

Barham & District Horticultural Society Annual Report for 2021.

Chair Report

Firstly, Happy New Year. Last year was obviously different for all of us. We started the year with virtual talks to keep some of our planned activity available to members. Liz Dallison wrote to us with regular newsletters, keeping us abreast of as much information as possible. Eventually we resumed in person, with the Autumn show, quickly followed by an accomplished talk by Chris Beardshaw. We had hoped to host the AGM in the village hall on 12th January, but we will host it via Zoom to deal with voting on the new committee members. A link to join the meeting will be e-mailed to you. An increase in subscriptions is now required for several reasons. They have remained static for a good number of years which does not cover an increase in operating costs. Our speakers all charge mileage, as one example. We wish to plant a flowering cherry tree in the picnic area within the recreation ground to add shade and interest. This will mark our **125th Anniversary**, delayed from 2020. Yes, we were established in 1895. We also want to plant a strong specimen Oak tree as a dedication to our previous President Brigadier Maurice Atherton. He and his wife Wendi have contributed significantly to the society and the village community, for a considerable number of years. Last year we did not collect any subscriptions at all and met the cost of the virtual talks and Summer Show without any financial contributions aside from monies raised from plant sales, created, and organised by Richard Borthwick, Jan Borgioli and Carolyn Manley. The new fees are £7 per individual or £14 per household.

We are very proud of the Planter subcommittee, headed by Carolyn Manley, with the help of Pauline Lewis and Carolyn Hunt. Their activity (with community helpers when requested) achieved a new larger planter and replanted the old planters to give more colour. These are situated in front of Fox Way along Valley Road. The planter created last year in front of The Shrubbery was a very abundant display during the summer. All planters have been planted up with new bulbs ready for the Spring. We received a significant donation from the Kent Community Fund, which was supported by Wendi Atherton. As part of our fund raising, we established a need for a constitution document. We opened a new account to keep the planter funds separate from the main horticultural account. The accounts are audited to include both bank accounts. Please see our Treasurer's report prepared by our Treasurer Andrew Clough, alongside our audited accounts. I would like to thank Richard Calderwood for the audit, on behalf of the society. We remain affiliated members of the RHS and The Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies.

This year I have moved out of the village, so I have decided not to stand as Chair for 2022. Whilst we wait to find a new Chair, we have structured the year ahead with a full programme and set out regular meetings to manage our calendar of activity and plans for the following year. Please do make suggestions for any trips, talks or activities you think of interest to our members. Following the retirement of Jill Terry, Helen Croft kindly agreed to source and arrange all our talks for this forthcoming year. Helen has set out below a summary for you to read. She has a broad knowledge of horticulture and has chosen a strong selection of speakers for us to enjoy. Jean Carus has arranged two trips, and details are also set out below.

The Autumn Show schedule and programme has been prepared by our Show secretary Jan and her husband Tony Borgioli. This is available now when you pay your subscriptions. We also have your membership cards, which you need to claim your membership discount with some of our advertisers. Please make the effort to collect these on 12th Feb 2022 from the foyer in Barham Village Hall (BVH), being manned by our committee. If you have paid via our bank account, this is the ideal opportunity to collect the programme and membership card. Between the hours of 10.30am and 12.30pm has been agreed.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all the committee who have worked so hard to keep things going during what has been a frustrating time, in terms of planning and organising, and then cancelling so much activity. I have felt so supported and part of a dedicated team who do a wonderful job running our society. It has been a great honour and a pleasure to do this role. We are now looking to find someone new to become the next Chair. In line with our proposals for tree planting I would like to include the following report by Cllr. Carolyn Hunt from Barham Parish Council. This was originally proposed as a short presentation to be held at the AGM in the village hall.

As with all content in the report we welcome any feedback, for example, if you require clarification, want to make suggestions, corrections, or add new ideas to be considered. Please do get in touch by telephone or the email address enquiries@barhamhortsoc.co.uk

REPORT BY BARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Barham Parish Council have initiated a project under the 2022 Queen's Green Canopy initiative as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. There are two areas currently under consideration for tree planting within the Brickfield Recreation Ground

1. **The Picnic and Play/Family area;** the aim is to enhance the environment for the purpose it was set out i.e., as a safe area for families to play and picnic. This area currently hosts two picnic tables immediately inside the gate, a zip wire and two donated trees planted in spring 2021 at the Rabbit Hole end of the grounds. The area currently lacks any aesthetic appeal or shade and so tends not to be utilised as intended. By adding a further fence line to enclose the picnic area further along with several trees planted in each corner, hedging along the fence lines, and moving the picnic tables away from the entrance, the aim is to make this an attractive enclosed green space for the recreational use intended.
2. **The un-mown/rough area in the main area of the grounds;** there is an opportunity to introduce a larger wooded area with paths/avenues or clusters of trees on the Gravel Castle Road side of this area. This would enhance wildlife and make the area of more interest for those using the area for walking for example. As there are orchids located in this area, a survey together with the Kent Wildlife Trust (or similar) will take place first to ensure the current flora and fauna would not be adversely affected

The Men of The Trees have been engaged to advise and support on the provision of trees as they have in the past for other green spaces across the Parish. The Parish will also be

consulted on these proposals and support will be sought for individuals and groups to get involved.

Sincere thanks to Tim Bines in providing invaluable input to the initial project outline. If any member of B&DHS would like to take part in this project, please contact Councillor Carolyn Hunt at carolyn.hunt@barhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

President's Address

My first remark is to thank the committee for maintaining a range of the Society's activities over the year under the excellent Chairmanship of Sue Strange. It would be all too easy given the Covid pandemic to shut up shop and promise to reopen at some future date. All of us should be grateful for the programme that has been delivered in a Covid safe way in the past year. This has not just involved our usual programme but also new initiatives like the installation and maintenance of planters which have started a programme to make Barham more attractive for all and could be extended.

In a similar vein thanks to the hard work of the committee the forward programme for 2022 offers members a range of activities to join in and enjoy whilst maintaining their interest in all things horticultural and staying safe. I do encourage all members to participate as fully as possible in the programme and not be shy in coming forward with new suggestions and ideas.

We had hoped to be celebrating our 125th Birthday in 2020 and we have at last managed a small celebratory talk by the well-known TV gardener Chris Beardshaw which attending members greatly enjoyed.

I hope in the coming year we can plant a tree to commemorate Brigadier Atherton our former long-standing president and contribute to other tree planting to help with the Queen's Green Canopy "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee" initiative.

The development this coming year of a smarter subscription payment option should help not just members to pay their subscription but also provide the Treasurer and Membership Secretary with easier accounting. I look forward to its seamless functioning!

The strength of the Society is in its membership and the more members we have the more we can do so I do encourage all members again this year to seek out new members – it would be fantastic if each member could find another to join!

Finally, I must pay my personal tribute to Sue Strange who took over from me as Chair in 2019 and has decided to step down at this year's AGM. She has provided the Society with energy and enthusiasm and her thoughtful leadership will be greatly missed.

This means that we are looking for a new Chair so if anyone would like to step forward, I would be only too pleased to discuss what is involved to help make a decision.

Treasurer's report 2021

This year we did not collect a subscription as we had so few expenses last year, due to Covid.

Also due to Covid, we had no income from the Summer Show, as we decided to reduce risk of infection and not hold a raffle or charge for entries. We also decided not to give out prize monies.

The one outing to Godinton paid for itself.

Our big talk, by Chris Beardshaw, was a worry as we feared it might make a loss as we were restricted on numbers in the hall. However, by also having a raffle we managed to make a small profit.

Sale of plants was a major contributor to our income.

The small surplus for the year leaves us with a healthy balance of £2650.

We are introducing a new option for paying subscriptions this year so that if members wish to, they may make a payment direct to our bank account **by 9th February**. This will help us with our administration and there will be less handling of cash. Members may still pay with cash or cheque, but we would encourage members to pay directly to our bank account where possible. The options are:

- 1) Set up a one-off payment or an annual standing order payable to Barham & District Horticultural Society; see earlier in this report re the proposed membership fee for 2022. The payment can be set up via online banking or by sending a signed instruction to your bank.
- 2) Make a one-off payment or set up a standing order at a branch of your bank.
- 3) Pay by cash or cheque direct to a committee member. The AGM will not be held at the hall this year due to concerns over Covid. Currently we have a talk planned for **9th February** and if we can go ahead with this at Barham Village Hall (BVH) subscriptions can be paid at the meeting. If the talk must be postponed or becomes an online event due to Covid the committee members will be available in the foyer at BVH to hand out membership cards and programmes and collect subscriptions **on 12th February** between 10.30am and 12.30pm.

To make a direct payment the Society's bank account, the details are:

Account name: Barham & District Horticultural Society (this is a business account with Santander bank)

Account number: 25029707
Sort Code: 09-01-52
Reference: Surname(s) and initial(s)

Payment for the 2022 membership year should be made on or before **9th February**.

If you are a new member, please submit the membership application form available at www.barhamhortsoc.co.uk before making your payment.

Proposed Talks & Event

Sophie Leathart – Talk – Growing Flowers for Cutting – 9th February 2022 – BHV

Sophie Leathart has been a freelance florist for 30 years. She trained at Moyses Stevens in London working at The Inn on the Park Hotel and the Claremont Club.

She now grows plants and runs a cutting garden.

She helped set up the Cayeux Iris display at the Chelsea Flower Show in 2016, where we won a gold medal and in 2017 took on the job of setting up the Cayeux Iris display for Chelsea and they managed to secure a second Gold Medal.

At the end of the talk Sophie is going to give a demonstration on arranging flowers without using floral foam (oasis). We thought this may be helpful with the floral art/decoration class in the horticultural show and a move towards sustainable floristry.

Susan Scrivens – Talk – The Scented Garden throughout the Year – 8th March – Kingston Barn KB

Susan spoke to the Society a few years ago and her talk was well received. This time she is coming to talk to us about some of the scented plants in the garden that you can enjoy throughout the year.

Barry Newman - Talk – The Modern Kitchen Garden – 13th April 2022 – BVH

Barry was booked in 2020 to come along and give us a talk which was cancelled due to the covid lockdown. He has been rebooked to come along to us and speak on the same subject, the Modern Kitchen Garden. It is a general talk in three parts, covering the traditional approach to growing vegetables, container growing and raised bed cultivation which he regards as the modern way ahead for those wishing to grow for the table.

Barry is a grower, exhibitor, lecturer, and judge. Also, a member of the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Fruit Vegetable and Herb Committee and a former chairman of the National

Vegetable Society (NVS). He serves on the judging and lecturing panel of the RHS as well as a senior NVS judge and Britain in Bloom judge.

Philip Oostenbrink – Talk – Walmer Castle Gardens – 10th May 2022 – KB

Philip is Head Gardener of Walmer Castle Gardens having taken over in 2020, previously Head Gardener at Canterbury Cathedral Gardens. He will be talking to us about his new role and the gardens at Walmer Castle.

He is also the holder of four National Collections: Aspidistra, Ophiopogon, Hakonechloa and variegated Convallaria. In October 2021 his book on The Jungle Garden was published.

Social Evening – 13th July 2022 – BVH

A social evening to replace the missed social part of the AGM in January 2022. An opportunity for a glass of wine and chat, possibly a quiz, and advice on exhibiting at the Society's show in September.

Colin Moat – Talk – 50 Grey Shades of Grey – 12 October 2022 – BVH

Often shade is considered a problem and Colin aims to show that it is an opportunity to grow a wide range of interesting plants.

He runs Pineview Nursery with his wife which is approaching its twenty fifth year. They offer a wide range of herbaceous perennial. The wide range primarily reflects plants that they believe to be of outstanding merit, with leanings towards shade loving plants. These include many ferns, and a huge range of Epimediums. They also have collections of Sanguisorba, Thalictrum, Persicaria, Anemone nemerosa, Eranthis many others!

Alison Marsden -Talk – Gardening for Well-being – 9th November – BVH

Alison has a wealth of gardening knowledge built over 20 years. She is based in Tunbridge Wells and founder of Garden by Design. She has been teaching since 2011.

Gardening for Wellbeing: Over the last few years and particularly through the restrictions of the pandemic many more people have discovered what gardeners have known all along – that gardening is good for mind, body, and soul, despite the occasional aches, pains, and frustrations. This talk looks at how gardens, gardening and green spaces can be used to support mental wellbeing in many ways beyond the image of a “calm retreat” so popular with the media, both at home and in more formal garden therapy projects.

Alison spoke to the Society in 2006.

Proposed trips for 2022

Our first trip is to **Walmer Castle Gardens on 18th May** when the azaleas & rhododendrons should be in full bloom. The gardens cover 8 acres with magnificent sea views.

A tour, hopefully with Philip Oostenbrink, the head gardener (depending on his Chelsea commitments) will be followed by refreshments.

We are asking you to arrange your own transport & the cost is £20 per person/ £10 for English Heritage members.

Our second trip is to **RHS Wisley on Tuesday 5th July** giving you a whole day to explore at your leisure. Newer highlights include The Welcome Building, The Well Being Garden, Wildlife Garden & RHS Hilltop.

This trip is by coach, leaving BVH at 8am at a cost of £15 per person.

We all look forward to seeing you during the coming year.