



**HPS**  
HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

## **South Pennine Group**

### **Newsletter**

Our Plant Sale is on May 16th and 17th at the Botanic Gardens,  
Sheffield.



**SPRING 2026**

Published by the South Pennine Group of the Hardy Plant Society

# The Committee

Tricia Fraser (Chairman)

Judy Coulson (Secretary & Membership Secretary)

Annette Meikle (Honorary Treasurer)

Dot Witton ( Vice Chairman)

Don Witton (Garden Visits Organiser), Toni Frascina (Plant Sales Organiser), Tricia Fraser (Website, Speakers), Jean Gater (Minutes Secretary and Plant Sales Publicity), Jayne Conquest (Conservation Plant Organiser), Linda Headford (Meet & Greet) , Niall Clarke (Newsletter Editor),

Committee Members: David Andrews, Dave Meikle

We now have a dedicated email address for contributions to our newsletter

[sphpsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:sphpsnewsletter@gmail.com)

Closing Date for the next issue is 1st July 2026.

Horticultural contributions long or short are welcome.

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*Cover picture : Meconopsis grandis by Don Witton from his Flower Power Plus Plus Plus! talk in January.*

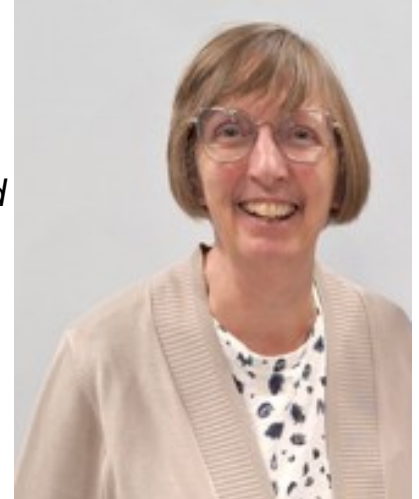
*Opposite: : Anemone nemorosa 'Royal Blue' – there are many more anemones on page 30.*



# Messages from the Chairman

Tricia Fraser

*At last we are past the spring equinox and the days certainly seem much brighter and longer. After a week's holiday near Kirkcudbright, South West Scotland (mostly wet and very windy unfortunately) we had a two night stay on our way home in North Yorkshire, visiting Fountains Abbey and Harlow Carr Gardens.*



**Fountains Abbey** (pictured below) was as calm and peaceful as ever, with daffodils flowering near the abbey. It's a place I love, since we visited many times when my parents lived nearby after they retired.



**Harlow Carr Garden** was a lot less peaceful, as it was another sunny day so it seemed as if everyone had decided to visit!





The garden was looking lovely, with many rhododendrons in flower in the woodland. The hellebores were also in full flower, with *Helleborus* 'Ashwood Blushing Bride' catching my eye (pictured below with a general view above) . It has a deep red centre and white petals outlined in the same colour. I think I need to get this one!. We were a bit early for garden visiting in Dumfries and Galloway, but we did visit Logan Botanic Gardens on the best day of the week. The camellias were all flowering wonderfully, as was *Magnolia campbellii*. Now we're back home it's time to sort out our own garden. Geranium nodosum has seeded prolifically everywhere, so there's plenty to weed out, but some will get potted up for the May plant sale, so that's a bonus.

## May Plant Sale



**Our May plant sale is just a few weeks' away on May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> and if you can help, then do get in touch with Toni Frascina ([tonifrascina@outlook.com](mailto:tonifrascina@outlook.com)).** It's a communal effort with everyone pitching in and doing whatever is needed. It's a great way for new members of our group to chat to other members, as well as learning about the plants we sell. Anyone can bring plants to sell but please contact Toni if you haven't sold at our sale before, so she can tell you about pricing and labelling. Or just come along to the sale and buy some plants – another good way of seeing how these sales are run and meeting other members. I look forward to seeing lots of members at the sale.

**[ There is an important additional message from Tricia on page 6 ]**

# Speaker Programme - should it continue in 2027?

Tricia Fraser

We currently have eleven monthly evening meetings featuring speakers from around the country, some being repeat bookings and some speakers are new to our group. Our next three meetings feature new speakers (that's new to our group – all are experienced speakers, but not ones we have heard before). Let's hope my choices find favour with members! I was disappointed with the low turnout for Andrew Ward in February. You missed an excellent talk. Andrew charges for his talks according to our total membership (104), yet only about 40 members came, so we pay quite a lot to get good speakers. It would help to know if my talk choices are not what members want (feel free to email me about this: [triciaf2808@gmail.com](mailto:triciaf2808@gmail.com)).

In the June 2025 newsletter, I asked for someone to help with booking speakers and eventually to take over from me. Despite having over 100 members, there was no response. I have booked 11 speakers a year, since 2022 (and several on Zoom in 2021) and it is now time someone else took over the role. I never intended to combine the role with being chairman, but I wanted to ensure the group reached our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which we celebrated last September. The current situation is that I have not booked any speakers for 2027. This is partly due to Greenhill Church changing their Alpha course, which we now believe will now run from January–March in 2027. It's also because I think this role could easily be shared by two members and this will bring fresh ideas of what we should do for meetings and how many in person meetings we should have a each year.

To help with this task, I maintain the HPS speakers list and have lists of speakers we have heard over at least the last 10 years, so there is plenty of choice and I will, of course, provide a smooth handover to my successor. The speakers list holds details of when speakers can give talks, how far they travel from home (some will come quite a distance as we now pay for B&B when needed) and they provide a list of their talks. Once a date is agreed by email, I email a confirmation letter to the speaker with all the details and then email a reminder about 2 weeks before the actual talk – I need to check the speaker hasn't forgotten! The list is emailed to members and to Niall for the newsletter. I also update the SPG website and the list can be found here: <https://southpenninehps.webador.co.uk/programme>

If you enjoy our evening meetings and want them to continue then please think about helping out and if there's anything more you want to know then do ask me.



# Talks programme 2026

| Date                                   | Speaker                                                  | Topic                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6 <sup>th</sup> May                    | Anthony Goode<br>(Member of<br>Alpine Garden<br>Society) | Postcard from Pont de Nant<br>(Lausanne University Botanical<br>Garden)<br><i>Anthony will have cards and<br/>pottery to sell.</i>             |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> June                   | Pip Smith                                                | Garden Design Tips and Tricks<br><i>Pip is a landscape designer and<br/>former head gardener at<br/>Wollerton Old Hall in Shropshire.</i>      |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> July                   | Gillian Taylor                                           | A Garden Adventure in France<br><i>Gillian has written articles for<br/>the HPS Journal.</i>                                                   |
| August – no<br>meeting                 |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup><br>September           | Ben Preston                                              | Cliff Bank Nursery – A new<br>Chapter<br><i>Ben has written about New<br/>nursery near Harrogate in the<br/>HPS newsletter.</i>                |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> October                | Val Bourne                                               | Fern Fancying – A Primeval<br>Passion<br><i>Val is HPS President, having<br/>succeeded Roy Lancaster at the<br/>HPS AGM in September 2025.</i> |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> November<br>AGM at 7pm | Hildegard<br>Wiesehofer                                  | The Glory of Gardens<br>(Derbyshire NGS Gardens)                                                                                               |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> December               | Razvan Chisu                                             | Designing a winter garden:<br>snowdrops, snowflakes and<br>other early flowers                                                                 |

All talks are at Greenhill Methodist Church Hall, School Lane, Sheffield S8 7RL



# MAD\* Garden Visits 2026

## \*Meet At Destination

By the time you read this we will have had two MAD visits: Dronfield Hall Barn and Sheffield Botanic Gardens. Don has arranged another season of excellent visits which are detailed below. The usual arrangements apply: put the dates in your diary and sign up for each visit on the sheet Don puts out at the monthly talk preceding the visit.. The full address of the members' gardens will be on the signing in sheet.

|                                                  |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup><br>May<br>11am         | Member's<br>Garden<br>Clay Cross<br>Nr. Chesterfield                    | Plenty of spring interest awaits us with trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants and bulbs giving colour. There is also a very productive fruit and vegetable garden. A warm and friendly welcome                                                                                                                                                        | Free<br><br>Donations for refreshments                              |
| Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup><br>June<br>2pm          | Member's<br>Garden<br>Shireoaks<br>Nr. Worksop                          | This new member's garden backs on to green fields and the Chesterfield canal near Worksop. It is a larger than average back garden with plenty of hardy plant interest in numerous island beds and borders. It should be looking good for our visit.                                                                                              | Free<br><br>Donations for refreshments goes to<br>Alzheimers UK     |
| Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup><br>July<br>2pm           | Cusworth Hall<br>Walled Garden<br>Cusworth Lane<br>Doncaster<br>DN5 7TU | South Yorkshire's newest RHS Partner Garden. A recently restored 18C walled garden containing flower beds, vegetable beds, orchard and historic bowling green. The hall is open and free and contains the Museum of Doncaster. Café on site.                                                                                                      | £4<br><br>RHS members free.                                         |
| Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup><br>August<br>10.30am  | Darley Park<br>Hydrangea<br>Garden<br>Darley Abbey<br>Derby<br>DE22 1DS | This is an historical park with the largest collection of Hydrangeas in Britain as featured on Gardeners' World. We are booked in for a guided tour of the walled garden and other gardens including herbaceous and formal gardens.                                                                                                               | Guided tour<br>£7.50<br>(minimum of 10)                             |
| Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup><br>September<br>10.30am | Hillsborough<br>Walled Garden<br>Middlewood Road<br>S6 4HD              | A walled garden we have never visited. Run entirely by volunteers, there is a healthy mix of ornamental, edible and historical. They don't offer guided tours but someone will show us round and point out all the relevant points of interest and answer any questions. Lunch can be taken in the Depot Bakery at the side of the walled garden. | Free<br><br>Donations accepted which go towards garden maintenance. |

# Plant Hunters' Fairs 2026

- Sun 26 April Cholmondeley Castle Gardens, Malpas SY14 8ET 10am–5pm Gardens and Fair £5.00
- Sun 3 May 1620s House, Donington Le Heath LE67 2FW 10am–4pm Gardens and Fair £2.00 **TICKETED**
- Mon 4 May Chasewater Country Park, Brownhills WS8 7NL 10am–3pm Country Park and Fair Free Entry (Normal Parking Charges Apply)
- Sun 10 May Capesthorpe Hall, Macclesfield SK11 9JY 10am–4pm Gardens and Fair £4.00
- Sun 17 May Southwell Minster, NG25 OHD 11am–4pm Plant Fair £2.00
- Mon 25 May Arley Arboretum, Upper Arley Worcs DY12 1SQ 10am–4pm Plant Fair Free Entry
- Sun 31 May Norton Priory, Runcorn WA7 1SX 10am–4pm Plant Fair £1.00
- Sat – Sun 6 – 7 June Hodnet Hall Gardens, Market Drayton TF9 3NN 10am–5pm Gardens and Fair £6.00
- Sun 21 June Middleton Hall, Tamworth B78 2AE 9am–4pm Gardens and Fair £4.00 **TICKETED**
- Sun 28 June Whittington Castle, Oswestry SY11 4DF 10am–4pm Plant Fair and Castle Grounds Free Entry (Normal Parking Charges Apply)
- Sun 5 July Thoresby Park, Newark NG22 9EP 10am–4pm Plant Fair and Country Park Free Entry (Normal Parking Charges Apply)
- Sun 19 July Chasewater Country Park, Brownhills WS8 7NL 10am–3pm Country Park and Fair Free Entry (Normal Parking Charges Apply)
- Wed 22 July Cholmondeley Castle Gardens, Malpas SY14 8ET 10am–5pm Gardens and Fair £5.00
- Sun 26 July 1620s House, Donington Le Heath LE67 2FW 10am–4pm Gardens and Fair £2.00 **TICKETED**
- Sun 2 August Southwell Minster, NG25 OHD 11am–4pm Plant Fair £2.00
- Sun 9 August Capesthorpe Hall, Macclesfield SK11 9JY 10am–4pm Gardens and Fair £4.00
- Sun 16 August Middleton Hall, Tamworth B78 2AE 9am–4pm Gardens and Fair £4.00 **TICKETED \***
- Sun – Mon 30 – 31 August Dorothy Clive Garden, Market Drayton TF9 4EU 10am–5pm Gardens and Fair £5.00
- Sat 5 September Bodenham Arboretum, Kidderminster DY11 5TB 10am–4pm Plant Fair Free Entry
- Sun 13 September Weston Park, Shifnal TF11 8LE 10am–4pm Gardens and Fair Special Price for Advance Ticket Purchase: £5.00 **TICKETED**
- Sun 20 September Arley Hall and Gardens, Northwich CW9 6NA 10am–4pm Gardens and Fair £5.00

**If you want more information about a particular plant fair, please contact**

**[janet@planthuntersfairs.co.uk](mailto:janet@planthuntersfairs.co.uk)**



# Flower Power Plus Plus Plus!

In January Don Witton gave us the talk he was scheduled to give in January 2025 which got cancelled due to the weather. Don presented the plants which he felt earned their place in the garden through giving more than most when it came to flowers. He had six categories of excellent examples of marvellous flowers: **Free-flowering shrubs, Free-flowering Herbaceous, Long Long Flowering Period, Large Colourful Flowers, Dark Days Flowers, and Wildflower Encounters.**







**Flower Power  
Plus Plus Plus!**

Ancient Egyptians  
'Sunflowers' Vincent van Gogh  
Wholesale flower market  
Cut flowers  
Kiftsgate Garden

**South Pennine Plant Society**  
Wednesday 14 January 2026

**Freeflowering Shrubs**

- Fuchsia Lady Bacon\*
- Weigela florida Variegata\*
- Weigela florida Folius Purpurea\*
- Deutzia Strawberry Fields
- Camellia williamsii Donation
- Magnolia soulangeana
- Cornus kousa chinensis
- Davidia involucreata
- Yucca gloriosa
- Sambucus nigra Thundercloud\*

**Large Colourful Flowers**

- Paeonia Scarlet O'Hara
- Paeonia Pillow Talk
- Paeonia Honey Gold
- Papaver orientale Forncett Summer
- Mecanopsis grandis
- Mecanopsis bearnshii
- Mecanopsis wallichii
- Mecanopsis nepalensis
- Leucospermum cordifolium
- Protea cynaroides

**Freeflowering Herbaceous**

- Inula hookeri\*
- Helenium Indian Summer
- Rudbeckia Goldsturm\*
- Symphyotrichum n.a. Alma Potschke\*
- Achillea Pomegranate
- Anaphalis triplinervis\*
- Erigeron karvinskianus\*
- Astilbe Lollipop
- Verbena bonariensis\*
- Euphorbia epithymoides Midas\*
- Geranium Patricia
- Astroemeria Princess Ivana

**Dark Days Flowers**

- Bob's Dahlias
- Dahlia York and Lancaster
- Tricyrtis stolonifera
- Chrysanthemum Bretforton Road\*
- Chrysanthemum Old Norwell\*
- Chrysanthemum Andrew\*
- Chrysanthemum Helen\*
- Chrysanthemum Chelsea Physic Garden\*
- Helleborus Winter Sunshine
- Eranthus hyemalis
- Rhododendron daurica Midwinter
- Fuchsia magellanica\*
- Mahonia Winter Sun
- Daphne bauhlija Jacqueline Postill

**Long Long Flowering Period**

- Astroemeria Indian Summer
- Geranium Rozanne
- Erodium Maryla\* / Natasha\* / Stephanie\*
- Corydalis Tory MP\*
- Salvia Hot Lips\*
- Salvia Cherry Lips\*
- Salvia Amethyst Lips\*
- Salvia Angel Wings\*
- Penstemon George Holme
- Euphorbia margalidiana\*

**Wildflower Encounters**

- Anemone nemerosa
- Hyacinthoides non-scripta
- Primula veris
- Dactylorhiza praetermissa
- Wild Lupinus

\* Propagated on the nursery

Page 10: top—Camellia williamsii 'Donation', bottom:— Mahonia Winter Sun

Above: top to bottom: Rudbeckia Goldsturm; Achillea Pomegranate and Chrysanthemum Andrew



# Don't Shoot the Messenger

## More on plant reclassification from Pam Hutchinson

### Persicaria

Pam writes... 'Over the years there have been 18 or so picture cards requested by our lovely growers for the Plant Sale, the majority of which have been for *Persicaria affinis* and *amplexicaulis* etc. This classification changed a few years ago, and as I'm gradually catching up (I doubt I'll ever keep up with the RHS boffins), I've now updated the picture cards as follows:'

All the *Persicaria affinis* species are now classified as **Bistorta affinis**, namely 'Darjeeling Red', 'Donald Lowndes' and 'Superba'

All the *Persicaria amplexicaulis* species are now classified as **Bistorta amplexicaulis**, namely 'Alba', 'Atrosanguinea', 'Blackfield', 'Firetail', 'Orange Field', 'Rosea' and 'White Eastfield'

*Persicaria bistorta* 'Superba' is now **Bistorta officinalis** 'Superba'

*Persicaria vacciniifolia* is now **Bistorta vacciniifolia**.

*Persicaria campanulata* has been reclassified to **Koenigia campanulata**

Thankfully for our labels, a few remain the same, namely:

**Persicaria** 'Purple Fantasy'

**Persicaria filiformis** 'Lance Corporal'

**Persicaria microcephala** 'Red Dragon'

**Persicaria virginiana** var. *filiformis*

**Persicaria virginiana** 'Painter's Palette'

*That's all for now folks!!*

Pam



*Persicaria affinis* 'Donald Lowndes' now *Bistorta affinis* © Jambamkin

Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh— <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Persicariaaffinis.jpg#file>



# Reeth Community Orchard

David Meikle



In Reeth (Swaledale) you will find the community run garden / orchard. The garden was originally associated with the managers flat of the Barclays Bank. The days of a live in manager long since gone ... rather like the bank...the garden was left rather to it's own devices

but when the branch closed the building and garden were bought as a community asset. There is no charge to walk round, there are often plants on sale. The garden features many apple trees, standing and trained, cottage garden borders, a shaded green border and a wild flower meadow around some of the apple trees. There is an ice cream parlour nearby, collect an ice cream to accompany a sit on one of the garden seats

Link <https://www.reethorchard.org.uk/>





## **Reeth Community Orchard continued**



## **Thornton Hall Gardens**

David has also sent in photographs of Thornton Hall Gardens in Darlington (opposite on page 15). As he said in his email to me, a little bit of a trip from home but judging by his photographs and the website well worth a visit. The gardens were created by the current owners in an estate dating back to the 1550s. When they moved in in the late 1980 they took over not one but three derelict walled gardens.

Link <http://thorntonhallgardens.co.uk/>







# El Jardín de Aclimatación de La Orotava

Niall Clarke

At February half term we visited Tenerife. As I write this, I note the temperature there today (April 18<sup>th</sup>) is 28°C. Back in February it was a far more amenable 18°C. Located in Puerto de la Cruz, the gardens were established in the 1780s by King Charles III (of Spain) intended as a means of acclimatising plants being brought from the far reaches of the Spanish empire on their journey to Spain. Planting began in 1792 and the garden remains to this day a focus for botanical study and conservation. However, as you might expect, the original plan of acclimatising plants for life in Spain didn't work out as the climate in and around Madrid is never going to support tropical planting. The botanic gardens hold an important collection of tropical and sub-tropical plants, not native to The Canaries. The natural flora of Tenerife is fascinating (but a bit limited in February) as the combination of Mt Teide, at 3700m often snowcapped, and the Trade Winds create on Tenerife a remarkably diverse climate. The north of the island, which includes Puerto de la Cruz, is humid and mild and the south is arid, more sunny and hotter. The native plant life reflects this diversity.

Back to the gardens. The gardens are laid out in a series of interconnected rectangles defined by quite narrow paths forming four quadrants around a central pond. A recent extension to the south east connects to a more elaborate pond area. When we arrived the daily watering had commenced so dodging the cascade from a hose of fire engine proportions occupied the first 30 minutes or so.

The gardens note their collection of palms, bromeliads, arums, and mulberries as being of particular interest and with the site being 250 years in existence some specimens are of noteworthy size and age. It is a remarkable collection, albeit not hardy plants as we would know them but they obviously are hardy in a Canarian sense. The plants are clearly labelled and an online catalogue helps you locate specimens of interest. The absence of tea rooms and gift shop is welcome – there are plenty of eateries in the vicinity – just come for the plants! and at only €3 admission, remarkable value.



**Don Alonso de Nava-Grimon ,  
founder of the gardens**



## Some plants from the gardens



Clockwise from above:

*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* ubiquitous in the Canaries, *Ixora coccinea* a native of Sri Lanka, *Elaeis guineensis* from West Africa, *Roldana petasitis* from Mexico which would survive down to  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$ . *Crinum x amabile*, a horticultural hybrid of an Indian native and *Calliandra ematocephala* from Bolivia which also had a white form in flower.









**Page 18 Clockwise from top left.** This fantastic *Aloe castanea* from S. Africa would be happy outside for us in the summer (rated H2). This specimen was 2m tall. There were many palms to look at, *Encephalartos kisambo* from Kenya,, *Saribus rotundifolius* a common enough house plant., *Brahea aculeata* from Mexico and *Lepidozamia peroffskyana* from Australia.

If the gardens have a star plant it is the one pictured below. Planted in the 1870's this Lord Howe Fig (*Ficus macrophylla* f. *columnaris*) from the Lord Howe Islands off Australia is a single tree with a central trunk surrounded by adventitious roots.

**Bottom left** is *Dracaena draco* or Dragon Tree a Canarian native now sadly very rare in the wild (pictured on the sea front) and **bottom right**, *Stiffia chrysantha* a shrub from Brazil..





# An Everlasting Bouquet

Tricia Fraser

Last November our son, knowing I liked flowers and gardening, asked me if I'd like a Lego flower kit for Christmas – something I didn't know existed. A quick search online showed me what he was talking about so I thought I'd give them a try. He bought me the 'Wildflower Bouquet' kit (for ages 18+ of course), which I enjoyed making after Christmas.

The set contained cow parsley, Welsh poppies, lavender, blue and white flowered cornflowers, lupins, gerberas, larkspur and a few fern leaves for foliage. Being Lego, the kit instructions were very clear and each flower was straightforward to make. The pieces are often very small and it did sometimes hurt my fingers trying to get everything in place, but



the results were very satisfying. It now graces our living room and I guess the only thing I need to do is to dust it occasionally!

Lego has reused pieces from other sets for parts of these flowers – the lupin flowers were originally pirate hats from mini pirate figures – but pink and purple rather than black. The ray florets of the Gerbera daisies are actually minifigure oars and the palm leaf elements used for the ferns were originally part of the Lego pirates' kits from the 1990s. It was definitely a different and enjoyable Christmas present, and the Lego website has lots more similar themed flowers, pot plants and garden themed sets so I may be asking for more when my Birthday comes around!



# New Zealand, Plants, People and Gardens

Rob Potterton of Potterton's Nursery <https://www.pottertons.co.uk> spoke to us in February on his travels in New Zealand. The talk was dedicated to his friend and alpine enthusiast Steve Newall who had organised much of Rob and Jackie's 2019 trip to The South Island.

The trip was part holiday, part botanising and large part delivering eleven talks to branches of the NZ Alpine Garden Society. In the course of an hour or so we had a tour of the private gardens of the people he stayed with and the plants he saw in the wild as he toured. New Zealand is a big place (slightly larger than the UK and twice as long) so there is considerable variation in climate. A bit like England, where the Pennines generate a rain-shadow in the east from the prevailing westerlies, the Southern Alps effect rainfall with up to 3 ½ meters to the west and as low as 30cm per year in some easterly locations. The takeaway being you

need to know where in the country a plant originates before siting it in your garden or alpine house. There were *Aciphylla*'s. In particular, *Aciphylla aurea*, or golden spear grass, a spikey green clump of a plant with flower stems up to 250cms which the story goes have been alleged to spear falling sheep – although I think sheep are probably wise to it. *Celmisia spectabilis*, has long leathery partially shiny leaves densely covered with daisy like flowers on long stems. The flowers are white with yellow central florets and are quite wide at about 3cms. The spear grass likes it well drained the clemisia likes it damp.

We heard that many flowers of native New Zealand plants are white. There is a history of coevolution between plants and insects and New Zealand lacks the butterflies and long tongued bees which prefer coloured flowers, with native species being more attracted by scent than colour, coloured flowers offer no breeding advantage.



Top: *Aciphylla aurea* in Hooker Valley Mt Cook, Canterbury (New Zealand) © Krzysztof Ziarnik  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aciphylla\\_aurea\\_kz13.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aciphylla_aurea_kz13.jpg)

Bottom: *Celmisia spectabilis* © Dun Holm  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Celmisia\\_spectabilis\\_DUBG\\_2009-06-03.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Celmisia_spectabilis_DUBG_2009-06-03.jpg)



## New Zealand, Plants, People and Gardens - continued

The Pottertons were hosted by members of the various societies they spoke to so we saw quite a lot of pictures of private gardens. It was noticeable how many gardens contained European and American plants with few featuring NZ natives. However if we reflect on our gardens and the number of English natives we feature, maybe not so surprising.

At several points Rob mentioned his favourite plant which is, not surpassingly, a South Island native, *Ranunculus crithmifolius*. A flattened rosette of grey green kidney shaped leaves with and open bright yellow upright flowers about 2cm wide on on stout 8cm stems. You can read more about it here <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-crithmifolius/>. Rob sent the photograph below for this article.

By coincidence we saw the fields of *Lupinus polphyllus*, an 20<sup>th</sup> century garden introduction now gone quite native, which Don Witton also showed us in January. Although it is an invasive nuisance it certainly made for an impressive splash I hope Rob will return to tell us more about his New Zealand journey.



Top: *Ranunculus crithmifolius* © Rob Potterton

Bottom : *Lupinus polyphyllus*, known as Russell lupin in New Zealand, alongside State Highway 8 in the Canterbury region. © Alan Liefing

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russell\\_lupins\\_Canterbury\\_New\\_Zealand.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russell_lupins_Canterbury_New_Zealand.jpg)



# Dunham Massey

Dunham Massey is a National Trust property near Altrincham, South Manchester.

Not uncommonly, as an estate it can be traced back to the Domesday Book, then owned by the Massey family and it remains a farmed estate with an extensive deer park. Horticulturally, it is perhaps unfairly

in the shadow of its more famous neighbour, Tatton. The estate passed through two major families in English history. First the Booths, who became Earls when the Crown was Restored after backing the Royalist cause during the Civil War. It was this family who built the current house and laid out a lot of the grounds we now see. The estate passed to the Stamford family in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The 10<sup>th</sup> and final Earl Stamford inherited his title at the age of thirteen in 1917. He died unmarried in 1976 and bequeathed the estate to the National Trust and the title died with him.

Unusually for the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the estate was actually expanded by the 10<sup>th</sup> Earl. He was politically active and it is said he used his connections during WWII to have the deer park spared from tree-felling for fuel. Since the National Trust took over the property, an extensive winter garden has been developed. However it is a 'good day out' at any time of the year and in the top ten National Trust properties for visitors. The high water table and acid soil favours rhododendrons, camelias (in the Spring) and hydrangeas and cardiocrinums in the Summer/Autumn.



**Not Dunham Massey house but a good nearby pub**







Purple Toothwort



Unnamed Trillium

The Historic and Botanic Garden Training Programme say about the garden *'The 30 acre garden conveys the pristine flavour of a Victorian pleasure ground, but one founded on a late 18th century layout of meandering lawns and shrubberies, and including some formal Edwardian touches and inspired contemporary planting. Particular historical features include an Elizabethan mount, an 18th century orangery and a bark house and pump house. ... Serpentine paths lead between borders thickly planted for texture and colour. The bog garden takes advantage of the unusual opportunities of the site. The woodlands are planted with ... azaleas, cardiocrinums and hydrangeas. There are more unusual trees in the extensive lawns. Summer colour is provided by herbaceous borders, bedding schemes, vegetable beds and a large rose garden. The result is a potent cross section of historical and modern styles maintained to an extremely high standard by the National Trust, making it one of the North's great gardens.*

If you're feeling peckish 'The Swan with Two Nicks is a short walk away and ideal for lunch and a nice beer.

Links <https://hbgtp.org.uk/?gardens=dunham-massey>  
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/cheshire-greater-manchester/dunham-massey>









# The Unbelievable Umbels aka The Awesome Apiaceae

Dr Andrew Ward spoke to us in March on umbriferous plants presenting for the first time a new talk he has developed. His nursery, Norwell, holds the National Collection of *Astrantias* and they featured in his talk but certainly not to the exclusion of many others from this large group of hardy plants, some 3800 species.

Umbelliferae, is a family of mostly aromatic flowering plants with the distinctive feature of compound flowers in umbrella-like clusters called umbels. Carrots, cow parsley and dill are common examples. He started by sharing one of his favourites,

*Cenolophium denudatum* or Baltic Parsley, with creamy white flowers and fern-like foliage. Many members

of the family are yellows and whites but *Daucus carota* 'Dara' has flowers which vary from pinks through to deep maroon.



Umbelliferae vary in height from a few centimetres to a couple of meters. Although the family contains edibles like carrots, dill and coriander it also contains some toxic species

such as giant hogweed, hemlock and spotted cowbane.

Although the general form of the inflorescence is umbrella shaped, in close-up the flowers take different habits from the quite densely packed like *Astrantia* to more open forms like *Orlaya grandiflora* with flowers described as sparkling and lacy and not unlike lace-cap hydrangeas.

The foliage is often attractive and fern-like and in the case of *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Going for Gold' a bright golden yellow with the plant getting to 120cm.





Eryngiums featured which on first sight and indeed second and third sight more resemble thistles not cow parsley. But then thistles are in the Asteraceae family and don't particularly look like daisies. It is easy to overlook the difference between flower heads (the inflorescence) and individual flowers, concentrating on the aesthetic not the botany. In eryngiums the flowers cluster to make the cone shape and are greys and blues not yellows and whites. Andrew suggested a few 'stunning blues': *Eryngium 'Fornsett Ultra'* and *E. leavenworthii*.

Moving on to Astrantias the advice is they do well in shade so long as it isn't too dry and the darker reds lack the vigour of other colours. There is a link to a short video on Astrantia below and you could do a lot worse than line up a visit to Andrews nursery to see them for real.

The pictures on page 26 are of members eager to buy from the selection Andrew brought.

## Links

Norwell Nurseries

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

Adam's Gardening Guides, Astrantias

<https://youtu.be/2mDkroSSKng?si=umejUL33SkwepSq5>

RHS guide to Astrantias <https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/astrantia>



## **Dean Charlton, of Hootons Walled Nursery in Hooton Roberts**

spoke to us in April. We visited his nursery on a MAD visit early last year and it

seems quite a few of us have visited it since, some several times. The nursery has been created on the site of an older venture which had been there for thirty years. When that owner retired the site had become dilapidated until Glenn and Dean (father and son) took it over in 2023 and began a process of creating a very different nursery to what had been there previously. They inherited glasshouses, irrigation systems and other equipment from the earlier business which was a boon. Glenn and Dean have a ten year lease on the four acre site from the Fitzwilliam Estate, however their plans and investment of time, vision, energy and indeed finance, clearly have a much longer horizon: he has planted oak trees, the ultimate definition of a long term vision.



Dean's studied fine arts at Newcastle and became interested in therapeutic horticulture and worked at Ouseburn Farm, a working city farm in Newcastle dedicated to helping adults with learning difficulties. Inspired by reading the books of Beth Chatto and Christopher Lloyd he applied for a short term placement at Great Dixter which became a six month placement at Beth Chatto's Garden and six years at Greta Dixter working in the gardens and in the nursery. He came back home to South Yorkshire attracted by the vibrancy of the horticultural scene in the area but also, clearly, to be closer to his family who have been active in getting the nursery going and developing it.

The mainstay of the nursery are hardy perennial plants and the stock beds show what the plant you're buying will become. As both the stock beds and the plants on sale have been propagated on site you can be sure what you buy will thrive in South Yorkshire. During the talk he took us through the cycle of propagation from seasonal cuttings through to established plants ready for sale using traditional methods. The plant list on his website runs to nine pages, well over 350 plant from *Acaena inermis* to *Viola sororia*. Obviously not everything is available all the time which gives ample excuse for repeat visits.

It is a difficult time for nurseries – proper nurseries – with the likes of Morton Nursery and Dove Cottage closing. However there are a few new startups, Dean mentioned Freckles and Flora near Thirsk and Cliff Bank between Harrogate and Otley (which is the subject of an article on page 29), both easily within day trip distance of us. Independent nurseries reflect the characters and values of the owners. Hooton's Walled Nursery is created with Dean's interest in the Arts and Crafts style evident. The nursery logo (page 27) is a stylised image of wild garlic. He celebrates English folk traditions at the nursery. A Wassail in January around the ancient pear trees which are an outstanding feature of the nursery also Morris dancing and long sword dancing; a statement of his values which fixes the nursery at the centre of the community. These activities along with offering educational courses are what go towards making a viable business. Having benefited from the training he received at Dixter and Beth Chatto he clearly has a passion for sharing knowledge formally and informally and has an ambition to establish a scholarship programme at the nursery. Details of the courses he already offers are on his website..

## Links

Hooton's Walled Nursery <https://www.hootonswallednursery.co.uk/>

Ouseburn Farm <https://www.ouseburnfarm.org.uk/>

Beth Chatto Gardens <https://www.bethchatto.co.uk/>

Great Dixter <https://www.greatdixter.co.uk/>

Freckles and Flora <https://www.frecklesandflora.co.uk/>





# Cliff Bank Nursery

Niall Clarke



Cliff Bank is a relatively new nursery which, as Dean Charlton spoke about in his talk to us in April, is a rare and valuable thing and what lovers of hardy plants should support enthusiastically. Located on the main road between Harrogate and Otley near North Ripton (LS17 0BZ) it is certainly worth visiting, perhaps combining with a nice lunch in one of North Yorkshire's beautiful towns or a visit to RHS Harlow Carr. The video linked to their website tells the story of the nursery from a derelict site in 2022 to a nursery full of treasures when we visited at Easter. The plants are grown on site and you therefore know they will grow in this part of the world. One thing which stood out as different were trays of bare root perennials such as veronicastrums and epimediums. Being bare rooted there is no need to surreptitiously tip the plant out of the pot to check what you're getting.

In addition to the sales area, being encouraged to wander 'back stage' in the propagation area to see what is being bulked up is a treat.



We picked up a fair haul – which is listed below to indicate the variety available.

*Dianthus Elizabethan Pink*

*Anemone ranunculoides* Kreet and *A. Flaccida*

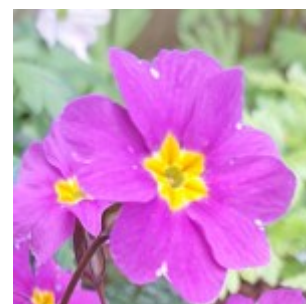
*Paris quadrifolia*

*Polyanthus "Paddy's Purple"* (right)

*Tulipa sprengeri*

Two orchids: *Dactylorhiza foliosa* and *D. purpurella*

*Xanthogalum purpurascens*





## **Anemones at Cliff Bank**

Ben Preston and Laura Kennedy, who own the nursery, have taken on the Anemone collection established by Anne Wright. Anne, who is famous for snowdrops and daffodils at Dryad Nursery, had run out of space and last year, generously, passed her collection on to Cliff Bank. The collection is in light-shade tunnels to the rear of Cliff Bank and Ben outlined his plans to conserve, display and propagate these lovely flowers. They like light shade and a moist but free draining soil and do well under trees,. A selection from the collection is pictured here which I hope illustrates the variety. A full list of stock is on their website. Ben also gives talks, so perhaps whoever takes over the role of speaker bookings from Tricia could get in touch and see if he can speak to us sometime.

### **Links**

Cliff Bank nursery <https://cliffbanknursery.co.uk/>

Their story [https://youtu.be/5p5XnOW-yTU?si= MeofIXULxbLWgrn](https://youtu.be/5p5XnOW-yTU?si=MeofIXULxbLWgrn)

Dryad Nursery <https://www.dryad-home.co.uk/>





*Anemone ranunculoides* 'Orange'



*Anemone ranunculoides* 'Kreet'



*Anemone ranunculoides* 'Virve'



*Anemone ranunculoides* 'Prees'



*Anemone ranunculoides* 'Little Star'



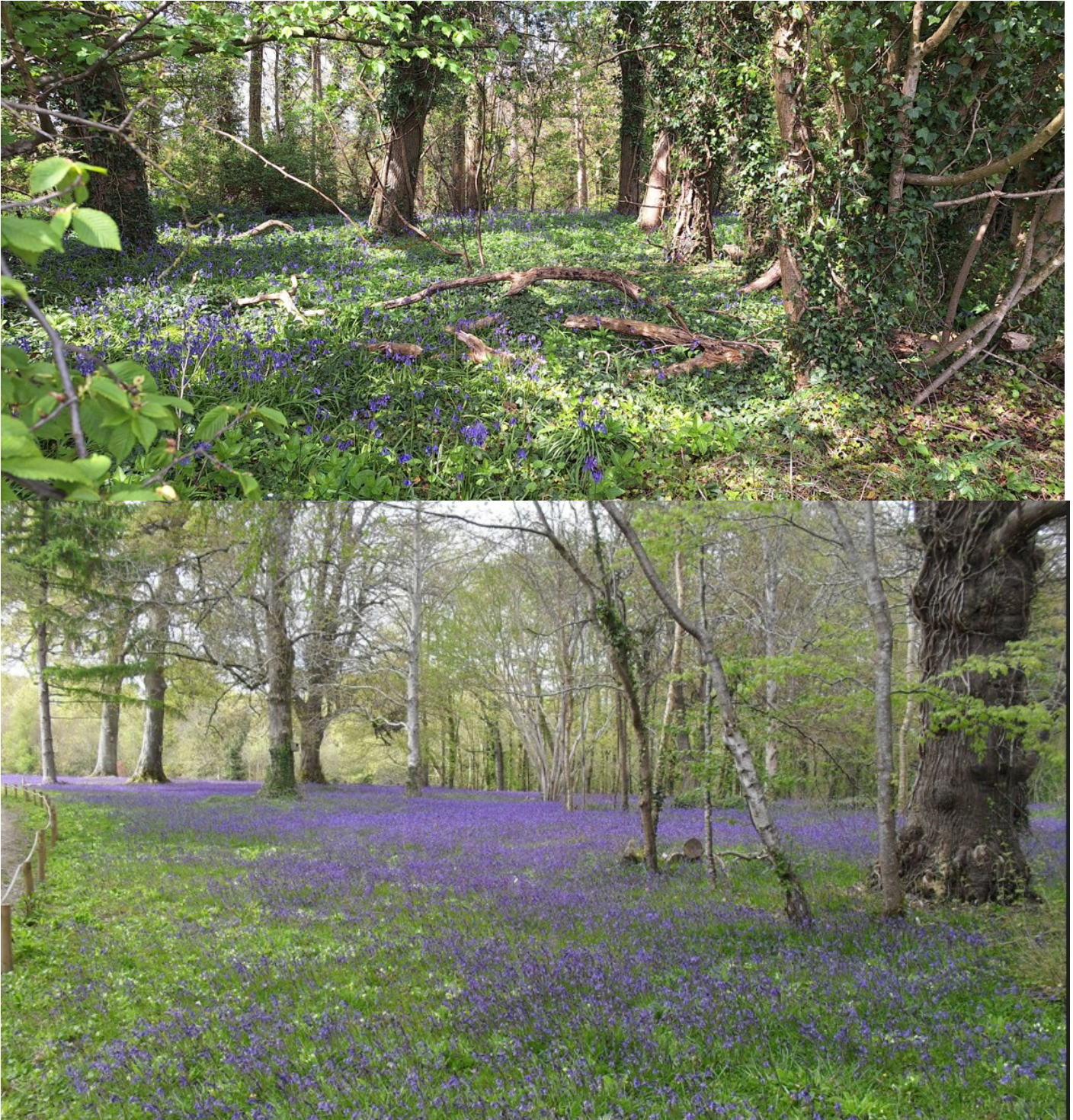
*Anemone nemorosa* 'Salt and Pepper'





# Bluebells

There are many plants evocative of spring but probably few rival the native blue bell. The top picture is from a small woodland near Netherthorpe, Worksop, taken 2026. The lower one is Enys Gardens, near Penryn in Cornwall, from 2017.



Articles for the next issue by July 1st please send them to

[sphpsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:sphpsnewsletter@gmail.com)