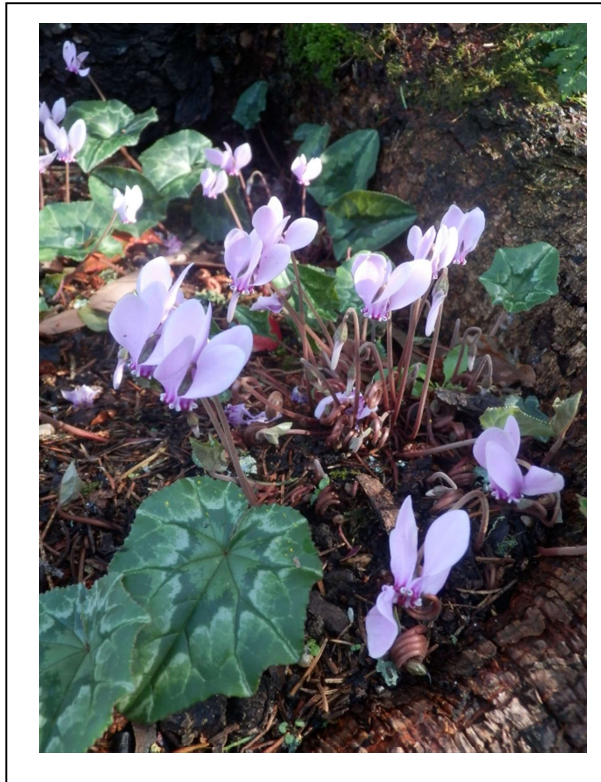




# Plant Heritage

CONSERVING THE DIVERSITY OF GARDEN PLANTS

## Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Group



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NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2018



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**Cover photo::** Photo by Doug Smith

## **Editor's note**

A big thank you to all those who have been generous with their time and contributed to this issue. The deadline for the Spring 2019 Newsletter is 15 February. I would really appreciate short articles on a wide variety of topics from members and Collection Holders. Contact the editor: Juliet Bloss: tel 023 8084 8085. email: [sevenmeads@aol.com](mailto:sevenmeads@aol.com)

## Chairman's Letter

As I finished my contribution to the spring newsletter, we were anticipating the arrival of “the Beast from the East”. Well, it didn't disappoint, if that is the right terminology: roaring winds and sub-zero temperatures were what we were promised, and that's what we got. Some plants and trees really got hit hard: our many clumps of *Libertia* were freeze-dried and mostly brown; and many of the *Eucalyptus* looked completely dead, not a single green leaf on them. The *Libertia* didn't really recover and the flowering was poor; even now they look a bit of a mess, as it is quite difficult and long winded to tease out all the dead leaves. The gums, as usual, fully recovered, with a flush of fresh leaves, but not really until mid-May. At least the Beast was fairly short-lived and the cold didn't penetrate deep into the soil.

Last autumn everyone was disappointed by the amount of summer rainfall. We recorded a foot from June to the end of September. This year we are just up to 4 inches over the same period. And the heat - a record breaker – was too much for too long; so the rain that actually fell mostly evaporated before the ground had a



chance to absorb it. Very nice if you want to laze by a pool, but hard if you are trying to do any gardening. Whilst many plants suffered, others, given adequate additional water, went crazy: 8ft Dahlias, and 12ft Cannas are just a couple of examples. The blue-flowered, South African water lilies *Nymphaea capensis* 'Pamela', overwintered under cover, performed beautifully - quite a rare occurrence

chance to absorb it. Very nice if you want to laze by a pool, but hard if you are trying to do any gardening. Whilst many plants suffered, others, given adequate additional water, went



This year's May Plant Fair and Autumn Plant Sale were both highly successful. Other events were well attended, and it was nice to see a number of new members. (See the events section in the next few pages for more detail.)

We have had an enormous success recruiting members in our area. Twenty-seven have joined since the spring, with a mere five feeling the need to resign. Thanks are due to all who were involved in this effort. Similarly the number of National

Collections has increased to a total of 50, with five new ones added in the last year (See Rosie's report.)

The shows were highly successful and I must single out the results achieved at Chelsea by Sparsholt College: again a marvellous result. It just amazes me that Chris Bird comes up with such great ideas, year after year. Chris explains in more detail later in this newsletter. I was really disappointed, as are many of us, that the BBC failed to give the display any mention whatsoever on the television, despite singing the praises of gardeners working with the community.

Gill reports on the discussion held at the AGM in Dorset. It became clear during the year that finances were not adequate to continue with the current structure and that changes needed to be made. I can now give you an update on the position. The post of CEO has been abolished and overall management of the charity will fall to the trustees, advised by the three panels. A Council meeting in July recognised that it (the Council) is no longer needed for the future and should be disbanded. It would be replaced by regular (once or twice a year) get-togethers of Group chairs and trustees. It also agreed that the term NCCPG would finally disappear and the Articles of Association would be amended to reflect this change. I have worked with Cecilia Bufton (our new Chair - right) on both the IT Steering Group and the Persephone Working Group and have been highly impressed with her abilities. With support from her deputy (and Chair of the Nominations Committee) Rosemary Day, plus three new trustees, I believe we are in safe hands and much better prepared for the future.



There are some really good articles following this introduction. I trust that the reports on events and talks refresh the memories of those who attended, interest those who did not, and perhaps encourage more people to make it on future occasions.

We have a good series of events coming up. The first half of these are described in this issue. The programme leaflet listing all the events up to the 2019 AGM will be sent out towards the end of the year, with the calling notice for the AGM, by post only to those for whom we have no email address. A paper version of the 2019 programme will be included with your spring newsletter.

I wish you all good gardening for the rest of the year and into the spring.

***Doug Smith, Chairman***

# Report on Spring and Summer Events

**Thursday 15 March 2018**

**Talk by Pat Murphy on the National Collection of *Meconopsis* at Holehird Gardens**

This National Collection of perennial species and hybrids was awarded in 2013. Holehird gardens extends to 10 acres and is close to Windermere where the cool, moist conditions are ideal for *Meconopsis* cultivation. These beauties originate in Nepal and Bhutan where they can be found on scree, in pastures and woodland and in the higher 'alpine' regions. Sadly, we cannot grow many of these in southern England. They need a dry spring and autumn and a cool, moist summer. They dislike a combination of low temperatures and heavy rain – so good drainage is essential. Open-ended cloches work well, particularly in winter.

Not all *Meconopsis* have blue flowers; pink, red, white, purple and yellow are all in cultivation. One particularly striking cultivar that Pat showed us was *M.* 'Barney's Blue', with the flowers starting plum, moving through purple to clear blue (right).



Pat took us through the process of seed collection and cleaning. Surprisingly, seed-bearing and non-seed-bearing pods often look identical. Once collected, seeds should be planted in January in a 2:1:1 mix of general purpose compost, John Innes No2 and washed grit. Seedlings can be planted out in June and July and may take two years to reach flowering size. Once large enough to handle they need an organic compost enriched with blood, fish and bone, but no extra chalk. Apparently they get yak dung at home! Good luck everybody, a worthwhile challenge. Thanks to Pat for sharing her expertise and beautiful slides

**Linda Smith**

**Sunday 2 September 2018**

**SPRING PLANT FAIR at Longstock**

Another successful Plant Fair with over 1000 visitors, mostly arriving in the morning and leaving before the sun got too hot – which it did. We managed again to net over £8,000, which, with some of our current assets, allowed us to contribute £12,000 to National Office funds, which we have requested should be used to help update the old, and frankly obsolete, IT systems currently in use. The Plant Heritage sales table did record business, taking nearly £1,200. Always on the look-out for ways to do better, later in the year we are going to review, with Longstock nursery staff, how we can improve attendance in 2019.

**Doug Smith**

**Friday 11 May 2018**  
**Visit to Savill and Valley Gardens in Surrey.**

Set within the 4,500 acres of Windsor Great Park, the Savill and Valley Gardens were largely the creation of Eric Savill, with much encouragement from King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

Having previously been a small estate nursery for growing park trees Savill, with its spectacular bog garden, was named in 1951. Eric Savill had already started work on creating the Valley Gardens. The transformation into the wonderful landscape we see today was continued by John Bond.

We were truly lucky to have Harvey Stephens as our guide in Savill. He gave generously of his time and knowledge and got us started on our tour which included the Temperate House, opened by our Queen in 1995.

Most of us walked to the Valley Gardens in the afternoon. May is a great time to appreciate the freshly leafed rare trees and the azaleas. The Punch Bowl is being revamped under the direction of John Anderson, but still displayed some stunning specimens (right). A grand day out. Thanks to all.



**Linda Smith**

**Friday 29 June 2018**  
**Visit to Malverleys Gardens, East End, Nr Newbury.**

Our visit started with tea, coffee, cakes and cold drinks in a cool outbuilding where we were welcomed by Matt Reese, the Head Gardener at Malverleys. Matt has been at the garden since it was bought by the current owners; previously he worked at Great Dixter in Kent. The 10-acre garden has been created over just six years, including a year during which the owners familiarised themselves with the site and decided what sort of garden they wanted to create. It has been greatly influenced by the writings of Christopher Lloyd, William Robinson and Vita Sackville-West, and the garden at Great Dixter.

Matt took us round the garden and explained how it had been divided into a series of contrasting rooms separated by yew hedges, starting with a walled cloister garden planted with cherry trees alongside a rill which has stone walls clothed in roses.

There are many exquisite plants in the garden and on the wide terrace in front of the house we found a beautiful *Silene compacta*, a vibrant pink splash of colour. There is a spectacular walled vegetable and fruit garden, which is also used to grow cut flowers. Its two fruit cages, containing cherry trees and strawberries, look



like pretty overgrown bird cages. Besides these areas there is a topiary meadow, a stumpery and woodland garden, and a new yew and box parterre. There is also a cool garden, a pond garden and a double herbaceous border planted with hot colours.

The planting is beautiful and has been very thoughtfully done; grasses have been used with restraint adding contrast where needed. The newly established parterre of box hedging and yew trees has been filled with *Hydrangea arborescens*

'Annabelle', which gives an original feel to the area. The woodland contained many *Lilium montana* and *Paris incompleta* (right). We saw a pink flowered *Eucryphia* 'Ballerina' by the pond, together with a purple leaved *Styrax japonica*.



This, however, just describes the bare bones of the garden; each area is beautifully planted with many unusual plants amongst lots of old reliable favourites. It is early days for the garden but it already looks spectacular and for those members unable to come on this occasion it is well worth visiting when they open for the NGS, but it is so popular that you would need to book well in advance.

*Gill Sawyer*

**Saturday 14 July 2018**

**TWO VISITS: Mike and Ann Collins' Garden. 1 Brook Cottages, Lyford.**

**Edulis Nursery, The Walled Garden, Tidmarsh Lane, nr. Pangbourne**

**am: Mike and Ann Collins' garden**

**M**ike and Ann Collins' garden is delightful. Measuring just 25m x 25m it is packed with two thousand different rare and unusual plants. The garden is just three years old but it looks very well established with everything growing to perfection. The garden is designed to give interest all year round, from bulbs such as *Galanthus* in the spring, to trees and everything in between. Mike and Ann grow a wide range of woodland plants, a tremendous variety of ferns, and fabulous *Cypripedium* hybrids. There are many hostas, including small leaved





varieties with almost no visible slug or snail damage. A large number of the trees and shrubs in the garden have had their canopies raised so that plants can be grown underneath them, maximising the growing space. There is a raised gravel bed full of alpiners including a *Crepis incana*, the pink dandelion, with sun lovers such as *Watsonias* growing in pots. The garden also has a number of different clematis clothing fences and scrambling into trees, including *Clematis triternata* 'Rubromarginata' and *C. integrifolia* 'Rooguchi'.

Our morning was made perfect by a limitless supply of tea, coffee, cake, biscuits and cold drinks and the hospitality of our hosts.

### pm: Edulis Nursery

In the afternoon we visited Edulis Nursery, owned and run by Paul Barney. Having recommended a pub for our lunch Paul kindly came and guided us safely to his nursery, which is tucked away down a lane.

The nursery is not normally open to the public so we felt privileged to be able to visit and have a good look round. Paul has an amazing collection of edible, wild, herbaceous and shade-loving plants from all over the world, including a seemingly endless variety of ferns. Everywhere we looked, in the shade tunnels, the polytunnels and the outside display areas, we saw plants that stopped us in our tracks. *Diananthe bifida*, *Diananthe caerulea*, *Corydalis* 'Dzovkov Mousse' and a fabulous pink form of *Eschscholzia californica* were some exciting plants we spotted. We spent a happy time reading plant labels and asking Paul about growing conditions for an endless variety of treasures, many of which we felt compelled to buy to take home with us.

**Gill Sawyer**

### Sunday 2 September 2018

#### AUTUMN PLANT SALE at Meon Orchard, Kingsmead, Nr Wickham

**M**eon Orchard opens for the National Garden Scheme three times a year. This was our third and last opening in 2018. We normally cater for around 250 visitors, which is close to what we achieved in May. After two months of dry weather, we were looking forward to a good turnout at our July 29 opening. What a disappointment! It rained all day; in fact an inch fell during the time we were open. What timing! A mere 27 brave souls turned out, looking more equipped for

a fishing trip in the North Sea than a pleasant tour around a garden. On average some three-quarters of visitors tuck into the cakes, so it is not surprising that there were rather a lot left over. However, with perfect weather forecast for 2 September, not too hot but dry, we had our fingers crossed. Something worked. In all we had 427 visitors, which almost made up for our July washout.

Some years ago we held our PH plant sale as an independent event, moving the location year to year, and normally around 20 to 30 Plant Heritage members attended. So, although there were some good plants on sale, there were not enough customers to purchase very many of them. At the event this year, we attracted some 18 PH members, plus helpers and plant donators, similar to the numbers in earlier days. But we now had over 400 potential customers. The net result was that Plant Heritage made over £400 from their stand, of which £40 was donated to the NGS, which cleared over £2,500 on the day, including entrance fees, profits from teas, and contributions from the two nurseries which attended. This appears to be a good formula. Plant Heritage members get free entry to the garden, the NGS provides most of the publicity, including a reduced-cost advertisement in the Hampshire Yellow Booklet. This brings in the visitors keen to buy lots of plants so that both organisations make a worthwhile income.

*Doug Smith*

## **Future Events**

### **Friday 5 October 2018**

#### **Visit to Nymans Garden, Handcross Nr Haywards Heath RH17 6EB.**

One of the National Trust's premier gardens, bordering the Sussex Weald. From intimate gardens, to tree lined avenues and woodland containing many rare and unusual plants. Guided tour £3, plus entry fee for non NT members.

Directions: On the B2114, off the A23 south of Crawley. Well signed.

**Time:** Meet at entrance at 1.40 pm for 2.00pm tour.

### **Thursday 22 November 2018**

#### **Social and talk by Tom Clarke 'Plants and People of India's North East Frontier'**

Tom, has taken over as Head Gardener at Exbury, after some years at National Trust gardens in Cornwall. His four trips to see Rhododendrons in the wild will feature in the talk. Please bring a plate of food to share and a prize for the raffle. Drinks will be provided.

**Time:** 7.30 pm at Shawford Parish Hall.

### **Thursday 17 January 2019**

#### **Talk by Andrew Halstead. 'Encouraging wildlife into your garden'.**

Andrew is a retired RHS Principal Entomologist with a wide range of interest in all wildlife. He has written several books and signed copies will be for sale

**Time:** 7.30pm. Warnford Village Hall.

## **Saturday 9 February 2019**

### **AGM and talk by Jim Gardiner 'Magnolias'**

Jim has recently retired as Director of Horticulture for the RHS having been curator at Wisley for 20 years. He was previously curator at Hillier's arboretum. His main interest is in woody plants, particularly Magnolias, and he has written three books on the subject.

**Time:** 2.00 pm Sparsholt College, Gilbert White, Westley Court.

## **Thursday 11 April 2019.**

### **Colin Moat 'Fifty greys of shade'**

Pineview Plants in Kent is run by Colin & Cindy Moat. The nursery offers a wide range of perennial plants ranging from rare, new or unusual, to easy, interesting and reliable. The nursery mainly sells plants that interest them and have proved to be good garden plants. Colin been a member of HPS for 25 years and on the national committee twice. He co-ordinated the 2015 display at Chelsea and is an assessor for the RHS *Sanguisorba* trial, growing many interesting selections on the nursery.

**Time:** 7.30pm. Warnford Village Hall.

**Later events will be published in the Spring Newsletter**

## **New Members**

The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Group welcomes the following new, or re-joining, members of our group. We look forward to seeing you at some of our events.

**Chrissi Knights, Yvette Frost,  
Carol Syson, Kate Le Marechal,  
Kate Turnbull, Julie Flood,  
Hannah Hartness, Mr & Mrs Doug Gemmell  
Roger Cunningham, Andrew Fellows,  
Olenka Snell, Anne Fellows,  
Clare Hogan, Lynne Ridler-Wall  
Georgina Siddall, Nigel and & Jane Plowright  
Tracey Noakes, Kim Jones,  
Paul Boosey, Howard Starr-Keddle,  
Jill Walmsley, Camilla Hiley  
Becky Getgood, Sarah Cooney,  
Anne Wanstall**

## The Exbury Gardens National Collection of *Nyssa*

*Nyssa*? I encountered several puzzled looks at the Collection Holders meeting earlier this year at the sight of my collection name badge. It seems this is not such a well-known genus of trees; oh, and that's *Nyssa* with an i as in miss, not with an n as in nice. You certainly can't miss them come the autumn when they explode in a dazzling display of fiery colour. With cultivar names such as 'Wisley Bonfire', 'Valley Scorcher' and 'Inferno', you begin to notice a theme and a clue to the season in which this tree holds pride of place.



No other garden holds a national collection of *Nyssa* which is one of the reasons why former Head Gardener, John Anderson, chose the genus and set about planting in 2006. He was keen to extend the diversity of autumn planting and to allow seasonal interest to pass from the riotous rhododendrons of the spring to the

furious fire dance of the autumn, adding to already established favourites such as *Liquidambar*, *Acer* and *Parrotia*. Here, *Nyssa* do not disappoint as their autumn colours are superb.

Taxonomy references place *Nyssa* either in Cornaceae (the dogwood family) or in its own family, Nyssaceae. The genus *Nyssa* takes its name from Nysseides, the Greek water nymph of rivers, streams, lakes and marshes and is known by the common name of tupelo tree, a Native American word meaning swamp. It is a genus of about nine species of deciduous trees, five of which are found in swampy regions of eastern North America, while the others are found in eastern Asia, and one in western Malaysia. There are 11 species listed by the RHS, although *The Plant List* includes another 33. Reproduction is possible through seed germination and cuttings; however, grafting is used to preserve the characteristics of named cultivars.

*Nyssa sylvatica*, the most widely grown species in the UK, was introduced in the 1750s from eastern North America and is known by several common names including tupelo, black gum tree, cotton gum, pepperidge, and sour gum tree. It received its AGM in 1993. We have one or two older examples of *N. sylvatica* which can grow to between 15m and 30m tall with drooping lower branches and obovate or oval leaves that turn spectacular shades of yellow, orange and scarlet in autumn. The black tupelo tree is the longest living non-clonal flowering plant in eastern North America where it can live for over 650 years.

Many cultivars have been produced from this species and several of them feature in our collection, including *N. sylvatica* 'Wisley Bonfire', named for the well-known tree at the RHS Gardens, Wisley. It is broadly columnar in shape with glossy, dark green oval foliage that turns brilliant red in the autumn. *N. sylvatica* 'Jermyns Flame' is a form that was selected by John Hillier in 1985 from specimens in the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens & Arboretum. It has relatively large leaves that turn striking hues of red, yellow and orange in the autumn. *N. sylvatica* 'Sheffield Park' was selected from one of the many plants raised by Arthur Soames of the National Trust garden at Sheffield Park in East Sussex. The brilliant orange-red colouring



starts two or three weeks before other *Nyssa*. *N. sylvatica* 'Autumn Cascade' (left) is a small tree with a weeping habit that was raised in Australia. A rare form, it produces rounded green leaves in spring and summer, changing to vibrant red and orange in the autumn. It grows up to 4 metres tall with a spread of 3 metres. *N. sylvatica* 'Miss Scarlet' is a small, branching tree with dark-green foliage becoming scarlet in the autumn. It can grow up to 10m tall and 8m across.

The young foliage of *N. sylvatica* 'Red Red Wine' is red, but gradually turns green only to turn back to rich red tones in autumn. It eventually makes a medium-sized tree. The cultivars 'Dirr', 'Haymanred', 'High Beeches', 'Highlight', 'Isabel Grace', 'Lakeside Weeper', 'Pendula', 'Valley Scorcher', 'Zydeco Twist' and 'Wild Fire', are also all part of our collection at Exbury and considered among the best. *N. sylvatica* var. *biflora* is a subspecies which evolved in the wetlands of North Carolina, Florida and Louisiana, where it is known as the swamp tupelo. It has slightly narrower, more leathery leaves and rather flat berries.

North American tupelos produce small, greenish white flowers, borne in clusters at the top of a long stalk providing a rich source or nectar for bees. These are followed by a black-blue, ovoid stone fruit (right), about 10 mm long with a thin, oily, bitter-to-sour tasting flesh which is attractive to wildlife and gives the tree its common name of sour gum. They are most often dioecious so a male and female tree in proximity is required to set seed; however, many are also polygamodioecious, having both male and female flowers on the same tree. Some of the



*Nyssa* at Exbury have flowered and this year four trees have produced fruit. The flowers are interesting and fruits can be attractive in a good year especially on *N. sinensis*, something to look out for as the trees mature.

We have several *Nyssa sinensis*, or Chinese tupelo. Discovered by Augustine Henry in 1888 and cultivated in Europe in 1902, *N. sinensis* has fewer cultivars and is smaller than *N. sylvatica*. It is broadly conical in shape, growing up to 10m tall and wide. Its young foliage is tinged with red and it has a more brilliant display of autumnal colour than *N. sylvatica*. *N. sinensis* is particularly at home in areas with wet soils or near ponds and streams, although we have had a few fatalities with these trees. *N. sinensis* 'Nymans form' has particularly attractive young foliage. You will see this tree growing beside Top Pond and above Bottom Pond in Home Wood, opposite the stone bridge. Our cultivars include, 'Heddon Flame', 'Inferno', 'Jim Russell', and 'Savill Sparkler'.

The water tupelo, *N. aquatica*, also called cotton gum, or swamp gum, is a



narrow tree with ovate-oblong leaves, the young shoots downy beneath. This tree is rarely seen in cultivation in the UK where it stays small, though it reaches 30m tall in its native US where it grows in swamps along with *Taxodium distichum*, often developing a characteristic swollen base. Exbury can boast two *N. aquatica*, one of which was awarded Champion Tree status (left) for height in England (6 metres), and Champion in Hampshire for height and girth (10 cms) in 2017. Amazingly, this tree has been recorded on our data base as having survived below minus 9°C in January 2009. You can see the characteristic swollen base developing in this tree and in the other *N. aquatica* growing in the Acer Avenue on the left of Top Pond. Tupelo wood comes mostly

from the water tupelo. It is pale yellow to light brown, fine-textured, and strong. It is used for carving and making crates and boxes, flooring, wooden utensils, and veneers.

The Ogeechee lime, *N. ogeche*, is a rarer North American tupelo that produces edible fruits from which honey is made. Bee keepers in Florida keep beehives along the river swamps on platforms or floats during the tupelo blooming time to produce certified tupelo honey, which can fetch a high price because of its light, mild flavour. Its red fruits have been used as a substitute for limes, which gave

rise to its common name. We began with two of these but only one remains in the garden, and it is planted above Jubilee Pond in Yard Wood.

*N. sylvatica* var. *ursina* is the bear tupelo from northern Florida with creamy white flowers. It is somewhat rare in the UK. You will find our little bear on the edge of Top Pond close to the Japanese Bridge, ready to put on an autumn display that will be mirrored in the pond and add to the magnificent reflections of *Taxodium*, *Acer* and *Metasequoia* .

There are three main areas of planting in the Gardens, all of them providing the required conditions of moist but well drained, neutral to acid soil; all that is then needed is a good hot summer to produce the best autumn colour, so after this record breaking summer of 2018, we look forward to seeing a fantastic display. In Yard Wood several *Nyssa* are to be found around the Jubilee Pond area, and at the head of the cascades can be found our *N. aquatica*, Champion. Across the Azalea Drive on the right in the wildlife pond area, is our oldest *Nyssa sylvatica* standing very close to a large *Liquidambar styraciflua*. Together they are sure to steal the scene and set the landscape ablaze. A few *Nyssa* are planted along the main drive in the area of the Iris Garden. The others can be found in Home Wood on the edges of the very popular Top Pond and through the gap to the left along the Acer Avenue.

Our collection at Exbury Gardens is still very young, and we have plenty of choice when it comes to adding to it in the future including, perhaps, specimens of the species *N. javanica*, *N. leptophylla*, *N. shangszeensi*, *N. talamancana* and *N.yunnanensis*. Meanwhile, we continue to watch these rewarding trees as they develop, grow and pay homage to the water nymphs.

**Gill Mordant, Exbury Volunteer**



***Nyssa sinensis***  
**Nymans form: early  
autumn colour**

## Profile of a Nurseryman: Peter Catt

Following the retirement of John Hillier at the 2016 AGM, Peter Catt was elected President of the Hampshire Group.

Peter Catt is Director of Liss Forest Nursery, former Chairman of the RHS Woody Plant Trials Sub-Committee, President of Liss Horticultural Society and Vice-President of Liphook and Bramshot Horticultural Society. He is a highly skilled plant propagator who has also made a significant contribution to amateur gardening, while his nursery provides a valuable training place for horticultural students. The RHS awarded him the Veitch Memorial Medal in 1998, and, in March 2018, its prestigious Victoria Medal of Honour. This exceptional medal is presented for life to British horticulturists deserving of special honour. We are very fortunate to have him as the President of Plant Heritage Hampshire Group.

Where did it all begin? When asked this question Peter said he just loves plants and has done since quite a young age. His Dad worked for a Colonel Benson in a private garden in Singleton; his role was to commercialise the garden by selling all the surplus produce at Petersfield Market. Peter and his younger brother were roped in to help sell the fruit, vegetables, plants and flowers.

At the age of 15 Peter left Chichester Grammar School to work for his Dad full time, after which he went off to complete his two years of National Service, gaining valuable experience as a clerk. He returned to work for his Dad on Petersfield market, where one of his most regular customers for cut flowers was Joyce, who in 1959, after 18 months of courtship, became his wife.

In 1959 Peter joined Sunningdale Nurseries as a shrub propagator, where in 1960 he was joined by Judy Medhurst; so began their working friendship, which has lasted nearly 60 years.

In 1961 Peter's Dad persuaded him to return to work for him again at his new nursery in Liss. This lasted for about five years, after which Peter ran a fruit and vegetable shop in Petersfield. In the meantime his Dad sold the nursery and moved to New Zealand. The new owners asked Peter to manage it, which he did from 1966 to 1971. Interestingly, this nursery in Liss became a Hilliers Garden Centre during the 1980s.

In 1971 Peter Thorp, owner of a large estate in Liss Forest, and Peter set up Liss Forest Nursery in a large abandoned walled garden on the estate. Peter Thorp financed the nursery and Peter saw to the plants and the contacts. Many plants were quickly produced. About 18 months later Judy joined the nursery. Many more plants were soon available and were sold to garden centres in the local counties. The estate was sold in 1976. Peter then bought a six-acre field in Greatham and carried on producing trees and an increasing variety of shrubs, many of them rare or unusual; he later introduced new shrubs from around the world as well as introducing several of his own.



Judy continued to work for Peter at Greatham and they built up the nursery as and when he could afford to do so. In January 1977 the two of them built the first double-span glasshouse – a mere 100 x 38ft. This convinced the local council that the business was up and running and planning permission was finally granted for Peter's family bungalow. This was a huge improvement on their rented caravan.

Two more glasshouses followed, in consecutive years, again built by Peter and Judy. There are now six glasshouses covering 20,000 square feet, and polythene houses covering 50,000 square feet. The nursery is now on two sites with the option of further expansion, although the site at Greatham could be sold in the near future for development.

Peter remembers driving round the countryside in the early days with his van full of plants, calling at local nurseries to try to sell them. On one occasion he called at Secrets Nursery, part of Squires, with some Camellias for sale; to his great surprise and delight, they bought the lot!

Peter had excellent contacts both at home and abroad. He knew Graham Stuart Thomas, who had been the manager at Sunningdale, and was very fortunate to be given access to Nyman's for sourcing some cutting material. He also got on well with John Sales, who succeeded Stuart Thomas at the National Trust. The great storm in 1987 uprooted many trees throughout the gardens; Peter was very lucky to be able to use some of this material, which would otherwise have been lost. He went on to sell plants to NT plant centres for many years, until the "no peat" ruling came into effect. He used peat as a propagating medium, so the sales came to an end.

Already a skilled propagator and successful businessman, Peter's passion for shrubs led him to travel and study their natural environments. This began as a family fly/drive holiday to America, where his teenage children were first taken to Disneyland in Los Angeles; they then travelled to Portland in Oregon for the famous Far West Show for nurserymen. Following this trip, Peter's younger son Vincent went on to work for Briggs Nurseries in the USA for a year.

Since then Peter has travelled extensively in Japan, China, Korea, New Zealand, the USA, Mexico and Chile, often joining other gardeners and nurserymen to study plants growing in the wild. He attended the Flowering Cherry Symposium in Japan in the 1990s with John Bond, and visited Chile in 2000 with Roy Lancaster.

He has bred and introduced many shrubs, the first of which was *Spiraea* 'Golden Princess' around 1982. This was spotted as a seedling growing in a friend's garden. Adrian Bloom took out Plant Breeder's Rights on Peter's behalf, marketed this shrub for Peter and also introduced it in the USA.

*Choisya* 'Sundance' was Peter's second introduction; Adrian Bloom showed it at Chelsea in 1986 and displayed a photo of it on the back of his catalogue. He has

also introduced four lavateras, one of which is *L.* 'Burgundy Wine', as well as several potentillas, including *P.* 'Pretty Polly' a "good, soft pink" and *Spiraea* 'White Gold', to name but a few.

He continues to introduce new shrubs and currently has "four on the go". Launching next year is *Choisya* 'Scented Gem', a compact grower; also, hopefully at the Chelsea Flower Show, *Choisya* 'Greenfingers', with royalties going to the Greenfingers charity for children's hospice gardens. However, of all the shrubs that Peter has introduced, *Choisya* 'Sundance' remains his number one favourite.

Sadly, Peter's wife Joyce died in 2001, but both his sons, Vincent and Neill still work for the business and are now co-directors. Peter and Judy continue to propagate but, if the Greatham site is sold, the nursery will move to another existing site within the next two to three years.

Peter has plans to build a new bungalow nearby, taking his wonderful collection of garden plants with him. Further projects include developing an arboretum in Liss and continuing to breed new plants.... and playing golf. Clearly he has no intention of slowing down!

**Tricia Newton**



## The Harold Hillier Herbarium

The Harold Hillier Herbarium, located in Jermyn's House, occupies a small preparation room on the first floor, plus a second room on the ground floor with sufficient space for 46 cabinets. We currently have just over 8,000 specimens, a small number compared to the seven million at Kew and 86,000 at RHS Wisley. The Herbarium was started in 1996 by the Arboretum's botanist Allen Coombes, helped by a dedicated volunteer, Dorothy Holley, who supported the work of the Herbarium for many years. It is currently managed by Head of Collections, David Jewell, supported on one or two days a week by a small team of volunteers.

The Herbarium started off with some specimens found in Jermyn's House after the death of Sir Harold Hillier, which had been collected by him on his travels. These samples, mainly *Quercus*, were not pressed and mounted but curled up in brown paper bags; all the required information was written on the bags, and the early Herbarium volunteers did an excellent job straightening out the specimens and mounting them.

The Herbarium developed, and plants from our 14 national collections have been and continue to be sampled, including *Cornus*, *Quercus*, *Hamamelis* and *Ligustrum*. In addition, we sample other genera such as *Tilia* and *Sorbus* for which we have a high number of taxa but which are not national collections.

We collect and press the flowers and fruit of all the different taxa. The Garden is large and although it is all mapped out finding your specimen with flowers or fruit in peak condition can be a challenge. Samples collected on any one day must be put to press on that day. The colours of the flowers, fruit and leaves are determined using the RHS Colour Standards, as colours often fade during the drying phase and will fade more with age. When put to press the specimen must not lose its character: it is important that its key identification features are displayed, such as the reproductive parts of the flower and the underside of the leaves. The specimens are sandwiched between blotting paper and corrugated cardboard for pressing.

Until recently, bricks, metal weights and old telephone directories were used to press the samples at ambient temperatures, but last year we acquired a heated fan-assisted drying cabinet running at 30°C. This cabinet has made a considerable difference as it speeds up drying time, previously two to three weeks, to one week; this helps the specimens to retain their natural colour.

Mounting is mainly carried out on rainy days when we cannot collect and in the winter. Acid-free paper and neutral pH PVA glue are used. Specimens are entered onto a database, labels are printed, and the sheets are photographed, but before being filed away in our herbarium cupboards they are placed in a freezer for at least three days to kill off any insects. Herbarium staff are forever on their guard to

ensure that herbarium beetles do not move in, as these insects will munch their way through any specimen and require little moisture to survive.

David Jewell has been running a *Hypericum* trial over the past three years for the RHS. So in addition to our routine work we have collected, pressed and mounted some 100 or more specimens from this trial.

Apart from samples from the Garden the Herbarium houses a collection of *Quercus* Cultivar Standards held on behalf of the Oak Society, and in addition to the specimens collected by Sir Harold Hillier we also hold specimens collected by Roy Lancaster and Allen Coombes.

**Linda Barker, Herbarium Volunteer**



**Linda Barker at work in the Herbarium**

### ***Buddleja* Unique 'PMOORE12'**

Having experimented with crossing various *Buddleja* species since 1982 renowned plant breeder, Peter Moore, from Longstock, Hampshire was shocked when he noticed a chance seedling from a batch of *Buddleja alternifolia* hybrid seedlings in 2009. Peter saw that the seedling looked totally different to anything that he had seen before.



After growing the plant on for several years, Peter realised that here was a *Buddleja alternifolia* that flowered on the current year's wood, continued to flower from June to October and was sterile, but still had nectar to attract butterflies and other insects. However, the plant had retained the weeping habit of its

parent plant along with the fragrant lilac - purple flowers.

In 2017 *Buddleja* 'Unique' was awarded a Gold Medal at the Dutch International nursery stock trade fair, GrootGroenPlus. "The judges found the plant unique and innovative within the large assortment of *Buddleja*."

*Buddleja* 'Unique' is a compact but not dwarf plant if grown in a pot, but can reach 2m in a garden setting if not pruned. Hardy to -25°C, like most *Buddlejas* it prefers full sun and any fertile well drained soil. Removal of the dead flower heads help to stimulate reflowering. As the plant is difficult to propagate conventionally from cuttings due to the fact that each shoot tends to run to flower, most plants are produced commercially by micro propagation. As flowers are formed on new wood, prune immediately after flowering. *Buddleja alternifolia* is a deciduous shrub which originates from west and central China and Japan.

See Peter's website: [www.bredbypetermoore.co.uk](http://www.bredbypetermoore.co.uk)

**Photo:** Peter van Rijssen (Plantipp in Holland)

**Wendy Staniforth, ProVar Protected Varieties Ltd**

## New Home for Cannas

Last year, with the blessing of Plant Heritage, Keith and Christine Hayward, holders of the National Collection of Cannas, donated a copy of their entire collection to the Singapore Botanical Garden for use in the new Jurong Lake



Gardens Development. The photograph above shows some of them featured in a landscape display at the Singapore Garden Festival in July; the photograph on the left is a picture of the cannas in

Chong Ren Ong's nursery. He plans to split up the larger clumps to give more backups of each variety and to feature cannas in a dedicated section of their upcoming garden development.

**Keith & Christine Hayward**

## **Plant Heritage National AGM 2018: 27th - 29th April**

Venue: Springfield Hotel, Nr Wareham, Dorset

This year's AGM and members' weekend was hosted by the East Dorset Group, who supplied excellent information to get us to the venue, with options for visits on the way there and home again. The AGM started with a "Meet and Greet" featuring an amazing plant-identification table of rare and unusual woody plant material, and a chance to view the NCH displays.

Before dinner we listened to a fascinating talk by Neil Lucas, the owner of Knoll Gardens and Nursery. He surprised many of us by saying that all his favourite plants are woody plants, not grasses, and he showed pictures of many of his favourites, both trees and grasses, and of the garden itself. Neil has championed a naturalistic style of gardening for over 20 years and won't grow anything that needs staking. He described how the garden was established and the nursery set up and then extended recently with the increased development of the mail order business. Knoll Gardens was one of the suggested visits for Friday afternoon, but sadly the weather was appalling, not good for visiting gardens or nurseries.

After dinner we had a talk by Steve Griffiths, Curator of Abbotsbury Gardens. He started work at Abbotsbury in 1990, since when he has worked to renovate and develop the eighteenth century woodland valley garden. This has meant renewing and expanding the planting, improving paths and developing new ways to finance the garden.

Saturday morning started with the Plant Exchange, which went smoothly as usual thanks to a huge effort by the individual groups and the organisers. This was followed by the AGM itself. Cecilia Bufton, the new Chair, introduced herself and passed on Mike Buffin's apologies. Mike has taken on a major new garden project for the National Trust and sadly felt unable to continue as Chair. Members heard that Plant Heritage plans to restructure to achieve greater financial stability, more emphasis on fundraising, and improved IT, providing a stable future for the Organisation. At the same time there is a move to develop greater contact between the individual groups, members and Head Office through the introduction of OMOV - One Member One Vote.

After the AGM there was a visit to Abbotsbury Gardens where we met up with Steve Griffiths once again. The garden was looking great; a huge amount of work has been done to renovate and improve the planting in all areas. A wide avenue has been developed from the garden up to the cliff top, opening up a fabulous vista of the sea, Chesil Beach and the coastline in both directions. Another major project has reinstated the view of St Catherine's Chapel that the Victorians had enjoyed, but which had become blocked by trees in recent times. On the way back to the hotel and dinner we called in at Holme Gardens, a nursery where a modern

five-acre garden has been designed and developed by the owners and is developing into a visitor attraction in its own right.

After dinner we were treated to an absorbing talk by Jennifer Trehane, who entertained us with the story of her career in the family business and the world of camellias. Jennifer trained in horticulture but moved away in the early 1960s. She was called back in the 1980s to run the nursery, and went on to become a world authority on camellias. She wrote world-renowned books on both camellias and blueberries, which have been grown in the nursery since the 1980s. We enjoyed a wonderful display of camellia flowers and stories of her visits to Oshima, an island off the east coast of Japan, which has 3 million wild *Camellia japonica* trees growing in its forests.

A big thank you is due to the East Dorset Group for organising this year's AGM; the hotel was excellent, the food was good, and the organisation by the Group was faultless.

***Gill Sawyer, Events Group***

## **National Plant Exchange 2019**

It is time for me to write the article for this newsletter, so it is also time for the first round of plant lists for the National Plant Exchange.

To qualify for the Plant Exchange the plants must have two or fewer entries in the current *Plant Finder*, which can be found online by anyone who doesn't own a current edition.

I love the Plant Exchange as I enjoy propagating and sharing plants with others. But most of all I enjoy obtaining new plants and learning all about them. Some are very exciting and stay with me for years, some I pass on more quickly, but none is ever thrown away. I hope that our Hampshire members will join in and share some of their plants with our members across the country this time around.

I need to have a list of all the plants offered and requested by Hampshire members by the end of October. The Shropshire group will collate all these plants and send us both lists in time for the Christmas break. Details of any plant on the offered list that you wish to bid for, or any plant that you can supply from the wanted list, should be with me by mid-February. The exchange itself takes place at the National AGM, on the last weekend in May, in Sussex.

It is always worth having a look at what has been offered in previous years, if you have retained these lists. A plant offered before might be offered again!

I look forward to hearing from you with your lists either in person at meetings, or on 01329 832786, or email at [landjpink@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:landjpink@tiscali.co.uk)

***Lynsey Pink, Exchange Coordinator***

## Collections Coordinators Report 2018

It's been a busy year for Hampshire Collection Coordinators. I'm pleased to say that visits are now pretty much up to date. There are some that lend themselves to an autumn visit and those could well be done by the time you are reading this. We have 50 National Plant Collections in Hampshire curated by 25 collection holders.

### New Collections

I'm delighted to say that Hampshire now have five new collections. At the Plant Conservation Committee (PCC) meeting on November 21 last year, applications for National Collection status were granted to Susan Summers for her collection of *Francoa*, Louise Bendall for her collection of *Ilex* and to Andrew and Lena Napier curating the *Buxus* (spp. & cvs. of Europe, NW Africa and Asia) on behalf of Ashley Brunning at the Langley Boxwood Nursery site.

More recently, at the June PCC June and John Colley were granted full status for two new additional collections: *Hosta* spp., forms and interspecific hybrids; and *Hemerocallis* spp., forms and interspecific hybrids. They are all impressive collections and well worth a visit. See the directory for details.

### Collections and Coordinators:

**Jennie Whitmore:** *Ilex*, *Liquidambar*, *Asclepias* & *Gomphocarpus*, *Lobelia* spp, *Roscoea*, *Rubus* spp, *Clematis* Montana Group, *Hosta*, *Hemerocallis* and the Pre 1960 Hampshire and IOW Apples.

**Jill Wright:** *Agapanthus*, *Buddleja*, *Clematis viticella*, *Canna*, *Clivia* and *Crassula* spp. *Platanus* and *Rosa* (pre 1900 shrub)

**Tricia Newton:** *Geranium nodosum*, *Patrinia* and *Salvia* spp. and *Francoa*

**Tricia Orolenshaw:** *Hemerocallis* (spider and unusual forms), *Nyssa* & *Oxydendron* and *Sorbus*

**Rosie Yeomans:** *Araliaceae*, *Eucalyptus*, *Podocarpus* & related *Podocarpaceae*, *Begonia* Rex Cultorum Group, *Eucomis*, *Hippeastrum* spp and *Veltheimia*, *Platanus*, *Rosa*, *Thelocactus*, and the 14 Hillier Gardens Collections.

### Proposals in the pipeline

We have three proposals that have been seen by the PCC this year and the collection holders are preparing for a full application: *Plectranthus* from Jeff Heaton and *Eucalyptus* and *Ficus* from Chris Kidd at Ventnor Botanic garden.

### SW Coordinators meeting

Some of our new coordinators joined me last October for our annual meeting with all the other coordinators in the South West, convening at a midway point, this year at East Lambrook Manor Gardens. One of my responsibilities as SW coordinator is to go back to the PCC with a review of the current status of the regions' collections. It's also a useful forum for exchanging experiences and ideas. We rarely have issues to worry about in Hampshire: thank you for that NCHS!



## **Hampshire Collection Holders Meeting: January 2018**

There has been a report on this meeting in an earlier newsletter so I will only add how wonderful it was to see so many collection holders there. Hillier Gardens generously hosted the meeting and the contributions from Wolfgang Bopp, Barry Clarke, Patrick Fairweather and Val le May Neville Parry were really appreciated. Eddie Mole, Head of Horticulture and collection holder from Bristol Zoological Society came to talk to us about managing his 'dispersed' collection of *Calendula*, which he does as a community project.

## **National Plant Collections Directory**

Every year we are sent a copy of the Directory. It has the details of all the collections in the UK, of course, but I just wanted to remind you that near the front of the directory are the collection open days. It's great to support these; the collections will be at their best and you can learn so much from collection holders. Check out other counties too: there are some great pit stop opportunities on your way to other parts of the UK.

*Rosie Yeomans*

## **National Collection of Agapanthus: Fairweathers' Open Day July 28**

The national collection of Agapanthus is held by Patrick Fairweather at his wholesale nursery near Beaulieu. The open day on July 28 was extremely well attended. The collection was on display, and Patrick gave an enlightening tour and talk.



Agapanthus come from S. Africa. There are about seven species, but not many now remain in the wild. The evergreen types come from the Cape where they get winter rain, the deciduous ones from further north where it rains in the summer. Neither type minds rain, but

they don't like sitting in the wet.

The collection consists of 530 cultivars and is the biggest in the UK, and probably in the world; 60 of the cultivars are commercially grown. The most popular, bred by Dick Fulcher in Devon, is 'Northern Star', which is dark with a good stripe, hardy, has a round flower head and a good purple base to the leaves.

All agapanthus need full sun, and Patrick thinks the hardy deciduous types are best grown in the border, and that the evergreens are best in pots, where they can be better protected from winter wet and cold. To get the best out of your plant it is important to know that they form their buds in the autumn so benefit from a high potash feed like *Tomarite* throughout the growing season to enable them to set buds for the next year. The buds of the evergreens sit higher up than those of the

deciduous types so their crown needs protection in winter, especially if grown in the ground. Plants grown in pots need a free draining compost such as John Innes No. 3 plus grit, or multipurpose compost plus John Innes.

Agapanthus grown in pots can become very congested. If they continue to flower Patrick suggests leaving them alone, but the time comes when you have to decide whether to divide them or simply re-pot. If you are repotting don't overpot, as they like root restriction, but leave enough room for feeding and watering. If you divide, use a saw to cut off the bottom third of the rootball, then divide by sawing through the remaining rootball. If the rhizome bleeds, leave it to dry before repotting, to avoid rot setting in.

The most commonly asked question is, "Why won't my Agapanthus flower?" Things to try are: 1. Give it maximum sun. 2. Feed it high potash fertiliser. 3. If it is evergreen make sure it doesn't get frosted in winter. 4. Divide if it is over congested. 5. If all else fails, buy a new one!.

It was a very instructive and interesting event.

*Juliet Bloss*

## Propagation Workshop

Another of our propagation workshops took place on April 11th, hosted by Lynsey Pink in her garden in North Boarhunt. We must have held the meeting on one of the very few dry, warm and sunny days that we had had in a very long time.

Plants were supplied by Lynsey and members of the group, but the expertise was all provided by Rosie Yeoman, our National Collections Coordinator. At each meeting Rosie deals with propagation methods that are particularly appropriate for the time of year; this time she dealt with basal cuttings and root cuttings. Many of us will have tried these methods for increasing perennial plants, but seeing a professional demonstrate exactly where to make the cut, how to trim a cutting, cut back the leaves and/or trim the roots is always enlightening. Having the opportunity to do it ourselves with Rosie to help, advise and explain is priceless.



After tea and cake Rosie demonstrated grafting a cutting from a *Cytisus* onto a *Laburnum*, which will hopefully create a *Laburnocytisus adamii* - a graft-chimaera. The particular laburnum brought in by one of the group was a bit old for this technique, but it will be even more of a triumph if it succeeds.

Altogether we had a delightful afternoon; we all learnt a huge amount about propagating and each of us went home with a bagful of cuttings, seedlings and plants. Another very successful meeting in our series of propagation workshops.

*Gill Sawyer*

## Chelsea Flower Show 2018

*Chris Bird and his team at Sparsholt College won both a Gold Medal and were named Best Discovery Exhibit at this year's show. Their therapeutic garden is being entered for the RHS Lindley Medal, awarded to the best educational/discovery exhibit of the year at any RHS show.*

### The Force for Good Garden

Another successful year - mainly involving nine City & Guilds Level 3 Extended Diploma Horticultural students and six Help for Heroes veterans, which proved an excellent combination over the nine-month preparation time.



This year saw a move to the north-west corner of the Grand Pavilion, where we were last in 2011; this eased the access problems we had last year. With the M3 being open overnight, this was a double win. On the other hand, growing conditions provided an interesting challenge: a very cold reduced-light-level winter followed by a jump in temperature in the weeks just before the

Show. This resulted in some adjustment in our final plant selection, for several herbaceous groups had gone over one week early. However, with the spent flowers removed the foliage proved useful as underplanting.

We worked out a rota of mixed teams and the build period ran quite smoothly, for an RHS Chelsea experience, with things going nearly to plan. Yes, there was a plan. Equally, the weather played its part: although dry, the temperatures increased over the Show week; and we left the Showground at 23:30 after Breakdown in monsoon style rain due to a thunderstorm.

Our thanks go to all who assisted with this event, especially David West of Fromefield Nurseries for lending us Danish trollies to transport plant material, Hillier Nurseries for supplying and transporting our trees, and Doug & Linda Smith for lending us an excellent selection of plant material, including *Pseudopanax* 'Chainsaw', which featured in the BBC TV Show coverage. Disappointingly, our main theme and display did not attract any further TV coverage. However, this was offset by the many features broadcast on BBC Radio Solent, including the live Breakfast Show for the results. Caroline Dear of Stonecraft contributed her outstanding hand-carved water feature, which provided much tranquillity throughout the Show. Please see the enclosed leaflet for the main themes.

RHS Chelsea provides us with a continuing opportunity to showcase our skills and expose all who contribute to a life-enhancing experience, albeit with a lack of sleep. Discussions are proceeding with the Basingstoke & North Hampshire Hospital on reusing some of the elements in a legacy garden or gardens to support patients, including serving MoD personnel.

*Chris Bird*

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