joining a NAFAS flower club. The rest is history. Leaving behind a mature garden though testing had advantages, I could divide plants, lift bulbs even transplant some of the younger trees. So, sharing the story with you, the journey for a flower arrangers garden, started at the front. This new garden is very different, a coastal, windy exposed sloping site, with sandy slightly acidic soil.

The first anchor plant was a weeping birch, *Betula Youngii* This is a beautiful small tree, a pale trunk topped by an umbrella of graceful swaying pendulous branches. In Spring, these are covered in delicate lime green leaves plus tiny catkins.

Birches are multi-purpose, the paper white mature branches form natural structural mechanics, the flexible defoliated twigs are easily manipulated to form shapes, wreaths, or, as a natural bulk filler.

The under-planting, *Bergenia Cordifolia*, is a versatile perennial evergreen ground cover; it includes the striking variegated form Tubby Andrews.

Bergenia is a large flowering genus. Leaves turning a burnished red spectrum of colour overwinter, if planted in sun, also shade tolerant, the flowers range from maroon through to white.



Betula Youngii

The generous leathery bergenia leaves can, by blocking, create an area of visual rest, cover a large design area, be manipulated, by folding, wrapping or pinning. They can be dried, some plants do this naturally-worthwhile scavenging around your plants, fresh leaves can be glycerined.

For uplifting perfume late Winter and early Spring, Sarcococca hookeriana, aromatic sweet box. This variety is the evergreen hybrid, Winter Gem. It has larger than average glossy rich green leaves, is highly scented, has round red to black berries. Ideal for shadier spots, such as under a birch canopy and flower arranging.

Early Spring welcomes the flowering hellebores. Fabulous in floral designs, with the long mature hellebore stems and rough textured, deeply cut, serrated edge, palmate leaves. The flowers can be used with confidence once the seed pods have set



Anna's Red



Pippa's Purple



Marbled foliage

This year, I have planted Anna's Red and Pippas's Purple from the Winter Angels sensa Frostkiss series, interestingly attractive, with their delightful silver marbled variegated leaves, the iridescent flower heads held upright on strong stems.

Transient succession of Galanthus, double and single snowdrops, grape Muscari, Ornithogalum, Star of Bethlehem, break through a weed suppressing coarse bark mulch. Spring flowers do make pretty little posies

Pre- loved - Any old Iron

Nestled into the bark is a repurposed rusted firepit containing a contorted prostrate sedum, *Sedum reflexum cristatum*, a ground cover perennial. A unique growing pattern of fascination forms a twisted carpet of green and pink., ideal for containers. As a succulent, it remains turgid out of water and could be incorporated into a low design secured by a cocktail stick.



There are also some relocated rusty gabions, found for sale at a contemporary floral workshop, in the adjacent gravel area, acting as a link between the two areas by repeated use of rusted materials and colour.

Workshops can be a great way to learn and find second-hand items, containers, "stuff" for sale, mechanics, goodies, books, plants, often sold to help with fundraising, as well as meeting up with likeminded people.

In the old garden, there was a huge stand of bamboo, *Phyllostachys nigra* and *Phyllostachys aureosulcata*. However, it proved exceptionally difficult to excavate a root division, but we managed! Planted here in a trench lined with slabs and bamboo membrane, as it can be invasive, it will form a living structural hedge, filtering wind, reducing road noise.

Bamboo nigra forms tall slender shiny swaying arching canes, the rigid yellow bamboo stems have a near luminous quality, which are topped with green grass like foliage. Bamboos can add a unique oriental charm to any design, they form strong mechanics of great tensile strength, with the dry aged cut canes fading to an attractive patina.

A trio of paramoudra, pammenters, in the stone gravel contrast textually with the bark planting. They are also called pot stones, as used for planting. The enclosed spaces are believed to be formed by precipitation of silica around burrows in the chalk.

These giant flints are from a nearby commercial quarry, chosen from my site visit there, a great experience.

Some amazing examples of these large ornamental flints are seen in the Desert Garden, at The Old Vicarage, East Ruston.

Paramoudra



Further planting in the front garden includes the wonderfully long silver tasselled male *Garrya Elliptica*, James Roof. The decorative silken tassels of this upright satin sea green shrub make a stunning Winter garden feature. Even when finished displaying tassels, the dark wavy edged foliage makes a lovely foil for flowers. *Garrya* foliage and tassels glycerine well.

Another choice evergreen erect shrub, *Nandina domestica*, sacred bamboo, has vivid seasonal colouring to its lustrous lanceolate foliage, inflorescent creamy flowers and red fruits.

There is still, the skeleton reminder of the tall rippling architectural grass *Miscanthus Karl Foerster*. It is however, one of the first grasses to start showing green growth, later many spectacular strongly vertical pink flower stems shoot, that bleach to a straw colour over a long season of interest,



Front Garden Border

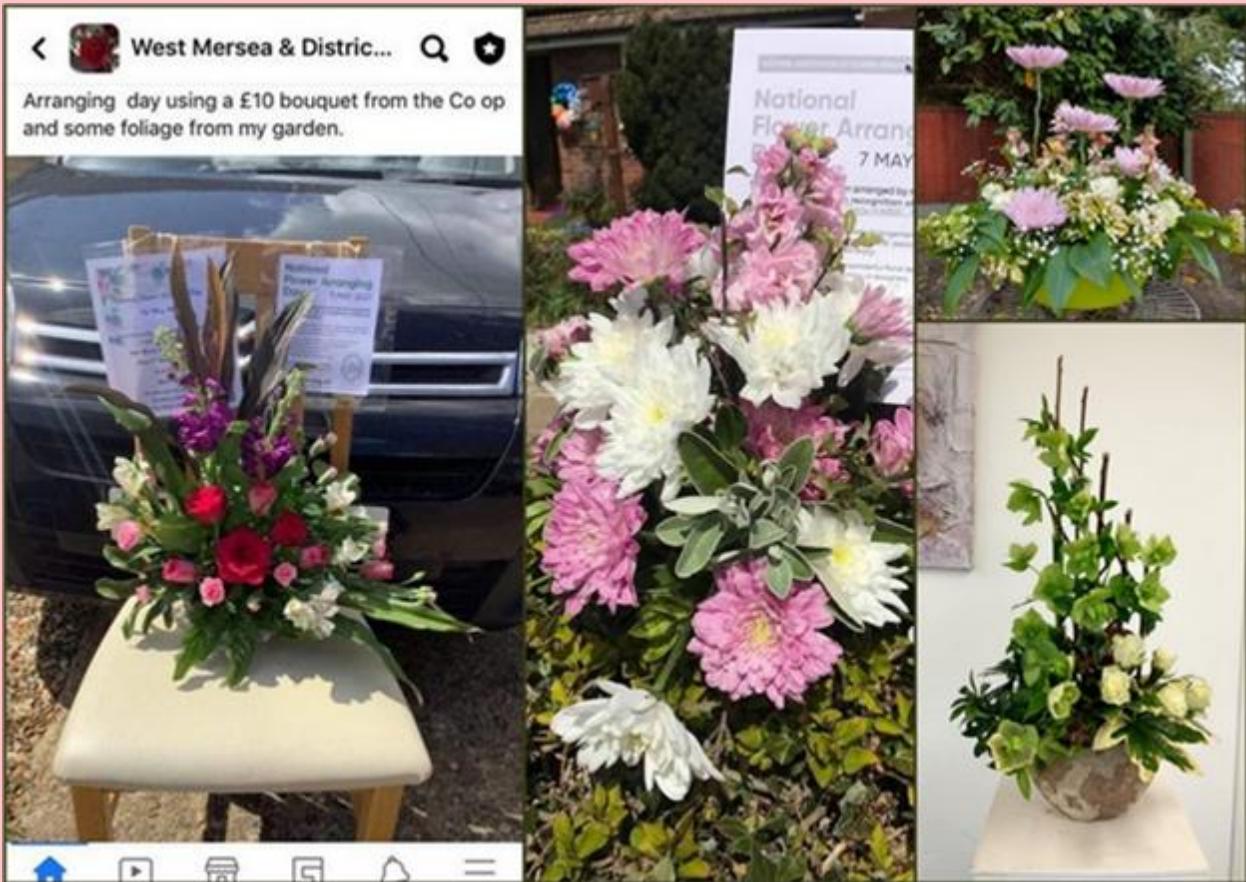
A garden in the making, a mere shadow of Nature, it gives joy, hope, inspiration and acts as my muse.

National Flower Arranging Day 7th May

Instead of handing out flowers to celebrate the event this year, to fit in with covid -19 guidelines, East of England members joined flower clubs around the country in using their homes to celebrate the day – displaying arrangements in their gardens, porches, on gates & fences, in windows and so on. Distinctive flyers were attached, giving Nafas details, in the hope that members of the public will be encouraged to get into flower arranging. Most importantly though, the aim was to give a little cheer and sign of hope, to the onlooker, and to raise the morale of members who are missing their club activities. Here are a few of the many displays produced for the event.



National Flower Arranging Day (continued)



Thank you to Great Baddow, West Mersea, Tiptree, Stowmarket, Lodden & Herts & Essex Flower Clubs for sharing your members' work on social media.

Barbara Collins writes about her **Brighter moments in Lockdown!**

Everyone has used their time over the past 15 months in different ways and we like many of you went out for our daily walks. The times you drive past people's gardens and never see what is planted the other side of their wall, well this was our opportunity to appreciate everyone's gardens.

As the seasons changed so did the gardens and there was a surprise just near to where we live. In early spring we noticed shoots coming up in the grass down near the mini roundabouts as we go onto the main road. As you can see from the photos (on the next page) firstly, we had crocus, followed by Tete a Tete dwarf daffodils; which were a joy for some weeks. Then the tulips came up and finally were followed by Thalia white daffodils about 10" tall. Whoever planted the 4 beds of bulbs around the junction certainly knew how one would follow the other and they gave us joy for over 10 weeks.

The planting scheme at the junction



With no demonstrating and minimal flower work, our own garden has become an abundance of lush foliage; especially now we have had some rain. I am always reluctant to prune just to throw in the compost so I have used some for cuttings and had some foliage arrangements in the house.

I also used some of the Rubus stems with the leaves stripped off to make door wreaths. They do not stay as tightly woven once they dry out, but if you thread a few midelino canes into them you can use them again, as it makes them firmer. I have made a wreath and added some flowers made from Elaeagnus leaves to show you.

(photos next page)



I used the smaller leaved Rubus for this wreath. We grow our Rubus up a metal obelisk so as you get long stems which are kept up from the ground so they stay clean and are more use than having them root into the ground. Always a good alternative to Ivy trails in pedestals.

The Elaeagnus leaves are a variegated variety but if you only have plain green or grey you can use the lovely reverse side of the leave as well. Always use mature leaves as they will last longer.

Start by mounting a larch cone on a wire for the centre, you could also use a small poppy head or even a bead. Cut the Elaeagnus leaves from the stem with their leaf stem attached, using a thin gauge wire (rose wire) I used green, bend the wires in half to make hairpins. Place the 2 ends of the hairpin on either side of the leaf stem about 1/3rd of the way up the leaf and push through to the back of the leaf. Twist the 2 wires together around the leaf stem, continue to do this with as many leaves as you will need for one flower. Now take your centre wired cone and place 3 wired leaves around the cone and using binding wire bind them together, do not cut the binding wire. Continue to add 3 leaves at a time then bind until you have a flower the size you require, bind tightly and cut off binding wire. To finish you can use stem binding tape.

These flowers can be used on wreaths, attached to structures or in the base of a garden design. They will dry and can be spray painted and used in a different design.

I have added a few pieces of rubus and commercial foliage, Hard Ruscus to finish the design. Hard ruscus can be used to make the flowers but is better in the Autumn when the leaves are stronger.

There has been plenty of sorting out of workshops, garages and sheds during our time at home. Lots of friends have offered me some of their surplus items.

My garage is now full!!!

I can usually use containers for demonstrating or fund raising and those times hopefully will soon come back again. Some of the more unusual items take a little more brain power!

I was given some wooden packing cases which were used to deliver some small trees and at the same time I was considering making a "Bug house" which I used in my exhibit for the NAFAS Virtual National Show, no award but I do now have the Bug house. I just had to line the wooden structure to make it waterproof and then fill with small terracotta pots, bamboo, pussy willow stems, rope, cones and moss.



So good things have come out of our time at home, let us now hope that we can return to a new normal and enjoy our flowers together again.

I hope to see lots of Flower club members soon and not on a computer screen.

Take care everyone, Barbara Collins

Vicki Hease, Area Demonstrator & National Teacher shows us how to **RE-USE & RECYCLE to create a FOAM FREE DESIGN**

Skirt covered plastic bottle

Fresh materials used:

- 1 bunch long stemmed Spray Carnations
- 8 large headed Pansies from the garden or similar (Tulips, Roses etc)
- 10-12 stems of last years Lycesteria prunings or other straightish twigs (old Raspberry canes, Physocarpus)
- Bark pieces from the log store

Other materials:

- 1 ball of chunky yarn, (this one was a specialist type used for a scarf, but you can also use 8-9 different double knitting yarns to create a chunky "skirt" for the bottle)
- 1 pair 10mm knitting needles
- clear pot tape
- glue gun with hot melt glue sticks
- florists' scissors
- knife



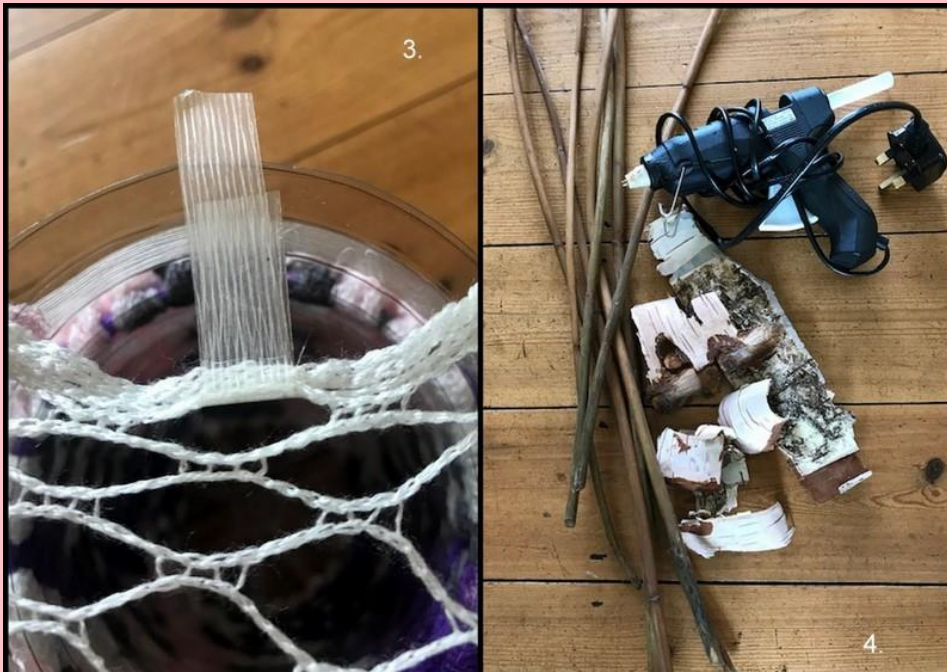
The finished design

How to:

Using your florists' scissors, cut 2/3ds of the plastic bottle, discarding the top 1/3rd. Knit, using garter stitch and 30 stitches a length to cover the bottle, approx. 28 rows, sew up the seam to create a knitted tube to fit over the bottle (see photo). I used a length of this scarf yarn, (see photo) opened out to create the grid for the bottle top, which is then secured in place with the clear pot tape. Alternatively, you can create a grid with your yarn over the bottle top.



Pull the bark peelings from the logs, (Silver Birch in this case), hot glue to the Lycesteria twigs at different heights, some on just one side, others to both sides of the twigs. (see photo). Using your bottle as a guide, lay out other pieces of bark and glue together to form a ring that the bottle will stand inside.



Fill the bottle with water, add the Spray Carnations evenly into the grid and bottle, keeping the full length of the stems.

Add these twigs with bark between the Spray Carnations, then finally add the large Pansies to the rim of the bottle. This draws the eye down the design and adds weight. The colour of the Pansies links beautifully with the purple of the yarn, creating rhythm, whilst the dusky pink of the Spray carnations, repeats the pale pink in the yarn. The bark ring grounds the design and repeats with the pieces of bark within the flowers.

The Lycesteria and bark achieve differing textures and forms creating overall harmony in the design.



An alternative to the above can be seen in the orange and green design, (see next page) made in the same way, knitting a "skirt", creating a grid with 1 strand of wool, but keeping the Cornus stems to the centre of the grid and bottle.

The 2 green Spray Chrysanthemums used low down and the orange Germinis placed around the rim of the bottle.

Because the "skirts" are not fixed in place they can be removed and used on other containers.

This design only cost me £4,00 for the Spray Carnations from the supermarket as I already had yarn from other projects, but it's very often possible to buy an odd ball from the haberdashery department or charity shop if you do not have any stash at home.

Go on, have a go and show us your creations.

Vicki's Alternative Design



Vicki Hease/2021

Ready, Steady Zoom – increasingly clubs are holding Zoom meeting, until they can finalise their plans for face-to-face meetings later in the year.

The New Creations Floral Design Club held their first virtual workshop on 25th March, delivered by Alison Chambers from The Flower Studio, Manchester.



It was a huge success with 11 members taking part via Zoom, making long lasting “Heart Hangers” for the door or wall, incorporating succulents and potted plants. Feedback was amazing- thoroughly enjoyed by all. Another workshop is planned for June. See group Facebook page for more information.



Herts & Essex Boundary Flower Club enjoyed an “inspiring evening with Nina Tucknott - Sussex Area of Nafas Demonstrator with her demonstration “Colour Me Beautiful” writes Beverly Moore. “As we are still unable to meet with members physically, for our May meeting 22 members enjoyed Nina’s colourful demonstration. Nina sends a link for the video to be seen on YouTube. As not all members are keen on or familiar with zoom this was a lovely way to watch the demonstration without fear of losing signal, fumbling around with the mute or the video buttons! Following the demonstration Nina hosted a Q&A session on zoom of which 13 members did manage to sort out their mute & video buttons and enjoy chatting to Nina and other members. Our dear member Pat who is 99yrs young watched & enjoyed the demonstration which just goes to show whatever age you are you do not have to miss out enjoying your flower demonstrations during these unprecedented times.”

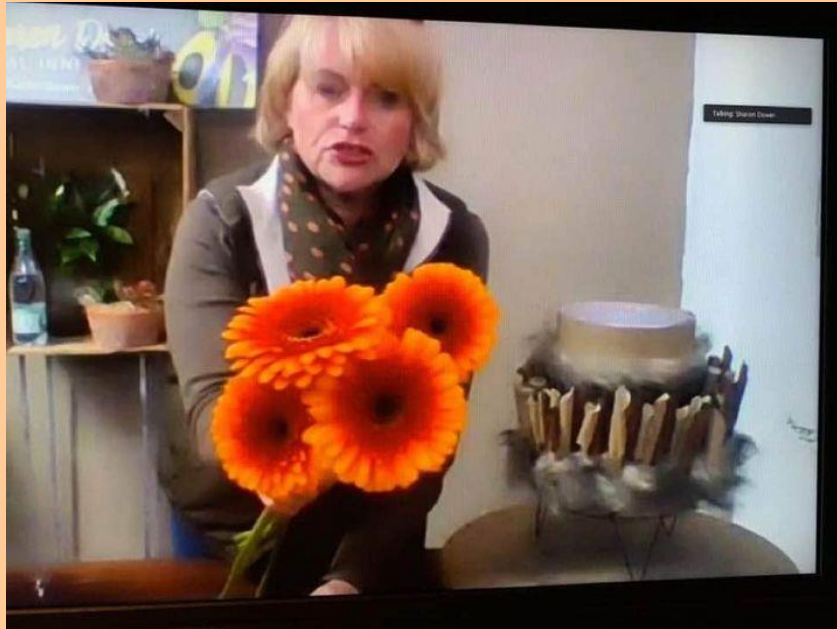
Permission given by Nina to post the photograph. (next page)



Meanwhile our own E of E demonstrator Vicki Hease was teaching virtually in Sussex Area. Vicki writes: "Today I taught a contemporary design - "Raised Rose bed" - via a zoom workshop to Sussex Area of NAFAS. Thank you to Barbara and her JDS & E committee for inviting me to do this. We all had a wonderful day playing with flowers again"



“Stanway Flower Club had an amazing May meeting tonight”, writes club chairman Brenda Evers,” with a fabulous demonstration from Sharon Dower at her studio in Swansea. Zoom has given us the chance to have demonstrators from all over the country (and abroad) during lockdown and it’s been such a joy to keep in touch with friends through flowers”



Screenshot of Sharon in full flow

Area Demonstrator, David Wright tells us that he has also been busy zooming, but has starting doing “real” demonstrations again. “After 14 months not seeing and hearing the laughter and chatter, it’s good to get back.” Below – a design from his recent Zoom to Costessey Flower Club



After months of meeting on Zoom, **Great Baddow Flower Club** committee members were treated to a 'real' workshop with Terri Potter “Lovely designs and fabulous company” Here’s Terri at work in the open air:



Dereham & District Flower Club wrote to tell us about the Club's Welcome Back Programme - three safe garden visits for the Summer months - first up is the visit to Dunbeagen, Westfield, Dereham on Thursday 24 June at 6.30pm. Refreshments, competition and raffle all available. These garden visits are for club members only. If you'd like to join our Flower Club and visit this beautiful garden with us, do get in touch. Subscriptions for the second half of 2021 are only £15. Chairman Corinne Steward has been keeping members focused on flower arranging with monthly competitions but is delighted to announce that indoor club nights will resume in September.

Great Ellingham & District Flower Club have decided to change from being a Monday evening club to an afternoon club, so that members do not have to drive through country lanes in the dark. This has necessitated a change of venue to Roxland St Peter, but the club is confident this decision will work well once they are able to meet in person again. Until then members continue to share their designs regularly on their Facebook page.

And Finally – just as we were about to upload this edition of the newsletter, the results of our Area Competition were announced. We couldn't resist including just a few photos of the winners of each class





All the winning designs, together with the class titles, can be viewed in their full glory on the website www.nafas-east.com

The next edition of Spotlight East will be available on line on 1st September, with a copy deadline of 23rd August. The media team are looking forward to reports of clubs meeting face to face, catching up with friends and moving forward, although we realise many clubs will not be resuming until September – tell us about your plans!

Please email the written part in Word format & (numbered) photographs separately in JPEG format, rather than displaying visuals within the text, as its easier to format the pages in this way. newsletter.nafaseast@gmail.com

All of us on the media team wish you a very happy summer, enjoying opportunities for more freedom, enjoying your families once more and possibly even enjoying some summery weather. Now pick up those flower scissors, if you haven't already done so and get creative!!

Best wishes,
Lindi Carrington (Editor)