



Home Counties AREA NEWS Autumn 2021



Message from our Chairman, Audrey Balderstone



5th September 2021

Hello everyone

Apparently, according to the Met office, the first day of Autumn 2021 will be on Wednesday, 22nd September. That means we are still in summer. Although most days in August have been very dull the sun is shining today and we are promised warmer weather over the next few days. That will be a relief!

Not all days have been dull, however. Carolyn and I spent a wonderful afternoon on 4th August with ladies from the Welwyn Club celebrating their 60+1 anniversary. The sun shone, the tables looked delightful with pretty flower arrangements and the afternoon tea was delicious. There was a beautifully decorated cake and Joyce, her committee and all the members made us most welcome.

On 18th August Geoff Fox of Watford Club organised a 'tea and cake' afternoon so that members could meet and chat before the first meeting in September. I attended as a member and also in my official capacity so that I could give the members an update on the Area and NAFAS. (I will do this again at our Council Meeting on 13th September.) Everything was arranged beautifully and the members were delighted to see and chat to each other.

In spite of a forecast of cold weather and biting winds the day for the Chairmans' Lunch turned out to be warm and bright. All 24 of us were able to sit on the patio and I did not need to issue the pashminas I had on hand in case people were too cold outside. We had a really delightful afternoon and I look forward to a similar occasion next year.

The long anticipated photoshoot for the Winter 2021 edition of *The Flower Arranger* took place on 22nd June at my home. Again, the weather was kind to us and a lot of work was prepared outside. Eight designers from Home Counties took part and they produced some beautiful designs. I hope you will all take out a subscription to the magazine so that you will be able to see Home Counties featured. The member

subscription price of £12.80 for 4 issues is very good value for money and the magazine is packed with articles, tips and photos of beautiful floral arrangements and displays.

High Leigh Conference Centre has been booked for our AGM, lunch and demonstration on November 19. Angela has already sent out details to all the clubs, so I hope as many of you as possible will attend the day. There is plenty of parking, and many seating areas, with tea and coffee available free, all day. There will be a hot two course lunch - with a choice of two dishes - served buffet style from three stations. Arnaud Metairie comes highly recommended and I am sure we are in for a treat. The coach we are providing for those from the Essex area will pick up from Thorpe Bay, Leigh and Benfleet. Do please book your seats now so that we can confirm numbers to the coach company.

Our Diamond Anniversary Celebration will have to wait until 2022, but I am sure it will be worth the wait. We have learned through the last eighteen months to be patient! A number of clubs have already met with great success. Most will be returning in September and a few will be waiting until the New Year. My best wishes go to all of you as Chairmen, committee members and club members. It is wonderful to belong to an Association such as ours which unites us through our mutual love of flowers. I hope the clubs will go from strength to strength from now on and that we will support each other in every and any way we can.

I look forward to being able to see as many of you as possible at our AGM in November and to enjoying a really good day together.

With sunny good wishes,

Audrey

TRIBUTES

It is sad to record the loss of two of our ladies who have been part of the backbone of our Area for many years.

JOAN HICKLIN was our Photography Representative from 1987 to 2014 (27 years!) and many will remember her, with her husband, taking photographs of all our events and displaying them at functions and Council meetings. She also co-ordinated, displayed and often judged entries for our Photography Competitions at Area Shows.

Joan was a former Chairman and Treasurer of St Albans Floral Arrangement Group.

CAROLE JOHNSON was a popular Area Demonstrator, Joint Area Secretary with Brenda London from 2005 to 2008, and former Chairman and Treasurer of Designer 3 Group.

Both ladies actively supported many Flower Festivals in our Area with their lovely designs.



*Home Counties Area of
NAFAS*



***AGM, Lunch
and Demonstration***

Friday 19th November 2021

at High Leigh Conference Centre,

Lord Street, Hoddesdon. EN11 8SG

Doors open 10 am

AGM at 11 am followed by Lunch

Demonstration by Arnaud Metairie at 1 pm

An Award-winning Floral designer and Demonstrator

**Stalls to browse and Complimentary Tea and Coffee
available throughout the day**

Tickets £35 may be ordered through your Club Chairman

Please apply no later than by 18th October

If possible one group application per club

Essex Clubs

The Area is providing a FREE coach from Leigh on Sea and picking up in Essex on the way. Please encourage all members to come and travel in comfort on the coach.

CELEBRATING A SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY

The first social event for the ladies of Welwyn Floral Group was held on Wednesday 4th August 2021. It marked the 60 + 1 years Anniversary of the club which is still going strong.



We celebrated at the Tewin Cricket Pavilion with a delightful afternoon tea and a beautiful cake created jointly by Alison Renshaw and Marilyn Dalglish from our club.

Thirty members attended plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Home Counties Area. The sun was shining and all the ladies had a wonderful afternoon of laughter and fun.

The club meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month (7 o'clock) at the Civic Centre, Old Welwyn Village, when we have a different professional demonstrator each month. Not only watching flower arranging but also a delightful social evening for us all. So please come along and enjoy.

Joyce Fursedonn
Chairman

* * * * *

(With thanks to Miriam Hill, President of South Stevenage Flower Club for the Design on page 1 "Equinox" staged for the National Virtual Show)

CHRISTMAS IN JUNE



It all started out so well! An email from the Editor of *The Flower Arranger* dropped into my inbox in August 2020 with an initial enquiry. Would Home Counties Area be willing to host a photoshoot for the Winter 2021 edition of *The Flower Arranger*? We felt honoured to be asked and of course said 'yes'. Covid restrictions were in place, but the Prime Minister was promising that Christmas would go ahead, so a date in December was pencilled in.

As the shoot was to be in my home the tree was bought, the house was decorated, the arrangers submitted their designs, along with costings, and bundles of blue spruce were ordered. Then came the dreaded Christmas lockdown. A new date was pencilled in for January 2021. Could I bear to keep my decorations up until after the holidays was the plea from Chloe? Of course! As the date kept being pushed back the tree was threadbare, so out it went and an artificial one brought in and decorated.

When it became clear that this lockdown wasn't going to end soon, the date was abandoned, but we would hold ourselves in readiness. The decorations were taken off the tree and it was pushed into a corner of the living room. The cards were left up as were the rest of the decorations. It didn't matter during lockdown as no-one was visiting, but when restrictions were eased a little the decorations came down, although the tree stayed in the corner.

After a few false starts a date in June was decided upon. Could the house be decorated to give a 'Christmassy' feel? Parcels under the tree, candles etc? Of course! Those coming to my home, from friends to delivery people, did a double-take when they saw a decorated tree, lights and Christmas decorations - in June??

In the event it was all very worthwhile. Chloe and Oliver, the photographer, arrived as did the arrangers and after refreshments the exciting day began. Four arrangers in the morning, and four in the afternoon ensured social distancing. Arrangements were prepared; furniture moved; pictures taken down; designs photographed in suitable locations with goodwill and a lot of laughter. Fortunately it was a good day so all twelve of us (my Vice Chairman included) were able to enjoy lunch together outside.

Designs were constructed and photographed and everyone went off at the end of the day feeling delighted with a good day's work. All that remained was to dismantle 'Christmas in June.'

Audrey Balderstone



THE TREE THAT NEVER FOUND FAME

This is the tree which was put up for the Photoshoot.

The Editor asked Audrey to have some ‘presents’ underneath, but in the event it was never photographed.
(What a shame! Ed)



Friday 29th October Preview Cheese & Wine Evening 19.00-21.30 (ticket only)

Saturday 30th October 10.00-17.00 Entry Programme £3

Sunday 31st October 12.00 noon-16.00 Entry Programme £3

Refreshments available- Tea & coffee, cakes and Ploughman’s Lunch (Saturday)
Craft stall, cake stall, raffle, tombola, flowers and flower arranging sundries.

The charities we are supporting this year are –
Ronald McDonald Evalina House, The Danny Green Fund,
Canvey Island Community First Responders and St Nicholas Church Fund.

NEWS FROM HATCH END

Pat Willmington had been treasurer of Hatch End Flower Club for an unbelievable 22 years until she decided that the time had come to retire. She stepped down at our AGM in February 2020 which was just before the first lockdown which continued on and off for another year and a half.

As we had not been able to mark the occasion in any way the committee decided to hold a lunch in Pat's honour on 22nd July which turned out to be near enough the hottest day of the year so far! Eleven of us enjoyed a buffet lunch in my garden and we were delighted that one of our founder members, Jean Guiver, was able to join us. Jean had moved away from the Area a few years ago, when her husband had become increasingly frail, to live near to one of her daughters. She is a remarkably youthful 91 years young and it was lovely to see her again. Most of us had not seen one another in person for a long time so the afternoon flew by eating and sipping cold drinks while chatting under the shade of umbrellas and the trees!



Although it is a daunting task to follow in Pat's footsteps, one of our members, Roberta Ward, valiantly volunteered to take over as our treasurer and Roberta is obviously going to be a marvellous addition to our team. Soon after joining the committee she offered to hold an Afternoon Tea for our members in her garden. We were exceptionally lucky that we had chosen a date in June that turned out to be warm and sunny because every other day the same week was cloudy and rained! At the time we were restricted to 30 people meeting outside and to our surprise we actually had to say to some people that they could not come as we had the maximum numbers permitted.

Roberta has a lovely garden stocked with many interesting plants which everyone enjoyed walking around. She had laid up tables around her garden for tea and family members waited on us all while we sat at the tables. Her son-in-law had even spent the previous weekend making cake stands on which she served a selection of sandwiches and cream scones she had made for us. This was followed by cakes too numerous to mention which

had been made by committee members. Tea and coffee and chatter flowed throughout the afternoon. There was a raffle, plant stall and bric-a-brac which all went towards a very successful fund-raiser for the club. Thank you, Roberta, for your generous hospitality and we are already looking forward to a repeat next year!

Angela Patteson

Olympic Flowers 2021



The 5,000 bouquets of fresh flowers presented to the Medalists at the Tokyo Olympic Games symbolised the country recovering from the devastation caused by the Earthquake and Tsunami and subsequent Nuclear disaster in 2011 when 20,000 people were lost.

The flowers were grown in areas affected by the disaster.

The green Lizianthus (which could be mistaken for carnations or roses from a distance) and Solomon's Seal came from the Fukushima region.

Fukushima was the site of the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl. The killer tsunami triggered by an undersea quake overwhelmed a local nuclear plant and 165,000 people had to evacuate. The agricultural industry was destroyed. The area now cultivates these lovely flowers which have helped to jump start the economy. Lizianthus (Eustoma) represent Hope.



Sunflowers are grown in the Miyagi region where parents, who lost their children during the earthquake, plant sunflowers on the hill where the children sought safety from the tsunami. Every year the hill becomes covered with sunflowers.

The Blue Gentians are grown in the Iwate region, a coastal area which was hit by three giant tsunami waves. They have been growing Gentians there since the 1960's. Its Indigo blue colour is the same as the Tokyo 2020 Games emblem.

The Aspidistras, grown in Tokyo, symbolise the host city of the 2020 Olympic Games.

The Olympic Mascot attached to the bouquet is Miraitowa and represents the Past and the Future. The Paralympic Mascot Someity symbolises strength and overcoming barriers.



We were lucky enough to visit the new RHS Bridgewater Garden just after it opened in May. Somehow my daughter managed to book a time slot.

The garden has been constructed on the 154 acre Worsley New Hall estate in Salford, Greater Manchester. The house was demolished in the 1940's after a serious fire and occupation by the army, and the grounds were little used. The estate has been developed in partnership with Salford City Council costing in total around £35 million. Work started in 2017 with the opening planned for July 2020, delayed by the pandemic until May this year. The focus of the garden is the 11 acre walled garden which has been divided into 3 main areas, the community Wellbeing Garden, the Kitchen Garden and the Paradise Garden. Much of the work clearing and planting has been done by local volunteers which, if you have seen the TV programmes, was a truly monumental task.

The garden is mostly on the flat with wide paths and plenty of seating made from trees which had to be cleared from the site. There is a learning centre for children which it is hoped will welcome 3,000 children from local schools this year. The Community Grow gardens are already being cultivated by local groups, something not tried by the RHS before.

The star of the garden is the Paradise garden designed by Tom Stuart Smith who lives in Home Counties. This reminded me of the Alhambra in Grenada with the rill running right through the centre. As it was May not all the plants were full of flower but there were some magnificent bearded Iris. At one side there is a heated wall with the greenhouses restored. Originally these were used to grow exotic fruit and decorative plants for the house. The chimney for the boiler towers above the garden and must have used vast amounts of coal.

Beyond the walled garden is a walk through the woods to the lake and the Chinese Stream garden. If you are feeling energetic you can go uphill towards the site of the house, I stayed on the flat!! The lake was a special feature of the original garden and there are plans to extend it further. At present there are waterlilies and if you are lucky, a duck and ducklings, tiny balls of fluff which didn't look big enough to swim. From here you come to the Chinese Stream garden which is still under construction. The pandemic has prevented the Chinese partners from coming to the UK, I imagine it will be a year or more before it is at its' best.

Of course, the exit is via all the temptations of the garden centre.

My impressions? There is a lot to see now but the plans for future developments make further visits essential. Involving local people at all stages was a great idea as it has given them a vested interest in the success of the project. It has also created 100 new jobs for locals.

Daphne Grant

A PERFECT SUMMER'S DAY Chairman's Lunch, 26th August 2021



Audrey Balderstone, our Area Chairman, hosted a lunch for all Club Chairmen from the Area in her garden and home.

26 people attended on a perfect summer's day when the sun came out occasionally but it was warm and dry so it was just right for sitting, relaxing and enjoying a delicious lunch. It was, for some ladies, their first social occasion for 18 months and to sit in a beautiful garden and talk to friends and other Chairmen who have shared the same difficulties it was a great pleasure.

Audrey welcomed everyone and took the opportunity to pass on some NAFAS news. She was able to present Geoff Fox, Chairman of Watford Floral Society, with the Flower Arranger silver salver that has been awarded to his club for having the largest increase in their subscriptions for 2020.

The buffet lunch was set out in the dining room where we could choose from quiches, lasagne, mushroom rolls, cheesy potatoes, coronation chicken and a large selection of salads and desserts. There was a lovely raffle and a flower arrangers' Bring and Buy stall.



We are very fortunate to have such a hospitable Chairman.

Carolyn Cranswick
Vice-Chairman of Home Counties Area of NAFAS



ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL RECIPE

This recipe makes 1 Pint and keeps for 3 months in the fridge

Ingredients: 12 Elderflower heads
1 large lemon washed or unwaxed lemon
1lb 10oz granulated sugar
2 ½ tbsp citric acid

1. Shake elderflowers well and put in bowl
2. Pare off zest from lemon in thick strips and thinly slice fruit into bowl with the flowers
3. Put sugar and 1pt/600ml of water in pan and heat slowly, stirring gently until sugar dissolves – bring to the boil
4. Pour boiling syrup over elderflowers and lemon and stir well, then stir in citric acid.
5. Cover with muslin or new disposable kitchen cloth and leave 24hrs
6. Strain through fine sieve into clean bowl then pour into clean bottle. Store in fridge.

Enjoy!

Janneke Jones

Recipe passed to me by Judy Bonham, a member of Canvey Floral Art Club



63 YEARS AND COUNTING

In May this year I bought a bunch of Lilies from Aldi's £2.99 (the last of the big spenders) and added some of my *Viburnum opulus* 'Sterile'. Some of the ladies from Home Counties may recognise the green vase. It was supplied for an Area Show in an Imposed Class.

This year I am celebrating 63 years of flower arranging. If celebrating is the right word.

Irene Bowkett

WHY ARE CUT FLOWERS SO EXPENSIVE?

Covid has forced growers to pull out crops because they didn't have the staff to keep them alive and it takes months to catch up

Not enough mother plants were available to start new crops

Bad weather all over the world has meant that the flowers that are in production are growing slowly

The demand for wedding flowers all over the world is huge

Basic costs have gone up – root plants, cardboard, paper, vases etc

Brexit has caused a rise in paperwork charges

Transport costs have quadrupled, there are fewer van drivers and delivery costs have risen

HIGHLIGHTS

Designs by Linda O'Toole of Clophill & District Flower Club: Below right: her Spring Bonnet in the National Chairman's Challenge for which she was awarded 3rd, and far right: her Highly Commended exhibit at the Virtual National Show "Adorned Beauty"



Left: Area Summer Competition "Garden Delights" 1st – Fiona Harrison Harpenden Evening Floral Group



Below: Irene Bowkett's design for National Flower Arranging Day



Left: the Bishop of St Albans gave his thanks and awarded the Order of St Alban to Geoff Fox, Chairman of Watford Floral Society





Another exciting event to celebrate the Winter season

A Winter Competition

We are holding another on-line flower arranging competition for
members of Home Counties.

Entries should be emailed to Rekha Naidoo (Media Officer) to the email address below
from **Monday 22nd November to Tuesday 7th December**

The photographs will be collated into a file and sent numbered anonymously to Area Judges.

The winners will be informed and the results will be published on the Area website.

Title *'Winter Celebrations'*

An exhibit . Fresh plant material should predominate but artificial material is permitted.

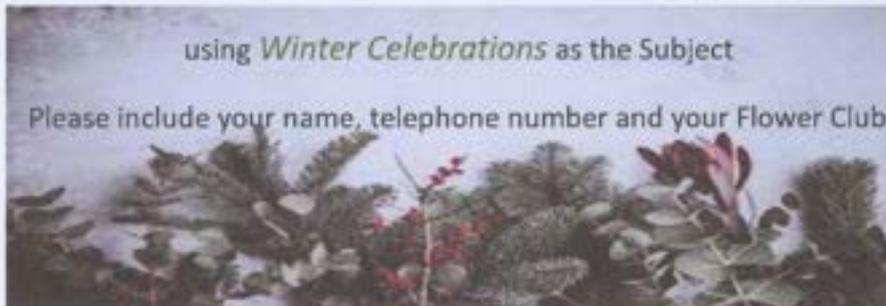
Size 60cm x 60cm x 90 cm height

The design should be photographed with a plain background.

Please email to homecountiesflowers@gmail.com by 7th December

using *Winter Celebrations* as the Subject

Please include your name, telephone number and your Flower Club





NEWS FROM NAFAS HQ

A VIRTUAL SHOW entitled 'Chasing Rainbows' is planned for 20th June to 1st July, 2022 featuring on-line demonstrations, talks and a competition. The competition schedule will be available in January 2022.

A REAL NATIONAL SHOW at Gloucester Cathedral is in the outline planning stage for 12-14 May 2023. Further details will be available later.

A RESIDENTIAL WEEKEND is planned for 9-11 September 2022 to replace the Roaring Twenties event which had to be cancelled in 2020.

NAFAS has teamed up with the Morrisons supermarket chain to provide in-store demonstrations in October 2021. Morrisons will be selecting up to 100 stores which have a good flower turnover, and they will provide the space and flowers. If one of the supermarkets is near you this would be a great publicity opportunity. More details will be available on the NAFAS website.

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATORS' TESTS

Pre-National Test passes – Sara Barrow (Flowers North West), Julia Loudon (SAFAS and Northumberland & Durham Areas), Karine Murray (SAFAS), Linda Seabrook (South Midlands)

National Test passes – Sarah Fenton (Mercia & North Wales Area), Alison Penno (Devon & Cornwall Area), Cherie Nummy (NGFAS), Kathy Stangaard (London & Overseas Area), Vanessa Wellock (North East Area)

DEMONSTRATORS' SYMPOSIUM – 21st to 24th April 2022. Telford Hotel and Golf Resort, Shropshire

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CANCELLATION OF WORLD SHOW NEW ZEALAND 'Flora Aotearoa@ 2024 (Abridged)

The cancellation will be an enormous disappointment, not only to our own Society members who were looking forward to hosting and attending the Show, but also to Wafa Ltd and our global floral art community. This is not a decision we have taken lightly but there are overriding concerns that have caused us to make this decision at this time.

First, is the increased and overwhelming concerns about the COVID-19 virus.

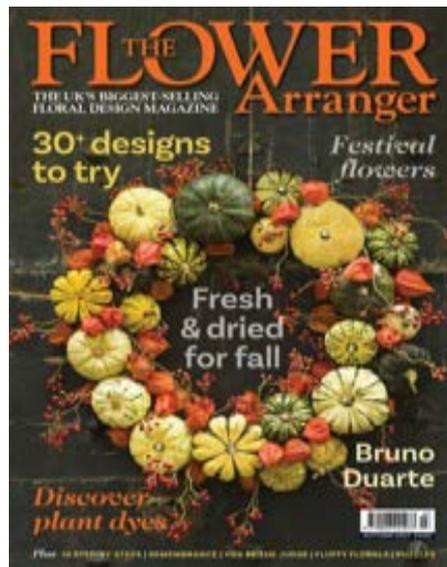
Second, is our responsibility towards Wafa Ltd, our members, sponsors and partners, overseas registrants and visitors who will fund the show. We cannot ask our members to invest money, or approach partners and sponsors knowing the potential risks.

These factors, combined with doubts as to the number of registrants who will be in a position to make a commitment to attend and pay sixteen (16) months in advance when registration and competitions entries are sent out, have led us to the conclusion the only option is to cancel the Wafa NZ World Show 2024.

Marianne Gibson, FASNZ President

5th July 2021

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your
copies
now*



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**NOW OPEN FOR BOOKING
EXCLUSIVE FOR NAFAS**

The President Invites: Travels with **Michael Bowyer**
Springtime in Ireland -with exclusive garden visits
19 - 24 May 2022

In the Chairman's Company: 'Friends, Romans & Countryside'
A floral adventure in Bath with **Katherine Kear**
7 - 9 July 2022

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