



Home Counties AREA NEWS

Autumn 2023



A LETTER FROM OUR AREA CHAIRMAN

Carolyn Cranswick



This year is going very quickly but as I look back since I came into office I feel that Home Counties Area has made good progress. The Area Officers and Representatives have worked hard to support our members and Clubs and to promote the love of flower arranging.

In May our Area took part in the National Show at Gloucester Cathedral and many members visited this special event. Rekha Naidoo and Theresa Rodrigues represented us in the large Area class 'On the Shoulders of Giants'. Their exhibit was beautiful and received a Commended award. Fiona Harrison received a First Prize in the 'Celebrating Courage' class. I am very pleased to report that the Show made a profit of £53,560 due to careful budgeting and management and lots of work by volunteers.

I was delighted to hear in May that Harpenden Evening Club participated in the National Flower Arranging Day and a gentleman was thrilled to find an arrangement sitting on his parent's memorial bench. He even emailed Head Office to say thank you.

In October we are holding a Special Area Day in Wheathampstead that is open to everyone. It will be an informative day exploring all aspects of floral design with a focus on the Principles and Elements of design. I hope that many of you will join us to enjoy a day with friends. All details are on our website.

In November we are holding our AGM/ Lunch/ and Demonstration by Tracey Griffin. This will be another Area day that we hope you will support. There will be stalls, a seasonal buffet and lots to interest all members.

I am aiming to visit all the Clubs in Home Counties during my term of office as I enjoy meeting members and observing how each club is different in the way it is organised. I am learning a lot! My other aim is to support Clubs in recruiting new members, so in

March I held a Chairman's Forum to exchange ideas and information. In June Rekha gave all Clubs, who attended the Council Meeting, ideas using social media to promote Clubs and now we have a new printed 3-fold leaflet to publicise our Area Clubs with details of what we do at our meetings and the opportunities for members of NAFAS. These will be available at the next Council Meeting, the AGM or contact me. Our Area Treasurer Celia Thompson has been working hard to organise an 'umbrella' insurance policy for all Clubs to save them the cost and responsibility of having individual club insurance. So you see we want to help our Clubs to thrive and attract new members.

Anne McPherson – Vice-Chairman is working to encourage college students who are studying floristry and floral art to consider becoming NAFAS demonstrators, as we are aware that it is becoming more difficult to find demonstrators for Club meetings.

We were very sad in May to hear that Janice Swan our Area Education Representative had suddenly died. Janice was an active NAFAS teacher and trainee demonstrator and she is greatly missed by all her NAFAS friends, especially in Essex, where she lived. Her friends from Leigh-on-Sea and Spectrum arranged the flowers for her funeral and I am sure Janice would have been delighted with them.

Looking forward to 2024 we have planned two Members' Days – one in April at our usual venue in Broxbourne and another at Runnymede Hall in Thundersley, Essex on 24th June. I appreciate it is difficult for members from Essex to travel into Hertfordshire or Bedfordshire, so we are coming to you. I really hope that the Essex Clubs will join us for a full day, with a speaker in the morning, a buffet lunch and a demonstration in the afternoon.

I hope to see you at one of our Area events. Please come and have a chat with me and let me have any of your news or views.

With my best wishes

Carolyn

Chairman of Home Counties Area of NAFAS

(With thanks to Michelle Rigby of Hitchin Floral Art Club for the picture of her crown design in celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III)

Home Counties Area of NAFAS

AGM, Lunch and Demonstration



Wednesday 22nd November 2023

at Spotlight Theatre, High Street, Hoddesdon, EN11 8BE

Doors open 10.00am AGM at 11am

followed by a seasonal buffet lunch

There will be a seating plan and we will be seated at decorated tables

Demonstration by Tracey Griffin

(National Demonstrator)

“Snowflakes”

Stalls to browse and tea/coffee and drinks available throughout the day

Tickets £35 Please apply no later than 15th November through your Club
or to Celia Thompson our Area Treasurer

AREA MEMBERS' DAY

at The Spotlight Theatre, Broxbourne

19th April 2023

The day started with a good journey from Canvey Island to Broxbourne with 3 other members of Canvey FAC. We received a warm welcome by Carolyn Cranswick and the officers, Angela and Celia at check in. Anne McPherson ran a stall with lots of different interesting containers in the foyer as well as John and Yvonne from Canvey who had a lovely stall with all his homemade wooden articles. Raffle tickets for morning and flower raffles were well supported and busy as usual. Joyce Furssedonn was promoting the Flower Arranger magazine. We enjoyed meeting up with lots of friends in the coffee bar where there were also a few stalls with jewellery, leather goods and accessories.

The time soon came around to take our seats when Carolyn welcomed Katherine Kear, our National Chairman, who had made a very early start travelling from Gloucester to be with us. Katherine answered many questions raised by the audience. This was followed by a wonderful presentation called "Doofers" which was enjoyed very much by everyone. The vote of thanks was given to Katherine by Lesley Sturdy.

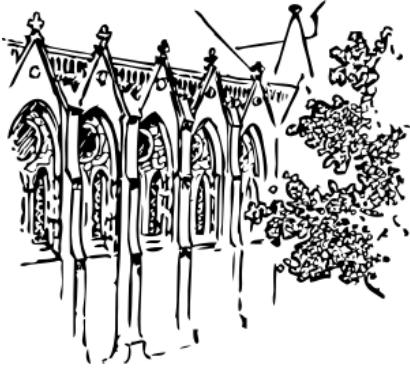
A buffet lunch consisting of savouries, sandwiches, fruit and cakes was provided in the coffee bar with plenty of seating for everyone. I had the pleasure to sit with Janice Swan joining the other officers and representatives in the front row. Little did we know it would sadly be the last time. We had the pleasure along with the Canvey ladies to be in her company for the rest of the day including lunch.

In the afternoon we enjoyed a lovely demonstration by Lucy Ellis entitled "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds". Her designs were all a very lovely choice of flowers and foliage each one accompanied by a piece of music, the first one being "Shine on you Crazy Diamond" by Pink Floyd, the second "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" by the Beatles, the third one was by Joan Baez - "Diamonds and Rust", the fourth "Diamonds in a Rainbow" a design of Red, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet. Number five was "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend" by Marilyn Monroe, finishing with James Bond themed all white arrangements "Diamonds are Forever" by Shirley Bassey. The stage looked magnificent as usual with this talented lady.



Fiona Harrison assisted her in preparation of the designs. Pamela Ferguson, our Area President gave the Vote of Thanks to Lucy. All in all a good day and the journey back home was ok until we approached Basildon and subsequently Sadlers Farm where we came to a halt and a long delay due to an accident on Canvey. It was good to be in everyone's company for the day. Another successful event organised by the Area Officers.

Janneke Jones, Speakers' Representative



Gloucester Cathedral 2023 FLORILEGIUM, THE NATIONAL SHOW A Competitions Officer's View

A beautiful building, incredible exhibits, delightful demonstrations, talks and workshops plus music and shopping – what more could you want? This was the National Show held in Gloucester Cathedral last May.

I had been involved as a committee member since 2021 as the Competitions Officer representing the National Judges Committee along with our chairperson Joan Magee. The National Judges Committee saw the building in April 2022 and chose the positions and titles for the exhibits. A little different this time from when I was Competitions Officer in 2013. Then I just had to tell the company who erected our staging our titles and exhibit sizes and hey presto a complete plan appeared on the computer! This time it was different, it was me and graph paper! It soon became clear that we could not put 4 large exhibits round a pillar – not space enough between exhibits (need to be 2m) so back to the graph paper and rearranged with plenty of space for working and viewing.

We only needed one run of conventional tabling for 20 designs and 2 of 12 spaces each, others had boards placed on benches; all of these either were painted or covered. We were fortunately provided in some spaces with low stone shelves for the young people's exhibits so only needed just to place exhibitors cards on each space. Hanging exhibits were between stone viewpoints or hanging from draped rods kindly provided by our own Area. Although to make sure the support poles remained upright Graham and I did have to make sandbags as ballast for security! All were stored at home along with exhibit cards that were prepared for each exhibit. A note of thanks to those who helped write all the information on each competitor card.

In January all the forms necessary were produced. From February onwards I received entries, answered questions and changed where necessary where entries might go as some classes were oversubscribed and 2 classes were removed as too few entries. Out of over 250 entries all had what they wanted or, in two cases, I managed to arrange another class for them. Later in this process they all had to be issued with a car permit as the cathedral would not allow them all to access the cathedral grounds permanently during staging. Later still I was asked to ask them to respond to the invite to the 'Reveal' on the opening on the first night. Thank goodness the computer was behaving itself!

The week finally came for the show - arriving Monday evening ready to start work 9am Tuesday. First, we positioned the bases for the Area and club classes round the pillars while waiting for the tables to arrive. Then tables were positioned for 3 classes in various parts of the cathedral, covered and spaces marked out for each exhibit while others positioned hanging points in chapels and music stands and marking out spaces on the floor for 2 other classes. This was all completed by 3pm Wednesday ready for us to inform and help those who wished to drop off items on Wed, from 4 – 8pm where their class was positioned. Back to the hotel for a quick meal and bed as we had to be in the cathedral by 5.15am checking nothing had moved and ready to help the rush of competitors at 6am. It looks like chaos but isn't and once they are settled there is a buzz of activity, greeting people and getting down to work. I wish I had had a pedometer as I must have walked miles up and down seeing that they all had what they needed and answering any queries and talking to people I'd emailed but not met. At 11.30am I held a judges' briefing of any changes made to the schedules prepared for their timetable or any facts that they needed to be aware of regarding exhibits. A quick lunch

together and they began at 12.45pm. It was a tight schedule to have all classes judged, recorded and prize cards written and displayed by 7pm. Meanwhile Graham was recording the results sheet. Unfortunately we couldn't use our quiet room for this as internet was only available near the entry to the cathedral and I was giving the final names to him while people were arriving for the Reveal which was a bit noisy. It needed the internet as we then had to send it to the printer so that copies were available for the opening on Friday. We finished just before 7pm and all the Judges Committee plus Graham went for a meal after a busy 12 hour day- and so to bed.

Friday was bright and sunny and a queue formed early for the opening time, we were in the cathedral checking all exhibits were OK. When we finally went for a cuppa the queue was still there. So many had come that there were still some waiting to go in and the last one went in at 11.45am. The day was great with demonstrations, workshops and competitors being congratulated. It felt like a new awakening of our organisation. Saturday was also busy and at closing exhibits were quickly removed by competitors; then it was all hands on deck to remove the staging ready for Sunday services. It was all cleared by 8pm, then a final meal altogether and packing ready for home on Sunday.

The Icing on the Cake

In July it was announced by Katherine Kear, National Chairman and instigator of the show at the cathedral, that the show had made over **£53,000**. This was due to tight budgeting and much goodwill by volunteers. Well done to all who participated in one way or another.

PS If you have not competed at any show I recommend it. You learn so much from others, make friends from all over the country and have a chance to show people what our organisation, NAFAS, is all about. I can remember at one National Show being told by a member of the venue we were at "You are the best kept secret, we never knew about your talents". Shows are the one way we advertise what we can do having fun, friendship and using flowers.

Lesley Sturdy

THE HOME COUNTIES AREA OF NAFAS NEEDS YOU

**We have a VACANCY for an
AREA EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVE**

**If you are interested and would like more information
please contact our Area Chairman Carolyn Cranswick in the first instance
or get in touch with your Club Chairman
who will have received the role description
by email from our Area Secretary Angela Patteson.
Please consider this very interesting and satisfying post.**

Congratulations



to our Vice-President
Audrey Balderstone and
her husband
Jim Huzzey on their
marriage in June

and to our Past President and Associate of
Honour Lesley Sturdy and her husband
Graham on their 60th Wedding
Anniversary



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SOUTH STEVENAGE FLOWER CLUB'S CORONATION GARDEN PARTY

On Friday 12 May, South Stevenage Flower Club's President, Miriam, hosted a garden party to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III. The brief was to dress as if for a Buckingham Palace Garden Party but, in one of the coldest, wettest springs on record, the day dawned and the rain was lashing down, the wind howling; at one point, almost carrying off the two gazebos erected over the entrance.

Fascinators and frothy dresses were replaced with warm clothes, rain macs and wellington boots, and the garden party had to move inside, but the 30+ members who attended were not going to let that dampen their spirits. Tea flowed, there was a sumptuous selection of home-made cakes to enjoy, we chatted, played games, undertook a team challenge to create two red, white and blue flower arrangements, and held a raffle as well as a jam jar tombola. It was a really lovely afternoon, and everyone had a right royal time.

The Garden Party That Never Was

An evening of Mocktails and Canapés was the brainchild of Geoff Fox, Chairman of Watford Floral Society, to give the members a good evening and to raise funds for the Club.

For many years we have had a Christmas coffee morning for Watford Club in December in my home, but, although it didn't worry me at all, Geoff was always concerned about the cream carpet! He decided that, as I re-married on June 4, we should no longer use my home. He suggested that, instead, we should have an evening event to be held in the garden, with all the preparation being done in the garage.

July 26 dawned bright and sunny. The lawn and hedges had been cut, the edges trimmed and the borders weeded. The garden was looking better than it has ever done and tables and chairs were arranged for the guests.

Geoff, always highly organised, arrived with the ingredients for Virgin Pina Coladas, Virgin Mojitos, and fruit punch plus the fillings for the canapés. Soon the committee were busy assembling the mushroom vol au vents and other goodies and the garage was a hive of industry. The guests were due to arrive at 6.30pm and we were on target for our garden party. At 6pm the first drops of rain were felt and it was not long before it was raining in earnest!

Geoff's best laid plans had gone awry, but with great good humour the members divested themselves of coats and umbrellas and found seats in the lounge. The mocktails and canapés were served and followed by delicious small cakes. Lots of chatter and laughter testified to the fact that everyone was happy and there were many compliments about the drinks and eats.

No Flower Club meeting is complete without a raffle and this one was no exception. The committee had generously provided enough gifts for almost everyone to win something, but as each gift was wrapped it was exciting to see what one had chosen when it was unwrapped. A member who is teetotal chose her wrapped parcel. It contained a bottle of Gin, so there was great merriment!

Coffee and cake before leaving rounded off an evening which everyone agreed had been a great success in spite of the rain. Geoff and the committee were thanked for all their hard work.

Although it was somewhat of a 'baptism of fire' Jim was delighted to meet all the members. Everyone went home happy, including Geoff.

And the carpet? Well, it has survived for yet another year!!

Audrey Balderstone, Vice President

SHORT COURSES IN FLORAL DESIGN, JANUARY 2024, HARPENDEN, HERTS



If you love flowers and would like to develop your arranging skills, a short course might suit you. Floral Design Classics 1 and 2 each cover basic arranging skills and the construction of 6 designs.

6 sessions of approx 2.5 hours, Jan – April 2024, daytime or evening, according to demand. Comfortable floral studio near Harpenden with plenty of on-site parking.

If you, or someone you know, are interested, please contact me for more information at (fionamharrison@hotmail.com)

Fiona Harrison, Home Counties Area Teacher, National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies

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Promoting NAFAS and Flower Clubs to Colleges

Following on from the impact of the pandemic, an increasing number of demonstrators have taken the decision to retire. Finding demonstrators for a flower club programme to be planned and bookings made has become increasingly difficult. NAFAS membership numbers dropping significantly as a result of Covid 19 restrictions and clubs continuing to close, has made it increasingly difficult to recruit members to train to be demonstrators. One potential source of finding new club members interested in the art of floral design and having a skill set with the potential to become a demonstrator is to be found in colleges providing courses on this topic. Capel Manor College were looking for support in Public Speaking skills for their Floristry/Floral Design and Event Styling students. My interest was to promote NAFAS Flower Clubs and generate interest in becoming a demonstrator as well as being able to advertise NAFAS in the widest way possible.

In January this year, the first event took place. It was supported by Clare Curtis, Curriculum Leader of Floristry, Business and Enterprise at Capel Manor College. Kathy Stangaard, a NAFAS National Speaker and National Demonstrator accompanied by Pauline Martindale

Area Speaker from London and Overseas Area gave a lecture as guest speakers to the 3rd year Floral Design and 2nd Year Floristry Students. Clare Curtis, Kathy Stangaard, Pauline Martindale Left-Right below.



Kathy, who had been a student at Capel Manor, spoke about NAFAS and the opportunities to acquire a range of skills including demonstrating floral design, speaking, judging and teaching. She had also brought copies of the Flower Arranger Magazine. Using a variety of props Pauline and Kathy demonstrated the key elements in dealing with preparation, confidence boosting elements and using visual and other aids in being successful in public speaking. Three students volunteered to attempt to give an impromptu three-minute speech on a topic, the

title of which they were only given just before they spoke. This is part of the test that trainee Speakers must successfully carry out in order to be able to be a NAFAS Speaker. All the students who participated in this mock test managed to meet the target.

We received highly positive feedback from students and the college on how enjoyable and informative the session on successful public speaking had been for them.

In April, Fiona Harrison and I held two sessions as guest speakers on NAFAS and the role and requirements to become a NAFAS Demonstrator. As former students at Capel Manor College we are both familiar with the Enfield site and the tutor running the course. I introduced each session to explain about NAFAS as an organisation and how to find and join a local flower club. This could be in London & Overseas or any of the other areas such as Home Counties and East of England which borders and provides the student flow for any of the 5 sites that comprise Capel Manor College. Fiona produced a floral design, describing what she was doing using the Elements and Principles of Design as well as linking it to the topic of the demonstration theme 'The Golden Age of Ocean Travel'. She gave lots of good practical advice and information to the students about what was involved in becoming and being a NAFAS demonstrator.

Our impression was that while there is interest, there is also uncertainty about what the role involved. None of the students at any of the sessions had heard of NAFAS and did not know about flower clubs and what it was like to watch a full demonstration. At the time it would have been helpful to have had some official NAFAS information to give out to the students.

This has subsequently been remedied by a useful booklet produced by the National Demonstrators Committee. It is thanks to the efforts of Jane Ellis Home Counties Area Demonstrators Representative writing earlier to the committee pointing this out and why it was needed. This was launched at the recent National Show in Gloucester.

To deal with the lack of 'live experience', I gave an open invitation to the students to come to Stoneycroft Flower Club in Hemel Hempstead, to experience a club meeting and see a demonstrator presenting to an audience of club members.

As it happened, we had Fiona booked to do her ‘Golden Age of Ocean Travel’ demonstration in May. It was an ideal opportunity for some of them to see her in action as it were.



Four of the 2nd Year Floral design students came and had a wonderful time, even winning two of Fiona’s designs in the flower raffle. One of these was a three-tiered cake, the top section being held by the student who won it. It is based on a winning design by Fiona in a competition.

This is only the start of developing a mutually beneficial relationship, in order to make a difference and facilitate change happening. Several students have joined flower clubs local to them. Encouraging the next step to

becoming trainee demonstrators will require time and effort. According to the Capel Manor Website information on Floristry and Floral Design courses, one of the jobs suggested after doing a course is listed as becoming a Floral Design Demonstrator.

In the meantime, the Head of Floristry and Event Styling for Capel Manor College, covering the 5 campuses, has offered an opportunity to have a NAFAS Representative who would promote NAFAS and establish long lasting links with the college. Since all the college sites are in the London Area, it seems more appropriate that this should be an individual based in the London and Overseas Area. We shall be looking to the colleges in the Home Counties Area to raise awareness about NAFAS and to promote joining flower clubs plus the opportunities to become a NAFAS demonstrator.

Anne McPherson



GIRLS’ WEEKEND AWAY

In May four members of our club decided to visit the National Show in Gloucester Cathedral. Not just a day but a girls’ weekend away. We were so lucky to have a super leader who booked the hotel and entry tickets and transported us in her car.

We travelled on the Friday stopping for refreshments in the Cotswolds, then after a spot of retail therapy in Gloucester we went into the centre of the city for dinner. Thence to “The Big Flower Night” in the Guildhall. It was packed for this special demonstration by Penno and Price. These two talented women had linked up for this performance never having worked together before. It was a fabulous start to our floral weekend.

Saturday was the big day- Florilegium meaning “the gathering of flowers” was held in the impressive Gloucester Cathedral and it was a sight to behold. The magnificent architecture was enhanced by so many fabulous arrangements and we were treated to live music pervading the atmosphere. So many classes caught the eye- too many to comment on here- but for me “Candles and Canticles” and “Block and Stone” were special. Demonstrations and sales tables were popular and everyone had a great time both looking at the exhibits and meeting old friends.



We walked back to the hotel via the old docks and then we were off to a lovely dinner. No cooking for us as we had all left our husbands to fend for themselves.

On Sunday we travelled back to Bedfordshire, again through the Cotswolds, but stopping at a new location for lunch.

We all thoroughly enjoyed our girls' break and brought back plenty of ideas and renewed enthusiasm for the art of Flower Arranging.

I would like to thank again our "leader" Carolyn for her organisational skills, careful driving and good company. I would recommend this more leisurely approach to visiting floral events.

Brenda London (Clophill and District Flower Club)

VISIT TO ASHWELL FLOWER FARM

On Monday 17 July, South Stevenage Flower Club paid the first of two visits to Ashwell Flower Farm. Our host, and resident flower farmer, Barbara Lohar, welcomed us with tea and cakes in her beautiful and tranquil garden, and told us a little about her journey so far. The pivotal moment came during lockdown when she decided to swap her high-powered city career for a more gentle occupation, and the steep learning curve that has taken her on to where she is today.

Barbara then gave us a tour of her small flower farm, which she has created on the upper level of her large garden, describing a typical day, the growing season in general, giving us an insight into how she deals with aphids and carrot fly, highlighting the flowers that she grows, those which have worked well, as well as some that haven't.



It was absolutely fascinating and, at the end of the visit, some of the group purchased a bucket of flowers to take home and create their own beautiful, locally-grown, flower arrangements. We rounded off the visit with a very nice lunch in the local pub.

Barbara hosted the other half of our group on Friday 28 July.

<https://www.ashwellflowers.com/>

OUR CRUISE TO ALASKA

In mid May my husband, Anthony, and I flew to Vancouver to start our 3-week holiday to Canada and Alaska.

After a couple of days sight-seeing in Vancouver we boarded a small 10-seater seaplane for a 30 minute flight to Victoria on Vancouver Island for a 3-night stay. Victoria is the capital of British Columbia and is still very “British”. Everywhere we went we were reminded of Queen Victoria and the UK’s historical links with Canada. We thoroughly enjoyed staying in the Fairmont Empress (Victoria) Hotel which overlooks the harbour and to the left of which is the Parliament Building which has a large bronze statue of Queen Victoria in front of it. The highlight of our stay was a visit to the Butchart Gardens, 55 acres of beautifully kept gardens which employs 500 gardeners! They were created by Jennie Butchart in 1904 and are still privately owned and operated by the family. The rhododendrons were in full bloom and everywhere was awash with colour and I thought they were possibly the best gardens I had ever visited! I was not surprised to read subsequently that they had been designated a National Historic Sight of Canada in 2004.

On returning to Vancouver by seaplane, we boarded our cruise ship for a 2-week return trip to Alaska. The weather was warm and sunny as we left so we enjoyed sailing out of Vancouver sightseeing along the coast. We travelled along the Inside Passage, which is between the Canadian mainland and Vancouver Island, which is 300 miles long.

Our first stop was at Ketchikan, USA, which is named “The Salmon Capital of the World” and is home to grizzly and black bears as well as whales, seals and bald eagles. We walked along the colourful Creek Street, which is built on crooked stilts over Ketchikan Creek, and was a notorious red-light district for sailors up until the 1950s. We then went on a boat trip to an island where we had an interesting walk into a Rain Forest. We then visited a centre for salmon fishing where we were given a barbeque lunch of freshly caught seafood and potatoes, which was tipped sizzling out of a bucket onto a newspaper tablecloth in front of us! We ate it with our fingers but it was surprisingly tasty and I think everyone enjoyed the experience!



The following day we docked at Icy Strait Point from where we went on our first of many whale watching trips!

We learnt about the era of the 1890s Gold Rush chasers when we visited Skagway where we took the White Pass & Yukon Route train, one of the world’s spectacular railroads. The train climbs from sea level in Skagway to almost 3,000 feet at the Summit in just 20 miles and features many steep gradients. We marvelled at how the railroad had been blasted through colossal rocks and had been laid alongside tumbling waterfalls and deep gorges until it reached the snow covered mountain peaks.

We were interested to visit Valdez, a port in Prince William Sound, made famous by the oil spill disaster of the Exxon Valdez tanker in 1989. The Alaska pipeline is 800 miles in length and runs from Prudhoe Bay on the north side of Alaska to Valdez, which was chosen because it is the only place in Alaska where the sea never freezes. It serves about 20 tankers a month. From here we went on a wildlife spotting cruise and saw breaching humpback whales, sea lions and female sea otters swimming on their backs carrying their babies on their tummies – an amazing sight!

Seward was the furthest north our ship sailed and it was indeed a very remote town surrounded by snow covered mountains. From there we cruised amongst the Columbia and Hubbard Glaciers for the next couple of days and it was frightening to hear how far the glaciers had receded in the last 10 years – something like 15 miles I think! We were very lucky at this point in our cruise because the weather was warmer than the first week with clear blue skies and the scenery on our return journey to Vancouver somehow looked much more magnificent in better weather. As we were told Alaska has about 300 days of rain a year we considered ourselves very fortunate to have had none!

We stopped at Juneau, capital of Alaska and their third largest city. It too was in an isolated location which can only be reached by sea or air as the roads peter out as the forests gradually take over the landscape.

We thought the prettiest place we stopped at was Haines, a very small town surrounded by snowy mountains where the area's native Chilkat Indian heritage has been kept alive through their weaving of elaborate and richly decorated robes. I was also told that no babies had been born there for over 50 years. Apparently when a woman is 8 months pregnant she is sent to the nearest town with medical facilities to await the arrival of her baby.

In Sitka we visited an animal rescue centre – “Fortress of the Bear” – where we could see bears up close without worrying for our safety. Unfortunately a lot of people on our trip were disappointed that they didn't see a bear in the wild but we had seen them by the roadside on a previous holiday to the Rockies.

Our last stop was in Wrangell, an unimpressive small town, where we went out in a fishing boat and were shown how crabs were caught in pots – a very hard way to make a decent living!

Our final day was spent in glorious sunshine lounging on deck watching the scenery pass by as we travelled back through the Inside Passage to Vancouver.

Angela Patteson

SOUTH STEVENAGE FLOWER CLUB - THE LIMONCELLO CUP

On Tuesday 20 June, South Stevenage Flower Club held their first 'Limoncello Cup' competition in memory of Edna Holt, our late and much-loved Club Chair. The Limoncello Cup is a beautiful crystal vase decorated with dragon flies, which will be presented twice a year, as a fitting way to keep Edna's memory alive.



For this first competition, members were invited to submit an arrangement in a wine glass, and there were at least 15 entries, all of a very high standard, which made the judges' (Club President, Miriam, and our demonstrator for the evening, Terri Potter) task a particularly difficult one.

In the end, both agreed that the arrangement pictured right, which was a wonderful cocktail of clematis and nigella, all from the arranger's garden, ticked all the boxes, and Marion Compton (pictured) was chosen as the winner, becoming the first recipient of the Edna Holt Limoncello Cup.



Very well done, Marion!

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A NICE DAY OUT FOR US ALL AT GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

I persuaded my daughter and 14 year old granddaughter to accompany me to the National Show last May. As they live in Bristol I thought it would make a nice day out for us all to visit Gloucester Cathedral together.

We arrived outside the Cathedral mid-morning and there was already quite a "buzz" about the place. Once inside we were over-awed by the magnificence of the beautiful building which was enhanced by many, many floral creations. Choirs were singing which added to our enjoyment as their voices echoed around the building. There were more people there than I had anticipated and I was pleased to see that so many were supporting the Show. It was good to meet and chat to like-minded flower arranging friends that I had not seen for a long time.



Firstly we went to look at Theresa and Rekha's exhibit in the Area class "On the Shoulders of Giants". I thought their exhibit was stunning and they were awarded "Commended" which was very well deserved as I know it had involved them in many hours of work and preparation.

We then saw Fiona Harrison's exhibit which was awarded a "First" in the "Celebrating Courage" pave class (depicting The Ascent of Everest) which was excellent too.





Vicky and Imogen were then keen to attend a workshop and they joined one which was making flower crowns. They made their crowns with trails of ivy adding foliage and flowers which were all supplied. They thoroughly enjoyed themselves and Imogen wore hers for the rest of the day! All the workshops were well attended with everyone chattering away!

It took me a long time to walk round looking at the exhibits – there were so many innovative and excellent designs – and I am only sorry that I wasn't able to see all of them. We had a picnic lunch on the Green outside the Cathedral and then joined a queue to watch Coral Gardiner's demonstration "Flowers in Art". We chose that one because Imogen is a budding artist and I thought it would interest her.

There was retail therapy as well - to which I succumbed - and I wished the Show had been on for another day so that more people would have been able to go and see the lovely flowers on display. The organisers are to be congratulated and thanked for all their hard work in making the Show such a success and I was very pleased to hear that it had made a profit of over £53,000 for NAFAS. Let's hope it won't be the last National Show!

Angela Patteson

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Janice Swan

Everyone who knew Janice was shocked to hear of her sudden death in May. She had been our Area Education Representative for 18 years, having taken over from Margaret Holmes in 2005. Jan was well known in the Essex area and was one of the founder members of Spectrum, a Teacher and Trainee Demonstrator and a member of Leigh on Sea.



Janice often worked alongside her partner in crime, Shirley Perkins, running workshops at Area events and representing the Area at such events as the Highlands House Flower Show.

Lovely floral tributes were made by her friends from the local flower clubs, Canvey, Spectrum, Eastwood, Leigh and Thorpe Bay for her funeral at Southend on Sea.

A Tribute to Janice from Audrey Balderstone

When I think of Janice I remember her smile and her cheeky sense of humour. She had an opinion about most things and was a lively contributor to discussions on committee, at council and in social gatherings. She loved being with people.

What I remember most about Janice, however, was her hospitality, which was always warm and generous. Whenever there was a workshop she was organising she always provided a lovely lunch for the tutor and anyone else who was helping.

As I attended a number of these during my years as Vice Chairman and then Chairman I was impressed by Janice's thoughtfulness in providing for various diets.

Janice will be sorely missed by her many friends in the Home Counties Area and beyond.

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Sheila Wadsworth



It is with great sadness that I have to report the passing of Sheila in July. Sheila was the longest serving member of Hitchin Floral Art Club having been Chairman and President and she was one of the most loyal members. She encouraged new members in their flower arranging and to enter shows where possible.

Sheila represented the Club at Chelsea and she won medals, an inspiration to us all. She also helped decorate many churches in the Diocese including St Albans Abbey. Her knowledge and love of flowers was second to none. She was a much loved member of our club and will be missed, not only by her family but by everyone who knew her. She will always be in our thoughts, we miss you Sheila RIP

Jenny Stutley

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – 2023/24

(N) = National Demonstrator
FB = Facebook Page
WS = Website

- 4th October** Welwyn Floral Group. 2 pm **Arnaud Metairie: Garden in the Sky**
Welwyn Civic Centre, Prospect Place, Welwyn AL6 9ER
Enquiries: joycefurssedonn7@virginmedia.com
- 11th October** Hatch End Flower Arrangement Group. 7.30 pm **FB WS**
Gill McGregor: Autumn Flair & Fantasy
Pinner Village Hall, Chapel Lane, Pinner HA5 1AA
Enquiries: info@hefag.uk
- 18th October** Blackmore Flower Club. 2 pm. **Terri Potter: This Way & That**
Blackmore Baptist Church Hall, Blackmore, Essex CM4 ORT
- 26th October** Hertford Flower Club. 2.15 pm. First visit free
Wendy Goodliff: Inspired by Nature. Hertford Heath Village
Hall, 121 London Road, Hertford Heath, SG13 7RH
Enquiries barbarakiln54@gmail.com
- 1st November** Welwyn Floral Group. Details as October
Gill McGregor: Glitter, Glitz and Glam
- 4th November** Designer 3 Group. **Workshop with Jane Rickard** **FB**
Leverstock Green Village Hall, HP3 8QG just off M1, J8
9.30 for 10 am start to 3.30 pm
Enquiries: email daphne.grant20@gmail.com Visitors £35
- 8th November** Hatch End FAG. Details as October
Arnaud Metairie: Festive Floral Fantasy

- 15th November Blackmore FC. Details as October **Rekha Naidoo: Jingle All the Way**
- 22nd November **Area AGM, Lunch and Demonstration** (See Advertisement)
- 23rd November Hertford FC. Details as October **Susan Horne: Christmas Cavalcade**
- 7th December Welwyn Floral Group. Details as October, **Workshop**
- 7th December Designer 3 Group – Inbetweeners. **Christmas Workshop**
 The Pavilion, Flamstead AL3 8DE near J.9 of the M1.
 10.15 for 10.30 to 3 pm £20 with light lunch. Contact:
daphne.grant20@gmail.com or suzanne.boet@ntlworld.com
- 13th December Hatch End FAG. Details as October **Jackie Page: Jingle All the Way**
- 2024
- 25th January Hertford FC. Details as October. **Fiona Harrison tbc**
- 11th March **Area Council Meeting** The Pavilion, Ottway Walk, Welwyn AL6 9AS
- 28th March Hertford FC. Details as October. **Jane Ellis: Shed Shuffle**

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**April
2024**

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