

NATIONAL
SWEET PEA SOCIETY
ANNUAL
— 2024 —



The Early National Show

Will be held at

**RHS WISLEY GARDENS
WISLY, SURREY GU23 6QB**

26 & 27 JUNE 2024

The Show will be open

Wednesday 10.30am - 5.00pm

Thursday 10.00am - 4.00pm

Presentation of awards at 2.00pm on Wednesday

Show Managers: Roger Parsons & Phil Johnson

Entries to:

Roger Parsons, Primrose Cottage
Clayton bay, Bracklesham Bay
Chichester PO20 8JQ

Tel: 01243 673770

Email: roger@rpsweetpeas.com

Staging:

Tuesday 25 June 6.30pm to
8.30am Wednesday 26 June

Judging:

8.45am Wednesday 26 June

YOU ARE REMINDED THAT OASIS IS NOT PERMITTED AT THIS SHOW!

FREE PARKING • REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE WITHIN THE GARDENS

NATIONAL SWEET PEA SOCIETY ANNUAL 2024

Happiness held is the seed; happiness shared is the flower

John Harrian

Patron: Alan Titchmarsh

Honorary Editor: Caroline Ball
caroline_a_m_ball@yahoo.co.uk

Published by: National Sweet Pea Society
Registered charity no: 226802

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Cover: 'Ian Myers'
Photo by Roger Parsons

THANKS

The editor would like to thank Ray Guzenda of GD Associates (www.gdassociates.net) and Janet Bulstrode for all their help in producing this Annual. Without them it would not have been possible.

The opinions expressed by contributors to this publication are their own and may not necessarily coincide with the opinions of the Society or the Editor.

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'Noel Sutton'.
Photo by Darren Myers.

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Officers and Committee for 2024

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Alan Titchmarsh

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 Coordinator)

Trustees, and Executive Committee, in whom all property and funds of the Society are vested and who make decisions regarding the recipients of special awards, prizes, medals or trophies which may be granted from time to time by the Society are:

President Chairman of Committee Deputy Chairman of Committee
 Honorary Treasurer Honorary Secretary

Three representatives from the general committee to be elected on 24 April 2024

The 2023-24 elected representatives were Laurie Burrell and Phil Johnson. The third position is currently vacant.

The NSPS website is run and managed by:

Jess Harvey 89, Whiteladies Road, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 2NT
 Warracks Ltd ☎ 07968 118894 Email: jess@warracks.com
 (Webmaster)

Advertising Secretary: Vacancy

AGM

AGM 2023

By Caroline Ball

The 119th AGM of the Society was held by zoom on 2 March 2024 at 10.30 am. 23 members were present who came from a wide area including Ireland, Scotland down to the south of England and Wales.

The Chair, Alison Shreeve, welcomed members and a minute's silence was held for those members who had sadly died during the year. The minutes of the 2023 AGM were approved and no matters were arising. The reports of the Chairman and the General Secretary had been printed in the Spring Bulletin and no questions arose thereon. The Treasurer gave her report on the financial position of the Society which made a small loss for the year but still has healthy £124k of reserves. The accounts, which had been published in draft on the website ahead of the meeting and included the Trustees report for the year, were approved. No questions were raised on the Treasurer's reports or on the accounts. Each of the reports and the financial statements are reproduced in full elsewhere in this Annual.

The 100 club was drawn by Phil Johnson as follows:

1st Graeme Hollingdale

2nd Alan Evans

3rd Ann Haskins.

The election of committee members retiring under the three year rule was next on the agenda. The resignation of Gill Hazel and Janet Bulstrode left two vacancies. Gill and Janet were thanked for all their input into the Society over the years, both having been executive members and fulfilling the important roles of Advertising and General Secretary. Phil Johnson, Nicky Edwards and Darren Everest who each retired under the three-year rule were willing to stand for a further term and were re-elected en bloc. The officers re-elected were:

President Roger Parsons

Chairman Alison Shreeve

Vice Chairman Graeme Hollingdale

General Secretary Carole Tate

Treasurer Caroline Ball

There had been two nominations to fill the two committee vacancies; Simon Coia, who originates from Cornwall but now lives in Scotland, has a varied background including

working for DEFRA, at Rosemoor and is a new Sweet Pea grower and Stephen Marsland who has been involved in horticulture for over 30 years and currently works at Barnsdale, Geoff Hamilton's garden in Rutland. They were elected unanimously.

The Independent Examiner of the financial statements, Lucida de Quincy Adam of Quincy Financial was reappointed.

Roger Parsons gave a short Trials report. The George Priestley award for best seedling at Askham Bryan went to a cream seedling raised and sent to Trial by the Late Andy Hubbuck. The FC Harriss award for best seedling at Sparsholt went to a pink and white seedling raised by Frank Verge and submitted by Darren Everest which has been named after his wife 'Dawn Everest'. Roger was arranging the despatch of the certificates and the garden centre voucher prizes to the winners.

It was announced that David Torrington had been persuaded to take on the role of District rep for Derbyshire and possibly part of Leicestershire which was unanimously endorsed.

Under any other business President Roger Parsons noted how zoom had enabled Simon and Roz Warley to join the meeting from Scotland and Niall Coveney and Thomas Butterly from Ireland and gave them a special hello.

Bob Rishworth gave a special vote of thanks to the chairman Alison Shreeve. The meeting concluded at 11.04am.



A mixture of Old Fashioneds and Modern Grandiflora. *Photo by Caroline Ball.*

Chairman's Report

By Alison Shreeve

2023 was another challenging year weatherwise with a long hot dry spell which almost brought my plants to an end, until the weather broke and heavy downpours stimulated a whole new growth spurt! This fortunately provided blooms for a couple of talks which Graeme Hollingdale and I did for local horticultural societies. I hope that the interest shown by their members results in a few more people growing for shows as we certainly need to gain more participants, as experienced growers are retiring from the show bench.

Having said that, there was good representation at the Early National at Squires Garden Centre in spite of the really challenging growing conditions that many of us faced. We had an excellent team in new managers Laurie Burrell and Roger Dix who managed the show plus Roger Dix's team of helpers, essential for any well organised show! Similarly, the Late National managed by Carole Tate also had a fantastic group of supporters, setting up, breaking down and selling flowers. Thank you to everyone who made these shows a success behind the scenes and of course to all those who showed and made a great display for the general public.

It cannot be stressed firmly enough that the Society needs good networks of people willing to give their time and expertise to promote Sweet Peas and how to grow them. It is so much easier to put on a public face when you have a couple of friends to help and to provide the blooms for displays. You don't even need to be an expert; bodies are needed for all kinds of little jobs like manning the stands, selling seeds and blooms or just fetching the tea! Thank you again to those new and old hands who have helped with the flower shows where we make a big presence each year with the displays and bureaux.

It was also comforting to know that there are willing helpers out there who do read the Bulletins! Following the plea in the Autumn Bulletin for someone to run a YouTube channel to support the website I am delighted to say that Stephen Marsland has come forward and we have put up a few video links in the members resources area. These will be added to over the years, as we get talks videoed. If you have anything which you think would be of interest to our members, please do get in touch. Also, please spend a little time looking at the website now and then as we do put up news items and will add to the resources. Thank you Stephen, we are very grateful.

If you have any ideas about what you would like to see in the resources section please do get in touch, either directly with one of the committee or through your District Representative. Don't be shy; do think about getting practically involved with the Society, it's a lot of fun and you meet some very interesting people whilst learning along the way!

Sadly, the Society has lost some very experienced and well-known enthusiasts this year. Our condolences go out to all who have lost loved ones and thank you to those who remembered the Society in the midst of their loss.

However, as always, we look forward to the New Year with hope and sowing reminds us that there is another year of challenges to look forward to with our blooms. As I write my seedlings are already looking too leggy, though only recently sown and put straight into a cold greenhouse on germinating. I put it down to my location, the greenhouse is on a west-facing slope with some trees nearby and also to the dreadful weather we have been experiencing – very dark and rainy days when we have to have the lights on in the house. Perhaps I will have to resort to a lighting system for the greenhouse! I sincerely hope not. I might try sowing again as it's not too late here in the Chilterns.

I wish everyone a very enjoyable and successful growing season and for those willing to have a go, a great year exhibiting too.

General Secretary's Report

By Carole Tate

2023 has again been a challenging year, with hot sunshine in May and June then rain in July and August. The Peas were as confused as I was and flowered their socks off at least 4 weeks earlier than normal, then they curled up their toes and gave up! However, not to be beaten, the spare Old Fashioned seedlings which I planted on the north side of the garden came into their own, giving me the opportunity to enter some of the decorative and non-Spencer classes at various shows.

I am sure you all have similar tales to tell, and for whatever reason, the weather does throw out challenges to us all. As I sit writing this, the sky is grey, the ground wet and straggly remnants of flowers are looking at me balefully. No way am I going out in that! The garden can wait 'til another day. It does, however, give me time to reflect on the season and to plan for next year.

2024 will see me eagerly digging over my beds, sorting out the pots and setting up my watering system. Seed varieties have been already chosen, using recommendations from friends and my old tested favourites. 'Gwendoline' is always a good exhibition plant, and 'Sir Jimmy Shand' did well for me last season. 'Cupani' is always a strong Old Fashioned, I also like 'Black Knight' and 'Flora Norton'. Throw in a pink, white and a few mixed and I will have enough to make a vase and bowl at the National. I am also going to try some of the dwarf varieties in pots, then I can move them about the garden to take advantage of the weather.

I grow species in large pots and will be planting enough cultivars to give me a succession of colours and choice throughout the season. These gorgeous, delicate, thumb nail sized plants are so pretty. I love them and they look great in vases around the house. Please have a look back at the Autumn Bulletin to see hints and tips on growing in pots.

It's not just the physical exercise I enjoy, but the mental health benefits of preparing and nurturing the seedlings and carefree pottering about the garden. The joy of smelling the fragrance of the first flowering Sweet Pea is hard to beat. Let's hope the weather is kind to us and the pests are kept at bay.

If you would like more information on how to grow and the activities for 2024 please go to our website www.sweetpeas.org or join our Facebook page "For the Love of Sweet Peas". You can also contact your local District Representative (details in the Annual or on the website)

This year's AGM will again be held via Zoom, which will eliminate geographical constraints, so please feel free to join us. Details of how are in the AGM Notice in this Bulletin or on the website.

I hope you all have a successful and enjoyable flowering season.

Treasurer's Report

By Caroline Ball

The financial results of the Society are still continuing to recover following the severe curtailment of activities in 2020 as a result of covid. Income levels are up on 2022 but have still not recovered to the levels experienced in 2019, being down by circa £5k on that year.

The overall result for 2023 was a small loss of £(1,426) (2022 £5,760) this was after an unrealised loss of £(£983) (2022 £(6,520)) on investments held and managed by the CCLA. To put this into some context and to reassure members, the investments showed a £12,613 unrealised gain in 2021. Since our year end 31 October 2023 the investments have increased in value by over £8,000. The CCLA is the UK's largest charity fund manager. They are mindful of the investment strategy of charities like ours which includes the creation of revenue, the sustainability of investment over time and the control of risk, both financial and reputational. As I have said previously, investments do fluctuate in value year on year and should be looked at longer term, this year's reduction in value reflects many factors affecting the investment market including the state of the UK economy which is now officially in recession, the cost of living crisis and the war in Ukraine all of which have had widespread financial consequences. Despite

the fall over 2022 the value of our investments are still valued at more than in 2020 with a value of £69,720 at October 2023 versus £64,610 at year end 2020.

Whilst we do not have direct control over the performance of our investments we do control our charitable activities, which this year show a modest loss of £(443) (2022 profit of £850) reflecting inflationary increases in the Society's general costs and increased activity in certain areas, which the Committee and your Treasurer carefully monitor.

Income levels are up slightly to £23,763 (2022 £20,373). Membership income and donations is up on 2022 at £15,625 versus £14,410 in 2022. This reflects the modest increase in membership fees balancing a 5% drop in membership, and generous levels of donations, up by £716 to £5,555. Despite increasing levels of donations in 2023 it is sobering to note that 5 years ago the level of donations were £3.6k more than now.

Shows and displays income was up to £3,164 compared with £1,732 in 2022. This reflected the event at Blenheim flower show that we have not attended before and the sale of seeds provided at cost by Roger Parsons and Phil Johnson at the displays in the South of England.

Overall costs were £24,206 compared with £19,523 in 2022. Other than inflation, the major differences were £2,267 on the purchase of seeds sold at a profit of c£1,600, plus the design and purchase of new banners and leaflets of £1,167. Inflation increased publications costs by £460 to £9,095 alongside donations to other Sweet Pea Societies to promote Sweet Peas of £630 and depreciation of our new fabulous website of £880, which was completed during the year and whose cost is being depreciated over 5 years.

The value of our investments closed the year at £94,403 (2022: £95,386). Stock values at cost were £15,744 (2022: £16,484) included the purchase of stamps before the prices increased to keep postage costs down. Debtors of £2,158 were for gift aid reclaimed on qualifying donations (2022; £1,964 gift aid and £510 from Chorley council re NW show). Creditors include the cost of the independent examination and show prize cheques not yet cashed. The overall value of the Society was £124,375 at year end versus £125,801 last year, a satisfactory result but we need to remain vigilant on costs, work hard on retaining and increasing membership and on activities that draw in donations to enable us to achieve our charitable objects.

Trustees Annual Report

Year ended 31 October 2023

The Trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 October 2023.

Structure, governance and management

The Society was registered as a charity on 11 March 1964 under registration number 226802. The Society is governed by rules revised and adopted on 12 March 2016.

The general management of the Society is conducted by a general committee of up to sixteen persons from the Society's members to be elected for a period of three years at the Society's annual general meeting. The general committee has power to:

- Appoint an Executive Committee from the Society's members for the preparation and conduct of any business. The officers of the Society are automatically members of the Executive Committee. The members of the Executive Committee are the Trustees of the Society.
- Fill vacancies of officers and members of the committee occurring during the year and co-opt as deemed necessary.
- Appoint Society's representatives to the Sweet Pea Trials Committee.
- Appoint show managers, editors, advertising secretary, sub-committees, honorary members and president emeritus.

There shall not be fewer than three members of the Society appointed by the general committee as trustees, in addition to the officers of the Society (President, Chairman, Deputy Chairman, General Secretary, Treasurer), in whom all property and funds of the Society shall be vested in trust for the Society, and as to real property upon trust for sale with power to postpone sale. The trustees shall not sell any land and the funds shall not be vested or realised without the authority of the general committee.

Objectives and activities

The Society consists of Members and Affiliated Societies paying an annual or life subscription to the Society. The object of the Society is to disseminate knowledge of sweet peas and other *Lathyrus* species for the public benefit, to encourage, improve and extend the cultivation of these species by means of scientific trials and the holding of exhibitions and displays, by publications and such other lawful activities as the Trustees shall deem necessary.

Public benefit

The Trustees consider they have complied with the duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Achievements and performance

In 2023 the Society ran two successful National shows at new venues to the Society. The Early National was held at Squires Garden Centre, Shepperton by kind invitation of its chairman emeritus Mr Colin Squire OBE. The Late National took place at the new RHS garden in Bridgewater by kind invitation of the RHS. Exhibitor numbers at both shows had not recovered to pre-pandemic levels which we consider was down to a difficult growing season for exhibition standard blooms, the ban on certain non-recyclable staging materials at RHS venues and the cost of living crisis, in particular high fuel cost amongst other factors. A total of 238 vases and other exhibits were shown at the Nationals, a slight reduction from 2022. Regional shows were held by the Chiltern Sweet Pea Society, the Yorkshire Sweet Pea Society, in Wem and the North West Regions of the NSPS and each was well supported.

Most of the administrative meetings and the AGM on 4 March 2023 for the Society were held online.

During 2023, the Society produced five publications in total; three informative and educational journals, the Annual and two Bulletins, the comprehensive classification list of varieties and the show schedule which covered the two National shows. 'Enjoy Sweet Peas' was provided to all new members and made available to a wider public.

The Society website was relaunched in November 2023, work that commenced during 2022. The refreshed look and content plus innovations such as the members only area, the facility to ask questions and join the Society directly from the website have been well received. It is hoped that this new look and regularly updated content will enable the Society to promote its aims to an even wider public. An online only membership has been introduced to this end with modest uptake so far.

During the year the Society has maintained its social media presence via its popular Facebook pages, its topical Instagram presence and X (formerly Twitter) pages.

Trials of novel Sweet Peas were held at Sparsholt College, Winchester, and Askham Bryan College, York with 22 varieties grown at each venue. 25 varieties were given awards. The Trials at Sparsholt were again disappointing because of staffing issues at the college and as a result the decision was made to move them in 2024 to West Dean Gardens, near Chichester in West Sussex. The second year of the RHS Sweet Pea trial forum for Grandiflora type Sweet Peas was well represented by NSPS. 14 RHS Awards of Garden Merit were given. The Trial was very popular with visitors to Wisley and helped bring Sweet Peas to the notice of a much wider audience of gardeners. A new proposal

is in hand for a future Trial at one of the RHS gardens. A National Collection of Lathyrus, which also has Scientific National Collection status, is held by Society Trustee and President of the Society, Roger Parsons. This collection covers approximately 70 species and 1,400 cultivars.

The Society staged popular displays manned with experts available to answer questions at many prestigious horticultural shows open to the general public. The Society exhibit at RHS Tatton Park was again awarded an RHS Gold Medal. Other major shows attended included the Royal Windsor Flower Show where the NSPS display was again visited by the Countess of Wessex and Society Patron Alan Titchmarsh, the Blenheim Flower show, the RHS Wisley Specialist Plant Society event and the Southport flower show. The various informative leaflets and banners used at events were updated during 2023.

A network of area representatives is maintained and work is being done to increase the level of regional activity as a way to enhance membership. Roz Warley has been appointed as the new district representative coordinator and has established a forum for sharing ideas. Talks and workshops were conducted in many areas. A National Sweet Pea Society YouTube channel with educational videos is at the planning stage. Disappointingly the overall Membership of the Society has fallen by c 5% in the last year.

Financial review

Incoming resources of £23,763 arose during the financial year whilst outgoings were £24,206. The revaluation of our investments has given the Society an unrealised loss of £(983). The overall result for the year is net loss of £(1,426) with a small loss of £(443) before the unrealised loss on investments. The Society's unrestricted funds as at 31 October 2023 amounted to £124,375 (2022: £125,801) which includes Designated Funds of £30,583 (2022: £30,583).

Reserves Policy

The Society's reserves consist of accumulated income and designated funds. The designated funds are identified with past members from donations received and held by the Society so as to provide income towards the cost of annual trophies given in memory of the past members and the Life membership fund contributes towards the cost of publications for life members. The funds are invested in COIF Charities Deposit Fund and COIF Charities Investment Fund income units. Reserves held as accumulated income are at a level determined by the Trustees and Management Committee to provide assurance that the Society will be financially viable for the future and able to build on the Society's one hundred and twenty three years' of history.

The Trustees and Committee are mindful of the current cost of living crisis putting pressure on its activities and the ability of members and the general public to donate towards its charitable activities, the difficulty of securing volunteers to support its activities and to find suitable show venues at affordable prices. The financial review reports the level of reserves held at the financial year end.

Risk Management

The Trustees have reviewed the risks to which the Society is exposed and consider there are no major risks facing the Society providing the Society has sufficient financial resources and volunteers to carry on its charitable activities.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 2 March 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

Prof A Shreeve, Trustee.



'Mary Priestley'.
Photo by Darren Myers.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Members of the National Sweet Pea Society

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of The National Sweet Pea Society ('the charity') for the year ended 31 October 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Lucinda De Quincey Adams MA ACA
Independent Examiner

Income and Expenditure Account

Year ended 31 October 2023

		Year from 1 Nov 22 to 31 Oct 23	Year from 1 Nov 21 to 31 Oct 22
	Notes	Total funds	Total funds
		£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS:			
Subscriptions, donations, legacies and sponsorship	4	15,625	14,410
Charitable activities	5	5,099	3,735
Investment income	6	3,039	2,228
TOTAL INCOME		23,763	20,373
EXPENDITURE:			
Charitable activities	7,8	24,206	19,523
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		24,206	19,523
NET GAINS/(LOSSES) ON INVESTMENTS	10	(983)	(6,520)
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(1,426)	(5,670)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward		125,801	131,471
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		124,375	125,801

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

Join the 100 Club. £10 joining fee, 5 draws a year.
Prizes £100, £25, £10.

Contact: Caroline Ball, Challow Mead, Silver Lane,
West Challow, Oxon OX12 9TN

Statement of Financial Position

31 October 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Investments	14	94,403	95,386
Website	13	3,520	1,200
		97,923	96,586
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock	15	15,744	16,484
Debtors	16	2,158	2,474
Cash at bank and in hand:		9,858	11,496
		27,760	30,454
CREDITORS			
Amounts due within one year	17	(1,308)	(1,239)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		26,452	29,215
Total assets less current liabilities		124,375	125,801
NET ASSETS		124,375	125,801
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY			
Unrestricted funds	18	124,375	125,801
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS		124,375	125,801

These financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on 2 March 2024, and are signed on behalf of the board by:

Prof A Shreeve, Trustee

Ms C Ball, Trustee

The notes on the following pages form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 October 2023

1. General information

The charity is a public benefit entity and a registered charity in England and Wales and is unincorporated. The address of the principal office is Challow Mead, Silver Lane, West Challow, Oxfordshire, OX12 9TN.

2. Statement of compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland', the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Charities Act 2011.

3. Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and liabilities measured at fair value through income or expenditure.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

The entity constitutes as a public benefit entity as defined in FRS102.

Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

Disclosure exemptions

The entity satisfied the criteria of being a small charity as defined in Charities Act 2011 and the Charities SORP (FRS102) and has taken advantage of the disclosure exemptions available to it.

Accounting period

The accounting period runs to the 31 October each year.

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

No significant estimates or judgements have been made by management when preparing the financial statements. The policies followed are shown below.

Income tax

The Society is exempt from taxation on its income and gains on investments.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees to further any of the charity's purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular future project or commitment.

Incoming resources

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when entitlement has passed to the charity, it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the charity and the amount can be reliably measured. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Income from subscriptions and donations is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the gift, receipt is probable and its amount can be measured reliably. Investment income is recognised when receivable and is shown gross to include income tax recovered and recoverable. Investment income comprises the returns on investments for the year and interest on cash balances.

Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is classified under headings of the statement of financial activities to which it relates:

- expenditure on raising funds includes the costs of all fundraising activities, events, charitable trading activities, and the sale of donated goods.
- expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs incurred by a charity in undertaking activities that further its charitable aims for the benefit of its beneficiaries, including those support costs and costs relating to the governance of the charity apportioned to charitable activities.

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost or valuation of an asset, less its residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Show Stands & Equipment – 33% straight line

Website – 20% straight line

Investments

Investments are measured at fair value with changes in fair value being recognised in profit or loss.

Stocks

Stocks are measured at the lower of cost and estimated selling price less costs to complete and sell. Cost includes all costs of purchase, costs of conversion and other costs incurred in bringing the stock to its present location and condition.

4. Subscriptions, donations and legacies

FUNDS DONATIONS	Unrestricted £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted £	Total 2022 £
Donations	5,555	5,555	4,839	4,839
SUBSCRIPTIONS				
Members	6,934	6,934	6,328	6,328
Affiliated societies	978	978	1,112	1,112
Gift Aid	2,158	2,158	2,131	2,131
TOTAL	15,625	15,625	14,410	14,410

The Trustees contributed £2,159 to the Charity in donations and sponsorship during the year (2022: £2,014).

5. Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2022 £
Sale of goods as part of direct charitable activities	3,164	3,164	1,732	1,732
Trial Fees	217	217	–	–
Advertising in publications	558	558	850	850
100 club lottery	1,070	1,070	990	990
Exhibition entry fees	90	90	163	163
TOTAL	5,099	5,099	3,735	3,735

6. Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2022 £
Interest on bank deposits	900	900	146	146
Repayment supplement	41	41	–	–
COIF Charities Investment Fund	–	–	–	–
Dividends	2,098	2,098	2,082	2,082
TOTAL	3,039	3,039	2,228	2,228

7. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

The breakdown of expenditure on charitable activities is shown below:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Cost of merchandise	507	44
Trials	–	–
Award cards	198	68
Society medals	191	517
Seeds cost	2,267	–
Banners & Leaflets	1,167	–
Display costs	88	–
Printing Annual and other publications	9,095	8,635
Exhibition prizes	2,365	2,661
Exhibition expenses	1,001	1,541
100 club prizes	675	710
Donations to promote Sweet Peas	630	–
Sundry expenses	717	1,010
Depreciation of website	880	–
Support costs (note 9)	3,375	3,375
Governance costs	1,050	1,000
TOTAL	24,206	19,523

8. Expenditure on charitable activities by activity type

	2023	2022
	£	£
Charitable activities	23,156	18,523
Governance costs	1,050	1,000
TOTAL	24,206	19,523

9. Analysis of support costs

The breakdown of support costs is shown in the table below:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Other printing & stationery	679	803
Postage & telephone	2,385	2,271
Meeting expenses	311	263
Sundry expenses	–	–
TOTAL	3,375	3,337

10. Net gains/losses on investments

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2022 £
Gains/(losses) on other investment assets - COIF Charity Investment Fund	<u>(983)</u>	<u>(983)</u>	<u>(6,520)</u>	<u>(6,520)</u>

11. Independent examination fees

	2023 £	2022 £
Fees payable to the independent examiner for:		
Independent examination of the financial statements	<u>1,050</u>	<u>1,000</u>

12. Trustee remuneration and expenses

No Trustee received any remuneration in the year (2022: £Nil). The average number of employees during the year was Nil (2022: Nil). No Trustee or any other person connected to the Society had any personal interest in any contact or transaction entered into by the Society during the year. 2 Trustees (2022: 6) were reimbursed a total of £762 (2022: £1,792) for travel and other costs on Society business. This sum includes £651 (2022: £1,516) of costs incurred directly by two Trustees (2022: 3) in their roles as show managers for the two National shows.

13. Tangible fixed assets

The tangible assets of the Society consist of show equipment and the Society website. Show equipment costing £2,064 is still in use and is fully depreciated. The website, which was work in progress at 31 October 2022, was fully constructed in the year and was brought into use in November 2022.

	2023	2022
	£	£
Website - Cost at 1 Nov 22 and 1 Nov 2021	1,200	–
Additions	3,200	1,200
Cost at 31 Oct 23 and 31 Oct 22	4,400	1,200
Depreciation at 31 Oct 23 and 31 Oct 22	(880)	–
Net book value at 31 Oct 23 and 31 Oct 2022	3,520	1,200

14. Investments

	Cash or cash equivalents £	Other investments £	Total £
Cost or valuation			
At 1 November 2022	24,683	70,703	95,386
Additions	–	–	–
Fair value movements	–	(983)	(983)
At 31 October 2023	24,683	69,720	94,403
Impairment			
At 31 October 2022 & 31 October 2023		–	–
Carrying amount			
At 31 October 2023	24,683	69,720	94,403
At 31 October 2022	24,683	70,703	95,386

Listed investments

All investments shown above are held at valuation and relate to the designated funds invested in Charities Investment Funds (COIF).

15. Stocks

	2023 £	2022 £
Finished goods and goods for resale	15,744	16,484

16. Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Prepayments and accrued income	–	510
Other debtors	2,158	1,964
TOTAL	2,158	2,474

17. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accruals and deferred income	1,308	1,239

18. Analysis of charitable funds

	At 1 Nov 22	Income	Expenditure	Gains and losses	At 31 Oct 23
	£	£	£	£	
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	95,218	23,763	(24,206)	(983)	93,792
Designated fund	30,583	–	–	–	30,583
TOTAL	125,801	23,763	(24,206)	(983)	124,375

	At 1 Nov 21	Income	Expenditure	Gains and losses	At 31 Oct 22
	£	£	£	£	
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	100,888	20,373	(19,523)	(6,520)	95,218
Designated fund	30,583	–	–	–	30,583
TOTAL	131,471	20,373	(19,523)	(6,520)	125,801

19. Analysis of net assets between funds

Designated Funds are analysed as follows:

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Total funds
	£	£	£
Fixed assets	67,340	30,583	97,923
Current assets	27,760	–	27,760
Current liabilities	(1,308)	–	(1,308)
Net Assets	93,792	30,583	124,375

	At 1 Nov 2022	Income during the year	Transfers (to) from income and expenditure account	At 31 Oct 2023
	£	£	£	£
Movements in the year:				
Life Membership Fund	21,810	–	–	21,810
Colledge Prize Fund	300	–	–	300
Charles Hamner Memorial Fund	510	–	–	510
J C P M Davis Memorial Fund	300	–	–	300
E R Janes Vase Account	100	–	–	100
Frances Williams Memorial Fund	234	–	–	234
FC Harriss Memorial Fund	500	–	–	500
Bolton Cup Proceeds Fund	2,068	–	–	2,068
Tom Baines Memorial Fund	100	–	–	100
B R Jones Memorial Fund	1,761	–	–	1,761
Burfoot Trophy Class	2,000	–	–	2,000
Whittemore Fund	400	–	–	400
Tom Cordy Award	500	–	–	500
	30,583	–	–	30,583

20. Related Parties

The Society requires all members of the Executive and General Committees declare and, if necessary, withdraw from the relevant part of the meeting should any conflicts of interest potentially arise. The Society also requires that all committee members, or anyone else undertaking activities on behalf of the Society, declare any material interests they or a related party may have in the activities of the Society.

During the year, Roger Parsons of Roger Parsons Sweet Peas, and Phil Johnson of Agrifusion made purchases of advertising from the Society. These transactions were completed on the same terms as other advertising sold by the Society.

The Society purchased sweet pea seed from Roger Parsons Sweet Peas and from Phil Johnson at discounted rates for sale at Society events. The Society offered to purchase sweet pea seeds from other seed merchants on the same terms. The Society benefitted from the donation of plants and blooms from 6 trustees at no cost to the Society.

Jack Davis Award

By Tom Atherton and Alison Shreeve

This year's recipient (and excuse me if I repeat this word as it is the only one that does not give away any clues) has been a member of our Society for almost a decade.

The recipient is a keen Sweet Pea grower and also an exhibitor. Ten years ago, the recipient knew very little about Sweet Peas but now is regularly giving top quality advice to other growers and supporting and encouraging new comers.

The recipient not only has growing skills but is also a very good organiser and has been instrumental in the Society's success stories over the last few years. The recipient is also very persuasive and has encouraged many of our more recent members to join the Society. The organisational skills have been put to good use and the recipient now holds one of the leading offices in the Society.

It now becomes impossible not to give identifying clues but I will list some of the recipient's involvements. This person is a committee member, a National Show Manager and a Trustee of the Society.

Born in Lancashire, she was a local Bank Manager up until her retirement. In addition to her passion for Sweet Peas, she enjoys walking holidays and has successfully

completed a number of world-famous walks – the Inca Trail, the Atlas Mountains, the Great Wall of China and the Milford Trail in New Zealand and she regularly travels the length of Britain. Her other forms of exercise include pole aerobics and line dancing. In between all this she is Treasurer of the local theatre group, group secretary of the local U3A and a member of the Lancashire Dialect group – a very busy person!

Last year, she stepped in at the last minute to run the Late National Show which was very successful and is currently leading a team in the North West who is pushing our Society forward on all fronts.

Will Carole Tate, our General Secretary, please step forward to collect this well-deserved Jack Davis Award.



Carole Tate.

Photo by Andrew Fletcher.

NSPS Shows

The Early Show – Squires Garden Centre, Shepperton

1 & 2 July 2023

CLASS	SPECIAL CLASSES	No. OF EXHIBITS STAGED
A	THE DUO CLASS 1st J & L Morgan 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
B	E W KING CLASS 1st – 2nd – 3rd –	(0)
C	SIX VASES 1st K Gray 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
D	THREE VASES 1st K Gray 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
E	W E ALSEN NOVELTY CUP 1st J & L Morgan 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
F	UNWIN CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
G	THE SOCIETY 20 (No Entries)	(0)

DIVISION I

1	ROGER PARSONS CHALLENGE PRIZE 1st B Bartlett 2nd D Everest 3rd –	(2)
2	SUTTON CLASS 1st R Read 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
3	TOM JONES CUP (No Entries)	(0)
4	BURPEE CUP 1st D Fitton 2nd R Read 3rd –	(2)
5	HAMMETT CLASS (No Entries)	(0)

CLASS	No. OF EXHIBITS STAGED
6	ONE VASE, WHITE OR CREAM 1st D Fitton 2nd – 3rd – (1)
7	ONE VASE, RED OR ORANGE-RED (No Entries) (0)
8	ONE VASE, MAGENTA, MAROON OR PURPLE 1st B Bartlett 2nd – 3rd – (1)
9	ONE VASE, MAUVE, LAVENDER OR BLUE 1st D Fitton 2nd R Read 3rd – (2)
10	ONE VASE, PINK OR PICOTEE 1st D Fitton 2nd – 3rd – (1)
11	ONE VASE, MIXED CULTIVARS 1st R Parsons 2nd J Rieley 3rd K Gray (4)
DIVISION II	
12	ONE VASE SPENCER (No Entries) (0)
12a	ONE VASE NON-SPENCER (No Entries) (0)
DIVISION III	
14	9 VASES DISTINCT (No Entries) (0)
15	6 VASES DISTINCT 1st N Hatch 2nd – 3rd – (1)
16	3 VASES DISTINCT 1st N Hatch 2nd D Chapple 3rd – (2)
17	MIXED BOWL (No Entries) (0)
18	ONE VASE, WHITE OR CREAM (No Entries) (0)
19	ONE VASE, RED OR ORANGE-RED (No Entries) (0)
20	ONE VASE, MAGENTA, MAROON OR PURPLE 1st N Hatch 2nd – 3rd – (1)

CLASS	No. OF EXHIBITS STAGED
21 ONE VASE, MAUVE, LAVENDER OR BLUE (No Entries)	(0)
22 ONE VASE, PINK (No Entries)	(0)
23 ONE VASE, ORANGE, PICOTEE OR FANCY (No Entries)	(0)
24 ONE VASE, MIXED CULTIVARS 1st J Rieley 2nd N Hatch 3rd –	(2)
DIVISION IV	
25 LEVINGTON CUP 6 VASES DISTINCT (No Entries)	(0)
26 THE BEN BULSTRODE MEMORIAL PRIZE 3 VASES DISTINCT (No Entries)	(0)
27 MIXED BOWL (No Entries)	(0)
28 ONE VASE, WHITE OR CREAM 1st J Rieley 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
29 ONE VASE, RED OR ORANGE-RED (No Entries)	(0)
30 ONE VASE, MAGENTA, MAROON OR PURPLE (No Entries)	(0)
31 ONE VASE, MAUVE, LAVENDER OR BLUE (No Entries)	(0)
32 ONE VASE, PINK (No Entries)	(0)
33 ONE VASE, ORANGE, PICOTEE OR FANCY 1st J Rieley 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
34 ONE VASE, MIXED CULTIVARS 1st J Rieley 2nd – 3rd –	(1)

DIVISION V

35	EVAN HINCE CUP 3 VASES DISTINCT 1st J & L Morgan 2nd A Shreeve 3rd R Barron	(3)
36	MIXED BOWL 1st J & L Morgan 2nd J Adams 3rd A Shreeve	(3)
37	ONE VASE, WHITE OR CREAM 1st R Barron 2nd J Adams 3rd J & L Morgan	(3)
38	ONE VASE, RED OR ORANGE-RED 1st J Adams 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
39	ONE VASE, MAGENTA, MAROON OR PURPLE 1st R Barron 2nd J Adams 3rd –	(2)
40	ONE VASE, MAUVE, LAVENDER OR BLUE 1st R Barron 2nd J Adams 3rd –	(2)
41	ONE VASE, PINK 1st J Adams 2nd R Barron 3rd –	(2)
42	ONE VASE, ORANGE, PICOTEE OR FANCY 1st R Barron 2nd J Adams 3rd –	(2)
43	ONE VASE, MIXED CULTIVARS 1st A Shreeve 2nd J & L Morgan 3rd J Adams	(3)

DIVISION VI

50	HENRY ECKFORD BOWL 1st A Shreeve 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
51	VAL & JOHN GOOD CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
52	OLD FASHIONED CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
53	WHITTEMORE CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
54	NOVICES OLD-FASHIONED CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
55	SEMI-GRANDIFLORA BOWL (No Entries)	(0)

CLASS	No. OF EXHIBITS STAGED
56 GRANDIFLORA BOWL (No Entries)	(0)
57 NEWINGTON TRIPLE (No Entries)	(0)
58 CHRISSIE CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
59 NOVICES GRANDIFLORA / SEMIGRANDIFLORA CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
60 AMY ANDREWS PERPETUAL TROPHY (No Entries)	(0)
61 LATHYRUS SPECIES (PERENNIAL) 1st C Ball 2nd R Parsons 3rd A Shreeve	(4)
62 POT-GROWN 1st A Shreeve 2nd G Hollingdale 3rd –	(2)

DIVISION VII

63 THE JOHN BISHOP MEMORIAL CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
64 UNWIN BASKET 1st A Shreeve 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
65 TOM BAINES CLASS 1st C Ball 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
66 E R JANES VASE 1st J Morgan 2nd L Morgan 3rd –	(2)
67 THE CORNISH BOWL (No Entries)	(0)
68 THE FRANCES WILLIAMS MEMORIAL DRIFTWOOD CLASS 1st C Ball 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
69 THE SYDENHAM CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
70 PETITE CLASS 1st A Shreeve 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
71 LES HARVEY PEDESTAL CLASS (No Entries)	(0)

SPECIAL AWARDS**THE JACK HARRISS MEMORIAL TROPHY (Best Exhibit)**

B Bartlett (Class 1)

THE CLAY CUP (Best Vase)

D Fitton ('Mary Priestley' Class 6)

THE COLLEDGE PRIZE (Best Lavender)

R Read ('Honeymoon' Class 2)

THE TERRY SEWELL PRIZE (Best Anniversary)

D Fitton ('Anniversary' Class 4)

THE GOWER SEEDLING PRIZE (Best Seedling)

Not Awarded

THE CYNTHIA DAVIES CUP (Best Vase Div III)

N Hatch ('Gwendoline' Class 15)

THE WARWICK CUP (Best Vase Div IV)

J C Rieley ('White Frills' class 28)

THE DIVISION V PRIZE (Best Vase)

J & L Morgan ('The Princess Royal' Class 35)

KEITH BREWER PRIZE (Best Vase Div VI)

J & L Morgan (Class 35)

THE HENRY ECKFORD CUP (Best Exhibit Div VII)

C Ball (Class 61)

BEST BOWL PRIZE

C Ball (Class 61)

BEST DECORATIVE PRIZE

C Ball (Class 68)

THE TOM SHILLING PRIZE (Best Vase by Newcomer)

R Barron ('Judith Wilkinson' Class 39)

*“Flowers are the music of the ground.
From earth’s lips spoken without sound.”*

Edwin Curran

Audit of the Early National Show – Squires Garden Centre, Shepperton

1 & 2 July 2023

By Liz Harvey

No	Name of Cultivar	1	2	3	Unplaced	Total	Colour	Class
1	Anniversary	8	3	0	0	11	White with Pink Edge	15
2	Gwendoline	7	1	0	0	8	Pale Magenta Pink	4a
3	White Frills	4	2	0	0	6	White	1
4	Jilly	4	1	0	0	5	Cream	2
5	Just Julia	3	2	0	0	5	Mid Blue	9a
6	Naomi Nazareth	3	1	0	0	4	Pale Blue	9b
7	Sir Jimmy Shand	2	2	0	0	4	Striped	16
8	Somerset Lady	3	0	0	0	3	Magenta	4
9	Mary Priestley	2	1	0	0	3	White	1
	Mrs Bernard Jones	2	1	0	0	3	Rose Pink on White	10b
11	Daily Mail	1	2	0	0	3	Cerise Pink	10c
12	Judith Wilkinson	2	0	0	0	2	Magenta	4
	Millennium	2	0	0	0	2	Red (Crimson)	3b
14	Our Harry	1	1	0	0	2	Mid Blue	9a
	Ruby Anniversary	1	1	0	0	2	Red (Crimson)	3b
16	The Princess Royal*	1	0	1	0	2	White	1
17	Alan Roberts	1	0	0	0	1	Striped	16
	Clotted Cream	1	0	0	0	1	Cream	2
	Evie Jones	1	0	0	0	1	Magenta	4
	Hero	1	0	0	0	1	Dark Blue	9
	Honeymoon	1	0	0	0	1	Lavender Flush	8a
	Joejess	1	0	0	0	1	Orange	12
	Pink Pearl	1	0	0	0	1	Pale Pink on White	10
	Platinum Jubilee	1	0	0	0	1	Striped	16
	Purple Pimpernel	1	0	0	0	1	Bicoloured	16a
	Queen of Hearts	1	0	0	0	1	Striped	16
	Serenity	1	0	0	0	1	Lavender	8
	Solitude	1	0	0	0	1	Lavender	8
	Southbourne	1	0	0	0	1	Pale Pink on White	10
	Windsor	1	0	0	0	1	Maroon	5
31	Dawn Everest	0	1	0	0	1	Novelty	–
	Eclipse	0	1	0	0	1	Mauve	7

*The Princess Royal was exhibited under a trade name as Gardener's Jubilee.

No	Name of Cultivar	1	2	3	Unplaced	Total	Colour	Class
	Grandma Butt	0	1	0	0	1	Magenta	4
	Lady Nicholson	0	1	0	0	1	Striped	16
	Lizanne Davies	0	1	0	0	1	Novelty	–
	Margaret Hastie	0	1	0	0	1	Striped	16
	Mark Harrod	0	1	0	0	1	Red (Scarlet)	3a
	Patricia Marilyn	0	1	0	0	1	Pale Pink on White	10
	Sunset	0	1	0	0	1	Striped	16
40	Karen Louise	0	0	1	0	1	Lavender	8
	Night Sky	0	0	1	0	1	Striped	16
	Valerie Harrod	0	0	1	0	1	Orange Pink	13
	Seedlings	0	0	0	0			
	Totals	60	27	4	0	91		
	Non Spencers	0	0	0	0	0		
	Mixed vases	4	3	2	2	9		
	Decorative & Bowls	10	4	2	1	16		
	Total	74	34	8	3	116		



Report of the Early Show – Squires Garden Centre, Shepperton

By Laurie Burrell & Roger Dix



**Society display (foreground),
Show benches (background).**
Photo by Alison Shreeve.

Taking on the role of Show Managers for the first time was a major step for both of us at such a prestigious event in the calendar of the National Sweet Pea Society in 2023. When Mr Colin Squire OBE suggested to the Society that they stage the 2023 Early Show at Squires Ltd Garden Centre in Shepperton it was accepted on the condition that it was managed by local members of the Society.

Mr Squire had originally approached Laurie in late 2021 to engage in the process of contacting senior committee members and the Middlesex District Representative Roger Dix to consider his invitation. Both Roger and Caroline Ball were enthusiastic to accept this offer as it opened an opportunity to stage the event at a new venue close to the Greater

London Area. One of the main advantages of holding the Early Show in the Shepperton Garden Centre was that a large marquee would be in situ within the gardens display area to house the Early Show towards the end of June. There followed several meetings between the Society and Colin Squire during early 2022 to clarify several issues regarding the overall size of the marquee, lighting, security and access for exhibitors overnight before the committee consented to accept his offer as a suitable venue for their annual event.



Show Manager Laurie Burrell.
Photo by Patricia Burrell.

Roger and Laurie decided to split the responsibilities for planning the show with Laurie taking on the administration and Roger Dix overseeing the logistics and transportation of show material to Shepperton from Essex. Squires Ltd provided the marquee, tables, and chairs free of charge as part of their involvement in supporting the local community floral events. The company have for many years supported the National Rose and Fuchsia shows and their offer to the National Sweet Pea Society to stage the Early Show at Shepperton is greatly appreciated by our members.



Duo Class winning exhibit with Alsen Cup. Photo by Lewis Morgan

The prolonged extreme high temperatures in June certainly affected the quality of Sweet Peas available for members to exhibit by the closing day for entries, several members contacted Laurie to apologise for not supporting the event. On learning of the situation our President Roger Parsons and Treasurer Caroline Ball immediately sprang into action and rang regular exhibitors to encourage them to enter as many vases as was possible to support the show. Fortunately, the outside temperature dropped, and rain arrived overnight resulting in members finding sufficient blooms to exhibit and stage on the Friday evening at the show.

Prior to the show concerns had been expressed as to whether the marquee would be large enough to accommodate the previous volume of entries and exhibitors, and if the level of lighting for staging would be sufficient. Both these concerns were overcome by the quality of the marquee and its own strip lighting fitted to the apex supports, several members commented on the excellent lighting provided to stage exhibits. The flooring on which the marquee was erected was brick paved and very level, so no problems arose with staging exhibits on the tables and tiering.

Fourteen exhibitors entered the show ranging from a single entry to a maximum of 16 entries, accounting for 100 vases and sixteen bowls and arrangement. In the main classes A to G only had a single entry, Class 1 Roger Parsons Challenge Prize attracted two entries Brian Bartlett and Darren Everest. Brian Bartlett's winning set comprised 'Judith Wilkinson', 'Jilly', 'Windsor', 'Mrs B Jones', 'Solitude', 'Anniversary', 'Millennium', 'Just Julia', 'White Frills', 'Gwendoline', 'Naomi Nazareth' and 'Queen of Hearts'. Darren's 2nd place selection was: 'Gwendoline', 'Lady Nicholson', 'Anniversary', 'White Frills', 'Sir Jimmy Shand', 'Margaret Hastie', 'Mark Harrod', 'Just Julia', 'Daily Mail', 'Naomi Nazareth' and the two novelties he launched at Chelsea: 'Lizanne Davies' and 'Dawn Everest'.

Robert Read's nine vase exhibit in class 2 combined 'Honeymoon' which won Best Lavender in show, 'Clotted Cream', 'Gwendoline', 'Ruby Anniversary', 'Somerset Lady', 'Purple Pimpernel' (a real eye-catcher), 'Serenity', 'Mary Priestley' and 'Pink Pearl'. Classes 4 and 9 with two entries exhibited in both by Dave Fitton and Rob Read. Dave Fitton's winning exhibit in class 4 was a noteworthy 'Jilly', 'Anniversary' and 'Hero'. Kathy Gray managed a worthy exhibit in class C (9 stems per vase): 'Somerset Lady', 'JoeJess' (lots of people wanted seed of this), 'Anniversary', 'Gwendoline', 'Just Julia'

Squires Garden Centre. Photo by Lewis Morgan.



and 'Mrs Bernard Jones'. Dave had an excellent show winning best vase with 'Mary Priestley' and Best Anniversary. Class 11 and 41 attracted four entries and Classes 35, 36, 37 and 43 attracting three entries. The remaining classes entered had either one or two exhibits. John Rieley won the Warwick Cup with 'White Frills' and Jenny and Lewis Morgan best vase in division V with 'Princess Royal'.

Our first entry received came some ten days before the show was from Neal Hatch who entered 12 classes in Division III at a time when we were getting reports that other exhibitors were struggling to find sufficient flowers to consider entering at least one class. Neal won three 1st in Classes 15,16,20 and a 2nd in class 24. Neal's class 15 included the rarely seen pink stripe 'Alan Roberts'. The other five were: 'Gwendoline', 'Somerset Lady', 'Jilly', 'Our Harry' and 'Anniversary'. Neal won the Cynthia Davis Cup for best vase in his division with the class 15 vase of 'Gwendoline'. Congratulations to Neal on his commitment to produce such excellent flowers under difficult weather conditions.

We had one novice Richard Barron who was won the Tom Shilling award in Class 39 with 'Judith Wilkinson' who also entered seven classes in total which was very brave at his first time showing Sweet Peas. Brian Bartlett who staged his only one exhibit in Class 1, took time to guide and advise Richard Barron on staging vases to their best advantage at a show, which proves a good example to those members who have never entered a Sweet Pea show before how experienced exhibitors of the Society will go out of their way to pass on their knowledge to members.

The decorative entries were low in numbers, reflecting the scarcity of blooms however, Jenny Morgan, Alison Shreeve, Roger Parsons, Graeme Hollingdale and Caroline Ball produced some much admired exhibits. Honours were shared amongst them though Caroline did win both Best Bowl and the Henry Eckford Cup with her bowl of the perennial latifolius 'White Pearl,' narrowly beating Roger Parsons' stunning pink latifolius bowl. Caroline also won Best Decorative exhibit with her shades of blue and purple driftwood arrangement using Old Fashioned and Modern Grandifloras.



Neal Hatch. Photo by Caroline Ball.



Brian Bartlett. *Photo by Lewis Morgan.*



Richard Barron. *Photo by Lewis Morgan.*



Early Show overview. *Photo by Lewis Morgan.*



Brian Bartlett's Winning Roger Parsons Exhibit. *Photo by Caroline Ball.*



L to R: Roger Dix, Colin Squires, Sarah Squires and Laurie Burrell.

Photo by Lewis Morgan.

Both of us as Show managers have received comments from both exhibitors and visitors to the show on the friendly atmosphere that they experienced on both days at the show, and the time given by Caroline and Alison on the NSPS stand, which they had created with Graeme Hollingdale, to explain the variety of cultivars on display. Living within a reasonable journey to and from the show venue of just under five miles made covering the arrival of exhibitors

on the Friday from 6 pm to 8 am far more flexible for us to alternate being available to welcome members to the event and get a period of rest and being refreshed prior to judging commenced on the Saturday.

Squires Garden Centre, Shepperton proved to be an excellent venue to hold the Early Show, with first class catering facilities available to members all day, clean and well-maintained toilets in the outside area which remained open and accessible to exhibitors when the retail area was closed. Squires Ltd employed a security guard to patrol the site during Friday night and to allow access for members to the in-store toilets which



Judging. Photo by Alison Shreeve.



Visitor and ex Mayor of Spelthorne, Alfred Friday, enjoying his Sweet Peas. Photo by Caroline Ball.

were close to the marquee. No restrictions on the use of Oasis applied to exhibitors at Squires Garden Centres which proved very popular to members.

On Sunday the show was very well supported by a ready stream of visitors to the marquee all day, and we managed to sell many of the Sweet Peas which had been displayed at the event. With the help of volunteers who arrived in the afternoon prior to the show closing we were able to clear the marquee of all our NSPS material and load the van ready for Roger to take it to Essex on Monday morning.



John Rieley. Photo by Lewis Morgan.



Dave Fitton. Photo by Caroline Ball.



Early Show prize winners. L to R: Colin Squires, Richard Barron, Brian Bartell, John Rieley, Jenny Morgan, Darren Everest, Caroline Ball, Robert Read, Dave Fitton, Neal Hatch. Photo by Lewis Morgan.

The Late Show – RHS Bridgewater, Worsley

8 & 9 July 2023

A	THE DUO CLASS 1st A Shreeve 2nd J & L Morgan 3rd K Preston	(3)
B	E. W. KING CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
C	SIX VASES (No Entries)	(0)
D	THREE VASES (No Entries)	(0)
E	NOVELTY CLASS 1st A Evans 2nd J & L Morgan 3rd S Meeks	(3)
F	UNWIN CLASS 1st J & L Morgan 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
G	THE SOCIETY 20 1st I D Myers 2nd K Preston 3rd –	(2)

DIVISION I

1	THE DAILY MAIL CUP 1st I D Myers 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
2	EASTBOURNE PRIZE (No Entries)	(0)
3	CHARLES HANMER MEMORIAL CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
4	THE MATTHEWMAN CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
5	HAMMETT CUP 1st I D Myers 2nd K Preston 3rd –	(2)
6	ONE VASE, WHITE OR CREAM 1st I D Myers 2nd D J Torrington 3rd –	(2)
7	ONE VASE, RED OR ORANGE-RED (No Entries)	(0)

CLASS	No. OF EXHIBITS STAGED
8	ONE VASE, MAGENTA, MAROON OR PURPLE 1st D J Torrington 2nd – 3rd – (1)
9	ONE VASE, MAUVE, LAVENDER OR BLUE 1st D J Torrington 2nd – 3rd – (1)
10	ONE VASE, PINK, PICOTEE 1st D J Torrington 2nd D J Torrington 3rd – (2)
11	ONE VASE, MIXED CULTIVARS 1st I D Myers 2nd D J Torrington 3rd K Preston (3)
DIVISION II	
12	ONE VASE SPENCER (No Entries) (0)
12a	ONE VASE NON-SPENCER (No Entries) (0)
DIVISION III	
14	9 VASES DISTINCT (No Entries) (0)
15	DAVIS CUP 6 VASES DISTINCT (No Entries) (0)
16	3 VASES DISTINCT 1st M Lloyd 2nd – 3rd – (1)
17	MIXED BOWL (No Entries) (0)
18	ONE VASE, WHITE OR CREAM (No Entries) (0)
19	ONE VASE, RED OR ORANGE-RED (No Entries) (0)
20	ONE VASE, MAGENTA, MAROON OR PURPLE (No Entries) (0)
21	ONE VASE, MAUVE, LAVENDER OR BLUE (No Entries) (0)
22	ONE VASE, PINK (No Entries) (0)

CLASS	No. OF EXHIBITS STAGED
23 ONE VASE, ORANGE, PICOTEE OR FANCY (No Entries)	(0)
24 ONE VASE, MIXED CULTIVARS 1st M Lloyd 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
DIVISION IV	
25 M.K. FRANKS CUP – SIX VASES DISTINCT 1st C Hicken 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
26 MONRO TROPHY – THREE VASES DISTINCT 1st C Hicken 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
27 MIXED BOWL CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
28 ONE VASE, WHITE OR CREAM (No Entries)	(0)
29 ONE VASE, RED OR ORANGE-RED (No Entries)	(0)
30 ONE VASE, MAGENTA, MAROON OR PURPLE 1st A Evans 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
31 ONE VASE, MAUVE, LAVENDER OR BLUE 1st C Hicken 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
32 ONE VASE, PINK (No Entries)	(0)
33 ONE VASE, ORANGE, PICOTEE OR FANCY 1st C Hicken 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
34 ONE VASE, MIXED CULTIVARS (No Entries)	(0)
DIVISION V	
35 GEORGE HERBERT CUP – 3 VASES DISTINCT 1st A Evans 2nd J & L Morgan 3rd –	(2)
36 MIXED BOWL 1st A Evans 2nd A Shreeve 3rd J & L Morgan	(3)
37 ONE VASE, WHITE OR CREAM 1st J & L Morgan 2nd P Champion 3rd C Winder	(3)

CLASS	No. OF EXHIBITS STAGED
38 ONE VASE, RED OR ORANGE-RED 1st H Dolan 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
39 ONE VASE, MAGENTA, MAROON OR PURPLE 1st A Evans 2nd P Champion 3rd C Winder	(3)
40 ONE VASE, MAUVE, LAVENDER OR BLUE 1st H Dolan 2nd C Winder 3rd –	(2)
41 ONE VASE, PINK 1st C Winder 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
42 ONE VASE, ORANGE, PICOTEE OR FANCY 1st C Winder 2nd H Dolan 3rd –	(3)
43 ONE VASE, MIXED CULTIVARS 1st J & L Morgan 2nd A Shreeve 3rd A Evans	(7)

DIVISION VI

50 HENRY ECKFORD BOWL 1st A Shreeve 2nd S Haisley 3rd C Tate	(3)
51 VAL & JOHN GOOD CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
52 OLD FASHIONED 3 VASE (No Entries)	(0)
53 OLD FASHIONED CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
54 WHITTEMORE CLASS 1st H Dolan 2nd C Tate 3rd S Haisley	(3)
55 SEMI-GRANDIFLORA CLASS (No Entries)	(0)
56 GRANDIFLORA CLASS 1st J & L Morgan 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
57 NEWINGTON TRIPLE (No Entries)	(0)
58 THE CHRISSIE CLASS 1st H Dolan 2nd S Haisley 3rd –	(2)

CLASS	No. OF EXHIBITS STAGED
59	NOVICES GRANDIFLORA/SEMI-GRANDIFLORA CLASS (0) (No Entries)
60	DAVID ARCHER PERPETUAL TROPHY (3) 1st N Edwards 2nd S Haisley 3rd C Tate
61	BOWL OF LATHYRUS SPECIES PERENNIAL (6) 1st A Evans 2nd M Wright 3rd C Tate
62	ANY LATHYRUS GROWN IN POT (1) 1st A Shreeve 2nd – 3rd –
DECORATIVE DIVISION VII	
63	THE HARROGATE CLASS (1) 1st K Preston 2nd – 3rd –
64	BURFOOT CLASS (1) 1st – 2nd S Meeks 3rd –
65	TOM BAINES CLASS (3) 1st M Wright 2nd S Meeks 3rd L Tedesco
66	E R JANES VASE (6) 1st A Evans 2nd J & L Morgan 3rd C Tate
67	THE YORKSHIRE BOWL (1) 1st K Preston 2nd – 3rd –
68	THE DRIFTWOOD CLASS (3) 1st C Tate 2nd J Beardmore 3rd S Hayward
69	THE SYDENHAM CLASS (3) 1st C Tate 2nd L Hathaway 3rd J Beardmore
70	PETITE CLASS (8) 1st N Edwards 2nd J Beardmore 3rd C Bromley
71	LES HARVEY PEDESTAL CLASS (3) 1st J Beardmore & S Meeks 2nd R Rishworth 3rd K Preston

“If we could see the miracle of a single flower clearly our whole life would change.”

Buddha

SPECIAL AWARDS

THE TOM CORDY PRIZE – BEST EXHIBIT

I D Myers (Class 1)

THE CLAY CUP – BEST VASE

I D Myers ('Mary Priestley' Class 6)

THE COLLEDGE PRIZE (BEST LAVENDER)

I D Myers ('Karen Louise' Class 14)

THE TERRY SEWELL PRIZE (BEST 'ANNIVERSARY')

C Hicken (Class 1)

THE A W GOWER SEEDLING CUP

I D Myers (Class 25)

THE HINCHCLIFFE PRIZE (BEST IN DIVISION DIV III)

M Lloyd ('Chris Harrod' Class 16)

THE K E ANDREWS PRIZE (BEST IN DIVISION DIV IV)

C Hicken ('Anniversary' Class 25)

THE RANDALL CUP (BEST VASE DIV V)

C Hicken ('Sir Jimmy Shand' Class 42)

THE HENRY ECKFORD PRIZE (BEST IN DIVISION VI)

A Shreeve (Class 50)

BEST BOWL PRIZE

A Shreeve (Bowl of Old Fashioned Class 50)

DECORATIVE PRIZE (BEST DECORATIVE ARRANGEMENT)

N Edwards ('Petite' Class 70)

THE TOM SHILLING PRIZE (BEST VASE BY NEWCOMER)

C Hicken ('Anniversary' Class 25)



Lathyrus Chrysanthus. Photo by Roger Parsons.

Audit of the Late National Show – RHS Bridgewater, Worsley

8 & 9 July 2023

By Carole Tate

No	Name of Cultivar	1	2	3	Unplaced	Total	Colour	Class
1	Gwendoline	4	1	1	0	6	Pale Magenta	4a
2	Anniversary	2	2	0	0	4	Picottee	15
	Sir Jimmy Shand	2	2	0	0	4	Fancy	16
4	Karen Louise	2	0	1	0	3	Lavender	8
	White Frills	2	0	1	0	3	White	1
6	Honeymoon	2	0	0	0	2	Lavender	8a
	Mary Priestley	2	0	0	0	2	White	1
	Pink Pearl	2	0	0	0	2	Pale Pink	10
	Southborne	2	0	0	0	2	Pale Pink	10
10	Jilly	1	1	0	0	2	Cream	2
11	Elizabeth Shorthouse	0	0	2	0	2	Rose Pink	11b
12	Alice Hardwicke	1	0	0	0	1	Orange Red	14
	Chris Harrod	1	0	0	0	1	Blue	9b
	Daily Mail	1	0	0	0	1	Cerise Pink	10c
	Dalesman	1	0	0	0	1	Blue	9
	Eclipse	1	0	0	0	1	Mauve	7
	Evie Jones	1	0	0	0	1	Magenta	
	Ian Myers	1	0	0	0	1	Mauve Bicolour	
	Mary Mac	1	0	0	0	1		
	Melanie Ann	1	0	0	0	1		
	Mumsie	1	0	0	0	1	Red	3b
	Mrs Bernard Jones	1	0	0	0	1	Rose Pink	10b
	Naomi Nazareth	1	0	0	0	1	Pale Blue	9b
	Oban Bay	1	0	0	0	1	Pale Blue	9b
	Queen of Hearts	1	0	0	0	1	Fancy	16
	Somerset Lady	1	0	0	0	1	Magenta	4
	Terry Davey	1	0	0	0	1	Mauve	
28	Alec Cave	0	1	0	0	1	White	
	Ballerina Blue	0	1	0	0	1	Blue	9a
	Gardener's Jubilee	0	1	0	0	1		
	Lady Nicholson	0	1	0	0	1	Fancy	16
	Platinum Jubilee	0	1	0	0	1	Blue Stripe	

No	Name of Cultivar	1	2	3	Unplaced	Total	Colour	Class
	Seedlings	1	0	0	0	1	No classification	
Totals		38	11	5	0	54		
Non Spencers								
1	Cupani	0	1	0	1	2	Maroon/Violet	OF
2	Dorothy Eckford	1	0	0	0	1	White	OF
	Jack Ellis	1	0	0	0	1	Maroon/Violet	MG
	Little Red Riding Hood	1	0	0	0	1	Red/White	MG
5	High Scent	0	1	0	0	1	Cream/Lilac Edge	SG
6	Painted Lady	0	0	1	0	1	Pink/White	OF
Total Non Spencers		3	2	1	1	7		
Mixed vases		7	5	4	6	22		
Total Vases		48	18	10	7	83		
Decorative & Bowls		12	9	8	10	39		
Total		60	27	18	17	122		

Report of the Late National Show – RHS Bridgewater, Worsley

By Tom Atherton

Bridgewater is a new RHS garden that has recently been constructed and opened to the public. It is on the northwest outskirts of Greater Manchester only a few minutes away from motorway links in the grounds of the Bridgewater estate which has a lot of historic content. It is easily accessible for exhibitors and public and gets a very good footfall.



Bridgewater. Photo by Andrew Fletcher.

As it was a new venue for the Society, there was a certain amount of anxiety by the organisers. However, the exhibition marquee had been transferred from Harlow Carr where we had held shows in it on a number of occasions so we had some familiar ground. The location of the marquee was ideal as it was situated at the end of an arched avenue and easily visible from the main entrance.



Staging. Photo by Andrew Fletcher.



Jars of flowers on society stand.
Photo by Andrew Fletcher.

The fact that oasis was banned and there was no overnight staging, I'm sure, influenced the exhibitors and there were very few entries from the 'larger' growers. This was offset by good entry levels in the 7 stems division, the non-cordon and the decorative sections. The final result was a magnificent spectacle that was well appreciated by the public who visited in large numbers continuously throughout both days. The bureau stand was constantly busy with a great amount of interest being shown in *Lathyrus* species.



View of the show. Photo by Carole Tate.



Visitors. Photo by Carole Tate.

Darren Myers dominated the awards – his 12 vase (15 stems) entry of superb quality blooms winning him the Daily Mail cup and the Tom Cordy prize for the best exhibit in the show. He also won the Clay cup for the best vase in the show with his vase of 'Mary Priestley'. His other successes were the Hammett cup for the best fancy, the College prize for the best lavender and the Gower cup for the best seedling. All-in-all a fantastic achievement! Dave Torrington also won some prizes in the 15 stem classes.

Matt Lloyd won the 3 vase (12 stems) class (Division III). This included a vase of 'Chris Harrod' which was awarded the Hinchcliffe prize (best vase Division III).

Division IV was dominated by a newcomer Clare Hicken who won the Franks cup for her 6 vase (9 stems) which included a vase of 'Anniversary' that won the Andrews prize for the best vase in Division IV and also the Terry Sewell prize for the best vase of 'Anniversary' in the show. It was also awarded the Tom Shilling prize for the best vase



Display benches. Photo by Darren Myers.

by a newcomer. She was awarded the Munro trophy for her 3 vase (9 stems) exhibit and also picked up 1st prizes in the lavender and picotee classes. Allan Evans also won a 1st prize in this section.

Division V was very competitive with 25 entries staged over 9 classes. The Herbert cup was won by Allan Evans for his 3 vase (7 stems) entry. He also won 2 other 1st prizes in this section. Colin Winder was awarded the Randall cup (best vase Division V) for his vase of 'Sir Jimmy Shand'. Other 1st prize-winners in this section were J & L Morgan and Helen Dolan each winning 2.

Alison Shreeve came out top in Division VI (non-cordon plants). Her bowl of Old-Fashioned won her the Henry Eckford prize (best in Division VI). It was also awarded the prize for the best bowl in the entire show. She also won the pot plant class. Other 1st prize-winners in this Division were Helen Dolan (2), Allan Evans (2), J & L Morgan (1) and Nicky Edwards (1).



Staging. Photo by Andrew Fletcher.



Sweet Peas in the garden at Bridgewater.
Photo by Andrew Fletcher.

The Decorative section (Division VII) was the most competitive in the show having 29 entries staged over 9 classes. Nicky Edwards was awarded the best decorative arrangement prize for her Petite entry with Julia Beardmore and Catherine Bromley 2nd & 3rd respectively. There were also 5 unplaced entries making this class the most competitive in the show! Other 1st prize-winners in this Division were Kevin Preston (2), Carole Tate (2), Susan Meeks (1), Monica Wright (1), Allan Evans (1) and Julia Beardmore (1).

The awards were presented by James Hall from the RHS who is the woodland team leader at Bridgewater.



View across the show. Photo by Andrew Fletcher.



Decorative arrangements.
Photo by Alison Shreeve.



Eckford Bowl. Photo by Andrew Fletcher.



Colin Winder being presented with Randal Cup. *Photo by Andrew Fletcher.*



Matt Lloyd prize winner at the Late show. *Photo by Andrew Fletcher.*



Clay Cup for Best Vase in Show. *Photo by Andrew Fletcher.*



Darren Myers with the Daily Mail cup and other prizes. *Photo by Andrew Fletcher.*



Alison Shreeve's, award for Best Decorative. *Photo by Andrew Fletcher.*

Trials

National Sweet Pea Trials at Sparsholt & Askham Bryan 2023

By Jim McDonald & Andrew Beane

SPARSHOLT

Again in the South of England we have had adverse weather conditions for growing Sweet Peas and the plot at Sparsholt where the Sweet Peas were grown again this year suffered with winds, frosts and heavy rains from March to early May, then terrific heat during May and June. There was some recovery from the end of June to July and with some suitable feeding of the plants it insured we had flowers to judge and assess at the end of June to early July. Sadly the section that have been responsible for growing the trials for us has been understaffed and most of the work was left to Kelvin Mason and his staff. We are most grateful to Kelvin for all his hard work under very difficult circumstances

My involvement at Sparsholt this year was rather limited as I had retired from being Trials Coordinator. It was apparent that no communication had taken place between the Society and Sparsholt apart from sending the seeds which needed grouping, coding and making ready for sowing and planting. After a call from Sparsholt I visited the site to help sort things out. After discussions with Roger Parsons I agreed to carry out the coordination of the Trials and see out the year.

I want to thank Andrew Beane for his sterling work at Askham and commiserate with him over the loss of his Trials partner, Mike Hargreaves who was a great support to Andrew, especially with transport.

On the bright side, we have some new and exciting varieties from this year's Trials. Plans are now in negotiation stages for some changes to the Trials growing and management in the South for 2024.

“Friends, like flowers, make life more beautiful.”

Michele Farabee

REPORTS ON ALL VARIETIES AT SPARSHOLT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1	A.A. Hubbuck / Cream	Code WBL4
	Good placement and size of flowers, has prospects for exhibition and garden decoration. Exhibition (AM)	
2	David Fitton / Carmine	Code DRF3
	Good true and even colour with exhibition prospects. Exhibition (AM)	
3	C.A. Beane / Crimson	Code 15BAC6
	Strong plants, true dark colour with good placement. Exhibition (AM)	
4	G. Wells / Orange/red	Code SHXKP
	Small flowers, delicate colour, thin stems. Flowers marked with sun. Suitable for garden decoration. Garden Decoration (HC)	
5	Roger Parsons Sweet Peas / Dark navy blue	Code 21133
	Strong grower, multiflora type, some rogues. Reselect. No Awards	
6	A.A. Hubbuck / Pale Blue	Code WBL3
	Rogues. Reselect No Awards	
7	Chris McAleer / Pale Lilac	Code 318-10-17
	Good form and placement. True colour. Suitable for exhibition and garden decoration. Exhibition (AM) Garden Decoration (AM)	
8	David Fitton / Maroon	Code DRF1
	Similar to Windsor. Good even colour, strong grower. Exhibition (AM)	

REPORTS ON ALL VARIETIES AT SPARSHOLT CONTINUED:

9	Chris McAleer / Orange Salmon	Code SHXCM
	Slightly small flowers at present. Not strong enough for exhibition. Good for floral art and garden decoration. Garden Decoration (HC)	
10	K.M. Brewer / White lavender flush	Code HT3
	Rogues. Reselect No Awards	
11	Roger Parsons Sweet Peas / Purple violet bicour	Code 20220
	Too many rogues to judge. No Awards	
12	Roger Parsons Sweet Peas / Blush/blue bicour	Code 21155
	Rogues. Reselect No Awards	
13	Darren Everest / Pink/white	Code DE1
	A good type for exhibition. Delicate colour with good placement flowers. One of the best on view. Exhibition (FC) Garden Decoration (FC)	
14	Darren Everest / Pink/cream	Code DE2
	Nice type of picotee. More delicate than 'Mollie Rilstone'. The clumps had rogues, needs reselecting. No Awards	
15	David Fitton / Pink on white ground	Code DRF2
	Variation in colour, too many rogues. Reselect No Awards	
16	C.A. Beane / Pink picotee on cream	Code 17B3
	Too much variation in colour. No Awards	
17	C.A. Beane / Pink picotee on white	Code 17B1
	Rogues in each clump. The pink is not as strong as 'Anniversary'. No Awards	



18 I.D.Myers / Magenta on white stripe – name 'Karen Michelle' Code IM1

Good for garden decoration. With a clamped keel this should be in the Grandiflora section.

Garden Decoration (AM)

19 I.D.Myers / Pale blue on white ground – name 'Grandad Myers' Code 10M12.1A

True colour, good length of stems and placement of flowers.

Exhibition (HC) Garden Decoration (AM) 1st Floral Art

20 Richard Borthwick / Red flake on white – name 'Amelie' Code 25

Nice strong growing plants, size of blooms not large. A good colour.

Garden Decoration (AM)

21 Roger Parsons Sweet Peas / Mid blue Code 22106

Good strong growing clump of Sweet Peas. Full of flower. All plants true colour. Excellent Grandiflora type for the future.

Garden Decoration (FC)

22 G. Wells / Cream Code CAB

Another excellent variety to add to the Grandiflora list. Good strong grower, full of flower on all plants.

Garden Decoration (FC)

ASKHAM BRYAN

The report begins with the sad news that Mike Hargreaves passed away on the 1 June. He will be sadly missed as a very experienced judge of Trials. The funeral was held on the 29 June which was our second judging date. It was therefore decided to go with only 2 judgings this year.

The seed was sown the first week in November by the RHS Level 2 and 3 students. Compost and soil preparation was as in previous years.

The plant out date was 15 March. The nets were put up the week before and trial number attached. This enabled a more efficient plant out by the students.

Please note the trial numbers at Askham Bryan are different to Sparsholt. To compare please go by the senders code number.



The weather conditions this year were a bit trying. Minus 8 degrees C on one occasion when plants were in the polytunnel. This was dealt with by covering with 2 layers of fleece. This was followed by a cold dry spring. A visit on the 18 May found very strong plants showing a few flower buds. Dates were set for judging. A very hot June brought the plants on quickly and they were in full flower 10 days before the judging date of 22/6/23. All the flowers were cut and water and feed applied. The florist department had a field day with cut flowers!!

The first judging went well. Less rogues than last year but still about 50%. Three seedlings from last year's trial seen, due to the previous severe hot summer causing the seed to ripen ultra quick. These being a maroon/mauve bicolour and an old fashioned. After the first judging all flowers were cut and 2 feeds applied before the final judging on the 6/7/23.

Next year 2 of the beds that had last year's seedlings will be rested and treated with Caliente mustard.

We had 2 RHS students with the judging panel at the first and one at the final judging. A massive thank you to Harry Johnson-Firth and staff for a successful Sweet Pea Trial. Steve Greenaway, part of this team, retires at the end of July and we wish him all the best. Lastly a big thank you to the florist department and NSPS judges for their valuable contribution.

REPORTS ON ALL VARIETIES AT ASKHAM BRYAN ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1	Roger Parsons Sweet Peas / Mid blue Tall Semi Grandiflora	Code 22106
	1 pink rogue. 1 mauve rogue No Awards	
2	Roger Parsons Sweet Peas / Dark Navy Blue	Code 21133
	1 mauve rogue. Lots of 5s but not enough flower. No Awards	
3	Roger Parsons Sweet Peas / Purple/violet bicolour	Code 20220
	2 bicolour rogues. No Awards	
4	Roger Parsons Sweet Peas / Blush blue bicolour	Code 21155
	2 bicolour rogues. Judges really liked this but felt it should be pink/lavender bicolour. Please reselect and send again. Good size flowers. No Awards	
5	C.A. Beane / Crimson	Code 15BAC6
	Good size flowers. Not enough flower at first judging but plenty at second judging. Garden Decoration (HC)	

REPORTS ON ALL VARIETIES AT ASKHAM BRYAN CONTINUED:

6	C.A. Beane / Pink picotee on cream	Code 17B3
	1 bicolour rogue maroon/mauve in one clump. Felt this was a seed from last year's severe hot summer. Improved at second judging. Exhibition (HC) Garden Decoration (HC)	
7	C.A. Beane / Pink picotee on white	Code 17B1
	2 mauve rogues No Awards	
8	Frank Verge/Darren Everest / Pink on white	Code DE1
	Nice pea, plenty of flowers. Exhibition (HC) Garden Decoration (HC)	
9	Frank Verge/Darren Everest / Pink on cream	Code DE2
	White, mauve, lavender rogues. No Awards	
10	Darren Myers / Pale blue on white	Code 10M12.1A
	Really nice blooms and placement. Improved on second judging for garden decoration. Exhibition (HC) Garden Decoration (AM)	
11	Ian Myers (The Late) / Magenta stripe on white	Code IM1
	1 bicolour maroon/mauve rogue in one clump. Felt that this was a seed from last year's severe hot summer. A good stripe that stood out for garden decoration. Garden Decoration (AM)	
12	G. Wells / Orange/red	Code SHXKP
	Small blooms but plenty of 4s. Garden Decoration (HC)	
13	D. Fitton / Pink on white	Code DRF2
	Rogues pale pink, rose pink 50/50. No Awards	
14	D. Fitton / Maroon	Code DRF1
	Judges liked this. Improved exhibition flower at second judging. Exhibition (HC) Garden Decoration (HC)	
15	D. Fitton / Carmine	Code DRF3
	Judges felt colour was magenta. One or two blooms seen with malformation. Plenty of flowers. Garden Decoration (HC)	

REPORTS ON ALL VARIETIES AT ASKHAM BRYAN CONTINUED:

16	G. Wells / Cream Semi Grandiflora	Code CAB
	Plenty of blooms at both judgings. Scent *** Garden Decoration (AM)	
17	A.A. Hubbuck / Pale blue	Code WBL3
	Some slug damage seen early on. Two mid blue rogues in each clump. No Awards	
18	A.A. Hubbuck / Cream	Code WBL4
	Extremely good colour, good stem, nice placement, not quite as good at second judging. Exhibition (AM) Gaden Decoration (AM) 2nd Florist Award BEST PEA IN TRIAL	
19	Chris McAleer / Pale lilac	Code 318-10-17
	Pale pink rogues. Mauve rogue which judges felt worth reselecting. No Awards	
20	Chris McAleer / Orange/salmon	Code SHXCM
	At planting out time one pot lost due to root rot. Two plants taken out with brown collar. Still looked well at both judgings. The odd bloom could have better placement, however plenty of exhibition blooms. Exhibition (HC) Garden Decoration (HC) 1st Florist Award	
21	K.M. Brewer / White lavender flush	Code HT3
	White rogues. Judges really liked this seedling. Please reselect and send again. No Awards	
22	Richard Borthwick / Red flake on white	Code 25
	Definitely a pink stripe on white. Plenty of flowers and had improved on second judging. Garden Decoration (AM) 3rd Florist Award	

PRINCIPAL AWARDS

A.A. Hubbuck / Cream – Raiser

George Priestley Award for Best Sweet Pea at Askham Bryan

Darren Everest / Pink/white

F.C. Harriss Award for Best Sweet Pea at Sparsholt

RHS Trial of Sweet Peas 2022–2023

By Rosalyn Marshall

This Trial of Sweet Peas took place over 2022 and 2023 in the Trials Garden at RHS Garden Wisley. There were 78 entries submitted by growers and National Collection holders from the UK. This was the first trial to focus solely on Grandiflora Sweet Peas, with smaller but more highly scented flowers, and a more floriferous display than the showier Spencer Sweet Peas.

The objectives of the Trial were to assess plants for the Award of Garden Merit (AGM), demonstrate the cultivation of a range named cultivars, and to confirm correct nomenclature.



Overview of Grandiflora Trials.
Photo by RHS / Rosalyn Marshall.

The plants were assessed using the following judging criteria:

- General visual impact
- Vigour and health of plants
- Quality and quantity of blooms, distribution from top to bottom
- Colour
- Length of flowering season

The difference between an entry showing genetic drift, reversion or where a known cultivar had got into the mix was discussed. Entries that contained rogues in year one were resourced from the same supplier and a different supplier in year two, to compare the stock. At the final meeting, where two or more rogues were identified in an entry these entries were discounted from voting.

The members of the assessment forum were:

P Johnson (Chair), K Brewer, C Brown, D Fitton, J Marshall, J McDonald, M McDonald, A Mulvaney, R Parsons and G Rice.

Cultivation

Seeds were sown on 4 November 2021 and 15 November 2022. Eight entries were also sown on 2 February in 2022. In 2023 most entries were sown in the autumn and repeat sown on 7/8 February, to allow growth and performance comparisons to be made.

Twelve seeds of each entry were chipped and sown into a 14cm pot, 10mm depth, in peat free seed sowing compost. Seeds were covered in vermiculite in year one, and sieved compost in year two. The pots were placed onto heated benches (20°C) until germination.

Six plants of each entry were then potted on into 2L pots with a plastic plant support cage. Records were kept of where one or more plants in an entry failed, and spares were retained and used where required to keep numbers up to six per pot. Seedlings were pinched out once they reached the top of the support cage, at about 10cm tall.

Pots were moved outside into cold frames in December. In February 2022 Storm Eunice damaged the cold frames housing the Sweet Peas and caused some labels to become dislodged. A liquid feed was used when watering as required. Mouse traps were placed around the pots at all stages.



Cold frames.
Photo by RHS / Rosalyn Marshall.



Trials ground preparation.
Photo by RHS / Rosalyn Marshall.

Soil analysis indicated good levels of nutrients in Trials Garden beds. The beds were mulched with Apsley Farm Soil Improving Mulch as a weed suppressor and nutrient source.

In 2022 autumn-sown entries were planted out on 28 March. A -4.3°C night followed on 1 April. Entries were individually covered with fleece over the weekend, however some foliage yellowing resulted. Spring-sown entries were planted out on 27 April.



Plant support.
Photo by RHS /
Rosalyn Marshall.

In 2023 autumn-sown entries were planted out on 15 March and spring-sown entries were planted out on 19 April.

Plants were grown up wire supports cylinders of 45cm diameter, spaced 1.2m between entries (and 1m between plants in an entry in year one). Wire supports formed of two cylinders of 15 × 15cm square wire, 120cm tall, placed one on top of each other, held together and secured into the ground using 8' bamboo canes.

Garlic Foliar Barrier was sprayed as a powdery mildew preventative in both years. On detection of aphids on the trial SB Plant Invigorator was spot sprayed in year

one. In year two the spring-sown entries were noticed to being more affected by aphids, with virus symptoms showing in the leaves and flowers of some entries. Initially both the autumn- and spring-sown entries were all sprayed with SB Plant Invigorator, moving to just treating the spring-sown Sweet Peas.

Towards the end of both years powdery mildew infection increased noticeably. In 2022 the scorching July temperatures caused many of the Sweet Peas to burn out early.

Other findings

The number of rogues across the trial was counted to be almost the same both years (30 in 2022, 29 in 2023), however they were found in different entries.



Mutant on Monaco.
Photo by RHS /
Rosalyn Marshall.

Autumn-sown plants in both years were stronger, taller plants, that flowered earlier in the year. The hot weather in 2022 meant that the spring-sown Sweet Peas didn't get growing, however in 2023 the spring-sown Sweet Peas continued to grow and flower after the autumn-sown Sweet Peas had finished. On seeing the differences in performance, the forum recommended sowing Sweet Peas both in autumn and the spring to extend the season of interest.

Plants in Bed 25 showed poor growth and early yellowing in both years, though the varieties planted here were different. Investigations into the bed are continuing.

A mutant flower on 'Monaco' (Riviera Series) in year one was identified as a reappearance of a mutation recorded in 1911 by William Bateson and Reginald Punnett, founders of experimental genetics in the UK. The mutation did not reappear in year two.



All three entries of 'America' were identical in 2023.
Photos by RHS / Rosalyn Marshall.



Photo from the 1995 trial.

'America', an existing AGM, was included the first year of the trial. The identity of the plants in the trial was queried, and likened to 'Queen of the Isles'. In the second year 'America' was included from two different sources, and 'Queen of the Isles' was also included from Parsons' Sweet Peas to compare. All three entries were identical. R Parsons brought in a plant that he has been growing as 'America', which had originated from Ferry Morse..

**The Sweet Pea Assessment Forum recommended
the Society's Award of Garden Merit to the following 14 entries:**

Lathyrus odoratus 'Alisa' AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus odoratus 'Cedric Morris' AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus odoratus 'Chrissie' AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus odoratus 'Fire and Ice' AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus odoratus 'Lady Grisel Hamilton' AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus odoratus 'Marseilles' (Riviera Series) AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus odoratus 'Miss Willmott' AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus odoratus 'Mrs Collier' AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus odoratus 'Prima Donna' AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus × *hammettii* 'Primrose' AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus odoratus 'Queen Alexandra' AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus odoratus 'Sweet Caroline' AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus × *hammettii* 'Three Times As Sweet' AGM (H3) 2023

Lathyrus odoratus 'Valentine' AGM (H3) 2023



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Alisa' AGM (H3) 2023**

(Trial no. 19/25) Classification: Semi-grandiflora

Forum comments: Prolific. One of the best spring-sown entries. Good pale mauve flowers and good foliage.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual climber, up to around 1.8m high, with curling tendrils and pairs of green leaves. Scented, pale pink flowers, with wavy petals touched with mauve, are produced in summer.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 215cm, spring-sown to 160cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List.



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Cedric Morris' AGM (H3) 2023**

(Trial no. 59/36) Classification: Old-fashioned

Forum comments: Lots of flowers, brighter and earlier than 'Quito' and 'Cupani', habit also more compact. Different to others in trial with finer, grey-tinged foliage.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual climber, up to around 2m high, with curling tendrils and pairs of green leaves. Scented flowers are produced in summer, with dark red upper petals and violet wings.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 200cm, spring-sown to 145cm. Seed suppliers confirmed availability from August 2023



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Chrissie' AGM (H3) 2023**

(Trial no. 45/60) Classification: Semi-grandiflora

Forum comments: Amazing! Vigorous, bushy with a multitude of flowers, unique colouring.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual climber, up to around 1.8m high, with curling tendrils and pairs of green leaves. Strongly scented, marbled lavender-coloured flowers are produced in summer.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 220cm, spring-sown to 180cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Fire and Ice' AGM (H3) 2023**

(Trial no. 54/10) Classification: Modern

Forum comments: Exceptional. Neat and even, healthy plants. Tonnes of flowers. Colour varies in intensity creating interesting colour combinations.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual climber, up to around 1.5m high, with curling tendrils and pairs of green leaves. Strongly scented flowers are produced in summer, with deep pink upper petals and white wings edged with purple.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 250cm, spring-sown to 170cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Lady Grisel Hamilton' AGM (H3) 2023**

(Trial no. 48/58) Classification: Old-fashioned

Forum comments: Lovely! Outstanding both years. Nice shape plants, neat, lots of flowers from top to bottom. Typical Old-fashioned type with small flowers.

RHS Find a Plant description: Up to around 1.8m high, with curling tendrils and pairs of green leaves. Scented, pale lavender-coloured flowers are produced in summer.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 220cm, spring-sown to 195cm Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Marseilles' (Riviera Series) AGM (H3) 2023**

(rial no. 38/54) Classification: Early multiflora grandiflora (Riviera type)

Forum comments: Vigorous, good shape plants. Well balanced. Lots of stems with five flowers. Great, rich flower colour.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual climber, up to around 1.8m high, with curling tendrils and pairs of green leaves. Early flowering, producing lightly scented, deep blue flowers touched with indigo, from early summer.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 235cm, spring-sown to 200cm. Seed suppliers confirmed availability



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Miss Willmott' AGM (H3) 2023**

(Trial no. 11/19) Classification: Old-fashioned

Forum comments: Lovely from the start. Neat plants. Lots of bright, clear coloured flowers, from top to bottom of the plants.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual climber, up to around 1.5m high, with curling tendrils and pairs of green leaves. Strongly scented flowers, with coral coloured upper petals and pink wings, are produced in summer.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 190cm, spring-sown to 135cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Mrs Collier' AGM (H3) 2023**

(Trial no. 8/70) Classification: Old-fashioned

Forum comments: Vigorous. Prolific, flowering from top to bottom. Still lots of flower in July. Nice cream flowers. Neat foliage and good habit.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual climber, up to around 1.8m high, with curling tendrils and pairs of green leaves. Strongly scented, ivory-coloured flowers are produced in summer.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 200cm, spring-sown to 175cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Prima Donna' AGM (H3) 2023**

(Trial no. 20/21) Classification: Old-fashioned

Forum comments: Typical Old-fashioned Sweet Pea flower shape, in baby pink. Long flowering period.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual climber, to around 2.2m high, with curling tendrils and divided green leaves. An old fashioned variety, producing strongly scented, soft pink flowers in summer.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 230cm, spring-sown to 165cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List



***Lathyrus* × *hammettii* 'Primrose' AGM (H3) 2023**

(Trial no. 3/69) Classification: Old-fashioned

Forum comments: Lots of nicely formed, creamy yellow flowers. Good bushy plants, not too tall. Would fit into a garden well.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual climber, up to around 1.5m high, with curling tendrils and pairs of green leaves. Scented, pale creamy yellow flowers are produced in summer.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 170cm, spring-sown to 145cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Queen Alexandra' AGM (H3) 2023**

(Trial no. 33/4) Classification: Old-fashioned

Forum comments: Lovely plants, neat and tidy. Lots of flowers. Autumn- and spring-sown plants both very good. Flower colour intense.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual climber, up to around 1.5m high, with curling tendrils and divided green leaves. An old-fashioned variety, producing scented, crimson red flowers in summer.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 230cm, spring-sown to 165cm. Suppliers listed in National Sweet Pea Society (NSPS) Classification List



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Sweet Caroline' AGM (H3) 2023**

Subject to availability

(Trial no. 15/16) Classification: Old-fashioned

Forum comments: Fabulous. Plants even and healthy. Nice fine foliage. Prolific flowerer. Still looking good in July.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual climber, to around 2m high. With curling tendrils and pairs of mid green leaves. Lightly scented flowers, with white petals streaked with deep pink, are produced in summer.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 250cm, spring-sown to 150cm. Seed suppliers confirmed availability from December



***Lathyrus* × *hammettii* ‘Three Times As Sweet’
AGM (H3) 2023**

(Trial no. 56/31) Classification: Modern

Forum comments: Looks great. Prolific flowerer, well-spaced small flowers, producing flowers from top to bottom.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual, deciduous climber with green foliage, reaching a height of around 180cm, and tricolour, strongly fragrant flowers appearing in the summer which are white and burgundy red striped on one side and dark purple on the reverse. Four or five flowers are produced per stem and colour intensity changes, depending on the temperature.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 215cm, spring-sown to 165cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List



***Lathyrus odoratus* ‘Valentine’ AGM (H3) 2023**

(Trial no. 17/27) Classification: Semi-grandiflora

Forum comments: Fabulous. Tall growing. Good foliage. Floriferous. Large, pure coloured flowers on long, strong stems. Many stems with five blooms. Spring-sown plants looked good early in the season.

RHS Find a Plant description: An annual climber, to around 2m high, with curling tendrils and pairs of mid green leaves. Free-flowering, producing clusters of strongly scented, pure white flowers in summer.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 230cm, spring-sown to 200cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List

*“Don’t wait for someone to bring you
flowers. Plant your own garden and
decorate your own soul.”*

Luther Burbank

The Sweet Pea Trials Assessment Forum recommended the Society's Award of Garden Merit is RECONFIRMED for the following 5 entries:

Lathyrus odoratus 'America' AGM (H3) 1995 (Trial no. 28/13 + 14)

Lathyrus odoratus 'Cathy' AGM (H3) 2002 (Trial no. 78)

Lathyrus odoratus 'High Scent' AGM (H3) 2008 (Trial no. 77)

Lathyrus odoratus 'King Edward VII' AGM (H3) 1995 (Trial no. 24/71)

Lathyrus odoratus 'Sicilian Pink' AGM (H3) 1995 (Trial no. 72)



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'America' AGM (H3) 1995**

(Trial no. 28/13 + 14) Classification: Old-fashioned

Forum comments: Uniform. Good flake pattern. Neat, uniform plants. Lots of flower.

RHS Find a Plant description: A strong-growing annual climber to 1.8m, with fragrant flowers to 3cm across, the petals all white with deep purplish-red streaks.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 210cm, spring-sown to 130cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Cathy' AGM (H3) 2002**

(Trial no. 1/78) Classification: Semi-grandiflora

Forum comments: Fantastic. One of the best. Strong growing with large flowers for an Old-fashioned selection. Very floriferous, with lovely cream flowers.

RHS Find a Plant description: A vigorous annual climber to 2m, with grey-green foliage and long-stalked racemes of up to four fragrant flowers 4.5cm wide, with ruffled creamy-white petals, opening from summer to early autumn.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 210cm, spring-sown to 185cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'High Scent' AGM (H3) 2008**

(Trial no. 7/77) Classification: Modern

Forum comments: Dependable, benchmark for scent. Soft cream flowers.

RHS Find a Plant description: A free-flowering sweet pea, growing to 1.8m high. Flower stems to 20cm long, bearing 3-4 flowers, 4cm in diameter, creamy white with a dark violet picotee edge. Highly scented as per its name.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 220cm, spring-sown to 160cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'King Edward VII' AGM (H3) 1995**

(Trial no. 24/71) Classification: Old-fashioned

Forum comments: Outstanding. Healthy, vigorous plants. Good habit. Very floriferous. Good over both years.

RHS Find a Plant description: 'King Edward VII' is an annual climber with fragrant, crimson flowers in summer and early autumn.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 210cm, spring-sown to 175cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List



***Lathyrus odoratus* 'Sicilian Pink' AGM (H3) 1995**

(Trial no. 9/72) Classification: Modern

Forum comments: Consistently good. Neat plants with flowers from top to bottom. Pretty colour flowers.

RHS Find a Plant description: A climbing annual to 1.8m, with strongly fragrant flowers 2.5cm across, the standard petals vivid cerise, the wing petals white flushed with purple.

Final height: Autumn-sown to 230cm, spring-sown to 180cm. Suppliers listed in (NSPS) Classification List

The photographs on the preceding pages of the Trials varieties are courtesy of RHS/Nicola Stocken

The Sweet Pea Trials Assessment Forum recommended the Society's Award of Garden Merit is RETAINED for the following 2 entries:

Lathyrus odoratus 'Bramdean' AGM (H3) 2008 (Trial no. 52/74)

Forum comment: Did not perform well in the trial. Usually lots of strongly scented white flowers.

Lathyrus odoratus 'Janet Scott' AGM (H3) 1995 (Trial no. 18/73)

Forum comment: Went over early, couldn't assess. Hasn't impressed either year but is known to be better outside of the trial.

The Sweet Pea Trials Assessment Forum recommended the Society's Award of Garden Merit is RESCINDED for the following 2 entries:

Lathyrus odoratus 'Heathcliff' AGM (H3) 2003 (Trial no. 35/46 + 47)

Forum comment: A complete mix. Lost its mojo. Not as advertised.

Lathyrus odoratus 'Matucana' AGM (H3) 2014 (Trial no. 58/75)

Forum comment: Didn't perform either year. There are different stocks with different qualities available.

Hardiness ratings:

Rating H3 – Category: Half-hardy - unheated glasshouse / mild winter; Temperature range: -5 to 1°C; Definition: Hardy in coastal / mild areas except in hard winters and at risk from sudden (early) frosts. May be hardy elsewhere with wall shelter or good microclimate. Can survive with artificial winter protection.

Lathyrus Tingitanus
and 'Turquoise Lagoon'.
Photo by Carole Tate.



Planting No.		Cultivator	Awards
2022	2023		
24	71	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'King Edward VII'	AGM (H3) 1995
29	1	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Prince Edward of York'	
32	2	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Nightingale'	
30	3	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Dave R'	
33	4	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Dave R'	AGM (H3) 2023
31	5	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Monaco' (Riviera Series)	
34	6	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Scarlett'	
23	7	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Genoa' (Riviera Series)	
68	8	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Zorija Rose'	
22	9	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Annie B Gilroy'	AGM (H3) 1995
54	10	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Fire and Ice'	AGM (H3) 2023
12	11	<i>Lathyrus</i> × <i>hammettii</i> 'Painted Porcelain' (syn. 'Spanish Dancer')	
–	12	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Queen of the Isles'	
28	13	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'America'	
–	14	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'America'	AGM (H3) 1995
27	15	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Our Heroes'	
15	16	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Sweet Caroline' } (entered in 2022 as AB 1)	AGM (H3) 2023
25	17	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Lady Tural'	
26	18	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Little Red Riding Hood'	
9	72	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Sicilian Pink'	AGM (H3) 1995
11	19	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Miss Willmott'	AGM (H3) 2023
10	20	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Crown Princess of Prussia'	
20	21	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Prima Donna'	AGM (H3) 2023
13	22	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Emily'	
–	23	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Emily'	
21	24	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Rosay'	
18	73	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Janet Scott'	AGM (H3) 1995
19	25	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Alisa'	AGM (H3) 2023
14	26	<i>Lathyrus</i> × <i>hammettii</i> 'Enigma'	
52	74	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Bramdean'	AGM (H3) 2008
17	27	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Valentine'	AGM (H3) 2023
16	28	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Cannes' (Riviera Series)	
55	29	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Princess of Wales'	
57	30	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Senator'	
56	31	<i>Lathyrus</i> × <i>hammettii</i> 'Three Times As Sweet'	AGM (H3) 2023
63	32	<i>Lathyrus</i> × <i>hammettii</i> 'Erewhon'	
58	75	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Matucana'	AGM (H3) 2014

60	33	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Cupani'	
–	34	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Quito'	
–	35	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> wild type	
59	36	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Cedric Morris'	AGM (H3) 2023
61	37	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Indigo King'	
66	38	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Jack Ellis'	
64	39	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Almost Black'	
62	40	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Black Knight'	
65	41	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Dr Robert Uvedale'	
67	42	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Monty Don'	
50	43	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Montpellier' (Riviera Series)	
51	44	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Roosterville'	
49	45	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Memories'	
35	46	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Heathcliff'	AGM (H3) 2003
–	47	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Heathcliff'	AGM (H3) 2003
36	48	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Lord Nelson'	
–	49	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Lord Nelson'	
37	50	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'My Navy'	
–	51	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'My Navy'	
40	52	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Violet Wings'	
–	53	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Violet Wings'	
38	54	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Marseilles' (Riviera Series)	AGM (H3) 2023
46	55	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'NZ Gardener'	
39	56	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Nice' (Riviera Series)	
47	57	<i>Lathyrus</i> 'Adorabel'	
41	76	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Flora Norton'	
48	58	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Lady Grisel Hamilton'	AGM (H3) 2023
42	59	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Albutt Blue'	
45	60	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Chrissie'	AGM (H3) 2023
44	61	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Astrid'	
–	62	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Astrid'	
53	63	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Butterfly'	
43	64	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Kingfisher'	
5	65	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Dragonfly'	
6	66	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'More Scent'	
7	77	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'High Scent'	AGM (H3) 2008
4	67	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Cream Eggs'	
2	68	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Juliet'	
3	69	<i>Lathyrus</i> × <i>hammettii</i> 'Primrose'	AGM (H3) 2023
8	70	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Mrs Collier'	AGM (H3) 2023
1	78	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> 'Cathy'	AGM (H3) 2002

Suppliers to the trial

Johnson's Sweet Peas – johnsonssweetpeas.co.uk

McDonald Sweet Peas – c/o the Trials Office

Roger Parsons Sweet Peas – rpsweetpeas.com

Somerset Sweet Peas – somensetsweetpeas.com

S Cook, National Plant Collection of Sir Cedric Morris Irises – c/o the Trials Office



The Trials assessment forum.
Photo by RHS / Rosalyn Marshall.

For more information

Details of current and past RHS Plant Trials and other colour illustrated reports can be found online at rhs.org.uk/trials-awards

The *Lathyrus* with an RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM) listed within this report are correct as of November 2023. The AGM is reviewed according to a rolling programme to ensure the standard of garden-worthiness is maintained.

Trials 2024

By Roger Parsons

The National Sweet Pea Society has held annual trials of new Sweet Peas for about 120 years. The 2024 Trials will be held at Askham Bryan College, York, and West Dean Gardens, Chichester. These trials are currently restricted to new cultivars, mostly unnamed, which have not yet been sold commercially. Entries are judged on their performance and awards are given for garden decoration, exhibition and floristry qualities. A report of the annual trials is published for members each year in the Sweet Pea Annual.

Entries for the 2024 trials are now closed but anyone wishing to submit a cultivar for future trials should contact the Trials Co-ordinator, Roger Parsons, at: roger@rpsweetpeas.com. Entries are normally invited in August each year and the seeds must be submitted by the end of September.

From 1930 to 2015, the Society held trials jointly with the Royal Horticultural Society, which still holds occasional trials at RHS garden Wisley. A trial of modern grandiflora cultivars in commerce took place at Wisley in 2022 and 2023 and a report of this is included elsewhere in the Annual and on the RHS website.

Review of the Trials - Please Have Your Say

By Roger Parsons

Trials have always been an important part of the Society's work. They are specifically listed in our Rules as one of the means by which the Society should fulfil its charitable objects. Now that I have succeeded Jim & Mary McDonald as our Trials Co-ordinator, it seems an appropriate time to review why we hold Trials and what we want to gain from them. This needs input from as many members as feel able to contribute, not just those actively engaged in our Trials. Please let the Committee have your views.

The origin and functions of Trials

The first Trials were held in 1906 at the Reading University College gardens and they have been held almost every year since, with a few exceptions such as world wars. The reasons for introducing Trials at that time are not clearly elaborated but from the original minute book and reports in the Annuals these would appear to be:

- a. To classify cultivars (varieties) by colour and type;
- b. To enable awards to be made to superior cultivars;
- c. To identify too-much-alike cultivars.

Trials superintendent, Charles Foster, reported:

“The main object of these trials is to give the Committee of the National Sweet Pea Society an opportunity of inspecting all the recognised varieties growing under similar conditions. It was never intended to issue, broadcast, a report of the merits or demerits of any particular Pea or stock sent for Trial, but those who sent varieties for trial in 1906 have already had a private and confidential report”.¹

A plea was made for all cultivars to be submitted to the 1907 trials and stocks of a cultivar from different sources were encouraged. So, the Trials included named cultivars already in commerce and novelties. It is clear from the 1908 Annual that un-named seedlings were included:

“There were some varieties more beautiful even than those named, but owing to the uncertainty no mention is made of their individually fine qualities”.²

The 1907 trials had 373 entries:

“In this big collection, were to be found many excellent varieties, but the utter uselessness of growing many of the older forms for old acquaintance sake was strikingly apparent”.²

From these 373 entries, six cultivars were given an award because of their exceptional merit. This ratio was repeated in subsequent years. The Classification List was updated and a “Too-much-alike” varieties list was produced. A list of 58 cultivars was produced which would be excluded from future Trials as being old and inferior. The number of entries with rogues was a problem then as it is now. A Trial of early-flowering cultivars was grown under glass in 1908.

By this time, hundreds of people were trying their hand at raising new Sweet Peas and the too-much-alike list was an attempt to reduce the proliferation of new cultivar names that were appearing. By 1910, the trials had moved to Sutton Green, Guildford, and bracketing cultivars together in the too-much-alike list had become one of the primary objectives of the Trials, along with the classification of novelties. Most of the entries came from professional seedsmen and nurserymen, some head gardeners but also a few amateurs. Despite World War One, 92 entries were in the 1915 trials (from which 4 awards were made) and a similar number in 1916 before circumstances prevented Trials for a few years.

Trials re-commenced in 1920 when 167 entries were grown at one of several locations used since 1912. During the war, very many cultivars had been lost and there were several years’ introductions to be assessed. The functions remained to assess the quality of named cultivars in commerce and update the classification and too-much-alike lists. During the 1920s, the focus changed as they became known as the Novelty

Trials, with an emphasis on classification and the too-much-alike list. A few established cultivars were grown for comparison and this approach to what is grown continued for the rest of the 20th century. The 1937 Annual announced the discontinuation of the too-much-alike lists.

Raisers

One thing which did change during the 20th century is who was submitting entries to the Trials. Prior to World War Two, most entries came from professional seedsmen. Amateur raisers were very few. After the war, there was a gradual shift as increasing numbers of amateur exhibitors tried their luck at producing a winning novelty. At the same time, the larger seedsmen were finding it less economical to have their own breeding programme so they turned increasingly to buying in seedlings from amateurs. Joint trials were held with the RHS from 1930 to 2015 and for most of that period Wisley provided a showcase for amateur raisers to display their seedlings to potential buyers. By the 1990s, when I first joined the Trials panel, novelties were still grown for classification but the vast majority of entries were un-named seedlings. It was still permitted to submit entries of named cultivars already in commerce, but this rarely happened. If I remember correctly, 'White Frills' was the last cultivar to be entered after it had already been introduced.

Turning as an example to the 1998 trials, 36 un-named entries were grown at Wisley from 23 raisers, and 32 named cultivars were also grown for comparison and for the classification of novelties. Four entries received an award, with two awards going to 'Gwendoline'. By this time a parallel trial of 54 entries was being grown at Harlow Carr. By the 2013 Trials, only 12 un-named seedlings were entered from 6 raisers, most plants on display being novelties grown for classification and existing AGM cultivars being re-assessed. Unusually, 26 dwarf and semi-dwarf cultivars were grown to be considered for AGM.

The end of joint trials with the RHS

Since 2015, our Society has held its own trials at Sparsholt college, Winchester, and Askham Bryan college, York. The Trials panels for these venues decided because of limited space to restrict entries to un-named seedlings not yet in commerce. The results of the 2023 Trials are reported elsewhere but included 22 entries from 10 raisers. Apart from myself, all were amateur raisers. The results from the Sparsholt trials are striking. Every entry was either rogued or got at least one award. In other words, everything that was judgeable got an award. Four of these were First Class Certificates, which are rarely awarded, and all from one judging of plants in a poor season.

Looking at these Trials in context, it is notable that the only professional seedsmen submitting entries nowadays are Phil Johnson and myself, and we do so only to support the Society. There is really nothing to be gained from sending a seedling for Trial other

than a cheap way to have the stock grown in order to assess whether or not it is rogued. Most of the novelties introduced by seedsmen each year have not been sent for Trial. If they have, receiving an award is rarely mentioned in catalogues.

Award Certificates are given for garden decoration and for exhibition. Since 2015, entries have been more informally assessed for floristry purposes but no certificates have been awarded for these. Now that many more people are growing Sweet Peas for floristry than for exhibition, is it not time that the judging for needs of cut flower growers is given at least equal status with exhibition?

The Society now carries the cost of hosting our Trials, though nothing has been spent since 2019 thanks to generous sponsorship from Westlands (Unwins Seeds). Entries to the Trials cost the raiser £5 per cultivar.

What do we want from future Trials?

The need to be able to continue classifying novelties remains. Since 2015, with no room at the Trials to grow novelties for classification, Phil Johnson, Jim McDonald and myself have had to grow these ourselves and compare cut blooms with existing cultivars. With the move from Sparsholt to West Dean in 2024, it is hoped that there will be space for novelties to be once again grown for classification as part of the Trials. If growing novelties for classification, should we also be assessing these for superior quality rather than restricting awards to un-named seedlings? Most novelties will not have previously been submitted to the Trials.

The RHS has gone down a different route. They hold trials of Sweet Peas infrequently. Their 2022-23 Trial of mostly Modern Grandiflora cultivars, with a few others for comparison, echoes the focus on dwarf cultivars, held in 2013. Should we be trying to focus on specific types or colours for comparison, which could include both named cultivars and seedlings?

With professional seedsmen raising novelties but not sending them to the Trials, is there a benefit to holding Trials just for the benefit of the remaining handful of amateur raisers? Surely, if an amateur raiser wants to bring a seedling to the attention of a seedsman, the better route is to send seeds direct so a seedsman can assess it for themselves in their own nursery. Raisers like to get awards for their seedlings but I wonder if the current proliferation of awards is merely self-delusion. I would rather have a situation where only the few very best receive an award, as has occurred prior to 2015. Rare awards are worth shouting about and are helpful to general gardeners as an indication of quality. It is not unusual for a seedling to gain an award at one location but not at the other, or to gain a higher award at one of the venues. As a national society, perhaps we should only be giving national awards based on good performance at both locations?

Now is the time to express your views. Does the Society still need to hold Trials? If so, what should we be trying to achieve? Should NSPS Trials include existing named

cultivars? Are there too many awards? Should the cost of entering the Trials be raised and risk reducing the number of entries? Please let committee members have your thoughts. I hope to receive a deluge of responses that can be published in the Autumn Bulletin.

References

¹ C. Foster 1907 The Society's Sweet Pea Trials at Reading. 1907 Sweet Pea Annual :33-35

² C. Foster 1908 The Reading Trials. 1908 Sweet Pea Annual :45-49

Comments from Eagle Sweet Peas

By Derek Heathcote

This is a very deep and complex question.

My own, personal, answer is:

Sweet Peas need colour and classification for exhibition and show classes.

I stopped sending Peas for Trials early on in my showing career mainly because Awards did not last long and varieties were replaced with new ones within a short period of time. Exhibitors were the main contenders for whether a Pea was good enough and how long it stood the test of time. There has been a lot of quality Peas never put on the exhibitors table and a lot of older, quality, varieties that are still on the table. Names of Sweet Peas have a lot more influence on what exhibitors and growers choose.

The NSPS needs to look after its members, and exhibitors, and maintain its own shows with exhibitors staging "Spencer" Sweet Peas to justify the classification list.

I also realise the future of the Society looks difficult.

Comments from Kerton Sweet Peas

By Phil Kerton

In the past we had a greater number of exhibitors who looked for Trial award winners. But this figure has declined, the main sales are now to general public so not the same market as exhibitors. My view is, if the Trials are to continue only quality Peas should be awarded.

The Trials

By Phil Johnson

We feel it is time to review the Trials format. In 2014/15 the NSPS took over the Trials from RHS WisleOur President's article about the current focus of the NSPS novelty Trials is sure to raise some strong feelings, not least from the judges. I know that neither Roger nor I would want to offend anyone by raising this subject and we certainly do not intend to criticise, merely to discuss possible alterations to make the NSPS Trials even more relevant for all parties. Both of us have considerable experience of Trials assessment, but this discussion needs contributions from any interested members, please.

A few observations and pertinent questions...

Why hold Trials? My view is that, in addition to assessing the qualities of Sweet Peas, trials CAN also offer a showcase to the public to promote Sweet Peas in general, not necessarily just novelties or "seedlings". But the Trial must be accessible to the public, either through open days or by being staged at gardens that are regularly open, for the greatest impact. The new venture at West Dean has much to commend it.

To continue in their current form, I believe that NSPS Trials need to have a number of established award winners planted at the same site for comparison - you need a benchmark grown in the same conditions.

Should the "seedling" entries to the Trials be judged over two years, to allow for the vagaries of the season? Certainly, the results of the recent RHS Trial would suggest there is great merit in this form of assessment.

Particularly, when judging at our Trials for exhibition qualities, should novelties be cut a few hours before judging and examined in a vase? Does the variety improve when cut, does the colour change? Or, should preliminary observations made at the Trial and any awards be postponed until a vase can be staged at one of our shows and the variety assessed there, by comparison – the best way to assess exhibition potential, in my view? RHS AGMs should have more clout than they do but are easier to promote to a wider audience. I have submitted a proposal to RHS for a further Trial and plan to select some of the best from NSPS Trials of recent years as entries. However, it may be several years before the opportunity arises to hold this Trial.

Should the Trial system be refocussed to classify novelties (i.e. new commercially available varieties) and / or compare a small selection of colours or types each year? To my mind the issue with limiting a Trial to novelties, is that it offers no opportunity for breeders to display their material prior to launch. This may end up excluding breeders, who wish to compare their work with other new material, before finding a commercial route. A very focussed Trial may also have its proponents.

If breeders do not work for commercial success, what happens to these cultivars?

Where is the link between the amateur breeder and their "route to market"? With the majority of the large seed companies no longer planting Trials, there is less opportunity for breeders to find a larger scale outlet for their new breeding material. I seem to remember that many years ago, Les Marchant set up a Sweet Pea company with the aim of filling this gap.

Although arguably I have better access to seed companies than most, there is a limited appetite for new introductions. I certainly have more than enough innovative material of my own these days. Yes, I have the opportunity to market more new varieties through English Sweet Peas, but there can be too many novelties and then the enticement for customers to purchase something new is diminished – too much choice. I also need to make a return on the time spent with our breeding programme, as do other breeders. To spread the cost, I need to be able to sell a decent volume of seed initially, otherwise it is uneconomical for the large players to take on.

Writing in the 1978 Annual, that well known authority, Charles Unwin made a number of pertinent observations, many of which still hold true today.

"With Sweet Peas, our methods of adjudication differ considerably from those of the two most reliable present-day sets of Trials, the All-America and Fleuroselect trials. All concerned, traders and amateur growers, have come to rely on the outstanding merit of any new flower or vegetable to which they have given an award. Yet show bench qualifications are not even taken into consideration. Their award winners must be distinct, different from existing varieties, or they must show some fairly obvious improvement in some way or other. This is exactly how Sweet Peas were judged in my young days and though Trials entries were very much more numerous then, awards were much smaller in number but greater valued as a correct indication of merit."

For the commercial seed market, true novelty has always been the overriding factor for success. At the risk of being flippant - how much value is there in another white Spencer etc, in this market? However, 'King's Ransom' seems to be really taking off. Why? Its novel colour.

If the current Trials system is not functioning well, what needs to be the new direction?

Taking Charles Unwin's comments into consideration, with which I would agree from a commercial standpoint, there is little reason to try to duplicate these international trials. Therefore, should future NSPS trials function primarily as a way to assess Sweet Peas for show bench potential and secondly to show off our wonderful flower to a wider audience?

To conclude, I do not have all (or any) of the answers and it has taken me considerable time and thought to put together this rather random offering. I hope that it stimulates further debate and we thoroughly consider the future and benefits of NSPS Trials.

Future Trials

By Jim and Mary McDonald

We feel it is time to review the Trials format. In 2014/15 the NSPS took over the Trials from RHS Wisley and Harlow Carr. We still kept two locations – Sparsholt in the South and Askham Bryan in the North. This was to see what difference it would make to the varieties being grown in two completely different areas. It was successful until covid arrived and changed several aspects of the growing with changes of staff at both colleges. At Askham Bryan Andrew Beane kept a keen eye on developments and it was very successful. Sparsholt didn't fare as well as they didn't have the same amount of staff to keep the plants in top quality condition. I also lost members of my judging team through illness.

In recent years the amount of varieties sent for Trial have diminished drastically, with very few coming from the professional/commercial hybridiser. It is important to have Trials as new varieties are needed to replace those that are failing to reach their original standard. Also there is a chance that mediocre varieties will come onto the market if they are not trialed.

Awards – When the NSPS took over the trials the following awards were made:

First Class Certificate 17 – 20 points, Award of Merit Certificate 15 – 16 points, Highly Commended Certificate 13 – 14 points. All awards for Exhibition and Garden Decoration.

In 2023 35 awards for Exhibition and Garden Decoration were given overall in total at both colleges. Bearing in mind the amount of awards given when trials began we feel there are too many awards given now. These awards have always been given mainly to Spencers but in 2023 we had some Old fashioned and Grandifloras which were of outstanding quality and received awards for Garden Decoration. At Askham Bryan they assessed varieties suitable for Floral Art. These were assessed by ladies from Floristry.

Summing up, we feel the following awards should be given:

Spencers - Exhibition - First Class Certificate 17 – 20 points

Garden Decoration - First Class Certificate 17 – 20 points

Old Fashioned, Grandifloras - Exhibition - First Class Certificate 17 – 20 points

Garden Decoration - First Class Certificate 17 – 20 points

This would be a drastic change but we feel, not only ourselves but the public, would only want the best!

One thing that was changed when the NSPS took over the Trials was the review of awards after ten years. This was dropped as the RHS held this information and we did not have enough room to grow so many varieties at both sites. We feel this is important to see if these varieties were worthy of keeping their award status.

Thoughts on the Trials

By Andrew Beane

The Society objects include holding scientific Trials of Sweet Peas. Not sure if Askham Bryan has enough room to hold the Trial and include named cultivars as a control.

Awards

We could combine the exhibition and garden decorations into one award similar to the RHS award of garden merit (AGM). It could be called the 'Queen of Annual Award'. The florist award should be retained as the florist dept at Askham Bryan like to do this and think it is a benefit and can use it to provide publicly.

I believe we need to retain two Trial grounds as seedlings respond differently in different situations. The college benefits from holding the Trial for its RHS courses. We have the FC Harriss and the George Priestley awards for best Pea at each trial which is another reason for maintaining two Trial sites.

We should consider raising the fee as feel it is too cheap for all the work and effort that goes into a Trial. I use the Trial for my seedlings as it is a good way to obtain other members' assessment before I consider whether to send to seed merchants for Trial.

The Society north-south split, that some perceive, will increase if you just use say West Dean for novelty classification and no Trials.

I always send the Trial report to Kings seed which Peter Miller welcomes. Why don't we send it to other seed merchants? Askham Bryan use the Trial publicity to recruit students.

*“Flowers are like friends;
they bring colour to your world.”*

Unknown

Articles

Lathyrus Collection Report

By Roger Parsons

National Plant Collection: *Lathyrus*

Collection holder: Roger Parsons

Period Covered by report: 2023

Database system used: Persephone and Excel

Plant list additions

'Lizanne Davies' and 'Dawn Everest' from Darren Everest

'Indigo Girl' from Maryn Mathis

'Suffolk Punch Miggie' from Phil Johnson

'Pinstripe' from Eagle

'Piccolo' from Kerton

'Kings Coronation' from E W King

'Our Helen' from Jim McDonald

'Grandad Myers' and 'Karen Michelle' from Darren Myers

'Toffee Apple' from Graham Rice

Desired plants:

Plants outside this collection were offered to the 2023 plant exchange.

Developments to the collection:

A Garden Pea, *L. oleraceus* 'Rosakrone' was grown in 2023, preparing the way for a future trial of Peas with unusual flower colours.

Set backs:

None that I can recall.

Contacts / visits:

Please give an estimate of visitors to the collection (or approx. numbers e.g. NPC open days). Were there more or less in 2023, than during 2022?

No open days held. Few visitors included Richard Barron (NSPS member), Marilia Godinho from Greenlines nursery, Rose Lee from Oregon and Gerard van den Berg from the Netherlands. Hosted a meeting of the NSPS classification sub-committee on 14 June. Member of the RHS panel assessing Trials at Wisley.

Visits by Roger included 2 visits to Seedlynx, Essex.

Various activities as President of NSPS.

Research, shows and publicity:

Maintained the online register of Lathyrus epithets and raisers.

Submitted blooms for NSPS stands at Windsor (10 June), Blenheim Palace (23 June). Exhibited at NSPS Early show (1 July).

Contributed to RHS podcast titled 'Summer Scents' available from 16 June. Filmed a video on the origin of 'Countess Spencer' for www.spencer1508.com

Gave a talk at West Dean College on 15 October. Assisted an article on the collection in the November 2023 edition of 'English Garden'.

Submitted many cultivars to the 2022-23 RHS Trials at Wisley. One outcome was that the taxon held as 'Queen of the Hearts' is in fact 'America'. The taxon previously held as 'America' has, despite its excellent provenance, eluded naming. It is currently held under the name 'Turrall's America'. A full explanation of this was published in the NSPS 2023 Autumn Bulletin and will be covered in The Plant Review magazine in 2024.

Are there any changes to your succession plans?

None.



Cow Muck – will it be the answer?

By Graeme Hollingdale

Pre-covid, after years of gradually declining quality of the crops (especially Sweet Peas) grown on my plot, discussions had begun with the landscape gardening company that I have been using for my hedge cutting and rotovating (twice a year each normally) about the logistics of bringing in the quantity of suitable manure that I would need to make it worthwhile.

For those who haven't seen the Chilterns joke that is my soil, it is best described as poor, hungry, light in colour with the unique ability to hold in the moisture and keep remarkably cold during the Autumn, Winter and Spring but then all of a sudden (normally late March) become rock hard, dry, capped and producing cracks. It is therefore extremely hard to work and produce a fine tilth, especially when windows of opportunity are thin on the ground. It appears to be a fairly shallow chalky top soil but over a base of clay and flint (certainly can't grow carrots longer than 3" long without forking).

That said, in the past I have managed to grow some pretty reasonable exhibition veg in prepared beds, along with various flowers, including some superb 'Peas. Winning my first best vase in division (Jilly – under 200's) when there were literally hundreds staged in each division, with double digit entries in the multi vase classes from this garden.

Climate change seems to have had a massive impact on the ability of my plot to cultivate 'Peas in flower, for any appreciable period of time. I well remember the year when I was able make a substantial cut and stage a huge bowl at the Bucks County Show, which always took place on the first Thursday of September. Exhibitors and visitors couldn't remember the last time they had seen Sweet Peas that late in the year. Now, I am lucky to get half decent flowers from the end of June until mid-July, with them normally finished before August arrives.



During the very cold period in January 2024 (it had been pencilled in to be done anytime from October 2023, however typically, the rain just wouldn't cease for more than a day or two, making it impossible to get on the soil) the day finally arrived when all the plans that had been discussed over many seasons finally came together. The very well-rotted cow manure which had been stacked in a farmer's field for many a year began arriving. The logistics were significant.



As I have a large gravel drive leading to a double depth garage, with a large door at the rear which then leads over a patio and lawn to the plot, plastic sheeting and boarding had to be laid first. On the farm a JCB (once it had been jumped started in the freezing conditions) filled a truck which drove back and forth for most of the day, which then reversed onto the drive where a smaller JCB unloaded onto the drive, where it then filled a neat diesel powered dumper truck with was guided by one of the team (best way of picturing that piece of equipment is to think of a large powered wheelbarrow). This was then taken to the top of the plot (there is a slope all the way from roadside to the top if the plot, not particularly noticeable until you try to push a laden wheelbarrow!) where another member of the team would supervise the tipping and then spreading of this material. A few pictures are included to help illustrate.

Amazingly it was all completed in one day. As I write this, all is calm on the plot, which is looking lovely in its much darker covering, albeit rather lumpy texture.

The ideal plan is to have at least two rotovates before the end of March when time and weather permitting the canes and other supports can go up (you can see the permanent end posts in the photos) followed by the flowers.

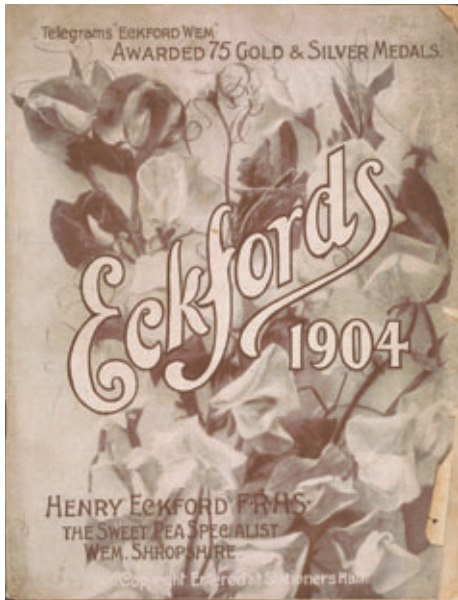
Who knows whether the results this year will be good, it may take a year or two for the ground to settle and balance; however, I am planning to do this again in a few years to build up the soil to a hearty constitution.

There remains the invoice to pay for all the manpower (at least the manure was free) good job I should be starting to receive my state pension in the summer then!

Updates will be forthcoming via the Bulletins. Anybody else had or having substantial work done on their plots? I am sure it will be of interest to many members.

Sweet Peas at Wem

By Graham Rice



Leafing through the nine hundred and thirty six page bound volume of *The Gardening World* magazine for 1906, the way you do on a chilly autumn evening, after the clocks have changed, I was startled to come across an article in the issue dated 4 August headed: SWEET PEAS AT WEM. A GLORIOUS OUTDOOR DISPLAY AT ECKFORDS.

“Towards the end of June we journeyed down to Wem Shropshire,” it begins, “the cradle of the Sweet Pea, as now distributed over the temperate parts of the world in all the glory of its modern beauty, delicacy of colour, intensity of colouring and refinement....”

It then goes on to describe, in a nicely detailed 1800 words, what must have been an astonishing visit to the Eckford Sweet Pea fields. Henry Eckford had passed away the previous Christmas Day and so the - sadly anonymous - writer was conducted on his tour by Henry Eckford’s son John who had recently taken charge of his father’s business.

Eckford varieties that we still grow today including ‘Unique’, ‘Queen Alexandra’ and ‘Henry Eckford’ are discussed and assessed, as are varieties long lost. The piece provides us with rare insight into how sweet peas were bred, developed, grown, and harvested almost a hundred and twenty years ago.

Thank you to Alison Levey for transcribing this article from the original.

The Gardening World

4th August 1906

Sweet Peas At Wem – a glorious outdoor display at Eckford’s



Towards the end of June we journeyed down to Wem Shropshire, the cradle of the Sweet Pea, as now distributed over the temperate parts of the world in all the glory of its modern beauty, delicacy of colour, intensity of colouring and refinement. For the last 16 or 18 years the late Mr. Henry Eckford laboured unceasingly for the improvement of his favourite flower, and all the world now knows the success of his labours. The firm is still carried on under the style and title as formerly by the son of the late founder, Mr. John Stainer Eckford, who, having been with his father so many years still continues working with the enthusiasm and earnest endeavour of his father.

We were under the impression that Sweet Peas could not be grown for many years on the same ground, but Mr Eckford proved that to be untenable. The same ground has

been under cultivation all the time. Indeed it is almost entirely devoted to Sweet Peas and Culinary Peas; cultivation does the rest. Some parts of the ground are heavily manured for the purpose of a long continued display of flowers, but the ground devoted to the stock or standard varieties is not heavily manured as the intention is to get good seed. These trials are carried on for the purpose of getting the stock pure, and the seed obtained is of course sent elsewhere to be grown in bulk for the retail trade. The trial grounds extend to 10 acres, and are entirely full of interest from one side to the other seeing that they consist of those best amongst Sweet Peas, each variety being grown true to name.



Henry Eckford family locket.
Photo courtesy of Barrie Eckford.

No attempt is made to raise Sweet Peas under glass for planting out of doors, and indeed the glass here would be entirely inadequate to accommodate a tithe of the plants required. No particular trouble was taken with them beyond the proper preparation and cultivation of the ground. The seeds were sown in February where the plants have now been flowering since early June. The broad areas of stock varieties are extremely interesting, but near the glasshouses a large piece of ground is entirely devoted to sowings of something like 3,000 to 4,000 selections of Sweet Peas from which new varieties are gradually being evolved, selected, and re-selected until they become fixed. This may take something like five years before it is safe to put a new variety into commerce, but Mr Eckford knows his business and has immense patience.

We first of all went over these selections and found an immense number of very beautiful varieties, but as might be expected the larger proportion of them would scarcely be sufficiently distinct from those already in commerce, but the grower is well aware of this. It is extremely difficult to get new colours that will be widely distinct from those in cultivation, but there nevertheless remains much to be done in getting new varieties of improved colour in any particular shade and in getting larger flowers with a greater number of them on the stem, and in these directions great improvements are certainly being made.

It would have taken us a week to thoroughly inspect these thousands of selections in order to get an idea of their leading points. That work, however, is being done by the raiser, and the world will in due time reap the advantage of this work. No names or only a few have yet been given to any varieties in these trials, so that we can mention only a number of them by their colours.

A very fine variety had rosy cerise standards and rosy pink wings. Another was noted for the immense size of its flower and having a standard flushed with heliotrope. It was indeed a flower of a dainty light shade. Some

beautiful shades of salmon-pink were observable and decided tints in the way of yellow are being evolved. Scarlet is a shade of colour that has been more improved here than in any other part of the world, and the finest named varieties of that colour have been



raised at Wem. Salmon-orange varieties are very numerous, and the improvement of being effected is in size and richness of colour. Other interesting varieties had shades of delicate lavender, cream flushed with apricot on the standard, maroon and purple, pale pink of huge size, rosy pink on a cream ground and equally large, and some of the 'Fascination' type with rosy standards and lavender wings.

Here also we noted what we should describe as a 'Scarlet Gem' of the 'Countess Spencer' type of bloom. A light and bright blue variety was notable for the size of its flowers; and great improvements were noticed in size of the yellows and the proper disposition of the flowers on the stems. To give some idea of the size of flower we measured a salmon-pink variety and found the standard ranged from 1 inches to 2 inches across. Very choice also was a variety with brilliant cerise standards on a cream ground and lake base. Brilliant crimson and carmine wings in another flower showed a vast improvement upon the old scarlet 'Invincible' in the matter of size.



A fancy flower was that with light cerise standards and crimson blotch on the mid rib. Cerise on a light blue ground was also a peculiar combination. A beautiful soft salmon-pink variety is expected to be fixed in the course of two years. An ivory white and very large flower shaded with apricot when young has been named 'Ivorine' and although a delicate colour is charming when seen in a bunch. Another striking light coloured flower had standards flushed with strawberry and creamy wings. This is equally choice when seen in the bunch.

These trials are sown in rows and staked in the ordinary way as indeed the bulk of the varieties here. In certain parts and chiefly alongside of the walks a number of varieties are grown in isolated clumps. The soil when being trenched is not manured in the ordinary way, but the manure is thoroughly incorporated with the soil. The stakes placed to support the Peas gave us much surprise as they were usually about 10 feet high or more, and the grower was confident that they would reach this height later in the season. On the occasion of our visit they varied from 2 to 4 feet in height according to the variety.

In going over the collection of standard varieties we took the names of only a few, but readers will understand that Mr Eckford grows the best of all the modern varieties whether of his own raising or otherwise. The beautiful 'Maud Guest' had large blush-



white flowers. 'Earliest of All' was sown on March 17th and came into flower on June 12th. It is much the way of 'Blanche Ferry' with cerise standards and blush white wings. It is very dwarfed in habit as one would naturally expect. The purse white 'Mont Blanc' is just a little later.

Here we noted the blue striped 'Unique' (Stark), one of the best of this type being true to colour and much finer than 'Princess of Wales'. 'Admiral Togo' (Eckford) is a lovely maroon shade on the back of the standard and lighter on the face. The wings are deep lilac flushed with light maroon. As variety this is quite distinct in colour and altogether different from another sort named 'Admiral Togo' in cultivation, but that seems to be a slightly improved 'Othello'.

The first of the real scarlet types was 'Scarlet Gem' which succeeds admirably at Wem, and is very floriferous but only of medium height. It has been entirely surpassed however by 'Queen Alexandra', which stands the sun well, grows more strongly, and is much more easily managed by the amateur. It is undoubtedly the finest scarlet in commerce. 'Agnes Eckford' is a lovely pink variety in the way of 'Prima Donna' but lighter in colour and double the size. The variety hitherto named 'Miss Eckford', or for which that name was proposed is now to be named 'La France', as the flowers are a uniform shade of pink very much like that of the rose of that name.

'Horace Wright' has standards of a deep rich violet with dark blue wings and flowers of immense size. 'Triumph' is still a handsome decorative variety with rosy cerise standards and white wings flushed with rose. That named 'Henry Eckford' for some years has stood out



as the best rich salmon-orange of a shade different from that seen in any other variety. It is still highly esteemed and is a splendid variety for exhibition. A little shade is beneficial in preventing the flowers from being burned by the sun. Another huge flower named 'Coronation' has orange salmon standards and rosy wings.

Here also we noted many other standard varieties which are the best in their particular colour to be had; and in walking through the field examining the long lines of Peas we were much impressed with the trueness of each type by comparison with what we have seen in several other trials of Sweet Peas this year. This speaks volumes as to the care taken in fixing varieties before they are put into commerce. As every grower knows the Sweet Pea is eminently liable to vary when placed under fresh conditions as to soil and climate. Most varieties on occasion are liable to give rise to sports in fresh districts. This cannot be said of Wem where the Peas have been grown on the same ground for the greater part of two decades.

Many varieties of garden or culinary Peas have been raised and sent out from Wem, but on this particular occasion we paid no special attention to them beyond noting that the taller growing kinds of these had attained the fine height of 4 to 6 feet, and were carrying splendid crops of pods.

The season at Wem for Sweet Peas may be stated to continue from June until the end of September at least in the open air so that those wishing to inspect this fine collection had best do it at the end of June, or if the circumstances prevent that an inspection will nevertheless be well rewarded up to September. We may here state that a card indicating "highly commended" was placed to the 'Princess Maud of Wales', 'Horace Wright', and 'Maud Guest' at the recent Show of the National Sweet Pea Society.

NSPS Annuals

By Caroline Ball

The National Sweet Pea Annual has been published since 1905 producing a wealth of information about Sweet Peas and a fascinating historical record of the Society. From time to time the Society receives very generous donations of old Annuals. If you are interested in extending your run of copies please contact Caroline Ball (caroline_a_m_ball@yahoo.co.uk) or Roger Parsons (roger@rpsweetpeas.com) to establish if we can help with your missing years.

All proceeds from the sale of old publications helps the charity achieve its objects of promoting Sweet Peas and other *Lathyrus*.

Striped Sweet Peas

By Roger Parsons

When I first started exhibiting Sweet Peas, nearly 40 years ago, there was only one striped cultivar available and that was 'Lilac Ripple'. This was raised by Bill Thomas and introduced by T&M in 1989. You could also buy "Unwins' Striped Mixture" which had not been refreshed since the 1950s and was by then deteriorated, having many smaller, non-Spencer flowers. I include 'Wiltshire Ripple' with these, as being too small and short-stemmed, so not worth considering for exhibition or cut flower production. Only a few eccentrics like myself exhibited 'Lilac Ripple' so if you had a good stock of it then it really caught the judges' eye. I won the Warwick Cup with 'Lilac Ripple' in 1996 against 150 other vases in the division. Out of 548 vases in the show, only 3 were striped (all 'Lilac Ripple'). 'Toby Robinson' (Kerton 1997) was more or less identical to 'Lilac Ripple'.

Nowadays, exhibitors recognise that striped cultivars can hide slight rain damage which is a valuable asset in a wet season. Turn to a recent classification list and there is a huge selection in the striped category (16) reflecting a very diverse range of colours, all with the striped colour pattern. Credit for trail-blazing improvements in the breeding of striped Spencers must go to Andrew Beane. His first cross was 'Wiltshire Ripple' x 'The Doctor' to produce 'Candy' (Unwins 1991). Simon Smith used to grow a range of different coloured striped cultivars. I remember Simon

telling me in 2007,

at the Early Show at Burnham-on-Sea, he had a

fancy to enter the Daily Mail class exhibiting 12 different striped colours. We decided at the time that there were not yet 12 different colours in the category. Might it be achievable now?

The most popular with exhibitors is 'Sir Jimmy Shand', more or less identical in colour to 'Lilac Ripple' but without doubt superior on account of its larger flowers and longer stems. It was raised by Bob Chisholm, has excellent placement and is consistent. A shade paler is 'Margaret Hastie' (Parsons 2011), I call it



'Wiltshire Ripple'.
Photo by Roger Parsons.



'Margaret Hastie'.
Photo by Roger Parsons.

lavender rather than lilac. It has all the good qualities of 'Sir Jimmy Shand' but is overshadowed by the ever-popular SJS and you would not need to grow both. Mauve would be my description of 'Lady Nicholson' (raised by Graham King), another where we have seen some very good vases. This is less popular than SJS. It has to be grown very well to get consistent "fours" and is a shade deeper than SJS. 'Margaret Hastie' and 'Lady Nicholson' are sufficiently distinct that a larger grower might have both. 'Platinum Jubilee' (Unwins 2023) is a new member of this group which looks promising. All these have white ground but 'Darcey Bussell' (Unwins 2001) might be described as light purple on cream ground. It is a distinct colour so probably better for cut flowers than for exhibition. 'Cream Ripple' (raised by Phil Kerton) is a cream ground form of 'Lilac Ripple'.

Many of the other colours appear to have been derived from the old Unwin's stripes because they don't have quite the same quality and uniformity of the lavender-lilac-mauve group. Perhaps the best of these is the pink on white group. 'Queen of Hearts' (raised by Roy Tullett) has been consistently good for decades and is still sold by E W King under the alternative name of 'Cirrus'. 'Terry Sewell' (Manston 2006) was identical. 'Olivia' (from Keith Brewer) is rarely seen but can be just as good, if not better. I fancy it has less colour in the petals than 'Queen of Hearts'. 'Alan Roberts' has some claims, having been selected by Andrew Beane from material inherited from Bill Truslove. Those wanting a cream-ground pink will find 'Ella Maria' (Kerton 2003) is of exhibition quality.



'Frances Kate'.
Photo by Caroline Ball.



'Ella Maria'.
Photo by Roger Parsons.

The dark blue / dark purple group can be exhibited but may be less reliable than the lilac or pink cultivars. They are very striking and are most popular with cut flower growers. 'Frances Kate' (Parsons 2011) is dark blue and has large flowers on long

stems. 'Night Sky' (Matthewman 2017) appears identical with me but with less good placement. The dark purple 'Nimbus' (Unwins 1996) is exceptionally popular with cut flower growers, who are less fussy about good placement. 'Tom Atherton' is intermediate in colour between these two. Raised by John Robson, it was named for Tom's 80th birthday after a vase of this impressed Tom at Southport Show some years

ago. It won the Gower Seedling Prize at the Early National show in 2022. 'Leilani Bluebell' (from Andrew Beane) is rarely seen but is a good quality cultivar. The Eagle novelty 'Pinstripe' has the same colour description of purple / mauve as 'Leilani Bluebell' so I look forward to seeing this in 2024.

There are some good quality maroon stripes, excellent for cutting and can also be shown. 'Lisa Marie' (raised by Dick Place) is my favourite for placement and uniformity. 'Olive D' (Owls Acre 2008) is also good. I have one from Latvia named 'Riga 800' (Dubovkis 2001) which is of similar quality to these two. I am less familiar with 'Choc Stripe' (Kerton 2015), which is another in this group to consider.



'Betty Maiden'.
Photo by Roger Parsons.

The best of the traditional blue stripes in my experience is 'Betty Maiden' (raised by Andrew Beane). Others in this colour are similar. Dot.Com (Eagle 2002) has less pigment and 'Serendipity' (McDonald 2018) has so little pigment that I would call it a blue picotee. Genetically, it is still a stripe. 'Serendipity' is my favourite of this small group and is very popular with cut flower growers.

What we might call cerise is an even smaller group. 'Kyle the Clown' (raised by Bob Chisholm) is the best of these for an exhibitor. 'Linda Carole' (raised by Dick Place) is preferred for cut flowers, being early, long-stemmed flowers, non-tendrill leaves and multiflora blooms with good placement.

The best of the reds might be 'Somerset Ripple', described by raiser Peter King as raspberry in colour. 'Geoff Amos' (T&M 2001) is also good and might be a brighter colour. 'Jacko' (raised by Dick's son, Richard Place) is a non-tendrill form with good placement.

In orange, 'Sunset' (Marshalls 2002) is the best of these. 'Tutti Frutti' (Parsons 2020) is a non-tendrill form with good placement.

Few magenta stripes exist and 'Borderline' (raised by Harvey Albutt) has to be considered outdated. I have a one from Martins Maltenieks in Latvia named 'Didzis' which I recall as being good so should grow this again.

This review has not covered all the striped



'Tutti Frutti'.
Photo by Roger Parsons.

Spencers that we have in the National Collection. Older cultivars can form a valuable resource for plant breeders. In the 1990s, Unwins introduced a new series to supercede the old Unwins Stripes and some of these remain worthwhile for cutting, including 'Candy' (light maroon), 'Comet (cerise pink) and 'Mars' (red).

All these striped Spencers are thought to have derived in ancestry from 'Lady Gay', introduced by Unwins in 1925. A recent introduction has been the modern grandiflora 'Three Times as Sweet' (raised by Charles Valin) which has a separate origin. It arose from 'Matucana' x *Lathyrus belinensis*. Striped colour pattern is also found in some dwarf and semi-dwarf cultivars raised by Andrew Beane and Dick Place. Some come from 'Wiltshire Ripple' x Cupids but others involve striped seedlings.

It should go without saying that the above comments are very much my own, based on my experience of growing these varieties on the Sussex coast. Others may find differently, so try growing them for yourself. Would it now be possible to stage a 12-vase class using distinctly coloured stripes? The answer is "yes, just about" but it is difficult enough to get an entry on the bench using more reliable solid-coloured varieties so it would be a courageous challenge to attempt.



'Leilani Bluebell'. Photo by Roger Parsons.

Times are a Changing

By Darren Myers

Having grown for many years, Sweet Peas have provided me with a barometer of the how the seasons have changed and how much more of a challenge it has become to get any longevity from my plants due to the changing climate we are experiencing.

I clearly remember the peak showing season in Northern England being late July early August, with shows such as Wakefield, Bakewell, Leeds and Southport being heavily supported by the Sweet Pea contingent. In addition, Wakefield held a number of the NSPS's Provincial Shows. In addition, I recall my late Father winning best exhibit in show at a local Flower and Vegetable show in the second week of September with 12 stems of 'Brian Clough', beating Chrysanthemums, Dahlia's and vegetables all grown by prominent growers, in their peak season.

Now, the season is considerably shorter and I dare say that my plants are now what I would consider to be at their peak for no more than 2-3 flushes of flowers, before the quality quickly diminishes. Unless you grow at altitude or are in Scotland, there is a real challenge on getting the plants to last beyond the third week of July. I often hear stories of growers saying that their plants are gone at the start of July.

Following what was an incredibly hot June in 2023, I was asked how I managed to supply the flowers for a trade stand at the Drifffield Show in the third week of July. This comment, I must add, was from a trained horticulturist, who grows Sweet Peas for exhibition. There is not a simple straight forward answer, but I have adapted what I do throughout the season, and continue to do so, to give myself a fighting chance of having some blooms for the show's I intend on attending

I normally sow my exhibition plants in the first weekend of January but have delayed sowing by around 2 weeks this year. This, I hope, will allow the plants to provide me with that extra week or 2 when I need the flowers.

At the start of their life, growing Sweet Peas as cold as you can, can be a challenge. But for several years, I have taken my plants from the greenhouse and placed them outside for around 6-8 weeks prior to planting. This has allowed them to develop as slowly as possible. The drawback, however, is that it takes much more work to take the fleece on and off when needed. It's not too long ago that growers used to lag their cold frames with cardboard and carpet to provide some insulation from the worst of the winter's weather, but this practice is no longer needed. It is possible, if correct care is provided and we don't experience anything excessive, to get your plants through the winter leaving plants outside in a sheltered position.

The reason I use fleece is to protect the plants from winds with a northerly to easterly flow. But a couple of years ago, I found myself in the garden at 3am taking the fleece off my plants as I was awoken with a heavy hailstorm. I feared the weight of the hail would break the plants, so it had to come off. Some would say I'm dedicated; others may not be so polite!

One other adaptation I am making this year is the timing of planting out. By sowing in the first weekend of January, I am normally looking to plant out around 10-12 April. However, I have started to experience, with some varieties, the plants starting to produce very small leaves and provide some very unpleasant looking growth, when the plants get to around 18 inches high. Some recover, some choose not to. I got talking to a notable experienced grower last summer who shared a very similar story to my own. The conclusion drawn is that the plants are being affected by climate change and not adapting to their new growing conditions, especially if there is any heat or periods of dryness when planted. He had experimented potting on into larger pots and then planting them a few weeks later, to provide much more root run. This resulted in no plants being affected. So, my plan for this year is to plant out around the same time, 10-12 April, although the plants should be around 2 weeks away from being ready to plant out.

As a rule, from cradle to grave, I never let my plants dry out, but I never overwater my plants either. They are never over watered, unless mother nature thinks otherwise. I believe that allowing them to have access to some moisture reduces the stress in the plants, which helps to delay flowering.

In periods of hot weather, and where possible, I use the mist setting on my hosepipe to place moisture on the leaves. Whilst some may question this practice, as it may encourage fungal infections (something that I don't experience), it works for me. This is something that I actually picked up from John Pratt several years ago. The water on the leaves, doesn't just help to keep the plants cooler, but also reduces the rate of water loss from the plants. Working fulltime, this isn't always possible, but I will do this as often as I can.

In the past, I have mulched my rows, but is a practice that I have now stopped. The lack of trustworthy material that isn't going to risk introducing herbicide onto my plot, fungal disease or alter the pH of my soil leaves limited options. So, with my Peas continuing to receive moisture from watering, I instead layer on the inside of the canes, which allows the plants to mulch themselves.

On the run up to layering I scrutinise my plants for days and work out if they need any additional feed. Any additional feed is incorporated into the soil between the rows during layering. I am not normally concerned about phosphorus or potassium levels. What does concern me is the level of nitrogen. The effect of nitrogen on exhibition Sweet Peas can be the difference between a lovely, refined specimen and one that produces

gappy blooms with a course stem, with leaves more akin to a savoy cabbage rather than that of a Sweet Pea. As a result, I never like to overdo the levels of nitrogen. In addition, I also don't want a fertiliser that gives them one big hit, instead I prefer something a little slower releasing. So, when layering I sometimes incorporate Hoof and Horn into the soil between my rows. Nothing more than ½-1oz per square yard is needed.

I always estimate that anything you do to your plants, can take up to 3 weeks before you can really see the benefits. So, introducing Hoof and Horn at the stage of layering is the perfect time to top up those nitrogen levels.

The key components to ensure good growth, besides having the correct pH, is having nitrogen, boron and calcium available to the plants. The lower the level of these key fertilisers, will result in a shorter growing period. So, ensuring that the plants have access to these fertilisers is key to keeping your plants going.

I must add, for context, although being very much inland, my plot at home is around 80m (around 260ft in old money) above sea level. In a cool wet summer, this level of elevation can help me get to the shows when others struggle. Conversely, any heat can impact me more. The higher the elevation, the more likely you are to be able to keep your Sweet Peas going for longer.

The final thing that I do, to reduce the stress levels in my plants, is to keep the amount of flower they carry to an absolute minimum. I now remove all flower buds until at least after I have layered. Due to my level of elevation, I am now of the belief that I am unable to produce top exhibition quality flowers and have them as a cut flower also, especially in a warmer summer. I am fastidious with the weather forecast throughout June and July, and I will determine a date from when I will allow them to flower prior to a show. In between shows, I try and keep the flowers to a minimum. Using a combination of experience and knowing the weather forecasts, I am now able to determine which flush of flowers will make the shows I am aiming for, and I invariably only allow them to carry the flush of flowers that I need.

So unless you are prepared to move your plot to higher ground, or mover further North, then be prepared to adapt your growing methods to adapt to our changing climate, as times are a changing.

“The very best relationship has a gardener and a flower. The gardener nurtures and the flower blooms.”

Carole Radziwill

An Introduction To The Flower Colours of Edible Peas

By Gabriella Harman

The edible pea, *Lathyrus oleraceus* Lam. (formerly *Pisum sativum* L.)¹³, requires no introduction, but the same cannot be said for many of the researchers who built our contemporary understanding of genetics with the aid of this unassuming vegetable. For this acclaim the edible pea shares credit with its scented cousin, which was the subject of much research into heredity at the beginning of the 20th Century ². Alike, they arose from humble origins to grace the gardens and tables of nobility and became steadfast in their redolence of the British midsummer.

While its cousin was awarded pride of place in the garden for its exquisite blooms and propensity to feed the human soul, the pea was favoured for its fruit, seeds and capacity to nourish the human constitution.

The demure flowers of *L. oleraceus*, pretty as they are, bear no scent and have been largely disregarded by commercial breeders and gardeners alike. For most of the domestic history of the edible pea, it has served as a grain legume and staple foodstuff. But after the inception of the modern sweet wrinkled marrowfat in the late 18th Century, courtesy of Thomas Andrew Knight and his experimental crosses, its status and popularity exploded as England hurtled into a golden age of pea breeding.¹⁴

However, the hundreds of new cultivars introduced by the English seed houses intentionally lacked the single component pivotal to the subjects of this article: colour, or more pedantically, anthocyanin. For without this pigment, peas taste better, but the spectrum of flower diversity is rendered invisible.

One has to look beyond the shores of Great Britain to find the homelands of the colour mutations, and the research that unfolded around them. These discoveries were made in Sweden and Netherlands, where the continued development and consumption of rustic 'grey peas' largely survived the marrowfat mania unfolding in Britain. In the Low Countries, these 'grey' peas are referred to as 'capucijners' and 'rozijnerwt'.⁴ Unlike in the Sweet Pea, any diversification in the flowers of edible peas were spontaneous - accidents of nature - without intention or further selection for the interest of the gardener or florist.

In the following chapters I hope to provide an overview of the array of pea flower colours which occurred spontaneously over the course of the edible pea's relationship with mankind, and a brief introduction to the scientists who first characterised them in the early 20th Century.

A NOTE ON ANTHOCYANIN

For the purposes of this article, we focus only on the changes to flower colour in which variable expression in anthocyanin pigment is the causal agent. The pivotal allele is A, responsible for anthocyanin synthesis in the plant. Without A, which is dominant, anthocyanin and all of its derivatives cannot express in the plant, resulting in recessive white flowers.⁷

All of these alleles described hereafter affect either the quantity or quality of anthocyanic pigment produced in the flower, so without anthocyanin production switched to the on positions by A, they may be present but hidden. In other words, with the pathways of anthocyanin production not in use, they remain hidden.

I. PURPLE/WILD TYPE



Despite being the 'original' colourway of the pea, cultivars with coloured flowers are vastly underrepresented. This is no accident, as the culinary quality of pigmented shelling peas is inferior to those without anthocyanin, tending to discolour and having a slightly bitter taste when cooked. Nevertheless, the majority of mangetout peas in the 1800s, highly favoured in France, had purple flowers⁶.

The well-known 'Cupani' and 'Matucana' cultivars are clear examples of wild-type coloration in *L. odoratus*.

The wild-type *L. oleraceus* is strikingly similar, though the colours are reversed, with the standard petal being a paler hue than the wings. Like in the Sweet Pea, anthocyanins are the main pigment type in the flowers of edible peas.^{7, 22}

It is from cultivated forms of purple-flowered peas that the existing accessions of the various following colour mutants arose.

II. WHITE

Edible peas with white flowers are ubiquitous, and the occurrence of this mutation is ancient, described as far back as the late 13th Century.⁷

In white-flowered peas, anthocyanin production is abolished in the entire plant by the recessive alleles aa. In its absence, pigmentation of the axils, pods, seed coat, tendrils and flowers does not occur, rendering the



former entirely green, and the latter colourless or 'white'. It is this lack of colour that made the pea the vegetable that we know today. There are Ethiopian and European lines of white-flowered peas from separate mutation events⁷, though it is the European line, and more recently Knight's marrowfat, that is the progenitor of the modern vegetable.^{8, 14}

There is far too much documented history surrounding the origins and results of this mutation to begin to scratch the surface in this article, and there are a number of great lectures and books devoted to this subject^{6, 14}. However, this single colour mutation, or lack of colour thereof, unequivocally dominates the identity of the cultivated pea the world over.

Doubtlessly, hidden behind the white veil, colour mutations have propagated countless times. But, without the reintroduction of anthocyanin, they shall remain obscured from view.

III. ROSE PINK



With casual observation one can infer that this mutation appears to be an analogue of the old 'Painted Lady' type in the Sweet Pea. Indeed, the biochemistry involved is the same, as both have a defect in the enzyme that synthesises delphinidin and petunidin, the blue pigments responsible for the purple wild-type flower colour.^{7, 22}

The Rose Pink character was first described by Tschermak in 1904¹⁶. In the estimation of Dutch researcher De Haan, (illustrated in attached 'Historical Survey') this colour would have arisen by the 1750s³, which aligns closely with Miller's reference to the 'Painted Lady' sweet pea in 1754.⁹

Spontaneous discoveries of this phenotype transpire relatively frequently. In 1920, Swedish botanist Hans Tedin documented his collection of 5 different pure strains of peas bearing Rose Pink flowers, which he had selected from 'native or foreign mixed sorts or found as intermixtures of other kinds of corn'.¹⁷

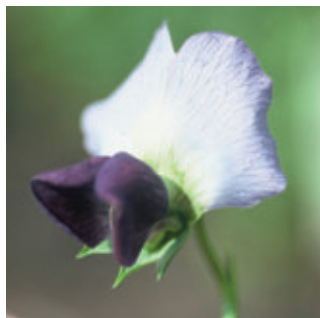
Closer to our place in time, Rose Pinks continue to spring forth. The conservationist and skilled amateur plant breeder Petra Suckling, had a rosy occurrence in their crop of 'Weggiser', a Swiss mangetout which bears purple flowers. This fortuitous discovery was named 'Elisabeth', for her mother and donor of the original 'Weggiser' seeds.

Another recent mutation event occurred in Utah, when a grower discovered pink flowers* in the purple-flowered cultivar 'Golden Sweet'. It retains all of the other characteristics of the parent cultivar, and the apt (though dry) initial moniker 'Pink

Flowered Golden Sweet' has stuck. A couple of years ago, I unwittingly found myself in the position of possessing the single last known seed of this line. The seedling came up 'blind' and its demise was imminent. With a prayer it was pinched back to produce new basal shoots. Fortune had a change of heart and the little plant prospered, and its lucky seeds have found many new homes across Europe.

*I have some mild suspicion that this may not be 'Rose Pink' but instead the rather similar 'Light Purple' described in the following section. Further investigation is warranted.

IV. LIGHT PURPLE & VIOLET



These two factors arose at the end of the 19th Century, and were described thanks to the observations of father and son research duo Hans and Olaf Tedin. In 1898, Hans Tedin received seeds of a field pea from the collection of H. von Post of Ultuna Agricultural College in central Sweden ^{17, 19}.

He writes: "I received from the Agricultural College of Ultuna, Sweden, a pea called '*Ljusröd-blommig Gråärt*' i.e. a light red flowered grey pea ('grey pea', is the Swedish name for *Pisum arvense*), a sort of pea with

flowers as pale as the rose-coloured, and, accordingly, with white or almost white standard, but with wings not rose-coloured but light purple. When crossing ... I received without exception a purple flowered F1, just as when crossing white and rose. But in F2, not only purple, light purple and white flowers appeared, but also rose and further a fifth colour, namely violet. Phenotypically this violet can be said to stand in the same relation to purple as light purple to rose."

Tedin gave the newly discovered Violet allele the symbol *ar* ¹⁸, and determined that the flowers of the Light Purple flowers were a result of combining the *ar* and *b* factors.

De Haan later postulated that the Light Purple form arose from a mutation in a Rose Pink line, due to the fact that Violet was not discovered until much later ³.

V. CRIMSON or APPLE BLOSSOM

In 1930, two papers describing the Crimson or 'Apple Blossom' factor were published simultaneously by Prof. Vassily Sergejevich Fedotov and Dr. Hedrick de Haan. De Haan's description was based on observations of a mutation discovered in the purple-flowered 'Noordhollandse' landrace, which he estimated had been grown since at least 1850. He claimed that the





seed traders in the region called these crimson-flowered mutations 'apple blossom' or '*bleekbloei*', which translates to 'pale bloomer'.³

(See plate)

In a striking difference to all of the other colour mutations described, flowers of the crimson factor are entirely self-coloured, with identical pigment produced in standard and wings¹⁵, much the same manner as the red *Grandiflora* Sweet Peas².

There are a few crimson-flowered cultivars and landraces in existence, including De Haan's original Apple Blossom line. Interestingly, they are all large wrinkled maple peas, known as '*rozijnerwt*' or 'raisin peas' in their homeland of North Holland⁴.

L to R: Deep Apple Rose, Apple Blossom, Violet, Rose, Violet Leaf Axil, Rose Leaf Axil.

VI. PINKISH WHITE

The prolific Dutch breeder Rijpko Jan Mansholt is credited with the discovery of this factor³. These 'pinkish white' flowers vary in appearance between completely white, to slightly tinged pink, depending on climatic conditions.

De Haan writes in his 'Contributions to the Genetics of *Pisum*':

"About the origin of the seed Dr. Mansholt informed me that in 1922 he sowed out a sample of trade-seed of a population of short grey peas from North-Holland. The seed appeared to be a mixture ... beside the common short plants there occurred 5 tall plants and also 5 short plants with white flowers. These latter were harvested separately. They appeared to be plants deviating from the rule that coloured flowers and a coloured seedcoat go together. The flowers were white, the seeds coloured."



The cultivars 'Ivora' and 'Dolfijn,' introduced by Mansholt in 1951 and 1953 respectively, were the first examples of pure lines of Pinkish White peas distributed in the seed trade. Both were selected from 'Hala', a purple-flowered dun pea⁴.

Another cultivar with white/pale flowers, likely to be Pinkish White, is 'Kool's Langstro Rozijnerwt', which was introduced by the brothers Reinder and Dirk Kool of Andijk,

Netherlands, in 1934. Also known as 'Kola Kapucijner', it is a derivative of 'Kool's Bleekbloei Grauwe Erwt', a crimson-flowered population which was in turn developed from the 'bleekbloei' referenced in the preceding chapter⁴. Its flower colour genotype has not yet been described, though I plan on making a few crosses to reveal this in the coming season.

It's worth noting that without exception, all of the above cultivars, and the Apple Blossom line, are derived from the 'Noordhollandse' landrace.

VII. CERISE



This chance discovery occurred in an altogether different set of circumstances to the preceding.

The revelation and description of the Cerise factor was published in 1951 by Dutch geneticist Susan Jacobus Wellensiek. Wellensiek had also been using Mansholt's original Pinkish White line, until it was lost during the war. Upon requesting new seeds, he received two separate lines that were of unknown identity. From my own observations, both have identical seeds and similar short growth habit. Despite these initial similarities, the

pale flowers are different, as are the alleles responsible for their colouration.²⁰

The author notes:

"Already by visual examination it turned out that one line was most probably identical with the old one, but the other one was clearly distinct by always showing clear spots of colouration on the wings."*

Wellensiek named this new colour line 'Light' and was able to determine, though a series of crosses and segregations, that the aforementioned 'old' line had the Pinkish White factor *am1*, and the 'light'-flowering pea were a result of a bifactorial mutation of both Crimson and a new factor Cerise, assigned the symbol *ce*.

In the same paper, Wellensiek notes that his discovery of Cerise is analogous to Tedin's discovery of Violet, both having arisen from lines that spontaneously mutated in two factors *ce*, *cr* and *ar*, *b* respectively.

*Its appearance possesses some similarity to the markings of my favourite Spencer, *L. odoratus* 'Margaret Hughson'.

JIC Accession	Original Line	Allele(s)	Flower colour	Author - Year
Jl 0018	Ljusröd-blommig Gråärt (Von Post)	ar, b	Light Purple	Tedin - 1920
Jl 0014	Ljusröd-blommig Gråärt (Von Post)	ar	Violet	Tedin - 1920
Jl 2776	Apple Blossom (De Haan)	cr	Crimson	Fedotov/De Haan – 1930
Jl 1860	Pinkish White (Mansholt)	am1	Pinkish White	De Haan - 1931
Jl 1858	Uncertain	am1	Pinkish White	Wellensiek - 1951
Jl 0021	Light (Wellensiek)	ce, cr	Pale Rose Purple	Wellensiek - 1951
Jl 1860	Light (Wellensiek)	ce	Cerise	Wellensiek - 1951

Table 1: The original *L. oleraceus* 'grey pea' seed lines and their John Innes Centre accession numbers, with the author and date of their first description, assigned allele symbols and current names for the colour types.

VIII. MULTIFACTORIAL CROSSES

Less of a discovery and more the result of an intentional cross, Carmel Statham of the University of Tasmania documents the new colour 'Pale Lilac' for the first time in literature in 1974¹⁵. This was the result of a cross between Violet and Cerise.

De Haan crossed Apple Blossom with Violet and a Rose Pink line, to produce what he named Apple Violet and Apple Rose³. Statham calls them light mauve and antique rose. Both are quite beautiful, single hues of lavender and salmon-peach respectively.

Via the culture of existing accessions and my own crosses, further exploration and illustration of these characters, as well as the various forms referenced below, will hopefully be an article for the future.

IX. IN CONCLUSION

Perhaps one can see that some species in the *Lathyrus* genus share the same order of precedence in colour mutations. Roger Parsons noted this in his article regarding *L. latifolius* in the NSPS Annual 2023¹². It seems that at first the wild-type of this species expresses the most anthocyanin pigment, then occurs the white form, and then a light pink coloured version. It does seem that these plants, when left to their own devices (or under the benevolent care of humans) have flowers that jump from purple/magenta > pure white > pale pink and beyond.

While the number of described *L. oleraceus* flower colours are very limited, I posit that this is a limitation imposed only by disinterest and lack of pursuit by conventional

breeding. No new colour factors or combinations have been described since Statham's thesis 50 years ago. With such little interest, it is remarkable that these original lines survive to this day, which is entirely thanks to the efforts of the late great pea geneticist Professor Stig Blixt, who amassed a collection of pea germplasm at the Weibullsholm Plant Institute and later the Nordic Gene Bank ¹¹.

Not mentioned in this article are the variations in pod colour, flower patterns and mutations in floral architecture that have been witnessed in the edible pea. In brief, the Sweet Pea pattern known as 'striped' appears to also be present in the edible pea, where the typename is 'centrobuscurum', though anything analogous to the 'flaked' sweet pea remains elusive.

As far as I'm aware, the 'bipartus' phenomenon is exclusive to the edible pea, whereby the wings are bisected horizontally with the upper horizon of normal colour, and lower horizon exhibiting the colour of the standard ⁵. Finally, it is known that the 'hooded' standard of the sweet pea has an analogous form in the edible pea, known as the 'lobed' standard, where the standard petal is comprised of the same tissue as the wing petals, resulting in flowers that are monochromatic, as opposed to the usual bicolourous blooms ^{1,21}.

With hope, it is my ambition to promote the lines referenced in this article to horticulturalists and farmers. Multiplication is underway and with any luck, this objective can be realised after a few successful seasons. It would be a sad shame for these peas to be forgotten to time, frozen in genebanks, without being given the chance to grace the plots of gardeners and inspire the next century of geneticists, breeders and conservationists. With the rise of recognising the importance of small-scale agriculture, 'slow food' and the ever-increasing demand for plant protein, shedding light on the historical provenance and diverse characteristics of these little peas may aid them in finding renewed purpose in the 21st Century.

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The ignition of my exploration into this topic can be attributed to Anna Roberts and her Rainbow Pea Project, and the extraordinary crosses, selections, and mutants exhibited by her, Emma Court, Petra Suckling, and Jan Galpin.

My sincere gratitude also extends to Jan for graciously providing the photographs of 'Cerise', 'Elisabeth', and 'Pink Flowered Golden Sweet'.

This article would not exist without the warm generosity, shared passion and innate inquisitiveness of these kind women.

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'Mrs Bernard Jones'.
Photo by Caroline Ball.

My First Year with Sweet Peas

By Susan Meeks

I only became involved with Sweet Peas in July 2022. I was invited by Stephen Hayward and his friend Ronnie Durrant to help them 'set-up' for Harlow Carr. How did I meet Stephen? I have known Stephen for over 10 years when he was allotment manager where I had my allotment. Harlow Carr, Westmorland, Tatton, Chorley, Garstang and Southport all these shows needed setting – up manning and dismantling, also I was helping Stephen with his own displays. Here was also the picking and transportation of the blooms.

So why not grow some of your own? Let's beat Stephen!! If I'm going to the shows lets enter.

In February I attended the first of the six workshops at Sarah Haisley's house. 1. Sowing seeds 2. Potting on 3. Stopping 4. Hardening off 5. Final planting 6. Growing and Layering. These workshops have been invaluable because I didn't know there was so much involved in the growing of Sweet Peas. Now where in my garden am I going to grow them? Stephen and I built two raised beds.

Once the seeds came through they were put into root trainers and once big enough I brought them home. The temptation is to put them in the greenhouse, but no, they had to be put outside, treat them mean. The Sweet Peas more than ready for their new home were planted after the erection of canes eight inches apart running north to south. Cutting off the 'fingers', side shoots and tying up is a daily job.

In March/April I accompanied the Sweet Pea Society at the plant sales at Arley, Bridgewater, Astley and Cholmondeley selling the seedlings to raise money for the Society, myself being chief wrapper, as the seedlings were wrapped in newspaper to continue our 'green theme'.

The plants in my raised bed in June weren't looking too good. I thought they were lacking something. I gave the beds a top dressing of new compost along with some pelleted chicken manure. I had grown some Sweet Peas in tubs using a different compost and these were looking a lot healthier. Could this be a lesson for next year, get your beds manured and enriched at the end of the season? On speaking to other members of the Sweet Pea fraternity everyone was having problems. The Old Fashioned varieties had taken to flowering way to soon. The Spencers were lagging behind. The weather I think was the problem, probably the early heat-wave.

Then came in July the start of the flower shows. Bridgewater was our first show. Thursday - build up day, Friday - arranging, Saturday and Sunday - open to the public. I was asked if I would like to help steward. I agreed and was assigned with Darren

Myers, one of the North's top growers. What an eye opener, he was pointing out all the faults. Do I still want to grow Sweet Peas? But it was also the opportunity to ask questions. Well I have started now, not very well, but one can only improve. Everyday is a learning day. Learning all the different 'breeds' (how can you tell I'm from a farming background?) but one day hopefully, I will be able to recognise all the 'breeds'. When the doors opened to the public, it was non-stop, people were buying seeds and asking for advice. Yes, I was giving advice to the best of my ability, if I didn't know the answers, I directed them to the experts. Sarah Haisley, Catherine Bromley, Stephen Hayward and I travelled to Wern. What a lovely flower show and we were all made very welcome. We did well 11 placements out of 19 entries. One of my entries in the floral art section won 1st prize and a trophy. Sadly we couldn't stop for the second day as we had to get home to set up for Tatton. Phillippa Cooper brought our vases etc back when she came up to Tatton. The guys set up the staging at Tatton, now it was time to set up the display. The 'team' because it is team work, from the picking of the blooms, the greenery, the vases, bowls etc. These are all brought by various members. The vases and bowls are all recycled, donated, or bought from charity shops. Then the arranging begins, this all takes time with everybody being involved. Congratulations to one and all because we won a GOLD medal.

I think that the rain we had been having had helped with the growth of my Sweet Peas. Chorley Show again- a two day show. A very wet show. I entered the decorative class with five entries. I was placed in all classes but sadly no first prizes, but won a trophy for the novice section. I volunteered to again be a steward and learnt a lot from the two judges that I was supporting.

Garstang Show- this is an agricultural show and they have a large horticultural section with over 138 classes. I entered both the Sweet Pea section and floral art sections. In the Sweet Pea classes I was placed (again no first prizes) and in the floral art received a trophy, two rosettes, one 1st, four 2nds, and three 3rds so was satisfied with my efforts.

Southport Flower Show- this started on Tuesday with the build up. Wednesday – the flower arrangement team again went into action. Everyone just gets on with it with a little banter along the way. I started to arrange some of the blooms and even managed to attach some of the everlasting Sweet Peas up the side of the display, under the guidance of Mavis Duxbury, my mentor. A new idea for the show was the single blooms in antique glass bottles, these were grouped in 3's and 9's. We had a lot of positive feedback from the public. I didn't think I would have enough blooms but I took them and they were used for the displays. We again won GOLD. On talking to other growers a lot of them had emptied their beds so I was pleased that I had some Sweet Peas to contribute.

Poynton Show- this was the last 'big' show, again all the team went into action to make a fantastic display, and yes another GOLD. It was a smaller display. I entered some classes and came away with two 1sts and three 3rds.

I cannot thank enough the members of our Sweet Pea Society for their help and guidance that you have all given me and I look forward to another year with you all and to hopefully winning more GOLD medals. I cannot name you all but you know who you are.

Taking on a Sweet Pea Challenge

By Neal Hatch

I know some people find growing cordon Sweet Peas a lot of work compared with just letting them grow up some sticks or netting. I think each approach has its place in the garden. I love having the odd wigwam of canes or sticks in the garden where I let the Sweet Peas scramble. But I also really love to see the long straight stems of a cordon-grown plant. Although it was only a single stem, I enjoyed entering this stem of 'Anniversary' at the Chiltern Sweet Pea show in 2023.

As I grew up, I helped tend my father's Sweet Peas, alongside growing a few dahlias and chrysanthemums myself for local flower shows. I was well versed in how to grow and also how to stage and show Sweet Peas from an early age, even though I never showed any myself! But study and work inevitably took over and I moved to work in London. As soon as I was able to get a small garden, I started to grow a small number of cordon Sweet Peas for the house.

Fast forward 30 odd years and in 2013 we decided to move to Somerset for a different pace of life. One of the main aims was to take on a much larger garden while we still had the energy to deal with it. As well as developing the garden, I soon started getting involved in local flower shows – both helping to run as well as exhibiting. I rekindled my early passion for growing and showing dahlias, but I have always had an interest in growing a wide range of flowers and vegetables. I naturally started to grow a row or two of cordon Sweet Peas – these made their way to my local show at Castle Cary in early August each year.

I started to get into growing Sweet Peas more seriously during the first year of lockdown in 2020 – even though they were mainly grown for my benefit as there were no flower shows! Even so, a few Sweet Pea stems crept into a couple of local 'virtual' online shows! At about this time, I joined the National Sweet Pea Society, to find out more about how to grow and show them. I would certainly have joined the Society without



A simple 1 stem vase
at Chiltern, 2023

the lockdowns, but the extra time on my hands was a spur to getting on with things that had been on my to-do list for ages.



I took 6 vases of Sweet Peas to Taunton Flower Show in 2021 when shows started to open up again. I was pleased to come away with some cards at a prestigious show.

Aside from a few vases of Sweet Peas in 'general' flower shows, this was the first time I had exhibited at a dedicated Sweet Pea show. I only had around 50 cordon plants that year. With the rain just before cutting, it was quite a challenge. I was pleased to have made it to the show and enjoyed the day. Apart from a couple of vases in local shows, I didn't show Sweet Peas elsewhere that year.

I spring sow my seed – or to be more accurate winter sow (in December/January). With milder winters there is no need for autumn sowing to get flowers to the shows I would be aiming at. I could probably sow a couple of weeks later than I do – but I need the propagator space for other things by that stage. Germination takes place in my warm greenhouse before everything is moved rapidly into a cold greenhouse for the rest of the winter so that the plants don't get too leggy, before hardening off in cold frames and eventually sitting outside before planting. I have been following what the experts do (on websites, Facebook, Instagram, and of course the NSPS publications) and so have been taking notes on pinching out and planting out. I try to keep records of most things, but I invariably look back and say I should have kept more detailed records or taken more pictures!



Keeping on top of all the plants is a challenge. I did layer my plants in 2021 & 2022, but I decided not to do so in 2023 when faced with 300 plants and competing pressures! I did not have enough time to layer the Sweet Peas in the run-up to the Sweet Pea show season, as by then I had several hundred dahlias to manage as well as other cut flowers, pot plants, and vegetables (in 2023 I staged over 400 exhibits at 16 shows). So I grew most of the Sweet Peas straight up the canes to hit a peak for the

An eclectic approach to growing the plants as I learn what works best for me.



wouldn't be competitive at the earliest of shows. But I thought if I started with long stems I could afford for them to shorten by the time of the National Show at the beginning of July.

My first show of 2023 was the Downton Show in June. I was made to feel welcome and enjoyed entering. It gave me a chance to practice staging (with my staging rings). But my Sweet Peas weren't ready – they were still only threes. The next week was on to Lacey Green for the Chiltern Show. My Peas were improving, mostly fours by now, but still some way off the quality of some of the other exhibitors. But, I was pleased that my strategy of heavy watering seemed to be paying off. As the National approached the stems

were shortening with the hot weather, but the spacing of the blooms on the stems was improving. I wrote in my gardening diary that the peak was about a week before the National. After all the dry/hot weather, heavy rain came just before I was due to cut for the National and marked the flowers – typical!

I made the trip up Shepperton during the night to stage at the early National in 2023. I was thrilled to win both the 6 vases distinct and 3 vases distinct classes, and the Cynthia Davis Cup for the best vase in the division. I had hoped to attempt the 9-vase

early National, and only layered the few plants I wanted to keep going for later shows. So my 2023 season was relatively short.

The weather (as always) proved challenging in 2023. Very hot weather was a problem early in the season, and I was worried I would end up with short stems by early July. So I watered endlessly in the early days, so much so that my stems were very 'gappy', and with a fair amount of bud drop. I



Growing two double rows in each of my small raised beds in 2023, with some wind protection after planting out. Unfortunately, the wind netting doesn't stop the hail!



class, but rain damage and a couple of variety failures meant that I had to restrict myself to the 6-vase class. It would have been lovely to have seen the show benches as full as they were in the shows I remember attending with my father. But you can only do your best and put your vases on the table. Nonetheless, it would be great to see a few other new exhibitors having a go at showing – it is fun.

A few vases of Sweet Peas did make it to the August shows. I just about managed to get vases into the 4 Sweet Pea classes at the Taunton Flower Show where they contributed to me winning the Banksian medal for most points/prize money across the horticultural classes.

Seeking Perfection

By Darren Myers

At the late National in 2022 I was fortunate enough to win the Lewiston for the best vase in show with a vase of 'Mary Priestley'. As exhibitors, we always try and strive for, but seldomly achieve, perfection.

However, this vase, according to the judge on the day, David Matthewman, was deemed worthy of such comment. I believe this was the first time any of my vases have achieved such comment. The vase itself was made up of 15 blooms, all of which were deemed by David to being like an 'F1'. Such standards I have yet to achieve with any other variety but continue to strive for.

But what does it take to achieve the required standard? Over the past few Annuals, I written several articles in which I set out some of my own growing techniques and methods. So, without wishing to rewrite those articles below are a few notes which I hope will help you with your understanding of what constitutes an exhibition quality bloom.

What varieties to grow

This should be the starting point. There are many varieties that have the potential to produce an excellent vase for exhibition, there are also many that aren't. This isn't to say that they aren't excellent varieties, but some are better equipped to provide the necessary quality than others.

If you are unsure where to start on choosing your varieties, there are several ways to find out. Firstly, consult the show audits produced by the NSPS. These give a good basis of what varieties are being grown for show.

You can always speak with your District Rep. They are a good source of information and if they don't know, they will invariably know someone who will.

Social media has really picked up the baton in recent years, so don't be afraid to jump online, whether it be Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) or Instagram and either look for the Sweet Pea specialist pages or ask growers on there what varieties they would recommend.

Most varieties suit everyone's location, but there are some varieties don't suit all soils, so you may have to be prepared to grow 2 or 3 seasons before you find a selection of varieties that you are happy with.

How many plants do I grow of each variety?

Every year without fail, I follow a strict set of rules that I never deviate from. It's something that has served me well throughout my growing career, whether I grew 100 or 700 plants.

I firstly plan my season and even before I sow, I know what my aims are, whether I am aiming for vases that contain 7, 9, 12 or 15 stems. Knowing what my aims are, I am then able to know how many plants of each variety I need. The following is a hard line that I do not deviate from, and if anything, these are the minimum number of plants for each variety that I grow.

5 stems = 20 plants / 7 Stems = 25 plants / 9 stems = 30 plants
12 stems = 40 plants / 15 stems = 50 plants

You will note that the ratio in each instance is 1 stem for just over every 3 plants.

If you have the time and inclination, I recommend reading historical NSPS publications and this rule of thumb has been used for many years. I will sometimes read articles from growers who, for example are growing 100 plants and growing 10 varieties, and then complain when they get to the shows that they are unable to get anything more than a mixed vase. The above numbers allow you, at show time, to have a good selection of plants to pick from, whilst providing some buffer in vase you lose a plant or 2. A greater selection allows you to pick only the very best flowers rather than putting in what you have.

What constitutes a good show bloom?

The NSPS's Judges rule book sets out the judging criteria. But this is sometimes difficult to visualise.

When judging, I always try and engage with the Stewards, and am normally more than happy to take several growers around with me, so they can see what I look for so that they can learn and take that knowledge and use it when staging their own exhibits.

The first criteria are that each stem should contain 4 fully open blooms. Anything that is showing signs of ageing, such as the stamen poking through the keel, will be down pointed. Equally, you will be down pointed for anything that is deemed young, ie is yet to be fully open.

Another big criterion for having exhibition quality is placement of the blooms. It is also important that the top bloom is facing forward, or as close to facing as forward as possible. The desired placement is stepped placement of each individual flower on the stem, with each bloom facing forward. The blooms should be neither gappy nor bunched. To help visualise what these terms translate to, let's look at some examples:



Gappy – between the 2 blooms on the left-hand side, there is a clear gap between those 2 blooms. This is considered a fault and will be down pointed. The causes are likely to be either:

- A trait of the variety
- Excessive water
- Excessive feed
- Cooler temperatures causing the stem to mature more slowly.



Bunched – where the 4 flowers are tightly packed together. The standard (the large main petal) excessively overlaps the top blooms. This is considered a fault and will be down pointed. The causes are generally:

- A trait of the variety
- Insufficient water
- Excessive feed
- Warmer temperatures causing the stem to mature more quickly.



Perfection, or very close.

What else will lose me points?

Weather damage – The 2 main causes of damage are rain and wind.

Wind damage is usually visible on the edge of both the standard and/or wing and is usually caused by the bloom. To limit this, tie your Sweet Peas so that the plants throw the blooms forward, and away from the canes or other any other blooms, as shown in the picture.



Rain damage can depend on the variety, severity of the rain and how long the rain has stood on the petals. Varieties such as 'Eclipse' will present with white rings. More characteristically, rain damage will be anything from a different shade of the same colour of the bloom through to brown marks. The brown marks are either bruising from heavy thunderstorm type rain or from where water has been allowed to stand on the petals for a period.

Whilst this may be considered excessive, I will often be seen on the run up to a show, out in the garden,

with a raincoat, shaking excess water from every bloom, even if it is raining. And I will do this as many times as needed. I stress, this may be considered excessive, but to demonstrate the benefits of this, the Late National in 2014 was held at Driffield. With the show being held on a Wednesday, we had heavy rain on the Saturday night and Sunday morning prior. Having shaken my blooms several times during that period, I ended up with a reasonable cut and eventually won the Clay Cup, with flowers that were rained on.

Malformations and trapped blooms – Close attention should be paid to the form of each bloom, looking for marks and malformations. Malformations can present in many ways, with the most common being a second standard and an underdeveloped wing. Some malformations can be corrected, but many cannot be, so attention to detail is the key to spotting these and ensuring that the fault on the subject bloom is addressed, or the bloom is discarded.

I will guarantee that the most common fault that is scene is that of a trapped bloom. This is where the standard hasn't been fully released by the calix and is trapped causing a hooding effect. This can be seen in top bloom in the picture of 'Valerie Harrod' below.

This can be easily addressed, and a steady hand can release the trapped petal, thus avoiding the penalty of down pointing.



Age of bloom – Whilst mentioned earlier, a bloom that is fresh and fully open is the perfect stage to aim for at judging. Anything that is either showing signs of tiredness or youth, will down point.

Variation in colour – any vase with a single cultivar should be of the same shade of colour. This is easy to achieve in white or cream coloured varieties, hence why they normally win the best vase in show. But it's harder to achieve with any other colour, and therefore having blooms at the same stage is crucial, but not always possible.

Although white and cream coloured varieties have the advantage when it comes to variation in colour, they do however have a slightly different issue to contend with. Some white and cream

coloured varieties are more prone to pinking. This is where a shade of pink, no matter how subtle, can be seen in one or more of the blooms. If any pinking is present in a vase then this will cause the vase in question to be seriously down pointed. In my capacity as a judge, I have taken vases outside away from any other colour to ascertain whether there is the merest hint of pink. Whether I am staging my exhibits or judging I try to avoid wearing anything that has red or pink as these colours will reflect onto the blooms, and distort your perception of whether a bloom is showing signs of pinking.

One other issue I see quite frequently is that of blooms showing signs of Mosaic Virus. Without going into detail around Mosaic Virus itself, the streaking of colour within the blooms, associated with the virus, is another fault that will be seriously down pointed. This may not be evident to the exhibitor when staging, but it can present itself, if cut from an infected plant, during the staging hours.

Lastly, be sure to check for Aphid infestations. At judging, I have always believed if there is 1 aphid on a bloom, then this shouldn't be down pointed as this could have come from elsewhere. However, if a family of aphid is on the flower, then this too will lead to the vase being down pointed. So be sure to check your blooms thoroughly.

To ensure the best exhibit possible, a conscientious exhibitor will check all their vases an hour or so before judging commences to ensure no faults have developed. Should any faults have developed, then those exhibitors will be seen swapping blooms, from the spares that they have available, to ensure that their vases are in the best condition possible ready for judging to commence.

Other factors

Staging – Whilst the quality of the how the vase is presented isn't taken into consideration, as per the NSPS Judging Booklet, there is no doubt that a well-presented vase will be looked at more favourably by a judge than a vase that hasn't had the same time, care and attention to detail spent on it. I am always of the opinion that what I put on the staging, is a representation of me, and I would be doing myself an injustice if I didn't try and represent the time and care I have taken throughout the year to get my blooms to the show.

I have seen some lovely blooms let down by poor staging, but I have also seen some average blooms made to look brilliant with some very good staging.

Summary

We all grow aiming for better, and as exhibitors we take an element of pleasure in our efforts being critiqued. Some are happy to enter what they grow, others strive to grow and show better flowers. Hopefully, for those that fall into the latter, these few pointers will help you along the way to growing better flowers and we'll hopefully see your efforts on the show benches at the many regional and national shows.

Showing at the Nationals is not for me!!

By Alison Shreeve

I first started showing due to the encouragement of Graeme Hollingdale, my local District Representative. My first tentative steps were with the Chiltern Sweet Pea Society. The shows were local and accessible, providing I took a half day off work. It took me a while to work out what was going on – but there was a fantastic amount of help, from John Bishop, Ann and Derek Chapple and on the decorative front from Caroline Ball and Gwen Bishop as well as other people showing.

I was quite content to carry on just showing at this one show until someone challenged me. Are you doing the National? Are you doing other local shows? I started to wonder why I wasn't doing these when other exhibitors were. I enjoyed the challenge of showing, although I was only a small grower and quite new to it.

The season is very short for our beloved Sweet Peas, so to make the most of the season I eventually decided to have a go at the Early National. It was of course a bit bewildering the first-time round. The venue wasn't ideal, a marquee on an uneven tarmac surface, and it rained! I remember it as being very dark, but that might not be correct as I certainly didn't need to stay up all night to stage the few vases I had.

Subsequent Early Nationals have brought me some success. I have learned a lot about selecting and staging but I'm still learning to be more open minded about which classes I can enter. I now don't just look at the smallest growers classes. There are some open classes which it is quite possible to enter if you grow some Spencers and some Old Fashioned and Grandifloras. If you have a bit of experience in floral art, you can enter the decorative classes. You don't have to be an expert, but just willing to have a go and learn from other people's success.

So do have a think about entering one of the Nationals. You can time the staging to suit your own circumstances. A careful perusal of the show schedule a week before, when you have to submit your entries will give you a good idea of what you should be able to enter. Be optimistic and have a go! Pick all the good blooms that you have so that you can select the best when you are staging. It is sometimes possible to enter an additional vase if someone has dropped out, so if you are in the lucky position of having more than you thought you would, simply ask the show manager if you can enter an additional class. When you arrive at the venue it is important to seek out the show manager and if you are new to showing at a National make this known. You will find that there are plenty of people willing to advise, to show you where to go and where to find the equipment you need. If in doubt ask someone!

The Nationals are very inspiring. If, like me, you are a small grower you can but marvel at the multi-vase classes and the massed beauty of 15-20 stems in a vase. You will find some exhibitors have a great deal of experience, but that doesn't preclude you from having a go and even winning. If you enter you will find those classes which suit you, your blooms and your skills and you can hone those over the years. In good years you might also enter both the Early and Late Nationals to gain even more experience. Each show has their own distinct character and minute variations! So, start this year by going to see a National Show. Peruse carefully and analytically. Ask why one exhibit is better than another and earmark a class or two which you intend to have a go at next year and talk to your fellow members about the merits of the winning exhibits. I'm sure you won't regret it! Good luck!

*“A flower’s appeal is in its contradictions –
so delicate in form yet strong in fragrance,
so small in size yet big in beauty, so short
in life yet long on effect.”*

Terri Guillemets

Selecting Varieties of Sweet Pea for Showing

By Alison Shreeve

How do we start to select which varieties we want to grow each year? If you are intending to show your blooms you will need to start planning in June for sowing in the Autumn. This of course is the best time to see the actual flowers and their colours in real life rather than on the internet or in a catalogue. Colour is very different when transmitted via media, so to be sure try and visit as many shows as you can and, if you can, go to open gardens in your area or to Roger Parsons' open day; that will help to expose you to plenty of possibilities.

The Classification List is also essential reading. Here the colours are grouped together and you will know which classes the varieties are eligible for, but the listing of types: Spencer; Old Fashioned; Modern and Semi-Grandiflora, will also be important when buying your seed. You can show all of these kinds as well as the *lathyrus* species at the NSPS shows, but local shows may simply say 'Sweet Peas'. For these you should think Spencers.

For most showing we assume that the Spencers are going to be the first choice. The big, frilly expansive blooms have the most impact. But not all Spencers are of show quality, so again read the information from the seed suppliers and choose those recommended for showing. King's Seed catalogue for example will indicate these with a little silver cup symbol. It is also worth consulting the audits from the National shows – this will tell you which varieties are shown the most and also gives information about placing.

The difficult part is selecting what will probably be a limited number of varieties. Up to 6 or 7 if you are a small grower, more if you grow hundreds or want to enter the multi-vase classes at the Nationals! You should think about a range of colours so that you have distinctly different colours that the multi vase classes ask for. For example, you would probably not want to grow a pink picotee, like 'Anniversary' in the same year as 'Queen of Hearts' as they are very similar. You might like to go for very strong colours, 'Dalesman', a dark blue, 'Restormel', bright red; 'Sir Max Hastings' – dark maroon; 'Bridget McAleer' or 'Eclipse', bright cerise/purple. Or you might prefer the other end of the brightness spectrum and choose paler versions, more typically 'Sweet Pea' perhaps? You might want a range from white, through blues, mauves and pinks and then of course there are the bi-colours, stripes and flakes and for some, the shifters. Far too many beautiful blooms if you can only choose six or seven! The answer is perhaps to grow more? Expand your plot? Get an allotment (or another one...)

For showing however, restrict yourself to a sensible range and choose what you like when you see them growing or on the show bench. Don't forget the Old Fashioned – a limited number of varieties if you are thinking of exhibiting at Wem, but a wider range, including modern versions of the same flower type for other shows. These are so easy to grow and very prolific flowerers. There are classes for vases of one variety or bowls of mixed varieties. Here you might choose a few pinks to show together, or contrasting colours. There are also classes for Modern and Semi-Grandiflora types which are also not grown as cordons. There are many beautiful colours in these as well.

It helps to try a few new varieties each year, but if you are like me, will settle into a few favourites which you will want in your garden every year. Some varieties have not done so well for me, even trying them in different years, so I rule those out. Some varieties, like 'Gwendoline', seem to be great each year, but I haven't grown 'Gwendoline' for several years! There is simply not enough room for too many favourites as well as some new varieties.

I hope this short article might help you to start planning for successful showing and gives you the confidence to show if you have not done it before. Good selecting and good showing!

My First Show by Rev Sweet Pea

By Richard Barron



Richard Barron. Photo by Caroline Ball.

In 2023 I entered the Early National Sweet Pea Show for the first time and I am glad I did, it was a very positive experience, as well as fulfilling an ambition. All the members were welcoming, helpful and encouraging, even sharing tips on how to display the blooms to their best advantage, an area where I lack expertise. The previous year, 2022, I attended the Early Show at Wisley to see if my blooms might be of a suitable standard. As a result, I decided to join the NSPS and seek to enter the Show the following year.

Where did it all begin?

Credit must go to the ladies in my life. Many ladies express a love for Sweet Peas. This little rhyme sums up a common female sentiment.

‘Please, O please, grow some Sweet Peas.
The colours are so fine and the scent divine.’



Cordons.
Photo by Richrd Barron.

I think it was my mum who persuaded my dad to grow them in the 1950s. He used the cordon system and later entered the local show in Coventry. From about the age of 8 years old he taught me how to grow them. For much of my working life I haven't had much opportunity to grow, either because of job demands, or soil conditions. For example, for 23 years I lived on the top of a chalk bank with only a thin layer of soil. Not ideal growing conditions.

In 2012 we moved to a more favourable environment in East Sussex and it was my wife who persuaded me to grow them again. Their abundance meant we could give bunches of flowers away when we went visiting people and this

was both satisfying and much appreciated. I joined the local horticultural society and entered village flower shows. It was here that I became known as Rev Sweet Pea! This stimulated other people to grow Sweet Peas and together we enhanced the shows, generated competition and created a camaraderie.

Around this time my wife and I read a book called, 'A Bunch of Sweet Peas,' by Henry Donald. It tells the romantic story of an impoverished young vicar and his wife who entered the 1911 Daily Mail Amateur National Sweet Pea competition and subsequently went on to win the top prize. As a vicar myself, the thought developed of entering a national show and trying to emulate the Rev Denholm Frazer who featured in the book. In 2014 my wife encouraged me to enter Mr Fothergill's National Sweet Pea Competition. I declined because I didn't think my blooms would be good enough but in 2015 I gave in to her pressure and entered the postal division because I couldn't attend in person. To my utter surprise and joy, I won! I dedicated this win to my dad.

I've been growing Sweet Peas every year since but in 2020 I had a disaster! Having run out of manure I bought some bags of horse manure, which turned out to contain aminopyralid and clopyralid herbicide. It killed half my stock and infected the soil. Compensation was received.

In 2021 I retired and moved to West Sussex where our garden is not large. In the first year of retirement, I grew 60 plants and was able to give away a lot of the blooms to neighbours and friends. Retirement meant the idea of entering a National Show became more of a possibility and after visiting the Early Show at Wisley in 2022 I plucked up courage to enter the 2023 Show. I increased my stock of plants to 118 and entered 3 classes, where I was thrilled to achieve a number of prizes, some of which were 1sts. I was disappointed there wasn't more competition, however, I recognise that growing Sweet Peas for competition requires time and a spacious garden, assets which many people do not have these days.

Personally, I like to grow for pleasure as well as competition and the two are not always compatible. Growing for competition on a limited plot means reducing the number of varieties grown, in order to increase the chance of having enough suitable blooms for the shows. Growing for pleasure gives the freedom to grow a wider range of varieties and to enjoy the pleasure they bring for oneself and others.



Richard Barron's vases at the Early National 2023. *Photos by Richard Barron.*

What have I learned from entering my first National show?

Well, I've learned it's worth having a go, and that members are always willing to help, to encourage and to share their growing experiences and tips. This year I'm growing some new varieties that impressed me at last year's show. At my wife's insistence I'm also growing the miniature variety 'Spangles'. Will I enter the 2024 Show? Yes, I plan to enter again and no doubt there will be lots of conversations about the challenges we've faced, the disappointment we've experienced and the obstacles we've overcome. But all of us who grow Sweet Peas do so because they are such a beautiful flower and it is a satisfying challenge to produce the perfect bloom and to enjoy their delicacy, their colour and their scent. Sweet Peas are a reminder to me of the goodness of God, who has created such beautiful things in nature for us to enjoy.

NSPS Show Entries over time

By Graeme Hollingdale

Having been IC of preparing the 2024 exhibitions schedules for the Society and as editor of the Bulletins, where I have been answering questions from members and explaining decisions made by the committee, it occurred to me that a look back at some of the data from previous years shows might be of interest to help people understand the background to some of the decision making by the schedule committee.

I have pulled out just mere snapshots for this short article but it might be interesting (especially for those younger members who are not so familiar with the history of the Society) to know if anybody has made a more detailed analysis of numbers of entries staged at the Nationals over the years. Most of the information is contained within the Annuals but has never, as far as I am aware, been collated and printed elsewhere. The excellent Centenary publication (2000) has tables of trophy winners of many of the most note-worthy awards but not exhibitor numbers.

My collection of Annuals spans the years from 1944 to the present day, plus one from 1933. Prior to the 1951 Annual which records the details of the 1950 exhibitions, numbers of entries staged was not published. However, the Audits did give numbers of vases staged of each named cultivar, just as we do today. One of the criticisms often raised about our Audits and therefore the numbers of different cultivars seen on the benches at our shows, is the lack of variety, with the most popular (reliable growers and having the best form for exhibition?) substantially outweighing others.

In 1948, 1,018 vases were staged, of which 93 each were Mrs C Kay and Mrs R Bolton (together, those two cultivars accounted for approx. 1/5 of the entire show!) In 1950, 2,092 vases were staged of which 222 were of 'Mrs R Bolton' and 210 of 'Mrs C Kay'. Which rather proves that percentage wise, things haven't changed significantly.

It is worth recording (also, reminding members) that up until 2003 there was only one National and either one or two other exhibitions referred to as Provincials, which had smaller schedules. The 2005 Annual records the first time that the titles "Early" and "Late" had been used, at the 2004 Nationals. I am not sure of the exact year parity actually occurred but we were very close to finally equating (as closely as possible, whilst acknowledging different sponsors wishes and existing perpetual trophies) our Early and Late Nationals, by 2017 (when I took over editing the schedules).

Provincials in terms of title and administration have not existed for many years, however, regional shows administered separately from the NSPS have continued to exist, some of more recent conception than others. For example, we have specialist shows held in

Wem, Yorkshire, New Forest, the North West and Chilterns, all run at least in part by NSPS members. Scotland also used to have its own National, with results recorded in the Annual.

In 1952 The Daily Mail class had 15 entries staged and the class that has throughout our history probably been the most popular multi vase class, the 3 vases in the 200 and under division, had 23 entries staged. In a division that was referred to as for "Novices (Amateurs)" the 6 vase class had 40 entries and the 3 vase, a whopping 45. Many single vase classes exceeded those numbers! In 1960 there were only 6 in the Mail and 17 in the 200's 3 vase but 7 in the 400's 9 vase. In 1967, the numbers were, 9,15 and 6 respectively. 1973 and 1992 had bumper years of entries in the Mail, of 12 each.

Up until the mid-noughties (2000's) during most seasons, with slight variations, the figures were similar. With 3 to 6 in the Mail, 0 to 2 in the (as it was now called) the Davis (9 vase, 400's) and 4 to 7 in the (now named Munro) 3 vase, 200's.

Best years in the 21st century have been 2004, 2009 and 2015 with 5 or 6 in the Mail; however, apart from 2009 when the Munro had 8 entries, most years have seen less than 5 with the norm now of 2 or 3 and the Davis either 1 or 0 each year.

If any of the modern crop of exhibitors would like to have a look back over the numbers for last twenty years or so, I am sure you will come to very similar conclusions to the committee, that competition in many classes has all but disappeared and to attempt to bring it back, less classes (but still plenty of classes in which to stage your blooms) have to be the way forward and this is what the schedule committee has sought to achieve. The shows and the schedule are reviewed every year in August and the analysis of what is working and what is not, hotly debated. It is likely that the show schedule will continue to evolve.

Sponsoring NSPS Show Classes

By Caroline Ball

The National Sweet Pea Society runs two prestigious Nationals each year. There are a wealth of classes for all types of grower and types of lathyrus from those that grow thousands of cordons to those that grow up to 100 and for those whose love is wider than Spencers. The Nationals showcase the best of our genus each year. Exhibitors enjoy the challenge of producing top quality flowers and competing against the best Sweet Pea growers in the land. The prize and award cards are much treasured and alongside this are cash and special prizes.

The Society invites members to sponsor classes in the shows. By doing so there can be the opportunity to name the class after something or someone special. Sponsorship starts at just £10. Not all of our classes are sponsored. If you would like to learn more about Sponsorship please contact Carole Tate (caroletate10@gmail.com) or Caroline Ball (caroline_a_m_ball@yahoo.co.uk). It is a great opportunity to buy as a gift for the Sweet Pea lover in your life who has everything or to remember that special someone whilst also helping the National Sweet Pea Society.

NSPS Questionnaire Outcome

By Laurie Burrell

On page 26 of the 2023 Autumn Bulletin the Committee carried out a Questionnaire seeking members views on the future presentation of 'Special Prize' awards at the Societies Early and Late shows. This topic arose due to the cost, difficulty and logistics of obtaining the crystal glassware from the suppliers in Southampton.

Five alternative suggestions were presented to members of the Society in an endeavour to seek the most acceptable views from them before the committee considered the future of the 'Special' awards.

The majority view from members was that we should continue with the engraved glass vases, tumblers or bowls. With this in mind the committee approached an alternative glass ware business in West Sussex called 'Four Hands' who sell their engraved products at Craft Fairs in the South of England.

Three committee members visited the companies local premises in East Preston, West Sussex and viewed a wide selection of high quality glass products they stock. They do not use crystal glass due to the cost of this product which is not attractive to their regular customers. However they can supply their products in different shades of colour which looked very attractive when engraved and they are prepared to produce a bespoke Sweet Pea design for the Society.

The committee have selected a range of glass items suitable for use as awards, and consultation is being undertaken to agree the design of the logo and wording on the selected items. The price per item is well within the budget set for the awards at the Societies main shows and events and it is planned to have the glassware awards ready for the 2024 Early and Late Shows.

Matthewman Sweet Peas

By Caroline Ball

We have been advised that Dave Matthewman will sadly be retiring from Matthewman Sweet Peas at the end of this season. Many will know Dave as a top exhibitor at the NSPS National shows having won NSPS top awards in the Daily Mail and the Jack Harriss on two occasions, at Gateshead in 1990 out of 7 entrants and at Chatsworth in 1993 out of 10.

The same level of excellence was carried over into the seed business. Matthewman's Sweet Peas exhibited at the Chelsea Flower Show for over 13 years and achieved thirteen consecutive Chelsea Gold Medals in this time. Matthewman's Sweet Peas also won numerous awards in many prestigious flower shows nationwide including Malvern and Harrogate and has been a great supporter of the Society, sponsoring the Matthewman class in Division 1 for three vases distinct at the Late National for many years. We wish Dave and Pauline much happiness in their retirement.

October Meeting 2024

By Darren Myers

This year the YSPS Annual October Social Day will be held on Sunday 6 October 2024 at the Wrenthorpe Village Hall, Wrenthorpe Lane, Wrenthorpe, Wakefield WF2 ONE. The venue itself is approx. 5 mins from Junc. 41 of the M1. Whilst there will be no bar, as in previous years, anyone wanting something a little bit stronger than tea or coffee at lunch will be able to visit The New Pot Oil Pub next door.

Lunch will be simplified to a choice of either Pie and Mushy Peas or Jacket Potato with filling. Please advise of your choice of food and let us know if you require a vegetarian option when you book your place. For catering purposes, we will require all bookings to be made by Sunday 29 September 2024 at the very latest.

The day itself will start at 10.30am and filled with guest speakers, along with a quiz and raffle. The day will finish at approximately 4.30pm.

The cost for the day is now £7.50 per person. To book your place please either email: darrenmyers77@outlook.com or ring Darren Myers – 07736 469343 or Joan Myers – 01924 870748

We hope that you can join us for what will be an excellent day.



'Pink Pearl'.
Photo by Darren Myers.

Shows and Displays

Blenheim Flower Show

By Adan Heeley

The Chiltern Sweet Pea Society decided that they could pull together enough support to have a stand at the popular Blenheim Flower Show in 2023 given the show did not clash with either the Chiltern Show or the Early National. This took a fair amount of planning of course and it was the first time we have done Blenheim.



Adam Heeley and Alison Shreeve setting up the display. *Photo by Caroline Ball.*

Our first mistake was not turning up on the first setting up day. We didn't need more than one day to put our stand together and we didn't want to stress out the blooms when it was a three-day show. The second setting up day we arrived to find that our pitch had been moved and we had been squashed into a corner, so our planned layout with six tables was not going to work. This was annoying to say the least as we had committed

and confirmed with the organisers that we would be exhibiting. However, we made the best of a bad job and got the utmost we could out of the reduced area. We were more than grateful to Dawn Everest for her sales table suggestion to squeeze out a few more precious inches for us.

We used the Chiltern staging, which is very easy to erect and compact as well. We bought two very large sheets, which could be laundered, having had a problem with staining on some display hessian the previous year at Windsor. In an effort to be sustainable we had bought a collection of second-hand vases for our displays. This gives a bit of variety and benefitted a number of other charities as well.

Calling in a number of favours to ensure that we had enough blooms to make a good display we then set about organising vases without using any staging material, again to avoid micro plastics and to be



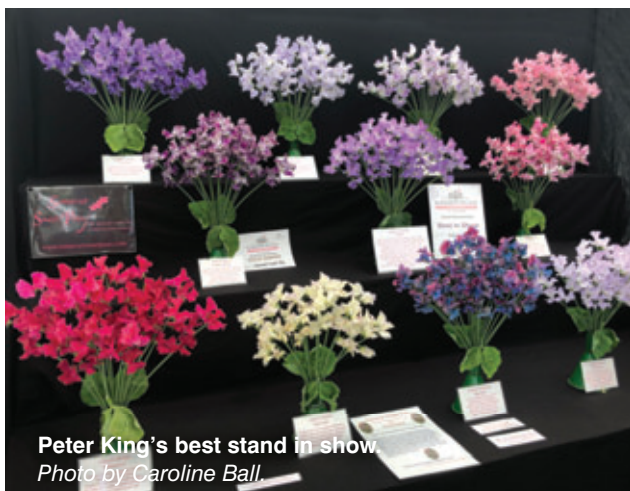
Roger Parsons with the Blenheim display award. *Photo by Alison Shreeve.*



The bizarre moment Caroline was asked to sign packets of her namesake Sweet Pea.
Photo by Mary Coe.

sustainable. The last thing we did was to write the varieties on cards and by this time we were all ready to go home. The team for setting up comprised myself, Alison Shreeve, Caroline Ball, and Graeme Hollingdale. We had different teams manning the stand on different days, including Roger Parsons, Derek Chapple, and some of our friends and family, John and Phillippa Cooper called in on their return journey home to spend several hours helping and advising. Plus we had new helpers in Robert Read and Mary Coe, Brian and Edith Butler, and Tony Mowlem. We couldn't have done it all without their help over the three days. This included having to replace some vases, remove dead blooms, selling blooms, seeds and publications, giving out information leaflets as well as advising and answering queries from the swarm of visitors.

We recruited some new members and met a lot of interesting people happy to share their experiences of Sweet Peas. We didn't have a lot of time to look round ourselves but we did get a chance for a quick chat with Darren and Dawn Everest and Peter King of Somerset Sweet Peas who were exhibiting, the latter winning best stand in show. Congratulations again Peter. The weather was very, very hot, perfect ice cream weather, but it was also very blustery. Being squashed at the end of the marquee we were close to the opening and this caused a few accidents with vases blowing over in the wind! Thank goodness the sheets dried quickly and didn't stain. When we came to pack up, selling off the remaining blooms, we loaded up three cars completely and set off to store the banners, staging and vases for this coming year. Unfortunately, we can't do this show in 2024 as the date clashes with the Chiltern Show and is a couple of days before the Early National. This is a shame because we reached a lot of people and raised a considerable amount of funds for the Society. Hopefully we will be able to take part again in the near future.



Peter King's best stand in show
Photo by Caroline Ball.

Chipperfield Horticultural Society

By John Hopkins

The Chipperfield Horticultural Society held its annual Summer Show on the 17 June. We had 2 Sweet Pea entrants this year covering all 7 of our classes with Kathy Gray from Aylesbury just edging out Peter Hurren from Datchworth for Best in Show. As always, we are most grateful to Peter and Kathy for their generous donation of surplus blooms which we were able to sell, providing a useful boost to society funds.

We are currently looking at dates for next year's shows - this year we were the day before Lacey Green – the Chiltern Sweet Pea Society Show - both Peter and Kathy who exhibited at both seemed happy with this arrangement but if you feel it would be better if we spread things out a bit next year by moving forward a week we would be happy to consider this - as it stands we are going for Saturday 15 June.

Chorley Flower Show 2023

By Matt Lloyd



Susan Meeks collecting her best novice award.
Photo by Nicky Edwards.

Chorley Flower Show was once again host to the North West Region Show on the 28, 29 and 30 July. In typical Chorley fashion the weather in the week leading up to the show made growing Sweet Peas a challenge. A daily barrage of wind and rain, some localised flooding and an unwelcome cool night had a noticeable impact on the vase classes although, decorative classes were well supported. Maybe a reflection of the difficult growing season.

As staging day arrived on Thursday, the flower show team had been working hard laying solid paths into the marquee and levelling the wet ground inside with woodchip to make life easier for exhibitors. Wellies or stiff boots were still the standard footwear option though. Wales must have been in a different weather bubble through the week as Jen and Lewis Morgan arrived to stage some impeccable blooms wearing sandals!

Although it was a tough season for growers, Kevin Preston once again managed to clear up in division 1 with his vase of 'Elizabeth Shorthouse' being judged best vase in



Carole Tate with the award.
Photo by Nicky Edwards.

division. Matt Lloyd took best vase in division 2 with 'Valerie Harrod' and Jen and Lewis Morgan took the best in division 3 with their mixed bowl. Helen Dolan made the best of division 5 and 6 with a vase of 'Lady Nicholson' in division 5 and a bowl of perennials in division 6. The best decorative exhibit was won by Nicky Edwards with her "tea for two" entry. The best novice entry went to Susan Meeks with her petite entry and Bryn Edwards won best junior with his gent's buttonhole. The ever-popular single bloom class was won by Helen Dolan.

A bonus of Chorley show is some of the classes are supported with special prizes from local sponsors so congratulations to anyone who won one and thank you to the businesses sponsoring classes and providing special prizes.

The weather picked up for the weekend and throughout the show, the Society stand was presented as immaculately as ever. This proved popular with the visitors to the show as the stand was busy throughout and volunteers were kept busy answering questions and selling packets of seeds. Individual jars were on display showcasing each of the varieties for sale which seemed popular as fingers ran through the seed packet boxes. The team were awarded a gold medal for their efforts when all the stands were judged before the show opened.



Named display of flowers in jars to accompany the seed sales. *Photo by Carole Tate.*



Society Stand. *Photo by Lewis Morgan.*

Audit of North West Region Show – Chorley – 28 – 30 July 2023

No	Name of Cultivar	1	2	3	Unplaced	Total	Colour	Class
1	Mumsie	2	0	0		2	4 Red	3b
2	Mrs Bernard Jones	2	0	0		1	3 Rose Pink	10b
3	Lady Nicholson	2	0	0		0	2 Fancy	16
	Wiltshire Ripple	2	0	0		0	2 Fancy	16
5	Sir Jimmy Shand	1	0	0		1	2 Fancy	16
6	Chris Harrod	1	0	0		0	1 Blue	9b
	Daily Mail	1	0	0		0	1 Cerise Pink	10c
	Elizabeth Shorthouse	1	0	0		0	1 Rose Pink	11b
	Gardeners Jubilee	1	0	0		0	1 Fancy	16
	Kippen Cream	1	0	0		0	1 Cream	1
	Pips Maroon	1	0	0		0	1 Maroon	5
	Valerie Harrod	1	0	0		0	1 Orange Pink	13
	White Supreme	1	0	0		0	1 White	1
	Windsor	1	0	0		0	1 Maroon	5
15	Just Julia	0	1	0		0	1 Mid Blue	9a
	White Frills	0	1	0		0	1 White	1
	Tom Atherton	0	1	0		0	1 Fancy	16
18	Anniversary	0	0	1		0	1 Picotee	15
	Route 66	0	0	1		0	1 Fancy	16a
20	Gwendoline	0	0	0		1	1 Pale Magenta	4a
	Bristol	0	0	0		1	1 Blue	9b
	Ian Myers	0	0	0		1	1 Fancy	16a
	Seedling	0	0	0		2	2	
	Total	18	3	2		9	32	
	Non Spencers	0	0	0		0	0	
	Flora Norton	0	0	1		1	2 Pale Blue	OF
	Dorothy Eckford	1	0	0		0	1 White	OF
	Jack Ellis	1	0	0		0	1 Maroon/Violet	MG
	Black Knight	0	1	0		0	1 Dark Maroon	OF
	April in Paris	0	0	0		1	1 Creme - Lilac Edge	MG
	Total	2	1	1		1	5	
	Mixed Vases	7	1	1		0	9	
	Total Vases	27	5	4		11	47	
	Bowls and Pots	5	3	1		0	9	
	Decorative Classes	9	9	9		17	44	
	Total	41	17	14		28	100	

DIVISION I – 15 STEMS

CLASS	SPECIAL CLASSES	No. OF EXHIBITS STAGED
1	6 VASES DISTINCT 1st K Preston 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
2	3 VASES DISTINCT 1st K Preston 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
3	ONE VASE, WHITE OR CREAM (No Entries)	(0)
4	ONE VASE, RED OR ORANGE-RED (No Entries)	(0)
5	ONE VASE, MAGENTA, MAROON OR PURPLE (No Entries)	(1)
6	ONE VASE, MAUVE, LAVENDER OR BLUE (No Entries)	(0)
7	ONE VASE, PINK (No Entries)	(0)
8	ONE VASE, ORANGE, PICOTEE OR FANCY (No Entries)	(0)
9	ONE VASE, MIXED CULTIVARS 1st K Preston 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
10	MIXED BOWL 1st K Preston 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
11	TWO VASES 15 STEMS (No Entries)	(0)

DIVISION II – 12 STEMS

12	6 VASES DISTINCT (No Entries)	(0)
13	3 VASES DISTINCT 1st M Lloyd 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
14	MIXED BOWL (No Entries)	(0)
15	ONE VASE, WHITE OR CREAM	(1)
16	ONE VASE, RED OR ORANGE-RED (No Entries)	(0)
17	ONE VASE, MAGENTA, MAROON OR PURPLE (No Entries)	(0)
18	ONE VASE, MAUVE, LAVENDER OR BLUE (No Entries)	(0)
19	ONE VASE, PINK (No Entries)	(0)
20	ONE VASE, ORANGE, PICOTEE OR FANCY (No Entries)	(0)
21	ONE VASE, MIXED CULTIVARS 1st M Lloyd 2nd – 3rd –	(1)

DIVISION III – 9 STEMS

CLASS	SPECIAL CLASSES	No. OF EXHIBITS STAGED
22	3 VASES DISTINCT 1st M Partington 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
23	MIXED BOWL (No Entries)	(0)
24	ONE VASE, WHITE OR CREAM 1st R Durrant 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
25	ONE VASE, RED OR ORANGE-RED 1st R Durrant 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
26	ONE VASE, MAGENTA, MAROON OR PURPLE (No Entries)	(0)
27	ONE VASE, MAUVE, LAVENDER OR BLUE 1st M Partington 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
28	ONE VASE, PINK (No Entries)	(0)
29	ONE VASE, ORANGE, PICOTEE OR FANCY (No Entries)	(0)
30	ONE VASE, MIXED CULTIVARS (No Entries)	(0)

DIVISION IV – 7 STEMS

31	3 VASES DISTINCT (No Entries)	(0)
32	MIXED BOWL 1st J&L Morgan 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
33	ONE VASE OF ANY CULTIVAR 1st J&L Morgan 2nd S Hayward 3rd S Hayward	(3)
34	ONE VASE MIXED 1st J&L Morgan 2nd – 3rd –	(1)

DIVISION V – 5 STEMS

35	2 VASES DISTINCT 1st H Dolan 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
36	ONE VASE OF ANY CULTIVAR 1st H Dolan 2nd C Tate 3rd –	(2)
37	ONE VASE MIXED 1st H Dolan 2nd J Richards 3rd J Richards	(3)

DIVISION VI

CLASS	SPECIAL CLASSES	No. OF EXHIBITS STAGED
38	MIXED BOWL 1st J&L Morgan 2nd C Tate 3rd –	(2)
39	ONE VASE OF 12 STEMS OLD FASHIONED 1st S Hayward 2nd H Dolan 3rd S Hayward	(3)
40	ONE VASE 12 STEMS GRANDIFLORA 1st H Dolan 2nd – 3rd –	(1)
41	BOWL OF SHIFTERS (No Entries)	(0)
42	BOWL OF LATHYRUS SPECIES 1st N Edwards 2nd C Tate 3rd –	(2)
43	BOWL OF PERENNIAL 1st H Dolan 2nd C Bromley 3rd C Tate	(3)
44	ANY LATHYRUS GROWN IN POT (No Entries)	(0)

SPECIAL CLASSES

A	TEA FOR TWO 1st N Edwards 2nd C Tate 3rd J Beardmore	(5)
B	BASKET 1st C Tate 2nd S Meeks 3rd E Ross	(3)
C	DINNER TABLE 1st E Ross 2nd S Meeks 3rd C Tate	(3)
D	DRIFTWOOD 1st C Tate 2nd J Beardmore 3rd S Hayward	(4)
E	7 STEMS 1st J Beardmore 2nd S Meeks 3rd C Tate	(3)
F	PETITE 1st N Edwards 2nd S Meeks 3rd C Tate	(5)
G	GENTLEMAN'S BUTTONHOLE 1st J& L Morgan 2nd J& L Morgan 3rd S Meeks	(8)
H	LADY'S CORSAGE 1st J&L Morgan 2nd J&L Morgan 3rd J&L Morgan	(6)
J	ONE VASE TO BE JUDGED BY THE PUBLIC 1st N Edwards 2nd J&L Morgan 3rd L Hathaway	(4)
K	ONE SINGLE BLOOM 1st H Dolan 2nd T Atherton 3rd J&L Morgan 4th H Dolan 5th J Morewood	(10)

SPECIAL AWARDS

BEST IN DIVISION I

K Preston ('Elizabeth Shorthouse' Class 1)

BEST IN DIVISION II

M Lloyd ('Valerie Harrod' Class 13)

BEST IN DIVISION III

(No Entries)

BEST IN DIVISION IV

J&L Morgan (Mixed, Class 32)

BEST IN DIVISION V

H Dolan ('Lady Nicholson', Class 35)

BEST IN DIVISION VI

H Dolan (Perennial Bowl, Class 43)

BEST DECORATIVE

N Edwards ('Tea for Two' Class A)

BEST NOVICE

S Meeks (Petite, Class F)

BEST JUNIOR

Bryn Edwards (Buttonhole, Class G)



Part of the Society Stand. Photo by Lewis Morgan.

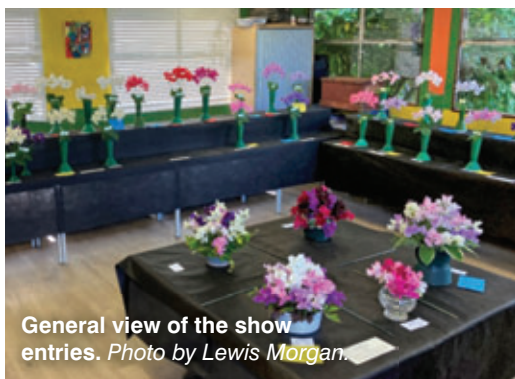
GFGS Gloucester

By Lewis Morgan

The last Saturday in June saw the welcome return of the Gloucester Federation of Gardening Societies Open Sweet Pea Show. The Show was returning following a three-year break due to Covid and a venue issue. This is a dedicated Sweet Pea Show supported and organised by the Federation filling a gap locally in speciality shows. The Show until now has seem to have flown under the radar, but it is a great little Show at the start of the season where the organisers are always pleased to see the exhibitors return year after year to support them.

The show had a new venue in 2023 at Dundry Nurseries, halfway between Gloucester and Cheltenham. They are true horticulturalists and were pleased to be able to host the show. They deserve a special mention as they also make space available for a charitable project called The Butterfly Garden which is an educational, therapeutic, and recreational scheme, based initially on gardening, but now offering so much more. It is a project for people of all ages dealing with disablement of any kind. For 2024 all being well the show will be able to have use of the charities day centre building which has its own kitchen, toilets, and if it is a hot day, inside the building will be much better temperature wise. Being next to Gloucester Airport we had light aircraft flypasts all day, and in the morning the RAF turned up as well on their way back into RAF Fairford, and very loud they were!

For us based in South East Wales this show is the nearest show by some stretch, and based near to the M5 has a good location, and is easily accessible from a lot of the surrounding areas. The organisers promote the show for those within Gloucestershire, but they are always pleased to receive support from those surrounding counties. The Show comprises a three-vase class, multiple single vase classes, single stem and mix vase classes, along with a couple of classes for local residents. Five stems are only required for each of the vases, so nothing too onerous.



General view of the show entries. *Photo by Lewis Morgan.*

Along with the local exhibitors, fellow NSPS members Kathy Gray, Phil Champion, and Graham Edwards attended along with ourselves and sweltered in the heat. Kathy swept the board, and the rest of us picked up the morsels, however, we were all glad to be able

to attend and get in practice for other Shows that were coming up. Experienced judge and NSPS member Gill Hazell was kind enough to come along and judge the entries for the organisers.



Kathy Grey's Winning 3 vase Entry and Best vase in Show for the vase of 'Gwendoline'. Photo by Lewis Morgan.

The 2024 show is currently been planned at the Dundry Nurseries venue with the date of Saturday, 6 July. The organisers would be pleased to see any members attend whether to exhibit, or to merely come and view the Show. We will post details on the "For the love of Sweet Peas" Facebook page near the time, however, if any members are interested in exhibiting, then please let us know (jlmorgan178@gmail.com) and we'll email the schedule when available.



Lathyrus Grandiflorus.
Photo by Caroline Ball.

RHS Tatton Flower Show 2023

By Julia Beardmore

The Show opened to the public on Wednesday 19 July to Sunday 23 July. The North West team once again put on a fabulous display despite poor weather conditions, and we were delighted to receive another Gold Medal.



What a complete change with weather conditions from the previous year, this year we were having an awful wet July, certainly not the best for our delicate Sweet Peas. July 2022 was the hottest week of the year, with light clothing and sandals, 2023 was warmer clothing, raincoats, boots and wellies! British weather!

There was a fantastic team effort, beginning on the Sunday, with build up with Peter Matthewman, Stephen Haywood, John Pattison and myself and having tables covered and everything ready for the arranging team on Monday.

Sarah Haisley and Catherine Bromley picked Spencer Sweet Peas from one of our members small holding and from the Old Fashioned and Species from our Allotment. This was also done on Sunday, along with many varieties of foliage, at least the weather was in our favour.



Monday, is the main day for arranging the displays, with Mavis Duxbury leading the team, Carole Tate, Tricia and John Pattison, Nicky Edwards, Monica Wright, Lisa Tedesco and myself creating displays. It's a long day from 8am until 6pm.

On Tuesday morning the stand has to be completed for judging and we do see the Judge's wandering around having a sneak preview. We had a few changes to the team

today, which included, Sarah and Catherine, Stephen and Susan Meek. Normally, we are racing against the clock to complete, this year we managed to complete with nearly an hour to spare. This gave us the luxury of wandering around the floral marquee without crowds and seeing many other stands being completed.



Creating the display.
Photo by Julia Beardmore.

Our stand was 12 metres long and had a 4-tier display using pre-loved vases and cut-glass bowls to display the many colourful arrangements. On the top tier, the centre arrangement is a riot of colour of Spencers, it's the largest display of all and is framed by the Society's arched sign with *Lathyrus Latifolius* twined around it. The Membership Bureau is the centre of the stand. We then had a long table with our display boards, which tell the history and timeline of our beautiful flowers. A small bowl of flowers is displayed in front of each board depicting the particular variety of *Odoratus* or species

on the timeline. Above the timeline we had 3 picture frames on the wall, the first one with an arrangement in a jug and bowl of Spencers, the middle one is a champagne bottle and glass with species, displayed as champagne exploding and bubbles. The last one is jug of Old Fashioned. We then have a stand-alone tiered table displaying in re-used diffuser bottles, and small jars, with many varieties of Sweet Peas and species, the Public can walk round and select their favourite flowers and has proved to be very popular.

Wednesday is the opening of the show, and Members only day. This is always the busiest day. We arrive early at the show to find a Gold Medal card displayed on our stand, we are a very proud team. One of the Judges visit in the morning with our feedback sheet and have a chat about the stand. It's so wonderful to see the public enjoying our display the perfume and amounts of photographs taken is phenomenal. Many seeds are sold and lots of information provided, by our volunteers.

A huge thank you to our team, Mavis, Sarah, Catherine, Stephen, Susan, John P, Tricia, Carole, Peter & Rachel Matthewman, Monica, Lisa, Tom & Jane Atherton, Nicky, Phillippa & John Cooper, John Beavan, John Richards, and Margaret Smith. We are allowed 8 volunteers a day, which sounds a lot, but we are kept busy most of the time.

More Sweet Peas are picked on Wednesday for replacing on Thursday, when we start to change the majority of the arrangements. During the show period we are all picking our own flowers to get help get them through to Sunday.

One of our Members, Catherine, kindly allowed us to use part of her allotment to grow Old Fashioned and species varieties. We also had an abundance of 'High Scent' and 'Turquoise Lagoon'. The plants did extremely well and provided us with flowers for all our shows. There was always plenty to do, and thank you to Catherine, and helpers, Sarah, Larysa Hathaway, Carole, Stephen, Susan, Margaret and Nicky.

Wem Sweet Pea Show 2023

By Phillippa Cooper



Staging. Photos by Lewis Morgan.



After a very successful reintroduction of the Wem show last year, I am delighted to report that we had more exhibitors and slightly higher number of entries in the Spencer classes this year. This success is, in no small part, due to the hard work of the team at Wem Town Hall, particularly the Director and our Show Manager Rose Horner. One of the main aims of the show is to encourage as many local growers as possible to enter. An information and demonstration evening was held last October. This was very well attended and I am sure that it was a major factor in encouraging new growers to enter as novices. In fact, there were more entries in all 4 novice classes than the previous year. Our hope is that these exhibitors continue to support the show.



Wem benches.

Photo by Lewis Morgan.

Due to a lack of entries in the open classes in 2022 it was decided to remove that entire division from the schedule. However, the committee will be discussing this decision prior to the show in 2024.

I am sure that everyone will agree that the 2023 growing season has been unpredictable to say the least. Moving the show back to the traditional third weekend in July certainly suited many local growers as well as our supporters from Wales and the North West.

From a personal point of view, I was bitterly disappointed to have insufficient



Janet Hankey presenting Dei Williams with the Maurice Graham Perpetual Challenge Cup.
Photo by Phillippa Cooper.



Barrie Eckford presenting Clive Payne with the Albert Bennett Memorial Plate for his bowl of Lord Nelson.
Photo by Phillippa Cooper.

Old-Fashioned blooms to stage even one vase of any single cultivar in Division 1. The overall number of entries in the Old Fashioned classes was down but once again Rhona Owen of Harlescott staged a lovely display in both of the multi vase classes. Rhona was a very worthy winner of the Dorothy Eckford Perpetual Cup. Local grower, Clive Payne, who was exhibiting for the first time was awarded three first prizes in Division 1 (pre 1910 cultivars). Clive was one of the attendees at the information evening. He was presented with the Archie Silvester Perpetual trophy for the most points by a Shropshire grower.

Although the number of entries in the classes for Old Fashioned varieties was down, we were fortunate to have a slight increase in the number entries of Spencer varieties.

Division 2 was slightly altered this year to make it open to growers of no more than 500 cordon plants. Although there were no entries in the six-vase class there were really beautiful entries in the three-vase class by local grower Neil Cooper (of Whixall) and Matt Lloyd. Many



Barrie Eckford presenting Matt Lloyd with the Jack Timpson Perpetual Shield.
Photo by Phillippa Cooper.

congratulations to Matt (of Lower Darwen) who won the Jack Timpson Perpetual Shield for the best vase in the Division. In fact, his vase of 'Daily Mail' was judged, by Dave Torrington, as the Best in Show. Barrie Eckford, President of the Eckford Sweet Pea Society of Wem presented Matt with the Bronwen Eleanor Perpetual Challenge Cup.

It is disappointing that there were only two exhibitors in Division 3 (exhibitors who grow no more than 200 cordon plants). Les Grisdale of Ellesmere Port repeated his 2022 success in this Division by being awarded the NSPS Bronze Medal for his vase of 'White Frills'.

Once again there was very keen competition in Division 4 (exhibitors who grow no more than 100 plants). There were 36 entries across the 9 classes, with considerable success for Welsh growers. Allan Evans (of Llandudno Junction) won the three-vase class. Jenny Morgan of Abergavenny, was first in the two-vase class, one vase white and one vase mixed. Dei Williams of Bala who was competing at Wem for the first time was placed first in single vase mauve, lavender or blue also one vase, pink red or cerise, one vase picotee and one vase of any other colour not listed. Overall Dei had most points and first prizes so he was presented with the Maurice Graham Perpetual Challenge Cup and the Preston Brockhurst Horticultural Society Challenge Cup. His vase of 'Mrs Bernard Jones' was judged the best in the Division and he was also presented with the Jenkins Perpetual Challenge Cup.

The Special Classes were very well supported this year. Congratulations go to Allan Evans who won not only the Presidents Plate but also the Mike Jones Memorial Trophy for Spencer varieties (mauve, lavender, pale mid or dark blue). Allan's superb vase of 'Terry Davey' was a very poignant winner as Terry was a fantastic supporter of the Wem Show and is greatly missed by everyone. Olwen Rowlands of LLandyrnog was placed first in



Dave Torrington judging Division 4 entries.
Photo by Phillippa Cooper.



Allan Evans winner of the President's Plate and the Mike Jones Memorial Trophy.
Photo by Phillippa Cooper.

the John Good Memorial Class and class 51, the Dinner Table arrangement. Phillippa Cooper was successful with her bowl of Lathyrus species, basket of perennial Sweet Peas and pot of flowering plants (any Lathyrus). There were also wins for Clive Payne with his 'Cupani' and 'Lord Nelson' along with Neil Cooper who won the Elizabeth Bodger class for most scented varieties. The Wem and District Rotary Club Perpetual Challenge trophy for the most points in the Special Classes was awarded to Phillippa Cooper.

Having an increased number of entries in the novice classes was particularly pleasing and the prize winners were Dei Williams and Megan Clay (Bewdley) in the Spencer classes. Rose Horner (Wem TH), Sarah Haisley (Chorley), Stephen Hayward (Burnley) and Richard Cooper (Sedgley) were successful with their old-fashioned blooms.

The trophy winners in the Floral Art Classes were Olive Morris (Oswestry), Wyllis Turner (Tilley) and Susan Meeks (Burnley).

Everyone at Wem is extremely grateful for the amazing support from growers across Wales and the North West. Hopefully the Wem Show will continue to thrive in the new venue. I know that I am looking forward to the 2024 show which will take place on Saturday 20 July (10am-5pm) and Sunday 21 July (10am – 3pm) in the Wem Town Hall. Fingers crossed that we have really full show benches.



'Painted Lady'. Photo by Caroline Ball.

Royal Windsor Flower Show

By Graeme Hollingdale

On Friday 9 June, members of the NSPS set-up a display and sales table in a marquee on the lawns of the York Club, Windsor Great Park, ready for the one-day show the following day.



Duchess of Edinburgh and President Alan Tichmarsh visit our stand.
Photo by Caroline Ball.

As you can guess, apart from finding enough suitable volunteers to help over the two days, the biggest issue on such an early date was obtaining enough blooms.

Thankfully, I was able to cut a decent amount from Alison's (Shreeve) garden (who was away at the time – yes I was given permission!) Caroline (Ball) had some and acquired more from Robert Read and Derek Chapple and brought her own but the majority came from Roger (Parsons), who also came along to help stage, alongside Gill and Brian Thompson, Caroline and myself.

Alison and Caroline had spent the previous couple of months sourcing and purchasing pre-loved glass vases in order to showcase

a more environmentally conscious method of staging such displays. The debate around the ban by the RHS of using Oasis, had brought the whole issue of the environment much more into all of our consciousnesses and the last thing we wanted to do (even though we could have used any staging material on this occasion) was to take a backwards step and ignore the progress made over the previous couple of years. There is no doubt, as can be seen in the accompanying photos, that when a more informal staging is sought, then using glass vases can be very attractive. Inevitably the public, organisers and high-profile guests, loved our stand.

On the Saturday, Caroline was joined by her friend Maggie Rose, Phil (Johnson) and new Sweet Pea grower, Tony Mowlam from Amersham, to welcome visitors, answer all



Caroline Ball discusses varieties with the VIP guests.
Photo by Phil Johnson.



Sales Table.
Photo by Caroline Ball.

their questions, plus selling packets of seed (provided by both Roger and Phil) spare blooms and at the end of the afternoon, those which had been on display. Inevitably, the hardest part of any such event is the dismantling and taking away to be stored for future use afterwards. All help was therefore gratefully received, which was augmented by exhibitor Roger Dix and his wife.

Events such as this, really enhance the image of our Society and help cement our charitable status by fulfilling our stated aims and objectives. If any of you ever see an ad for help at an event or display near to you, either in terms of flowers, equipment and time, then do support your fellow members in any way that you can. It is fun and remember, our Society is not just about entering classes and winning prizes at our shows!



The display at Windsor.
Photo by Caroline Ball.

Wisley

By Caroline Ball



Wisley display.
Photo by Caroline Ball.

Caroline Ball and Phil Johnson spent a pleasant afternoon on 16 June 2023 setting up the National Sweet Peas Society display on the lower lawn at RHS Wisley for the Specialist Plant Society's event 2023. The NSPS stand was situated near to a marquee entrance. Excellent for a number of reasons, we were the first thing many people saw and the entrance, plus an aircon unit, gave us some much-needed relief from

the heat. The stands were far enough away from the entrance not to be impacted by wind if there was any - other shows could learn from this! The display utilised Phil's 3 sizes of matching glass vases and was totally oasis free. We tried out using some vines of Sweet Pea flowers as well as the normal cut stems (mainly courtesy of Phil) which gave a naturalistic and different look to the display with some added height. We were pleased with the finished result and we had a small area for sale of seeds and publications.

The small team of helpers when the show was 'live' comprised Alison Shreeve, Phil Johnson and Caroline Ball. We even had a little bit of support on our stand from Vanessa Penn of the RHS who had arranged the event. Vanessa said to me afterwards that she really enjoyed talking to people about how to grow Sweet Peas and even persuaded a



Wisley display.
Photo by Caroline Ball.



Discussing plants with the Iris and the Fern societies. *Photo by Caroline Ball.*

few people who had never done so to give it a go. There was a steady throughput of visitors some putting even our knowledge about Sweet Peas to the test. A fair few RHS employees came to see our display, some very senior, like Alistair Griffiths their Director of Science, and included the Trials team who all seem to have fallen in love with Sweet Peas. It was nice putting names to faces when the trials coordinator Roz Marshall popped by.

We were placed next to the Iris Society and opposite the Ferns. Both teams were interesting to chat to (I went home with some special irises and ferns and they went home with Sweet Peas) - we learned things from each other about our respective specialisms and their approaches to displays. The Iris Society had little in terms of real flowers on their stand but it was still interesting and informative showing what can be done at any time of year. Great for sparking ideas for our future use. One of my old gardening club chums from my time in Upton, Oxfordshire was manning the Iris stand too – such a small world!

Phil gave guided tours of the second year of the RHS Sweet Pea Trials and we each managed to grab some time to take a look ourselves. The contrast between the Spring and Autumn sown plants this year was stark - much more so than in year 1 -with the Autumn sown much bigger than the Spring sown. The Trials were a credit to the RHS and a stunning advert for Grandifloras. We had customers who came to the stand with a list of seed of varieties they had liked in the Trials which was a bonus.



Phil Johnson gave guided tours of the Trials. *Photo by Alison Shreeve.*

Competitions

100 Club

By Caroline Ball

Prize winners since those listed in the 2023 Sweet Pea Annual were as follows:

Draw Date	£100	£25	£10
26.04.23	G Hollingdale Princes Risborough	A Shreeve Looseley Row	J Cooper Wolverhampton
06.09.23	F Towers Preston	Mr & Mrs C Winder Stockport	G W Putman Kenley
08.11.23	T W Lawford Cantebury	G W Putman Kenley	G Hollingdale Princes Risborough
15.02.24	N Edwards Chorley	L Burrell Shepperton	G W Putman Kenley
02.03.24	G Hollingdale Princes Risborough	A Evans Llandudno Junction	A Haskins Cuddington

Very many thanks to all who participated and congratulations to the winners.



Sweet Peas at Aylesbury show 1950. Photo sent in by Chris Gray.

District Representatives

The role of the District Representative is to give help and advice to members and affiliated societies in their area, to assist at National Shows where possible and to provide an area report for the Annual. They will be pleased to assist with your Sweet Pea queries so do contact yours. We still have vacancies, if you could help please call either Carole Tate on 07961 477137 / email caroletate10@gmail.com or Roz Warley on 07307 867512 / email rwarley5@gmail.com

SE England

Bedfordshire	VACANCY
Berkshire	Robert Read; 4 Tubbs Farm Close, Lambourn, Berkshire RG17 8PE ☎ 07990 078938 Email: rdread94@outlook.com
Buckinghamshire	Graeme Hollingdale; 16 Wellington Avenue, Princes Risborough, Bucks, HP27 9HY Email: graeme@graemehollingdale.com can also be contacted on Facebook and/or messenger ☎ (for emergency or texts only) 07929 047235
Hampshire	Darren Everest, Greenbush, Hamstead Road, Cranmore, Yarmouth, Isle of Wight PO41 0YB ☎ 07808 793862 Email: darreneverst@ymail.com
Hertfordshire	VACANCY
Isle of Wight	Keith Brewer; Ivy Bank, Marlborough Road, Ventnor, IOW. PO38 1TE ☎ 01983 856482 Email: keithbrewer123@aol.com
Kent	Linda Ellis; Sycamore Cottage, Aerodrome Rd, Bekesbourne, Canterbury, Kent CT4 5EX ☎ 01227 832458 or 07887 717117 Email: eliislinda57@gmail.com
London (Greater)	Alan Gillingwater; 91 Beresford Road, Chingford, London, E4 6EF ☎ 0208 5292910 Email: gillingwater05@aol.com
Middlesex	Roger Dix; 85 Nursery Gardens, Staines, Middx, TW18 1EL ☎ 01784 455057 Email: rogerdix@supanet.com
Surrey	VACANCY
East Sussex	Dave Fitton; 2 Magnolia Close, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 8YF. ☎ 01435 661158 or 07763 333817 Email: dfitton2@sky.com
West Sussex	Roger Parsons; Primrose Cottage, Clayton Lane, Bracklesham Bay, Chichester, West Sussex, PO20 8JQ

SW England

Avon	VACANCY
Cornwall	Russell Pettit; 11 Twyford Place, Tiverton, Devon EX16 6AP ☎ 01884 235989 Email: twyfordplace@gmail.com
North Devon	Russell Pettit; 11 Twyford Place, Tiverton, Devon EX16 6AP ☎ 01884 235989 Email: twyfordplace@gmail.com
South Devon	Russell Pettit; 11 Twyford Place, Tiverton, Devon EX16 6AP ☎ 01884 235989 Email: twyfordplace@gmail.com
Dorset	VACANCY
Gloucestershire	VACANCY
Somerset	Peter King, 17 King George Road, Minehead, Somerset TA24 5JD ☎ 07834275940 Email: peter@somersetsweetpeas.com
Wiltshire	VACANCY

Eastern Counties

Cambridgeshire	Brian Harwood; 34 Crow Lane, Romford, Essex, RM7 0EL ☎ 07985 600355 Email: harwoodbrian477@yahoo.com
Essex	Brian Harwood; 34 Crow Lane, Romford, Essex, RM7 0EL ☎ 07985 600355 Email: harwoodbrian477@yahoo.com
Norfolk & Suffolk	Chris Dale; 52 Elmcroft Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 6NB ☎ 01473 484507 or 07747 774577 Email: cj-dale@hotmail.co.uk

Midland Counties

Cheshire	Barrie Eckford; 28 Tunshill Road, Manchester, M23 9QB ☎ 01619 450442 or 07553 182626 Email: barrieckford@btinternet.com
Derbyshire	David Torrington; No 6 Sterndale Close, Litton, Nr Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 8QZ ☎ 07708 244930 Email: torrydj42@gmail.com
Hereford & Worcestershire	Megan Clay; 1 Home Farm Cottages, Ribbesford, Bewdley, Worcestershire, DY12 2TQ ☎ 01299 400669 Email: meg.bewdley@gmail.com

Midland Counties *continued*

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Northamptonshire	VACANCY
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District Representatives

By Roz Warley

Well now what have the District Reps been up to this winter? Quite a lot it seems. Firstly we have some new reps aboard who are already working hard to make a difference:

Linda Ellis, who is doing a great job with Kent has filled the boots of Richard Borthwick who did so much. Chris Priestley looking after the Humberside & Lincolnshire members, (kindly taking over from myself) whose father George was our Vice President for many years, and bred 'Mary Priestley', which I still grow every year as in my humble opinion it is the whitest white. Chris is happy to give talks, and presently setting up his presentation with Powerpoint kindly assisted by Alison Shreeve.

Some reps who have been active for a while and have taken on neighbouring vacant counties to add to their own, who are also making a real difference. Examples are Russell Pettit, has most kindly added South Devon and Cornwall to his own area of North Devon, this is really appreciated. Nicky Edwards has taken Merseyside under her wing, adding to Lancs; our Essex rep Brian Harwood has kindly agreed to add Cambs to his area. Chris Dale our Norfolk & Suffolk rep continues to reliably send over material for the publications, which is very much appreciated.

Some reps who have worked hard for a long time in their areas and are known to and loved by their membership for bringing NSPS values, friendship and support to members across the board new and old. Here is just a snapshot of some of them.

Philippa Cooper who has her own regions, is very active with, amongst other things, the revival of the Wem show which is just great, giving talks, and in a nutshell just 'doing whatever is needed'. Phillippa is a valued District Rep.

Graeme Hollingdale who is the rep for Bucks fits this in with his vocation as a professional musician, plus Deputy Chairman of the NSPS Committee, editor of our bulletins, judge, Secretary of the Chiltern Sweet Pea Society and many more roles.

Jen & Lewis Morgan and Allan Evans are doing excellent work in Wales with John Rowlands. They are on the Horticultural Committee for the Royal Welsh and striving hard to keep Sweet Peas firmly on the Royal Welsh's agenda. Allan opens his garden to everyone, gives talks regularly and keeps in contact with many in his area, this trio do fantastic work for the NSPS on top of still working themselves in their 'day jobs'.

Carole Tate, not only our General Secretary, but also the DR for Cumbria, and NW regional co-ordinator, doing so much including being part of the team which create NSPS Stands and many prestigious shows, year on year, which win many Gold and add valuable funds to the Society coffers.

Bob Rishworth, for West Yorkshire, Show Manager, exhibitor, local gardener volunteer and well known character to everyone.

Roger Parsons our President, author and National Collection holder as well as the DR for West Sussex.

I could go on. Our District Reps are continuing to bring the NSPS to members old and new and assist with all things *lathyrus*. We have many more Reps who are very active on the ground so as to speak more so than online and we are very keen to recognise the great jobs they too are doing.

Whilst the committee is considering enlarging DRs areas from 1 or 2 counties to a region involving maybe 3 counties to solve the ongoing vacancies it's nice to be able to give all our DR's a pat on the back for all that they do. There are many of you that are not mentioned here, but your efforts are sterling and much appreciated by the Society and it's membership.

On a sad note, of course we lost three prominent District Reps recently, in Andy Hubbuck (for Derbyshire), Mike Hargreaves (Yorkshire) and Tony Boston the Rep for Ireland. Our sympathy lies with their families and friends, the Society won't be quite the same without them.

If you would like to join the brilliant group of NSPS District Reps, please do let us know, we still have areas vacant, and would love to hear from you. It really is a great role, and it's fun too!

We have a lot planned for this year, plus we have our new Facebook private group which is growing. If you haven't already joined us, search for the 'National Sweet Pea Society Members Only Chat Room', request to join and we will do the rest - it's as easy as that. You will find your District Rep and others in there, group experts in all things Sweet Pea, videos and much more.

The DR's will have some Open Gardens this summer, and some talks in the pipeline, plus varying events and workshops, so keep an eye on things being organised in your area.

With best wishes for the 2024 growing and showing season.

“I must have flowers, always, and always.”

Claude Monet

District Representatives Reports

Buckinghamshire and the Chilterns

By Graeme Hollingdale

Whilst it is true that some areas of the UK have enjoyed quick returns to normal behaviour patterns following the enforced break due to Covid, others have not.

It is also curious (and something to which I have referred previously in my articles) that when questioned, members of the NSPS and those growers who are not yet members but hopefully will be, often state that they would like to have more events put on, at a local level.

So, it is with great regret that after continuing to put on an Autumn Social for many years including during 2023, the numbers attending the one hosted by us, The Chiltern Sweet Pea Society, have dropped to an unsustainable level. The only people attending were committee, those helping to provide food and drink and a couple of local friends. Whilst they have been of course very welcome and helped make sure the events were run very smoothly and efficiently, the whole purpose of running such events was to give Sweet Pea growers the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences (led by a different speaker each year) amongst fellow enthusiasts, which in the case of the CSPS included many experienced growers and exhibitors plus at least three National committee members, who could communicate both ways, with and about the Society. Those who attended always had a great day out.

Our final Autumn Social (in the current climate) took place in Lacey Green's Village Hall on Sunday 8 October 2023. There was a mini show to both enter and judge, plenty of wall quizzes, drinks (hot, cold, soft and hard) and home prepared food (soup, buffet, desserts/cakes) alongside the opportunity to discuss, ask questions, share experiences with one another about all things Sweet Peas, plus our special guest speakers, Jim and Mary McDonald.

As many of you know, Jim and Mary have been an integral part of our hobby and Society for many years. They have touched, taken part, helped organise and run almost all there is over the years of their connection with the NSPS. Having been secretary, show manager, trials co-ordinator, committee member, flower arranger, exhibitor and hybridiser. I have deliberately used the above terms in the singular, because like many

couples who have a shared interest, it is indistinguishable between them as to who does what when, and in fact mostly it is together anyway. So, we were treated to a wonderfully varied presentation entitled "Sweet Peas, their way". Thank you both.

There will be no social event planned for 2024. The short AGM which was always held as part of this event, will now take place in the form of a normal committee meeting, except members will be invited to join in and will receive minutes, agendas, reports and have the opportunity to send in written questions and responses. Additional committee members will also be invited to join.

Fortunately, shows held by the CSPS have continued to be well supported; not perhaps quite back to the bumper years (we have been active since 2000 and last year's show was the 23rd) but entry numbers still compare very well to those staged at the recent National exhibitions.

As a balance to the above comments, many of us have continued to be very active in visiting local societies and giving talks, spreading the love about Sweet Peas and guiding new growers as to how to sow, grow, look after and enjoy the flowers, whether for cut flower/garden enjoyment but also for exhibiting.

Chiltern area members receive once or twice a year, updates and news items (sometimes in the form of a newsletter) from me and of course are invited to make contact at anytime with any questions, information etc via email. Sometimes their letters get to appear in the Spring or Autumn Bulletins, sometimes (if I have managed to persuade them) they provide a full article for publication!

The 2023 CSPS show was held on an earlier date than previously used, Sunday 18 June. Although some growers hadn't quite come in to full flower yet, the overall feeling was that this was a good move, coming two weeks ahead of the Early National and a day after the New Forest and District event. In fact, our Judge last year was David Fitton, who had been successful at the New Forest the previous day!



Chiltern Show. *Photo by Alison Shreeve.*

There were 95 vases, 2 pot-grown and 9 decorative exhibits staged.

A new feature of our schedule in 2023 was two classes (vase & bowl) for a Novice (our definition being a member who has never won a first prize at a CSPS prior to the current season) and a class for a new grower (a non-member of any age who has not previously staged an entry at a CSPS show) As we had entries in all three of these classes, it is something we will continue to offer.

The main winners were:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Simon Smith | Best vase (White Frills) and Best exhibit – for class B (3 vases distinct) |
| Kathy Gray | Flay Trophy for most points in the single vase section |
| Brian Bartlett | Chiltern Challenge Shield for Class A (mixed cultivars) |
| Alison Shreeve | Wessex Trophy for Best vase in the smaller grower section |



Chiltern Show. Photos by Alison Shreeve.



After the Chiltern Show. *Photo by Caroline Ball.*

In 2024, the CSPS show will be held on Sunday 23 June in Lacey Green Bucks (between High Wycombe and Princes Risborough) unfortunately the hall was not available for the previous week which would have been our preferred date. This is still three days before the Early National and gives growers the ideal opportunity to practise their selection and staging skills. As always, if you require any information, then do please email me. If you can correctly spell my Christian name, then there is a good chance you will get my email address correct! graeme@graemehollingdale.com



Wingrave Show benches.
Photo by Caroline Ball.

Essex

By Brian Horwood

Hello everybody

What a hot summer we had in 2023. I had good quality Peas for 4 days only, then the stems started to shorten, I could only enter four classes out of six at my local show at Elm Park Hornchurch and that was the end of my Pea showing for 2023. Elm Park Show had only two exhibitors, Chris Dale from Ipswich and myself with Chris entering all six classes and winning the cup for most points and the medal for best exhibit; Chris winning 5 first's and one second and yours truly winning one first and 3 seconds, we could do with more exhibitors at the show and hopefully 2024 may see more which takes place on Saturday 15 June . Elm Park is not only a flower show but caters for very good cream teas served by the committee and volunteers. Alan Gillingwater was the only exhibitor at Chingford and Buckhurst Hill and taking all the honours. next came Collier Row where Harry White took all the honours.

I did not receive any feedback from Rayleigh once again, but some good news for Essex is that Rainham Show will be back this year taking place on Saturday 6 July so hoping I have Peas to enter but all depends on the weather. Let's hope we do not have heatwaves like last summer.

2024

Peas were sown middle weekend of October 2023 and at the time of writing the plants are looking very healthy and some varieties are nearly ready for planting so if the next couple of weeks stay mild I shall plant before the end of the month (February) because I am awaiting surgery on my left knee and expecting some news any time now of the date as it is hard to plan work in the garden. All ground work is prepared and canes in place, recuperation will take between four to six weeks so I have arranged two volunteers to assist me if required.

Here's hoping you all have a successful year in the shows ahead.

“A flower blossoms for its own joy.”

Oscar Wilde

Ireland

By Niall Coveney

The 2023 season started for everyone at the end of 2022 with high hopes for plenty of competition and blooms. The 2022 season had been relatively poor, but the prospects looked good. It really did not work out that way in the end.

The weather played havoc with all Sweet Pea growers. February was extremely mild, but March was the wettest on record. We had storm Noah in April which brought storm force winds and damaged the cane structures. This was followed by May which was the second warmest since 1900. This record was broken with June becoming the warmest month for over 124 years. July then became the wettest July on record. As you can see, we all had to suffer great extremes and that is the last thing that Sweet Peas growers need.

Our first show was held in Degany in County Wicklow. Exhibitors came from the West of Ireland and through the Midlands and around Dublin. The main prizes went to David Moloney from Clonmel in County Tipperary and Maria Melvin from Ardee in County Louth. A new exhibitor from Galway, Mike Redfearn won the novices section.

Ardgillan Castle, the former seat of the Taylor family for many centuries was the venue for the next show the following day. This is a fine building purchased by State in the 1960's and is now run by the local council. One week later the next show took place in Newbridge House. This is the home of descendants of the Cobbe family, and they still live there as part of an arrangement with the local Council. The house is well worth a tour. However, the Council organise a show which is a effectively an agricultural show

with fruit, vegetable, and flowers included. There was a good number of Sweet Pea exhibitors at this show on the first and second of July. Peter Harvey won most of the Sweet Pea classes.

The Rush show was the next show on the 8 of July. This is the main Sweet Pea show with the Irish Championship being awarded to Maria Melvin who deserved the title.



Catherine Coveney and Cora Swan in Delgany, 23 June.
Photo by Leigh Anderson.

There were at least eight other entrants in different classes with Peter Harvey and Catherine Coveney sharing the honours. The novice section was well attended with entries from Louise O'Connor, Maureen McGetterick and Melissa Barry doing very well.

Two weeks later the Malahide Horticultural Society held its annual show in St. Andrew's Parish Centre, Malahide. This was the Society that the late John Warren was involved with and there was a special prize for an exhibit of fruit, vegetables flowers and Sweet Peas in his honour. Three large exhibits from societies around the country vied for first place with the Naul Society winning out. Again, there was a large number of Sweet Pea entrants in other categories with the overall prize going to Maria Melvin.



Winners of the John Warren competition in Malahide. *Photo by Niall Coveney.*

On the following day there was a show in Balbriggan but due to building works in the hall the number of exhibitors was considerably reduced. Peter Harvey scored well here with his blooms.

The next show brought some surprises. It was held in Swords Co. Dublin and David Moloney produced a stunning display of a new cherry blossom coloured Sweet Pea. This stole the show. Catherine Coveney and Peter Harvey did well here too.



Catherine Coveney. *Photo by Leigh Anderson.*

The last show of the year was that held in Tullamore. This show is mainly an agricultural show with a marquee for flowers, fruit and vegetables. You could have up to 20 competitors in the potato division along with many people from all over the country vying for the title. There were just two classes for Sweet Peas. David Moloney won both classes with Pat Thornton and Zara Evans sharing the honours.

The varieties that are doing well in the Irish climate include 'Gwendoline', 'Mrs Bernard Jones', 'Sir Jimmy Shand' and 'White Frills' while others we see regularly on the bench include 'Windsor', 'Bristol' and 'Mary Priestley'.

Our thanks must go to Mossy Buttery who grows Sweet Peas commercially for acting as our judge in all the main shows. Without him we would be stumped for an independent judge, and we appreciate very much his commitment to our shows. Sadly, Sydney Harrod was unable to travel and judge the National Championship in Rush this year. We wish him well and a speedy recovery.

The sourcing of seed has become a big problem as all the seed providers for the Irish market are based in the UK. Brexit prevents us importing so we are back to sharing and saving seed. Hopefully this will be remedied soon. Our local hybridiser Chris McAleer is beavering away and has been successful at the UK Trials with 'Bridget McAleer' and 'Josie' now in commercial production. He has also won awards with a pale orange variety which he has named 'Layla' and a pale lilac variety called 'Claire McAleer' We wish him well with his continued successes. Chris is also supplying the National Botanic Gardens with Sweet Pea plants annually for their Irish Plant section.

Sadly, on the First of January 2024 we were stunned to hear that our old friend Tony Boston had died at home. Tony had been the lifeblood of the Sweet Pea fraternity hosting a show in Finglas for many years and bringing us news from other societies around the UK. He is missed by all of us in the Sweet Pea fraternity. Our prayers are with his wife Frances and two sons Wayne and Tony.

Lincolnshire and Humberside

By Chris Priestley

I took over the role of representative for this large and fairly sparsely populated area just before Christmas 2022. Although the district is large in area and our member numbers are small we are fortunate having two very impressive, well known gardens within this region. They're Easton Walled Garden, near Grantham and Barnsdale Gardens of BBC Gardeners' World fame where Geoff Hamilton presented the programme for many years. Strictly speaking the latter garden falls just over the border into Rutland but we won't argue about that. Both gardens feature magnificent Sweet Pea displays each summer and are worthy of a visit from any Sweet Pea enthusiast. They are easily accessible from the A1 in South Lincolnshire, should you be passing. One of our members, Stephen Marsland, has been instrumental in establishing and developing the displays at both sites and shares here his journey into growing Sweet Peas.

I started growing Sweet Peas 15 or so years ago at Easton Walled Gardens with just a couple of varieties. I had no idea about types. I grew all the plants on cordons and remember being annoyed at how small and 'rubbish' a few of the varieties were compared to others. But I just enjoyed growing them. Over that first winter I did a bit of reading and started to understand more about Spencer and Heritage (as I knew grandifloras back then) types. Over the years I refined the way I grew them, mainly for maximum flower yield and ease of visitors being able to walk amongst the plants. That's why I was growing them after all.



The Spencers I grow on supported canes with a post and two cross members (a longer one lower than a shorter one at the top to angle the canes) at each end of the beds with electric fence wire strung between them. The grandifloras I grow on chicken wire cylinders attached to tree stakes. Semi-grandifloras I grow the same way, but with the chicken wire higher up the tree stake.

After a few years of not growing Sweet Peas, in late-2022 I started a new job at Barnsdale, Rutland. Soon after I was given a couple of beds in what's called the Elizabethan Kitchen Garden. The idea, as with Easton, was to give visitors something different and quintessentially English to see while they were visiting the gardens.

On the 40th anniversary of Geoff Hamilton starting out at Barnsdale I decided I ought to choose varieties named after Gardeners' World, and other gardening programme presenters, such as 'Geoff Hamilton', 'Seabrook's Fantasia', 'Monty Don' and 'Alan

Titchmarsh'. The 2023 Sweet Peas were a great success (despite some exceptionally cold weather in December 2022) and I was given the go ahead to grow them again in 2024. I was even given more beds!

The extra space means I can start growing semi-grandifloras too. Some of the varieties I've chosen are: 'Alisa', 'Cathy', 'Kingfisher', 'Pink Pimpernel', 'Top Hat', 'Valentine.'

I've also been able to increase the number of Spencer varieties I'll grow from 15 to 20 some of which are: 'Betty Maiden', 'Blue Shift', 'Border Beauty', 'Enchanté', 'Henry Thomas', 'Macmillan Nurse', 'Orange Stripe', 'Percy Thrower', 'Sir Jimmy Shand'

'Macmillan Nurse' was very hard to come by, but Cathy from English Sweet Peas worked wonders and found me some in their seed stores!

The number of grandifloras I'm growing hasn't changed from 2023, but I've chosen different varieties for 2024, including: 'Almost Black', 'Dragonfly', 'Jack Ellis'.

Along with some old favourites: 'Cupani', 'Dorothy Eckford', 'Fire & Ice', 'Painted Lady', 'Prima Donna', 'Senator'.

I have a trials area in the garden's allotment, here I grow 'Geoff Hamilton' (for seed production), a variety which was saved from a rogue a few years ago as well as some of my own crosses from years gone by. I'll also be growing 'George Priestley' and 'Mary Priestley' from seed kindly sent to me by our District Rep, Chris Priestley.

Thanks Stephen for sharing your interesting developments. There can't be many gardens up and down the country that can boast such a varied and interesting range of Sweet Peas and I hope members and the general public will enjoy visiting both Barnsdale and Easton Walled Garden this coming summer. Their wonderful displays are not to be missed!

Kent

By Richard Borthwick

Like most areas of southern England growing conditions in Kent were challenging to say the least. Those with decent water supplies could irrigate but even so plants growing up canes were often scorched by the sun. Most beneficial therefore if one was able to damp down the growing plants and the paths between during cooler evenings. Our flower is still a very popular vase, brought indoors for the benefit of the "lady of the house" is usually well received.

At the County Show honours were shared between myself and Linda Ellis who is also a member of our Society. At Tonbridge Horticultural Society Show the Sweet Pea classes were hotly contested and winners included George Bass, Chris Passey, Sheila Hinton and Brian Cook. I was once again able to sell Sweet Peas at our local community shop and raised over £1,000 for a local charity.

Because of an ongoing illness it has become necessary for me to step down as a County representative. I am pleased to say that Linda Ellis, a keen grower and shower, has agreed to take over. I wish her good luck and encourage you to support her in her new role.

North West Region

By Nicky Edwards

2023 was another busy year for the North-West membership. It was a difficult year weatherwise and it was a great achievement that we managed to set up some wonderful stands at RHS Tatton, Chorley, Southport and Poynton and win GOLD medals at all of them. Well done team for rising to the challenge.

It was a year of change for the North-West branch. We attended some new events this year, RHS Bridgewater and Capesthorne Plant Fairs to name but two, and our growing workshops at the start of the year had a change of venue. The most exciting new thing that we took on as a group was the cultivation, from scratch, of part of an allotment in order to grow flowers for all our events and to produce seed for growing plants next year. This was no mean task and has involved an enormous amount of work and dedication from our team of helpers. The work is considerable and continues into 2024 so any help from our members would be greatly appreciated in the coming year.

Without our fantastic team of North-West members we wouldn't be able to take part in nearly as many events as we do so our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who participated in any way. Carole Tate has written a piece on Southport Flower show below and special thanks go to her for organising our stand at this show.

Growing Workshops

Both afternoon and evening sessions of each of our five growing workshops took place this year to cater for as many people as possible. We are extremely grateful to Sarah Haisley for hosting these at her house this year and putting up with all the seeds and compost that inevitably end up strewn about during the process.

Around twenty intrepid gardeners took part in the workshops. Some had grown Sweet Peas before whilst others had never grown them. Session 1 was about seed sowing, session 2 involved potting-on seedlings individually into root trainers or similar and in session 3 the plants were stopped. The hardening-off process was discussed and started in session 4. Session 5 was all about final planting, discussing various growing

media and structures, bed preparation etc. Participants took home nice strong plants to transplant in April.

Later workshops demonstrated cordon growing, layering and how to stage and make decorative arrangements for showing. Everyone who completed the workshops was encouraged to enter their flowers in the Late National at RHS Bridgewater and the North-West Regional Show at Chorley Flower Show. Some got involved with our events and we hope they will be back this year to help again.

Work on the Allotment in Chorley



Allotment in Chorley. Photo by Nicky Edwards.

The area is approximately 6x12 meters in a sunny, well drained location. Work clearing the site began in November 2022. Most of the area was cleared by New Year 2023 and we had the use of a rotavator to help with the soil preparation. Our member Stephen Heyward created three slightly raised beds made from recycled wood to aid drainage. We had plans to make a couple of compost bins which will be

completed this year, probably by Stephen again – thank you to him for his incredibly hard work on building all this. We added a framework to hold the nets and canes and used compost to help raise the level of the beds and bark chipping to create pathways.

Our member Sarah Haisley worked tirelessly to complete the monumental job of sowing a succession of seeds and pricking them out and planting and watering in due course. Several members were involved in sourcing materials, planting, watering, weeding, tending to the plants during the season and picking flowers. A big thank you goes to all these people.

In Autumn the beds were cleared. The plants were pulled up and any seeds picked and saved for the next year. We had a good tidy up and dug the beds over to allow the Winter frosts to do their work before next season. Further ground preparation will need to be done before planting out in the Spring and we hope to resume work on the allotment in January/February 2024. The best thing about this project was the opportunity it offered for us all to learn from each other. As well as all the work, we had some great fun on the allotment and it is a very sociable way to garden when we all meet up and share a meal afterwards.

The Plant Fairs - Arley Hall, RHS Bridgewater, Cholmondeley Castle, Capesthorpe Hall



Capesthorpe Hall plant fair.
Photo by Nicky Edwards.

The settings for all these Plant Fairs were beautiful. We sold many *Vernus* plants, seeds and *Lathyrus* plants and chatted to a steady stream of people who visited the stalls to find out about *Lathyrus Odoratus* and associated species and the NSPS. More new members were recruited.

RHS Bridgewater was a 2-day event and several other specialist plant stalls took part. Our members Lisa Tedesco and Monica Wright instigated a new initiative selling bouquets smartly wrapped in gift bags which went down a storm with the public. We will be doing this again in 2024.

Some wonderful specimen plants, including the famous Eskimo Nell and Carole Tate's pink *Lathyrus Vernus Angustifolia*, were showcased at all the events and created much interest. We were all looking to grow the "rosenelfe" variety with its beautiful pink flowers.

Sweet Pea Awareness Day at Astley Park

There is always fantastic weather when we do this event in the wonderful location of the Walled Gardens in Astley Park in Chorley. This is great opportunity for some local PR as we promote the NSPS and Chorley Flower Show. Children were invited to plant *tingitanus* seeds to grow at home and to come back to Chorley Flower Show, also held in Astley Park, to tell us how their plants were getting on. All the volunteers enjoyed spending an hour or two selling seeds and plants at this event.



Astley Park awareness day.
Photo by Nicky Edwards.

RHS Tatton Show

We pulled off another great success and achieved a GOLD medal for our wonderful stand at this prestigious RHS show. This was a major achievement given the extremely wet weather which affected the quality of flowers somewhat. It was so difficult to dry them out for the display stand and soggy flowers do not make easy work for the

arrangers. The stand was completed once again without oasis and used recycled containers. We signed some new members, sold many seeds and gave out valuable advice to the public. Thank you so much to everyone who helped in setting this up and on the seed and information bureau over the course of the show and also breaking down on the Sunday. Special thanks go to Julia Beardmore for all her work organising this. (see full report in Shows & Displays section of this Annual).

Lyme and Disley Horticultural Show and Garstang Show

We had stands at these smaller local shows selling seeds and offering advice and information to the public. We signed some new members and some existing members came to see us so it was lovely to meet up with them. Well done to those members who helped to support the open classes in the horticultural sections of these colourful and varied shows. It would be great to see more of our members doing this next year.

Southport Flower Show (by Carole Tate)

Southport Flower Show took place on 17-20 August. It is a well-supported major show in the North West with trade stands, gardens, floral arrangements and competitions, various musical groups, arena entertainment and a large horticultural marquee.

We set up our Society stand on Tuesday and did the flower arrangements on Wednesday using pre-loved glassware, ready for judging and opening to the public on Thursday. We were delighted to receive a GOLD Award for our stand.

We had an information bureau and seed sales and many visitors gave us good feedback on the display stand. We signed up 9 new members and have a list of local people interested in our workshop for next year. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with the setting up and manning the stand.

We had 14 exhibitors entering the 12 Sweet Pea classes in the Amateur Gardeners section. Allan Evans travelled

up from North Wales to win the 3 vase class and Martin Holmes from Pately Bridge to win the 2 vase class. Stephen Hayward won the vase of 9 stems old-fashioned and I won the bowl of species. The full list of winners is on Southport Flower Show website.

All the volunteers had time to look round the show, enjoying shoe shines, foot massages, master chef, bmx, dog, falcon and floral demonstrations, food, whisky and gin samples and buying more plants for the garden!!

A thoroughly good event enjoyed by all.



Sharing a meal at the allotment.
Photo by Nicky Edwards.

Poynton Show



Information bureau at RHS Tatton.
Photo by Nicky Edwards.



Setting up at RHS Tatton.
Photo by Nicky Edwards.

Coming right at the end of August this is the last major show of the season. As such it is always a big ask to find flowers to fill the stand but a medal and trophy are at stake so against the odds our team worked miracles and produced a fantastic stand from very few flowers. We continued the theme of the season and used some interesting and unusual containers displaying single blooms in various ways. As with Tatton, Southport and Chorley the stand was created using recycled glassware and without oasis. We were thrilled to get a GOLD medal and win the trophy for best amateur plant society.

Poynton Show has a Sweet Pea section in its horticultural schedule. Again it is a big ask to find flowers for entries this late in the season but our members did brilliantly - well done to everyone who made an entry. The show is affiliated to the NSPS and has our Bronze medal and card, awarded to the exhibitor with the best single vase of Sweet Peas in the show. Congratulations to our member Larysa Hathaway for winning this. Some of our members won prizes in the other horticultural sections and open classes too so congratulations to them also.

We sold seeds and plants and promoted the NSPS at our information bureau. The show always look after us very well with catering and refreshments and there were plenty of other things to see - entertainment, animals and livestock and various stalls - so a great time was had by everyone involved. Thanks team for a great day!

North West Autumn Social

This was a very enjoyable event. The morning started with refreshments and a welcome from Carole. Then we had an entertaining talk from Susan Meeks about her first (very successful, I might add!) year growing and showing Sweet Peas. Phillipa Cooper travelled to see us with her husband John and gave us an informative update on Wem

Show and Henry Eckford’s residence in Wem. The show is happening again in 2024 after its success this year and it would be great to see our members supporting it again.

Julia Beardmore gave us an interesting talk about going to collect the RHS Lindley Award which we won for displaying the best educational exhibit shown to the RHS during the year on our stand at Tatton 2022. She showed us the beautiful crystal vase which we received and also told us about her trips to Kew Gardens and Chelsea Flower Show.

Sarah Haisley then gave us a very entertaining glimpse of her time spent travelling about on NSPS business in her camper van, Sweet Pea. Following a hotpot lunch and cakes supplied by Sarah, the quiz and seed sales, I gave a talk on the Alnwick garden which I visited in August.

After the raffle the meeting was closed by Carole telling us about Future Events. It was lovely to catch up with so many members and thank you to all those who attended.



Larysa Hathaway receives her award.
Photo Nicky Edwards.

Chorley and District Garden Society Show

We like to support this small local show, taking place in a church hall, as many of our members are also members of this garden society. We had a small stand selling seeds and offering advice and information about the NSPS. It is the last event of the season and has a Sweet Pea section which several NSPS members entered. I think it is amazing that people still had flowers at this stage in the year so hats off to all those who entered.



Poynton Show display. Photo by Nicky Edwards.



Poynton Show display detail.
Photo by Nicky Edwards.

Scotland

By Roz Warley

At last the sowing date for Spencer Sweet Peas up here in Aberdeenshire is upon us! Roger Parsons has very kindly shared his expertise and seeds so Valentine's Day it is!

Having around 10 varieties plus some species seed there will be plenty to do, and I thought I would quickly share a tip we gleaned from an allotment group recently. As a small 'greenhouse' affair, they suggested a 3 drawer plastic unit, the type you can get to keep craft items in. We have some granite blocks arranged in a rectangle, for which we were going to find some old windows to make a cold frame of sorts. This tip changed our idea to asking our local village group for plastic storage boxes with lids (clear plastic). Our intention is to put the half seed trays inside, and stand the boxes in the rectangle. It isn't in full sun, and our garden is very exposed, so we will let you know how we get on.

Our village is restarting the Gardening Club, and I've been asked to give a talk later in the year, also, I am contacting the local shows (I'm new to the area), and sponsoring a rosette (on behalf of the NSPS but made by my own company) for the Best Vase in the Sweet Pea section at grass roots level. With the addition of a table with (hopefully) some species blooms and information sheets, the hope is that new members might be attracted.

There is a vibrant show scene up here in NE Scotland, with some absolutely cracking local shows, which are very well run and richly attended, (bursting at the seams in fact). Apart from the larger shows, which are also very well attended, hopefully we can bring our Society to more people and therefore increase our membership. That is the plan, and we will be giving it a good go!

We are hoping to be able to open our Sweet Pea patch too, if we can get it ready in time.

Our Facebook members only group is growing steadily, if you haven't yet looked for it, the group is called the 'National Sweet Pea Society Members Only Chat Room' pop in and request to join, we will do the rest. It's a great place, and intended for the enjoyment of all members of the NSPS, so we hope to see you there.

“In joy or sadness, flowers are our constant friends.”

Okakura Kakuzo

Suffolk and Norfolk

By Chris Dale

It was 14°C, the primroses already past their best and I saw a beautiful Peacock butterfly in the garden while checking the 'Peas in the frames today. Not in spring, it's just turned February. Maybe the early shows will be favoured again in '24?

My season was very short. No rain and blistering temperatures curtailed the growth of almost everything, rapidly shortening stems, and I struggled to scrape together a reasonable entry for Elm Park. Brian from Essex will have written about the results from there, the only show I attended. I will add that it's a fine Society which is moving to a new venue for 2024. Sensible sized Sweet Pea classes, well organised, and cream teas over which to chat with like minded gardening folk. A day well spent at what feels like a country village show but in suburbia.

The 'Peas were pulled out earlier than ever, as were the spuds I grow for rotation purposes. I had the plot manured and rough dug before autumn whilst the clay soil was still dry and lighter to turn over. Since then, the deluges rendered the garden a bog, and it's only in late January and early February that I could drag a fork and rake through the surface to try and dry it out a bit to break down the clods. Our weather seems to be coming in long blocks of extremes which is challenging for the gardeners but devastating for our farmers, with flooded fields across my region and crops failing. So I won't grumble about short stems, though I am still simmering gently about the unusable blocks of Oasis in the shed.

It's otherwise been quiet as usual in my region, and I don't seem to have the inclination to 'push' things, especially given a couple of eye surgeries, and some hospital investigations involving cameras being inserted into places that were not evolved to accommodate such intrusions! Fortunately, nothing found that isn't manageable for now, but these things do make one think. So if anyone else would like to take on Suffolk and Norfolk in the not too distant future, please do raise your hand.

That's it for now. Best wishes and good growing from the East. Take care of yourselves.

*“Flowers always make people better,
happier, and more helpful; they are
sunshine, food and medicine to the mind.”*

Luther Burbank

West Sussex

By Roger Parsons

While most people were disappointed with the summer of 2023, I was delighted that for the most part temperatures were not too hot, leading to an excellent seed harvest. I supplied blooms for the NSPS stands at Windsor on 10 June and helped out at Blenheim Palace on the 23 June. The NSPS Classification sub-committee met here on 14 June.

I judged at Rustington on 24 June where only 31 vases were staged but the quality was very good. The bronze medal for best vase went to 'Just Julia' exhibited by Jayne Pumfrey. Best exhibit went to Jeffrey Haine's winning set in the 3-vase class. This went on to win the award for best exhibit in the entire horticultural section of the show.

New member Richard Barron visited on 15 June. Exhibitors from West Sussex at the Early National Show were John Rieley from Lindfield, who retained the Warwick cup with his vase of 'White Frills' in class 28. Newcomer Richard Barron from Worthing won the Tom Shilling Prize for the best vase by a first-time exhibitor with his vase of 'Judith Wilkinson'. Congratulations to both. I made up the numbers, with entries in 2 classes.

The exciting news for the county is that the NSPS trials, previously held at Sparsholt college, will be at West Dean Gardens, near Chichester, in 2024. This is an RHS partner garden, so entry is free for RHS members. I gave a talk on Sweet Peas at the West Dean College on 15 October.

Looking ahead to 2024, the rainfall with me has been exceptionally high during the 2nd half of 2023 so I hope everyone has been able to get their winter digging done by the time you read this.

Staffordshire and West Midlands

By Phillipa Cooper

A main objective over the past months has been trying to improve our heavy clay soil. Having had such a poor year with my old-fashioned varieties in 2023 John and I decided to sow the several types of Autumn green manure seed mix as this had certainly been of benefit for our 2022 blooms.

Sadly, we had rain, rain and more rain leaving us with a waterlogged garden. We couldn't reach the Sweet Pea beds as the lower part of our lawn resembled a paddling pool. The green manure didn't survive and therefore we won't know which mix (if any)



Barrie Eckford, President of the Eckford Sweet Peas Society with exhibitors from the NSPS North West area.. Photo by Phillippa Cooper.

would have improved the soil. Back to the drawing board.

As Wem is back to third weekend in July I decided to sow my seeds at the end of January. They are now coming on nicely so fingers crossed that I have a better year.

I am continuing to do talks, mostly in Staffordshire and Shropshire. Fortunately, I still have some seeds to give away but I am grateful to Jenny Morgan who supplemented my stock due to my very poor harvest last Autumn. My main aim is to get as many gardeners as possible to grow the old-fashioned varieties.

I am not sure how many Gloucestershire members we have reading the Annual. Anyone interested in entering a newly reintroduced Sweet Pea Show near Cheltenham on 6 July please feel free to contact me. I believe that this is specifically for growers of Spencer varieties. This may seem a rather unusual request but at the present time we do not have a District Rep in Gloucestershire and I am trying to help one of my own members in Staffordshire.

South Wales

By Jenny and Lewis Morgan

The year got off to a reasonable start, October sown plants were overwintering nicely, the January sowing happened as planned, and the Royal Welsh Show seemed to be progressing as expected. We gave a talk to one of the other local Gardening Groups which seemed to be well received.

Then things went a bit pear shaped in April as they say! Firstly, The Royal Welsh Show decided at the last minute to cancel the whole of the Horticultural Marquee which included all the various floral, flower, vegetable classes and The National Sweet Pea Championship of Wales. Needless to say, this was very disappointing as those of us from Wales who exhibit Sweet Peas are proud to enter in our National Show.

Ground preparation etc. in February and March had gone well, the weather being remarkably good for the time of year. Come April the October sown had to be planted, and then the weather changed. The month was poor weather wise and the plants never really got away and did that well, our cordon rows of 'Valerie Harrod' and 'Mrs. Bernard

Jones' failed completely and were in the compost bin at an early stage. We had better use out of the row with a late crop of runner beans and surplus cutting bed flower plants!

May saw a visit to Chelsea Flower Show, and we called by Darren Everest's Exhibition display that attracted a lot of attention from the visitors.



Darren Everest at Chelsea providing advice to the many visitors. *Photo by Lewis Morgan.*



Meeting Mr President at Chelsea. *Photo by Lewis Morgan.*

So, the question was, what to do with the annual leave we didn't need for the Royal Welsh Show? And the answer was go on a tour of Lancashire Sweet Pea Shows. The National Late Show, and North West Regional Show were penciled in; Premier Inns booked and fingers crossed we could rustle up enough blooms to make the trips worthwhile, although the truth was we'd have probably gone anyway, as we'd have had nothing else better to do.

First Show of the year was the Gloucester Open show at Dundry Nurseries, halfway between Gloucester and Cheltenham, which was a new venue. Along with the local exhibitors, ourselves and fellow NSPS members Kathy Gray, Phil Champion, and Graham Edwards attended and sweltered in the heat. Kathy swept the board, and the rest of us picked up the morsels, however, we were all glad to be able to attend and get in practise for other Shows that were coming up. There is a separate report elsewhere in the Annual.

Onto the serious business, the National Early Show was upon us. Squires Garden Centre in Shepperton were pleased to host the show, and a big thank you to the Show Managers for their organisation. Not being a RHS venue members were happier having more choices of staging materials to use.



Catching up with fellow members at the Gloucester Show. *Photo by Lewis Morgan.*

The M4/M25 was kind to us, so we'll be back at Wisley in 2024, although avoiding the M25 Junction right by the venue.



Tea Break time at The Late Show.
Photo by Lewis Morgan.



Darren Myers – 'Facebook Legend!'
Photo by Lewis Morgan.

No sooner home, and back on the road to RHS Bridgewater for the Late National Show. Again, a great venue, and a lot of visitors viewed the show which made the efforts by all concerned well worthwhile. Also, we had the opportunity to meet Darren Myers in person, until now he was only a Facebook legend to us!

Wem Show beckoned the following weekend and saw another cross border raid by Welsh members, with Dave Williams a new recruit this year, safety in numbers as they say!



Welsh Members catching up with Phillippa and John Cooper at Wem Show. *Photo by Lewis Morgan.*

The end of July saw the North West Regional Show at Chorley, and it rained again! The weather didn't help the Vase class entries, however, the floral classes were well supported, and provided a great spectacle. Nicky Edwards organised some excellent special prizes, one of which we were pleased to receive. Renowned Florist Jonathan Mosely was giving floral demonstrations in the Marquee on Horticultural Journalists

Martin and Jill Fish's Potting Shed Stage, and Jen made them all Sweet Pea button holes for them to wear.

So that was the main show season over for us, with only a couple of local country shows left with vegetables, general flowers and photograph entered as only one or two Sweet Pea classes.

With the early season problems we only managed three single vase entries at Clutton Show. We are determined to try and elongate our season to be able to enter the six vase class and give local member Graeme Nichol some competition. Graeme and his



Martin Fish with Jen, and Jill Fish with Jonathan Mosely sporting the Sweet Pea buttonholes. Photo by Lewis Morgan.

wife provide great support to the show not only entering the Sweet Peas but also the many other floral classes as well.

The local Llangynidr Show rounded off the year for us and we managed to scrape together one decent vase of Sweet Peas and Jen came away with the National Society Bronze Medal and Card.

September was the time to put everything to bed for the winter and plan for 2024. One decision we made was to forego any autumn sowing this year to avoid any early season planting out issues as we had experienced in 2023. The 2024 Royal Welsh Show horticultural section was being planned by the organisers to be reintroduced, and this time we are optimistic it will happen, and we await to see exactly what form it will take. We hope to catch up with some of you in 2024.

ANNUAL AND BULLETIN DEADLINES

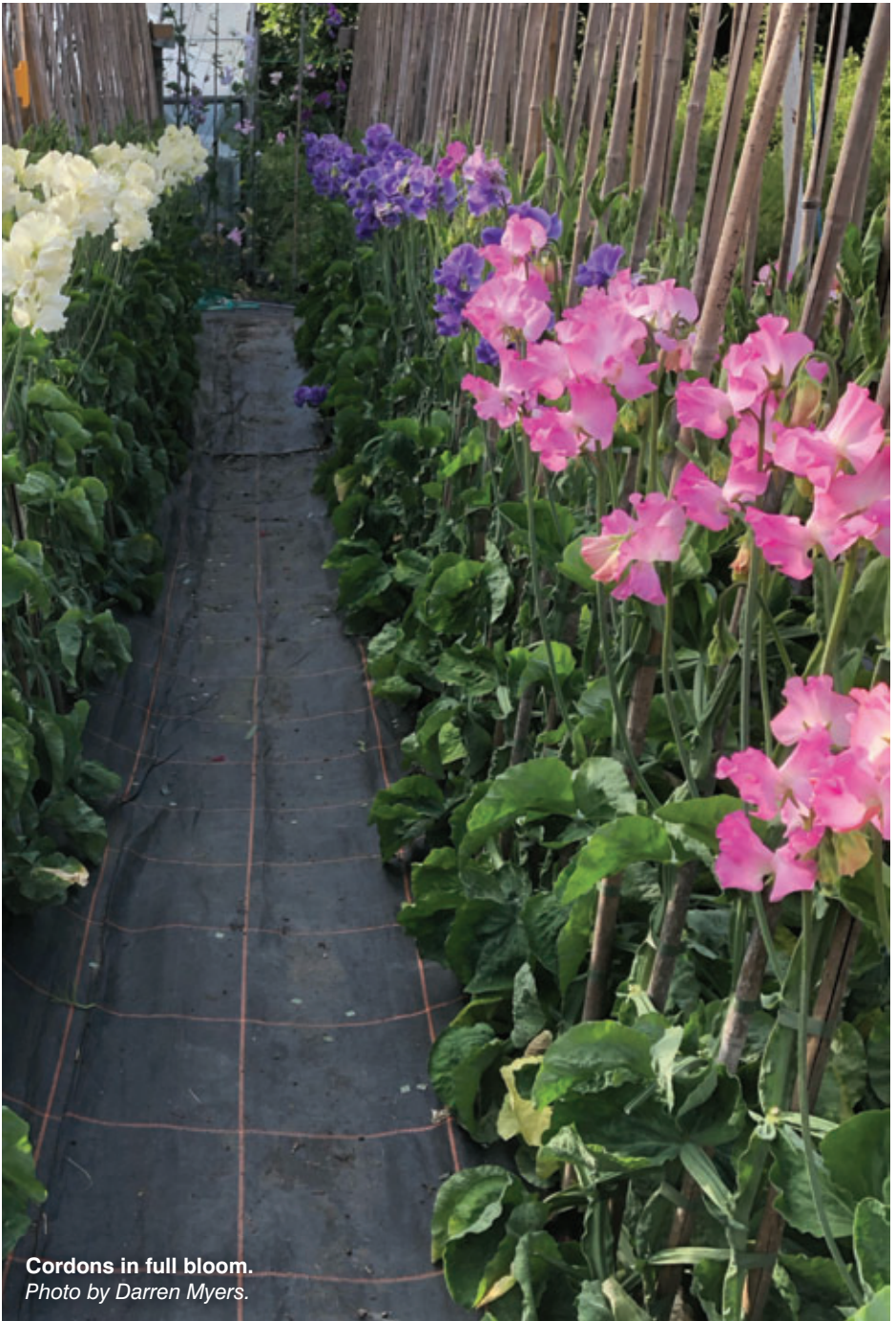
Contributions are most welcome. They can send to us in any format, even by letter (addresses at front of Annual), and don't forget photographs to illustrate your articles.

FOR THE ANNUAL

Caroline Ball: Email: caroline_a_m_ball@yahoo.co.uk
DEADLINE: 31 January

FOR THE BULLETINS

Graeme Hollingdale: Email: graeme@graemehollingdale.com
AUTUMN: Deadline 4 September SPRING: Deadline 31 December



Cordons in full bloom.
Photo by Darren Myers.

Obituaries

Tony Boston

By Roger Parsons



Tony Boston has passed away at home on January 2024. He had been in ill health for some time and confined to a wheelchair. When I visited Ireland to give a talk on 29 February 2020, just before Covid, Tony was too ill to attend. Tony was a great Sweet Pea exhibitor in the past and the district rep for Ireland, serving as mentor to many growers. Chris McAleer says: "Without Tony's help, Sweet Pea growing and exhibiting in the greater Dublin area and beyond would be struggling, but as a testimony to the man it is growing well. I owe him a great deal; his advice was priceless."

He attended our AGM for many years and exhibited at some national shows. My favourite memory of Tony is at an AGM after John Pratt and Frank Pettipher had brought out their video showing people how to grow Sweet Peas. Tony stood up and with a straight face congratulated John and Frank on producing the video. He said since he bought it, his Sweet Peas have improved enormously. He had stretched the tape out along the rows and it kept the birds off! This brought roars of laughter.

Tony's enthusiasm caused him to talk quickly and not everyone coped with his strong Dublin accent, but his detailed reports in Sweet Pea Annuals were always worth reading. Darren Myers says: "Very sad news indeed. A real character, and someone with a deep passion for Sweet Peas. I always remember Tony for his in-depth district rep reports in the NSPS Annuals championing Sweet Pea growing in Ireland".

He raised at least one Sweet Pea which I have in my seedbank. It is named 'Frances Boston' and has never been in commerce, but I should grow it again to re-assess it.

Our condolences to his widow, Frances, and family.

Neil Evans

By John Rowlands

We were all saddened to learn of the passing of Neil at the age of 86, although he was not in the best of health for a number of years and had suffered the loss of his wife about 12 months previously. Neil was well known as an expert gardener and was also famous on the horticulture exhibition circuit.



**Neil Evans and Dave Torrington
at Wem 2019.**

He started his horticultural career helping his father who was a gardener in a big house near Denbigh, one of his many tasks was to stoke the greenhouse boiler which consumed one ton of coke a week, the last stoking was at 12 pm! He also spent some time working in the Forestry with two horses pulling timber. He served for three years in the Welsh Guards, standing guard at Buckingham Palace and attending other ceremonial events. His delight was growing Sweet Peas and Chrysanthemums and was known in his local area as Mr Sweet Peas. He had been a member of our Society for over 60 years. He recently told me that he grew 1,600 plants at one time, showing at Wem, Shrewsbury, Southport, the Royal Welsh and many more local shows. He seemed to love the all night

setting up scene and happily camped in his car for a few hours shut eye but never before he'd had a nightcap (or two). He would happily sit for hours teasing the petals of his Chrysanthemum blooms into shape with a cotton bud. His attention to detail in the growing and showing of his flowers earned him a great deal of respect and of course a lot of trophies. In fact he told me that he'd amassed over £1,000 in prize money one year, quite an achievement! One of his favourite shows was Wem, he was so saddened to hear that it was folding but made an effort to attend the last show and was very proud to be asked to present the winning basket of Sweet Peas to Mrs Val Good the President. Many people had a lot of respect for Neil, he would offer advice and encouragement to anyone. His passing is a great loss to the gardening world. His funeral was held at Rhuddlan Parish Church and was well attended. The family all wore Sweet Pea badges, which was lovely to see, the leaflets were also adorned with Sweet Peas. During the service we listened to music for reflection which was 'I did it my way' by Frank Sinatra. He is survived by his Son Andrew and Daughter Linda.

Rest in peace Neil, You certainly did it your way!

Mike Hargreaves

By Pat Hargreaves



Mike was born in Leeds on 3 June 1930, just 10 minutes before his twin brother, David, and died just 27 hours before his 93rd birthday. He had managed to plant out his 200 Sweet Peas in April. They must have known that they needed to perform well as they arrived just in time for his funeral, where they were displayed in abundance.

Mike's first interest in his favourite flower emerged in his youth when he saw them growing in a neighbour's garden. He spent a year of his National Service in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and shortly before

his return home he wrote to his parents asking if he could claim a specific part of their garden in which to grow some. The answer was 'No'. They obviously thought that they would end up having to look after the plants themselves as Mike was only 19.

As the years went by he grew a few in the gardens of his own homes but it wasn't until we moved to Guiseley in 1980 that the bug really took hold. He joined the NSPS shortly afterwards and from then on he dedicated his time to it with the same commitment as he did to his family and his career. His involvement included 15 years on the Committee, with 9 of them also on the Executive, 9 years as Merchandise Secretary, several years on the Schedule Committee, three years as Bulletin Editor, five years organising, setting-up and manning displays at the Harrogate Spring Flower Show, umpteen years at the Driffield Show display and information stand, displays at RHS Harlow Carr, the Great Yorkshire Show and the Leeds Show, trials judging at Harlow Carr and Wisley and many talks to garden clubs throughout Yorkshire and into Lincolnshire, and only retired from these commitments at the age of 84. When the person who made the rings retired, he sourced a Yorkshire supplier of wire and made them himself.

When a group of enthusiasts 'Up North' established the Yorkshire Sweet Pea Society in 1999, Mike was appointed Chairman and remained in post for the rest of his life. At the July 2023 Show I was permitted to enter his blooms and they won two trophies. In his address at the Show, Darren Myers, the Secretary, said "Mike was a wonderful ambassador for the Sweet Pea, and a great example of the sweet pea fraternity. Despite winning multiple awards over the many years of growing, he remained modest of both

his growing prowess and achievements. However, I think we can all agree that Mike was, despite his advancing years, age-defying and continued to grow his plants to a high standard. But win or lose, I always had the sense that Mike grew and showed for the love of it, not for the winning." It was very thoughtful of Darren to ask Mike's daughter, Julia, to present the awards.

Mike was a person who could get along with anyone, whatever their age or background. He felt that the Society's greatest asset was the camaraderie of its members and he greatly appreciated the many friendships that he established within it.

Alec Andrew Hubbuck

By Darren Myers



It is with a great amount of sadness that I report the passing of a good friend to many of us Andy Hubbuck.

Andy was born in Chesterfield on the 2 May 1943 and was the second born to Jessie & George Hubbuck. His brother Tony, being 5 years his senior.

During his youth, Andy was a keen guitar player and along with a group of friends formed a skiffle band, calling themselves Andy and The Asteroids. Andy declared that they had hit the big time when they got to play at Bakewell Welfare Club, where they were paid their expenses. The expenses was just enough to get them to Baslow, following their gig, where they would ring their parents and ask them to come and pick them up. Despite

the band not making it to stardom, Andy kept an interest in his guitar and continued to play for pleasure through the rest of his life.

Andy's working life started on a farm, where he remained for 20 years, before moving on to work in the haulage department of Bryan Donkin Engineering in Chesterfield. Here he worked his way up to the position of Transport Manager until he was made redundant in 1994. Having built up many contacts he decided to set up his own light haulage business, which, like everything Andy did, he made a success before retiring 10 years later.

Whilst in their teens, Andy met his future wife, Beryl and they eventually married on the 5 December 1964. They welcomed their daughter, Sally, into the world on 28 February 1969.

In 1981, Andy's life changed, when he met Tom Cordy, who at the time was part of strong contingent of Sweet Pea growers in the Notts and Derby area. Andy was soon bitten by the bug and was encouraged to dig up his lawn by Eric Ball to make way for more growing space. The lawn didn't last for long afterwards, as Andy quickly progressed through the divisions and was soon competing in the open division.

Andy and Beryl weren't just husband and wife, but also had a strong partnership. That was clearly evident in 1993 when they not only organised, but raised every single penny needed to put on the National Show in the grounds of Chatsworth House. As Show Managers there was a weight upon their shoulders, but they need not have worried as they were supported to the hilt and put on a show that had just shy 1,000 vases staged. A show that we will never see the likes of again.

Andy served on the National Committee for many years, as well as being the district rep for Derbyshire, a post he held twice. But he had gained a reputation for growing quality Sweet Peas, and as a formidable exhibitor he became virtually unbeatable as he won all the major honours in the Sweet Pea world on multiple occasions. He became the winner of the Clay Cup on no

fewer than 5 occasions, with his first win coming at the National Show held in the grounds of Shugborough Hall in 2004, with a stunning vase of 'Gwendoline'.

However, Andy's biggest achievement came in 2005, when he won both the Daily Mail and Clay Cup at the early National, and the Roger Parsons Class and the Leweston at the Late National in the same season. An achievement that will be hard to match. His second Daily Mail win came in 2016.

Andy's love of Sweet Peas became a catalyst for friendships that went beyond Sweet Peas, and he made many lifelong friends along the way. Andy and Beryl would go out of their way to be the best of friends to people who were ill or in need of support.

We all got to know Andy through his warmth and wit, and he would regularly crack a joke or 2 and have the whole room in stitches at the many Sweet Pea gatherings over the years. One of my first memories of Andy was the Saturday lunchtime at the Provincial Show at Wakefield in 1991 where Andy had us all doubled over as the jokes just rolled.



One of Andy's treasured possessions, his first ever NSPS prize winning cheque.

Andy also bred a number of Sweet Peas that made it into commercial circulation, with the likes of 'Allan Hodgson', 'JoeJess', 'Evie Jones' and 'Andrew Cavendish' being the most prominent of his raising.

Despite his advancing years, Andy remained very active, and would regularly go to the gym, go for bicycle rides as well as play walking football for a local team. When he was unable to go to the gym during COVID, he still kept active and videos exist of him working out in his driveway where he substituted weights with bricks.

Andy was very much a family man, and he doted on both Joe and Jess, his beloved grandchildren. In particular, he became taxi for Joe as he had trials at various football clubs. As Joe grew older, Andy would still travel home and away as Joe played for Brampton Rovers.

Andy's funeral was a testament to the man that he was, and what he meant to many people. Not only was it standing room only in the crematorium, but having also packed out the waiting area, mourners had to stand outside, as well as mourners joining the service online, as hundreds came to pay their respects and to say their final goodbye to someone who was held in high regard by all.

Our world is a darker place without Andy, as we have lost an excellent grower, exhibitor, competitor and above all else a dear friend. Andy leaves his beloved wife, Beryl, daughter Sally and his grandchildren, Joe and Jess to whom we send our deepest condolences.

David Lemon

By Roger Parsons



David Lemon at Wisley

David Lemon was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1934 and started his career with Watkins and Simpson, London, from 1955-1964. This included 2 years training at RHS Wisley from 1956-8. He spent a year at Denholm Seeds in California before joining Ferry Morse from 1965-1973, where he worked on producing Jet-set series of Sweet Peas. In 1973, he returned to Denholm Seeds where he

produced the Supersnoop series. He also worked on the Early Multiflora type, creating the Mammoth Series introduced in 1982. These are rather early spring-flowering than winter-flowering but in 1984, David moved to Bodger Seeds where he created the Winter Elegance Series introduced in 1992. He also produced the Explorer series, as an improved Supersnoop. After leaving Bodgers in 1994, David continued to work on Early Multifloras at Oglevee Ltd, producing for Pan American (Waller) material which was refined for the UK by Mark Rowland and introduced by Owls Acre as part of the Winter Sunshine Series. His final evolution of the type is Solstice Series, introduced in 2009. From 2007 to 2015, he worked for Floranova as an independent breeder but then retired.

David worked on many other genera and is perhaps best known for Marigolds. He received the prestigious All America Selections Medal of Honor in 1985. Later, near the end of his career, he received the rarely awarded Breeders Cup. He patented countless varieties, his 10,000th plant patent was for a Pelargonium that was planted outside the White House.

David treasured his Irish roots and had a mischievous sense of humour. He took a fall in early February 2024. He seemed well afterwards, but suddenly passed away on 10th February 2024, just short of his 90th birthday. He'd been hospitalized for observation for three days and was released to a rehab place as he'd fractured his pelvis and they wanted to slow him down a bit while that fracture healed. His wife, Sandra (married in 1971), was with him there. She had just recently been released from the hospital as well. A memorial service was held at the Methodist Church in Lompoc, California in early March 2024.

Frank Verge

By Roger Parsons

It is with sadness that we hear of the death in 2023 of Frank Verge. He was 96 years of age.

Frank was best known in the Society as a breeder and judge of Sweet Peas. I recall for many years he used to judge at Shalford Show, near Guildford, where the standard of competition was formidable. Many of the Daily Mail exhibitors used to show there, so it needed a first-class judge to sort out the blooms. Frank was also a breeder of new Sweet Peas. Several received awards at the Wisley Trials in the 1980s but only 'Zoe', a scarlet Spencer, made it into commerce. In 2023, shortly before Frank's death, Darren Everest introduced two of Frank's later raisings as 'Dawn Everest' and 'Lizanne Davies'.

Frank was also very active as a breeder and exhibitor of Daffodils. He was a founder of the South East of England Daffodil Society (SEEDS). His most popular raising is the 1987 registered cultivar 'Fiona MacKillop' 2 W-Y.

One of Frank's proudest moments was when he was an Olympic torchbearer at the 1948 Olympics. He raised a daffodil which he named 'Olympic Flame' 2Y-O to commemorate this. In 2012 he met Dame Kelly Holmes when the Olympic torch was carried through Tunbridge Wells.

Other Deaths

We have been notified of the death of the following member.

Rosie Eckford

Our sympathies are extended to her family and friends.

Just as this Annual was going to press we heard of the sad death of Wem stalwart Val Good MBE. A full obituary will be included in the 2025 Annual.



Affiliated Shows 2024

To advertise here costs Affiliated Societies £6. Contact the Editor or return the form included within the Autumn Bulletin.

8 June – Downton Horticultural Society

Show held at Downton Memorial Hall, SP5 3NB. Show open 2.00pm – 4.15pm. Show Secretary Tony Ashford, 51 Moot Gardens, Downton SP5 3LG. ☎ 01725 510656 Email: ashfordtony2@gmail.com. 13 Sweet Pea classes including novice and other flowers.

8 June – Royal Windsor Flower Show

Show held at York Club, Prince Consort Drive, Windsor Great Park SL4 2BS. Staging Friday 7 June 3.00pm to 8.00pm and Saturday 7.00am til 9.00am. Show open 10.00am to 6.00pm. Show Manager email: mike@franksons.co.uk Open Sweet Pea Classes and Novice Class see www.rwrhs.com/flower-show for online schedule.

15 June – Chipperfield Horticultural Society

Show held at Chipperfield Village Hall. Staging from 8.00am. Show open to public 2.30pm – 3.30pm. Chairman John Hopkins 'Beckley', Langley Road, Chipperfield Herts WD4 9JS ☎ 01923 268852. Email: johnh65@live.co.uk Classes: 3 vases, distinct cultivars, 7 sprays of each; 1 vase, white or cream, one cultivar, 5 sprays; 1 vase pink, one cultivar, 5 sprays; 1 vase, lavender, mauve or blue, one cultivar, 5 sprays; 1 vase, cerise, magenta, crimson or scarlet, one cultivar, 5 sprays; 1 vase, any colour, one cultivar, 5 sprays; 1 vase, mixed, 12 sprays

15 June – New Forest Sweet Pea Society

Show held at Verwood Memorial Hall, Ringwood Road, Verwood, BH31 7AA. Show open to visitors 1.00pm – 4.00pm. Show Manager Ted Perren, Gay Correl, Amport, Andover SP11 8BE. ☎ 01264 772814. Email: eperren@btinternet.com Staging 6.00am to 10.30am.

23 June – Chiltern Sweet Pea Society

Show held at Millennium Hall, Lacey Green, Buckinghamshire HP27 0QT what3words 'famous.october.advantage'. Staging 8.30am – 12 noon, bowls and baskets up until 1.00pm away from the exhibition area. Judging 12.15pm onwards. Show open 2.30pm. Show manager Mr. Chris Gray, 68 Narbeth Drive, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP20 1NU. ☎ 01296 488160. Mixed open classes including sections for novices and 200 cordon growers. All exhibitors welcome.

6 July – Bournemouth in Bloom – The Bournemouth Horticultural Society

Show held at St. Francis of Assisi Church Hall, Charminster Road, Bournemouth BH8 9SH. Show open noon – 4.30pm. Show Manager David Bassil, 31 Princess Road, Poole, Dorset BH12 1BG. ☎ 01202 752014. Email: dcbassil04@gmail.com All classes open. Classes for large growers and small growers. Also novice classes. No entry fee. No prize money.

6 July – WARGAS

Show held at Wingrave Community Centre, Wingrave, Buckinghamshire. Open to public 2.30pm – 5.00pm. Show Secretary Adrian Reeve, 127 Winslow Road, Wingrave HP22 4QB. ☎ 01296 681372. Email: showsecretarywargas@gmail.com 6 vases distinct; 3 vases distinct; 1 vase white or cream; 1 vase red, orange or orange red; 1 vase lavender, mauve or blue; 1 vase pink; 1 vase any colour not listed; 1 vase mixed; 1 vase not more than 20 stems; 1 specimen bloom; bowl of Sweet Peas; novelty class. Special class for exhibitors who grow less than 200 plants, 3 vases, 6 stems of each, 3 distinct varieties; 1 vase 7 stems not less than 3 varieties; 1 vase 6 stems 3 of each; 1 specimen bloom and a bowl of Sweet Peas.

20 & 21 July – Eckford Sweet Pea Society of Wem (ESPS of Wem)

Show held at Wem Town Hall, 28-32 High Street, Wem, Shropshire SY4 5DG. Show opens on Saturday 20 July 10.00am – 5.00pm and Sunday 21 July from 10.00am – 3.00pm. Show manager Rose Horner of Wem Town Hall (as shown above). ☎ 01939 232299. Email: sweetpeas@wemtownhall.co.uk. Open classes, special classes, vases for Spencers and Old Fashioneds, Floral Art (note craft classes being considered for 2024).

22 – 25 July – Royal Welsh Agricultural Society

Show held at Llanelwedd, Builth Wells LD2 3SY. Show open 8.00am – 8.00pm. Horticultural secretary Amanda Burton, RWAS Ltd., Llanelwedd, Builth Wells LD2 3SY. ☎ 01982 554409. Email: hort@rwas.co.uk Open classes, novice and restricted. Schedules appear on website in April www.rwas.wales or contact Amanda Burton.

10 August – Clutton Horticultural Society

Show held at Ridges Field, Bendalls Bridge, Clutton BS39 5SJ. Show opens at 12 noon. Exhibits to be staged between 7.00am and 10.00am. Show secretary Roger Snary, Brookfield, Carlton Close, Clutton BS39 5SS. ☎ 01761 453063. Website cluttongardening.org. 4 classes to enter.

10 August – Disley & Lyme Horticultural Society

Show held at Disley Amalgamated Sports Club, Jacksons Edge Road, Disley SK12 2JC. Show open noon – 5.00pm. Show secretary George Noworyta, Ash Cottage, 131 Buxton Old Road, Disley SK12 2BX. ☎ 07971 186554 Email: noworyta@talktalk.net. Website www.dlhs.weebly.com. All schedule classes on-line at website



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2025 Novelties



Seamist Mixture

Our 'Limited Edition' Mixture in celebration of 20 years in retail. Pictured above and left.

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THE LATE SHOW

RHS Bridgewater Gardens, Worsley M28 2LJ

Occupation Road, Salford, Greater Manchester M28 2LJ
what3words: proper.readjust.headsets

13 & 14 JULY 2023

The Show will be open
Saturday 11.00am - 5.00pm
Sunday 10.00am - 3.00pm

Presentation of awards at 1.00pm Saturday

Show Manager: Carole Tate

Entries to: Carole Tate, 22 Lime Grove, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 3JA
Tel: 07961 477137 Email: caroletate10@gmail.com

**Staging 6pm and 10pm Friday (via gate code)
and from 6am and 9.30am Saturday (via gate code)**

Judging at 9.45am Saturday

YOU ARE REMINDED THAT OASIS IS NOT PERMITTED AT THIS SHOW!



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