



Alpine Garden Society

Hampshire Group

Newsletter: September 2021



Page 1	Chairman's Message
Page 3	Autumn Programme
Page 4	In Praise of the Poppy by David Dickenson
Page 10	Lockdown Experiences by Ben Parmee
Page 13	Wiley at Wildside by Paddy Parmee
Page 16	A Glossary of Terminology Fifty Years Ago

Editor: Ange & Steve Lobley
 54 Long Copse
 Holbury
 Southampton
 SO45 2LA
lobs@mac.com
 Deadline for the next edition is
 1st January 2022

Chairman's Message

Hi everyone, my name is Malcolm Calvert and I was duly elected as your new Chairman at this year's AGM. I realise I have some big shoes to replace and will do my best. Firstly, I would like to thank Paddy Parmee for her 7 years as Chairman. Paddy is staying on the committee booking talks and looking after the social media pages. It was my pleasure to present to Paddy, on your behalf, with a gift token as a thank you for her services as Chairman. I have been Vice Chairman for a few years but kept mainly in the background. Now I cannot hide and will be at the forefront of our Group. This last 18 months have seen some trials and journeys for all of us but has enabled me to complete some long overdue alpine jobs in the garden. A few years ago I was given 3 Belfast type sinks to use as alpine planters. This year I have finally placed them in the garden and planted them up. I followed a tried and tested method, firstly ensuring the sink sloped towards the drainage hole, covering the hole with fine gauze then crocks, and a fine layer of gravel. After deciding how the rocks were going to be placed part filled with a good gritty compost mix.



Drainage



Layout

In one I added peat to ensure an acidic PH. Then after placing the plants I topped up the compost, watered and finally topped with alpine grit. I have enclosed several photographs of the processes including how the sinks have developed over the last 6 months or so. Recently I purchased another trough for shade loving plants. My 3 existing troughs are all in full sun. The majority of the plants used came from our plant sale this year brilliantly organised by Ben and Paddy Parmee.

As I write this report I am building a new area by our dry stone walled area for woodland or shade loving plants. The idea is to extend the dry stone wall area another 3-4 feet along our sideway to give additional planting space under our privet hedge.

We are trying to incorporate more alpine plants into our garden. Like many, we have murdered loads leaving them in pots too long.



Coming together

As your new Chairman I will be supporting your committee to move the Hampshire Group forwards to ensure a long and sustained future and then assisting the National Society to becoming stable and secure for generations to come. Alpine gardening seems to be getting much more media attention now so hopefully we can encourage a younger audience to ensure our society future is healthy.

If I can be of any assistance please don't hesitate to contact me or when we do restart face to face meetings come and have a chat. There's always room for new faces at Hampshire AGS.

I hope you enjoy the photographs.

Group Officers

Chairman	Malcolm Calvert	Treasurer, Hon. Group & Membership Secretary	Ben Parmee
Vice-Chairman			
Newsletter Editor's	Ange & Steve Lobley	Teas	Jackie & Mike Gurd
Committee	Dorothy Searle	Jo Whitfield	Terry Raisborough
	David Hanslow	Paddy Parmee	

2021 Autumn Programme

Dates – all Thursdays	Titles	Speakers/Venue
23rd September	<i>A remarkable flower-rich Patagonian mountain - Meseta del Lago Buenos Aires.'</i>	Martin Shearer Group member and AGS Judge and Tour Guide
28th October Zoom meeting	<i>Alpines for Everyone</i>	Jim Almond AGS official photographer
25th November	<i>"Jewels in the Rain: Walking the mountains of Arunachal Pradesh".</i>	Tim Lever Aberconwy Nursery
9th December	<i>Seasonal meeting including quiz and short presentations by members and refreshments</i>	THIS EVENT WILL BE HELD IN THE HALL

IN PRAISE OF THE POPPY

DAVID DICKENSON

naturescene.net

Some AGS members are already aware of my passion for crop field weeds, and have had a tantalising glimpse of their abundance in the Cévennes, my summer retreat in France.

Even in the modern world, we can all share the emotion of roaming through the poppy fields of Monet.



**Corn Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*)
in the Tarnon valley**



Windmill at La Parade, restored in 2018

The beauty and richness of these fields rely not just on the lack of herbicides, but centuries of traditional agricultural practices, recently at risk of disappearing.

Their chances of survival have been much augmented by the restoration of an old windmill on the Causse Méjean. The milling of old local varieties of grain, organically grown, has stoked tourist demand for specialist breads and already this is transforming the landscape back in time.

The trend had already been set by the international success of a local producer of organic sheep cheeses; this demand has reversed a massive decline of sheep grazing in the area, and revived a need for healthy untreated pasture and fodder.



The wild abandon of a hay meadow at Nîmes-le-Vieux



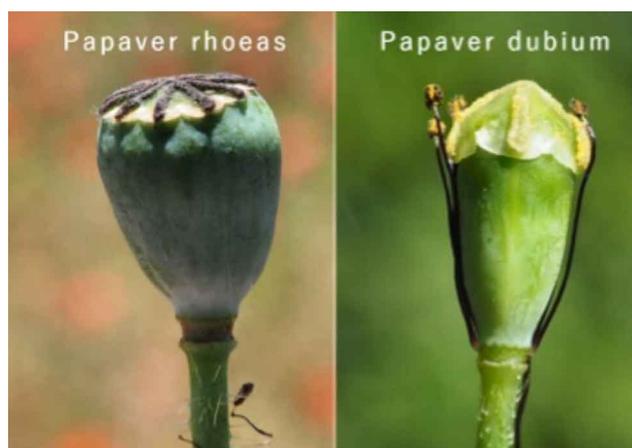
**Long-headed Poppy (*Papaver dubium*)
at Nîmes-le-Vieux**

For the technocrats amongst you, we have two main species, *Papaver dubium* and *Papaver rhoeas*, which look almost identical from afar. The line-drawings in Stace's Flora of the British Isles somewhat exaggerate the difference in length of the seed pods. Perhaps this is the English desire not to follow Europe, but even *chez nous*, this remains the clearest point of difference.

Other criteria such as petal colour, number of stigma rays and direction of pedicel hairs are variable, and only of back-up use if your companion argues the toss.

The starting point to feed my passion for these arable weeds, 'messicoles' in French, is the humble poppy.

If the poppy cannot get a look-in, neither can my crop field weeds, so my starting point is always those scarlet flashes that light up the rocky hillsides.



Breed faster than rabbits: whatever the species, expect over 10,000 seeds from a single

Whatever the species, they all make for a beautiful drift of red, with the promise of many delights within.



The steppes at Drigas, Causse Méjean

The Causse are a series of limestone plateaus at about 1000 m, with a hybrid Continental–Mediterranean climate, cold in winter, a furnace in the summer. The welcome spring rain quickly runs through into a network of caves and subterranean rivers.

This gives rise to a drought-resistant steppe-like flora, with a wide range of sub-alpine flowers.



***Triticum aestivum* var. Barbu du Rousillon**

Organic culture requires frequent rotation of crops, and farming practices such as time of sowing and harvesting. This ensures that every year will give you a fascinating change of companion plants. Don't go back to the same spot expecting to see the same plants.

Cereal crops, such as the legacy wheat 'Barbu du Rousillon' alternate with Triticale. The latter is a wheat-rye hybrid, becoming fashionable in recent years in the UK, but a key livestock grain for years for cattle and sheep locally.



Triticale (x *Triticosecale rimpaui*)

A wheat-rye hybrid, 100 m from the Lady's Slipper orchid

Legume-based crops (principally *Onobrychis viciifolia* on its own or mixed with *Trifolium incarnatum* and *Trifolium pratense*) are very common, used for fodder or grazing.



Sainfoin (*Onobrychis viciifolia*)
Nutritional and vermicidal, widely



Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*)
It's not me that named it



Crimson Clover (*Trifolium incarnatum*)
Uncommon, but making a comeback



Local honey is highly prized.

Exceptionally, in 2020, I saw a field of *Phacelia tanacetifolia* for honey-bees.

Set-aside is common; the first year often is a great year with an abundance of annuals, but this may stretch into years, with the poppies giving way to a display of long-forgotten, now rare, perennials.

On rotation, a hay meadow such as this may easily contain up to 80 species, of which 10-15 are likely to be rare or even red list species.



Cros-Garnon, Causse Méjean



Cornflower (*Cyanus segetum*)

The cornflower, so beloved of childhood, is a famous companion for the poppy,

Many English visit our area to see them, searching the under-storey for the Venus' looking-glass, with the stars of the corn-cockle towering above.

They are rarely disappointed.



Venus' looking-glass (*Legousia*)



Corncockle (*Agrostemma githago*)



The shocking yellow of the corn **marigold** (*Glebionis segetum*) can offend the eye, so it is fortunate that it is very rare on the Causse

Unknown in Lozère, finding the field larkspur in extensive drifts on the Causse Sauveterre in 2020 came as an absolute delight.

The assumption is that the seed-corn was the source of this.



Field Larkspur
(*Delphinium consolida* subsp.)



Wayside poppies can add to the beauty of any country lane across Europe, including the UK

Imported seed-corn may not be the only source of the unexpected. Seeds of messicoles can remain fertile in the soil for many years. I have myself seen several disappeared species return after the soil being worked 60 years later.

So if you see a field of poppies in England, stop and take a look. The increased interest in organic food has increased your chances. Even Covid has benefitted us, with many people making their own bread, sparking an interest in organic flours from traditional grains. Yes, herbicide free.

Lockdown Experiences by Ben Parmee

I thought I would split this article in two, firstly looking at how we as a Group managed the pandemic and secondly a few of the lockdown garden projects we undertook at Hursley Road.

Hampshire AGS in Lockdown

Well it all came to a halt after our February 2020 meeting and the Dorset Group Allendale Show in early March with the rest of our year being cancelled, including our competitions and plant sale. During the summer we discovered **Zoom** and spoke with Head Office and other groups to share best practice as to how to proceed during the 2020-21 season. Pinching the idea from groups in the North West of England we formed the **South Coast 'Bubble'** with Dorset and West Sussex Groups and between us developed a programme of Zoom lectures.

Zoom became the norm and the lectures were a great success; we were delighted that 55 Hampshire members attended one or more zoom sessions. Our talks were advertised on the AGS website and attracted a worldwide audience and for several of our talks we had an audience of well over 100; now that would have been a squash at Chilworth Hall! Thank you to David Butcher for writing the Christmas quiz, which was held virtually on zoom.

2021 didn't start well with a further lockdown; however, our programme was going from strength to strength. During the spring you entered into the 'virtual' spirit of our usual group activities, particularly the plant and photographic competitions with record numbers of entries; our thanks go to Ange and Steve Loble for organising and presenting both and to our judges, Martin Sheader and Jon Evans. All entries were beautifully presented at our virtual AGM in May.

The last main event was our plant sale, which extended throughout April. Lists of plants kindly supplied/donated by Robin and Sue White were circulated and orders taken. We hosted the collection (and a couple of deliveries) every other day during the month due to COVID regulations limiting visitors to four per day. Thanks also to a number of members who donated plants and particularly Stefan Rau who stocked us up nicely several times during the month. The weather was kind to us and we were able to open the garden for you to enjoy alongside the plant sales. A big thank you to Paddy who baked cake every other day for our visitors. The plant sale raised £700 for the Group.

Lockdown Projects at Hursley Road

Whilst we have been under restrictions for 16 months it seems like we are still not in control of the weeds! However, lots of carpentry has taken place during that time amongst other things.



First came a new boardwalk at the end of the pond to assist with the weeding with the danger of me falling in as the bank was becoming quite hazardous.

Next was the erection of trellis above the left-hand fence to accommodate all Paddy's Clematis, now covered beautifully (you can hardly see it).



In February another safety issue was resolved with the installation of a new path along the stream bank made from sleepers.



With Paddy taking over most of my veggie beds for her bulbs, we have been growing our vegetables in tubs this year with quite some success.



Lastly and courtesy of our new neighbours (a Porsche dealership, sadly no free samples!) matching trellis was erected above our right-hand fence, to give added privacy, and small area of ground was 'reclaimed' which has been planted up.



Wiley at Wildside by Paddy Parmee

Keith words about Roz

“For me personally, she was my whole life, and the love, joy, humour, friendship and companionship we shared together will be with me forever and for all that and a million and one other things, I thank her from the very, very bottom of my heart.”

These words sum up what Roz meant to Keith, the tribute garden is his way of remembering her, keeping her alive; the garden has always been a joy to visit with Keith’s wonderful planting and visions with their love of plants Wildside evolved.

I have to say what’s been done so far is amazing the building, rock pools, planting, next the waterfall it will be a wonderful place to sit and reflect ... Roz captured Wildside in her paintings which will be on display once the building is finished.

How can you not be inspired visiting here? I can’t put all the photos here but will put more on Hampshire Facebook page.

The link below tells you more than I can say here; I’d like to thank you all who gave, Keith couldn’t continue with this project if it wasn’t for the donations people give. He was thrilled and a little taken back at our generosity so thank you all once again.

There’s still much to finish, funds are not going far with the rise in building materials so if you feel you could give a little contact Ben

Keith & his friend Mike the builder do all the work themselves

We will open our garden at snowdrop time with funds going to Keith’s tribute garden

<https://wileyatwildside.com/tribute-garden/>

<https://wileyatwildside.com/about-us/>



The Garden in Flower 2021

The Ros Wiley Tribute Garden

The Proposal

For the past 15 years I have been gradually creating a landscape in what we called the 'Canyons' as a semi-natural adjunct to the garden. This was to be larger both in scale and in its range of planting than anything we had done elsewhere. I had virtually finished the shaping of the ground in 2019 and was ready to move onto the next stage of making the ponds and creating some of the planting spaces when Ros's life was cruelly cut short. Ros had been excited by the prospect of this garden from its conception and I would like to try and push on to finish this area. It will encompass water, wildlife, a seeming wilderness, vivid seasonal colour that she so effortlessly captured in her paintings, and a calming tranquillity that encapsulates many of her passions in life; so it seems apt to dedicate this part of the garden to her memory.

The Tribute Garden Site

After years and countless tonnes of earth moving, the half-acre site currently looks like this:



The Pavilions

The centrepiece of the garden will be a two-tier pavilion acting as a focal point for the whole area. The Lower Pavilion opens out facing south onto the semi-arid landscape of the watercourses and sand beds and will be a magical place to sit on sunny days listening and watching the water and wildlife.

Above and offering views in all directions—the Respite Pavilion will provide a panorama of the garden from a sheltered but elevated position. This pavilion has scope for later adaptation as an exclusive respite retreat.

On the upper level, the northern aspect will include a peaceful, covered seating area nestled into the garden and overlooking the silver birch woodland.

Impressions of the proposed pavilions are shown here.



Finally

The Ros Wiley Tribute Garden will be calming, peaceful and, at times, a flamboyant place, enclosed in a naturalistic setting. The silver birch woodland which sits comfortably on the steep shale slopes all around provide a wonderful backdrop as well as refuge for many small birds and insects. A restful wildlife haven then, but also, a uniquely glorious garden that will lift the spirits. A tribute to a very special, gifted human being and, I hope, a solace to many others.

Your support is hugely appreciated, Keith.



The Concept

One evening, two years ago, I saw a photograph in a book on South African bulbs which showed glorious flamboyant flowers growing alongside and reflected in a shallow stream. We had been several times to see these magnificent floral displays in the wild but had never witnessed the added effect that water could bring. It was an inspiration, as I realised that I could recreate a version of the South African garden that I had completed at



the Garden House (pictured here) and which I been so sad to leave behind.

It would give me a chance to plant an area to produce



the vivid colours so beloved by Ros and depicted in so many of her paintings.

This time, the new South African style garden would have a setting which was more truthful to the original but with the bonus of running water adding a new and wonderful dimension. It would be less brash than my first attempt maybe embracing elements of other areas in South Africa (as in the photo right)



The Way Ahead

I have now dug out a sinuous water course that will eventually, when complete, be so shallow and crystal clear that the stones can be seen beneath the surface. The water will be filtered and pumped up the slope where it will emerge as if from a spring, before descending through a series of pools and waterfalls. All around this watercourse



will be sand beds topped in natural stone rubble so that the plants will appear to be growing out of rock or sand as in the pictures



here of plants growing in the wild. The scree topping will ensure that the whole area remains quarry-like and natural in the colder months of the year whilst providing a counterpoint to the vibrancy of the flower during the warmer months. Ros's love of colour will be reflected with low-growing vibrant red, orange and yellow flowers set amongst calming silver sub-shrubs on the lowest areas near the water. As the slopes get steeper; the plant palette will change to incorporate taller kniphofias, dieramas, agapanthus and watsonias in pastel shades of pink, blue and soft orange; all nesting among silver-leaved shrubs. Further banks will be covered with alpine plants. There will be seats aplenty, tucked into places where the views open up for you

Why ask for financial help now?

Ros and I had hoped to complete the garden over the next few years but with Ros's passing half the workforce has been lost. I plan to continue opening the garden to visitors; however, this income will not cover the extra labour required to replace Ros and the costs to create a major new part of the garden.

What will the money be used for?

The costs of materials, plants and labour for the garden, waterways and pavilions will be around £18,000 with a similar amount required to fully finish and equip the pavilions for respite use. All donations will be allocated directly to the Ros Wiley Tribute Garden.



A selection of photo's showing work so far and garden vistas

Fifty Years Ago (September 1971) – A.G.S. Bulletin Volume 39 No. 3 p.178

**A Glossary of Terminology
from Rhinanthus, who I believe was Michael Upwood**

'Readers may be aware of the valuable work by Miss Whitehorn (of the Observer) and Mr. Frost (of nearly everything else) in redefining technical terms to meet modern standards of euphemism and hyperbole. Feeling that the time now come for a more realistic interpretation of terms misleadingly applied by Nurserymen¹ and Experts² to alpine plants, I humbly offer a few definitions of my own.'

As a very inexperienced alpine gardener and with tongue-in-cheek, I offer some of my own definitions or comments. Janice Bennetts

A Glossary of Terminology	'Rhinanthus definitions'	My definitions
<i>Hardy</i>	– one can grow it	- it depends what it is – high altitude alpine plants e.g. <i>Ranunculus alpestris</i> would be difficult to grow in Hampshire
<i>Fully Hardy</i>	– one can grow it in Cornwall	- unlikely, writing as a Cornishwoman
<i>Usually hardy</i>	– one can't grow it, even in Cornwall	- very unlikely, for reason above
<i>Dislikes autumnal damp</i>	– forget it	- certainly wouldn't grow in Cornwall
<i>Rather shy-flowering</i>	- it once produced a bud in late November	- <i>Clematis rehderiana</i> bought in 2006, flowered for the 1 st time in October 2020!
<i>Limited flowering season</i>	– I was away for the weekend when the flower opened	- forgot to look in the greenhouse at lunchtime when <i>Morea simulans</i> flowered!
<i>Free-flowering</i>	– I spent the crucial weekend at home	- <i>Papaver nudicaule</i> , very free-flowering, free seeding and deep rooted!
<i>Flowers at a useful time</i>	– when all sensible gardeners go on holiday	- when is a useful time for gardeners to go on holiday if they have no backup assistance - November?
<i>Useful foliage plant</i>	– never flowers	- flowers are hidden, and you don't realise how invasive it is e.g. <i>Asarum europeum</i>
<i>Good ground-cover</i>	– something one can grow	- <i>Leptinella squalida</i> 'Platts Black' – suppresses weeds and everything else.
<i>Short-lived perennial, with an engaging habit of seeding itself</i>	– a flaming nuisance	- <i>Aquilegia betoniola</i> is certainly short-lived and the seeds rarely come true to the parent, and can seed all over the rock garden.
<i>Dies down for the winter</i>	– optimism	- never reappears
<i>Not invasive</i>	– optimism	- <i>Anomatheca laxa</i> (False freesia) if it is happy, make sure you whip off the seed capsules after flowering or else it will take over!
<i>Propagate from cuttings</i>	– buy another one	- buy it from Stefan Rau
<i>Propagate from seed</i>	– long-term planners only	- get one from Paddy & Ben's Open garden days sales
<i>Propagate from leaf-cuttings</i>	– they must be joking, I can't even grow well-established ramondas.	- no need to, as Vic Aspland (Birmingham AGS) kindly showed me how to extract a cutting from a congested ramonda plant – it had previously been very wet.
<i>A surprising variety of forms</i>	– won't come true from seed	- can be a positive advantage – although one has to be patient
<i>Comes true from seed</i>	– only the present undistinguished form available	- forgot the seed was from an F ¹ hybrid plant
<i>Likes cool deep root-run</i>	– makes rock garden uninhabitable	- watch out for <i>Oxalis latifolia</i> , has deep roots and runs ...difficult to get rid of
<i>Prefers a well-drained, mild site</i>	– will not grow in Britain	- will climate change make a difference?

¹Nurseymen – one who is in it for the money and thus cannot afford to lose plants (or customers)

²Expert – one who is in it for the kudos, and whose stories (and plants) are likely to be framed.