



## Hardy Plant Society Northamptonshire Group

# NEWSLETTER

### EDITORIAL

Dear Members,

This newsletter is being circulated principally to reach out to the members for whom we do not hold an email address. Your committee are very aware that we have not been in touch since the beginning of the year and, as we come out of Lockdown 3 and the successful vaccination programme progresses, we can perhaps look forward to meeting later this year.



*Spring is here in the Ryder's garden!*

We have now held four meetings on Zoom including, earlier this month, our AGM, with nearly fifty members listening in. Sadly, despite offers of assistance to get to grips with Zoom, our audience is not growing. About the same number again have the facility to Zoom but choose not to. More verbal arm-twisting later on!

**Extra Meeting:** You will notice from the programme over the page that we have an extra meeting in May, as there is no Plant Fair on the early Spring Bank Holiday, and that, and our June meeting, will be on Zoom.

I am very grateful to our Chairman, Anna, who has been busy in her garden and has created a 'blog' of the first, rather wet, three months of 2021 in her garden.

I have had two tasks imposed upon me this last month. Firstly, BT announced they were withdrawing support for community websites so I have created a new website which I think is a great improvement. It is also viewable on your smartphone! The Garden Visit and Coach Trip pages are still under development but do have a look at

[www.hpsnorthants.webador.co.uk](http://www.hpsnorthants.webador.co.uk)

At the same time, I experienced problems with Microsoft Outlook and had to abandon it for Mozilla Thunderbird. This has meant recreating the mailing groups that are used to distribute this newsletter. Hopefully I have not made any mistakes or omitted anybody.

There is possibly going to be a plant fair at Holdenby this year. More about that later in the newsletter.



*Not a flower, just a leaf, but just thinking of all the Rhubarb Crumble to come at Ryder's Cottage!*

The Editor on behalf of Your Committee

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*Pulmonaria in the Editor's garden.*

## 2021 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

Unless otherwise indicated all meetings are held at the Moulton Community Centre, Reedings, Sandy Hill Lane, Moulton NN3 7AX commencing at 2pm except for the October meeting which will commence at 2.30pm.

**3<sup>rd</sup> April 2021 on Zoom**

Dr Andrew Ward of Norwell Nurseries –  
'Gardening in a Changing Climate'

**1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 on Zoom EXTRA MEETING!**

Joe Whitehead – Burghley Head Gardener -  
The Burghley Walled Garden

**5<sup>th</sup> June 2021 on Zoom**

Graham Spencer of Plants for Europe –  
subject to be announced

**4<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

Darren Rudge 'The Laughing Gardener' –  
'Sustainability in Your Garden'

**2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021**

**Please note this meeting will start at 2.30pm**

Samantha Hopes of Hopes Garden Plants –  
'Journey into Horticulture'

**6<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

Simon White of Peter Beales Roses –  
'Highlights of Chelsea and Hampton Court'

**4<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

Paul Barney of Edulis Nursery –  
'Plant Hunting in Manipur'

### NORWELL NURSERIES

Woodhouse Road, Norwell, Newark, Nottinghamshire  
NG23 6JX  
01636 636337  
[www.norwellnurseries.co.uk](http://www.norwellnurseries.co.uk)

### PLANTS FOR EUROPE

Representing the interest of the raisers of new plants in the EU  
[www.plantsforeurope.co.uk](http://www.plantsforeurope.co.uk)

### DARREN RUDGE

Darren Rudge, also known as 'The Laughing Gardener', has been a BBC Radio presenter for over 15 years.  
[www.darrenrudge.co.uk](http://www.darrenrudge.co.uk)

### HOPES GARDEN PLANTS

Halesowen, West Midlands  
01384 413070

We propagate a range of plants from our garden and plant collections, some are reliable border staples, while others are rare jewels.

[www.hopesgardenplants.co.uk](http://www.hopesgardenplants.co.uk)

### PETER BEALES ROSES

London Road, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 1AY  
01953 454707

The gardens, plant centre and shop are open Monday to Saturday 9am to 5pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays 10am to 4pm. Visiting at other times is by appointment.

The Rosarium Restaurant is open Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 4.30pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays 10.30am to 3.30pm.

[www.classicroses.co.uk](http://www.classicroses.co.uk)

### EDULIS NURSERY

The Walled Garden, Tidmarsh Lane, Pangbourne, RG8 8HT  
01635 578113 / 07802 812781

Founded by Paul Barney, Edulis is tucked away in a walled garden in the Thames Valley near Pangbourne.

[www.edulis.co.uk](http://www.edulis.co.uk)



*Primulas in various shades welcome Spring.*

## CHAIRMAN'S 'BLOG'

### Welcome 2021!

**New year, new hopes!** January named from the Roman god Janus, who is represented with two faces looking in opposite directions - as retrospective to the past, and prospective to, the coming year. Shall we just look forward?

Not much going on in the garden, just the earliest Aconites and a few snowdrops.

**"February fill Dyke"** Living up to its name, anyone gardening on clay will be familiar with these scenes.



The remarkable snowdrops always help to lift your spirits, almost flat to the ground after a hard frost, springing back upright as the weather brightens.

### **"March, hack ham, comes in like a lion, goes out like a lamb"**

**St David's Day.** After several cold nights with brilliant sunshine during the day we have reverted to almost ground frost and thick fog this morning.

Monday is my early start, early finish workday! Always good intentions and plenty of plans...first thing. Tidying one flower bed yesterday I had the bright idea of digging everything out and re-planting. Splitting chrysanthemums Posie and E H Wilson as I went, two beautiful hardy plants with a long flowering season. My terrier puppy Fudge has found the best game in any dog's world, which is wait until the Boss is kneeling, then jump on her back, not a bad trick when you get used to the sudden surprise. I must look out the collar bell she used to wear so at least I will be forewarned. So, plants lifted soil improved with council compost and hopefully some plants repositioned.

I have 4 solar powered water features, well I say features, they are to me but maybe not in the official world of water gardens. With the sun shining for most of the last few days it was the ideal time for their annual service. I cleaned them all, washed out the pump sponges, recharged the battery back-up packs, put them all back together and for the first time ever they all sprang into

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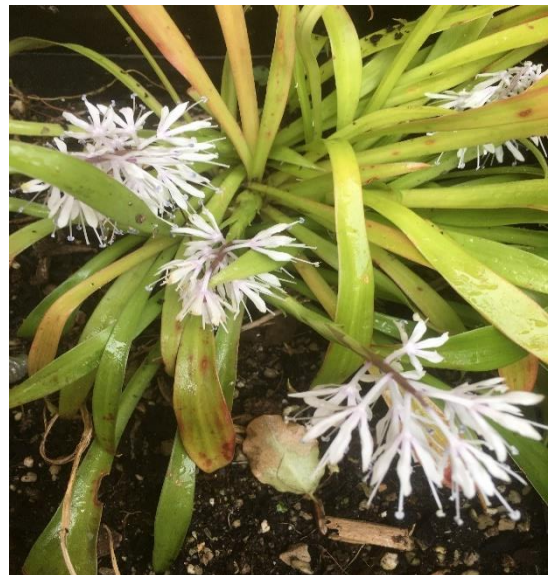
life. (I usually have one that is awkward). So a cuppa, watching the first of the bumble bees buzzing round the crocuses and a butterfly tentatively stretching its wings, it seemed like a Spring day like in every previous year. Warning on the early morning news today, though, of another COVID-19 variant.

### What is Looking good in the garden.



The brilliant red anemone has been in flower since the end of February, I'm not sure which one it is but it's a faithful splash of colour.

The white flowered **Ypsilandra thibetica** (I can spell it but can't pronounce it) forms evergreen rosettes and then in late winter to early spring beautiful stems of pale lilac flowers fading to white appear. Like a lot of early flowerers, it has the most beautiful perfume. Mine came from Norwell nurseries many years ago, so watch out for Dr Andrew Ward's Zoom presentation in April to see some of his more unusual plants.



The self set seedling of this Hellebore has such dark foliage it is a joy. The first of the early flowering Lady Smocks, **Cardamine quinquefolia** is a bit of a thug but is easy to keep in control.

Finally, a host of golden daffodils, this group of February Gold daffodils did open in the last week of February.



**“Daffy-down-Dilly comes into town, with her yellow petticoats and green gown.”**

The post has just arrived, my lovely hardy plant seeds included. I’ve received all of my first selection, which is brilliant. The propagator is already up and running,

Now where is that dog.....

Anna

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### **A Message for all Non-Zoomers**

We have only 50% attendance at our Zoom meetings to date and your Committee would love to see more of you. Actually you do not have to be seen or to say anything if you are a little shy!

If your computer is that old that it does not have speakers it should have a headphone socket you could plug headphones into.

You can also view the meeting on your smartphone.

So what is stopping you? Send an email to [hpsnorthants@gmail.com](mailto:hpsnorthants@gmail.com) with a date and time and we will help you get acquainted.

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### **COACH TRIPS**

It is hoped that we will have a programme of coach trips in 2021 similar to those that we should have had in 2020. Your Committee has asked Linda Kier to re-arrange the trips now as it will be too late when we know that we can go.

Hopefully her labours will not be in vain.

Bookings will be taken later when the trips have been confirmed as being able to go ahead.

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## PLANT FAIR

At the beginning of the year the Committee took the decision that, if there was a Plant Fair in May, we would not be involved as many of our members would not be fully vaccinated.

Since then Holdenby and Battenburg Events have announced that there will be a Home and Garden Fair on the Late Spring Bank Holiday at the end of May.

With our excellent vaccination programme (one thing about this pandemic that I think we can say the Government have got right!) it seems that the critical date of May 21<sup>st</sup> will not be postponed and the Fair will take place without us.

With the loss of our share of the income from the Fair, the stallholders' fees and also the income from our plant stall we shall have a financial loss of between £2,000-2,500 for 2021.

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## SMART PLANTS

Stuart and Anita Smart have supported our Plant Fairs over many years. Their nursery is just up the road from where we meet in Moulton.

They will be opening their nursery when they are allowed – in the meantime they can be contacted through Facebook under Smart Plants or can be emailed if you want any plants and to discover the opening hours.

Telephone: 01604 454106

For your Satnav: NN3 7JB

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

eMail: [smartplants@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:smartplants@hotmail.co.uk)

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*Pot of Iris 'Katherine Hodgekins' just blooming in my back garden. Taken by Chris Mense*

## AGM

As you will know we held our AGM on Zoom this month. Eighty-four members had returned their voting forms, all voting FOR all the motions. About fifty members were 'present' to witness the proceedings.

So it was a straight forward process to approve the minutes of the last AGM and the Treasurer's Report and Accounts for 2020.

The accounts were unaudited due to the ban on non-essential journeys, two trips to the auditor not being deemed essential. They will be audited with the 2021 accounts.

Then the Officers and Committee were re-elected without change.

Margaret Pateman had volunteered to fill the vacant place on the Committee and this was approved by all members present literally waving their acceptance.

Finally, the auditor, Roger Eddowes, was re-appointed and the AGM was closed.

The AGM was followed by the talk by Helen Picton.

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S GARDEN

At last the weather has warmed up sufficiently for me to spend more than ten minutes in the garden before my fingers shut down (I am a Reynaud's Syndrome sufferer!) and I can join Maggie who has been out trimming back everywhere ready for the Spring growth.

Our brown bin garden refuse collection has resumed and the bin, which had been full right through the winter, has been emptied and promptly refilled from the bags of trimmings. We wonder how much longer that collection will be included in our council tax now we are part of North Northamptonshire and not Wellingborough BC.

We had never been able to do much with the beds immediately around the front of the house. The house faces north-east, so they are quite shady, and the soil, as elsewhere in the garden is very thin and poor. In the rain shadow of the house they needed extra watering which always seemed to sit on top of the clay soil rather than sinking in.

Also the slabs in front of the door had become uneven and a trip hazard and we also wanted to widen the drive to save walking on the grass when getting in and out of the cars.



We engaged Mike (everyone needs a Mike!) to come and lay fresh slabs along either side of the drive and in front of the entrance to the house. He also built some raised beds from sleepers and filled them with some decent soil. (I fancied a couple more beds nearer the

road but these did not get management approval!) The beds were finished off with pavements to create a mowing edge and purple slate.

A new water butt with a proper diverter that can be accessed to remove the moss washing off the roof completed the set up.

So, more 'wooden walls' but hopefully they will be softened up in time by some trailing plants.

Once the soil had settled we planted up the beds before winter set in, hoping that the plants would get some roots down before the spring.



However, it remains to be seen how many of the plants have survived because, as with Anna's pictures of her borders, the flower beds spent much of February looking like a couple of lakes!



It may well be that what roots there were will have rotted off or the plants simply drowned. Only time will tell and we wait to see what needs replacing once the weather really warms up.

Another area of the garden that had long needed some attention was the top left-hand corner of the back garden. We have a radial pergola over a quarter-circle seating area. We had never done anything with the beds to the back of the area that were created when the pavements were laid. The soil again was very thin but had been improved over several years by the leaves falling off the ivy and pyracantha clothing the fence being left to rot away.

Slightly raised beds were created using 6" x 1" timbers. (No Mike this time – I can be quite handy when I put my mind to it – it just takes some time to apply it!)



It was important to leave a gap in the bed as this was a major entry point to our garden for hedgehogs. We put 'hedgehog highway' signs on both sides of the new fence panels (Ok, I have to confess Mike replaced the fence panels for us!) but, unfortunately, our neighbours promptly blocked the hole on their side with a bag of compost as they could see their pet rabbit escaping into our garden!



The raised beds were filled with a mixture of soil, some old potting compost and some grit to aid drainage but still, even though these beds are quite sheltered, planting was delayed as it was too wet to work.



Now we have planted one fern and a series of various hostas and we await their emergence. You will have to imagine how it will look later in the year.

We have finished it off with some more purple slate and some artistically(?) placed clay pots.

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**HARDY PLANT SOCIETY  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE GROUP**

**OFFICERS, POSTHOLDERS & COMMITTEE**

CHAIR:	Anna Smith	01455 552646
VICE-CHAIR:	to be appointed	
HON. SECRETARY:	Jan Craig	01604 740401
HON. TREASURER:	Peter Ryder	01933 279003
MEMBERSHIP SEC'Y:	Judith Roan	01604 645359
PROGRAMME SEC'Y:	Kate Brown	01604 706248
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COMMITTEE:	Beryl Brett James Chua Margaret Pateman	
PLANT FAIR		
CO-ORDINATOR:	Jan Craig	