

CSGGA Newsletter

September 2019



RHS Affiliated Membership Number: 10570237

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Plant Collecting in Bolivia – Pamela Holt

Despite being a seasoned traveller and having visited some very remote places, Pamela Holt found herself in difficulties closer to home as the M25 proved to be its usual unreliable self on her way to our meeting. We listened to Briony's announcements and had our tea break straight away, during which Pamela arrived with a flurry of bags and equipment.

It was refreshing to experience a change from a PowerPoint presentation, as Pamela had brought her slides and slide projector with her to illustrate her trip to Bolivia.

Pamela is a botanist and intrepid traveller. She trained at The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew with Alan Titchmarsh and taught Charlie Dimmock whilst a lecturer in Somerset. In 1975, she first went to South America, visiting Peru for plants. A decade later, in 1986, she teamed up with a doctor, Christine, and the two women applied for grants as an Anglo-Scottish female team launching an Andean Expedition to climb a mountain in Bolivia that had not yet been climbed by anyone British. Grants for expeditions to remote ranges were more likely to be successful and they duly obtained the funding they needed. They set off first to Peru - the reasoning behind this being to start at sea level

and steadily work up to Bolivia's high country, thus acclimatising along the way. Pamela showed us slides of the journey, starting in Lima, the Peruvian capital, where the mummified body of Pizarro lies (the conquistador who led the Spanish conquest of Peru).

The two women travelled by bus and train to Lake Titicaca and took a rustic craft to Bolivia. They eventually reached La Paz, the Bolivian capital, which lies on the Andes' Altiplano plateau at more than 3,500m above sea level. Pamela showed us slides of the journey, highlighting the basic transport facilities and bleakness of the terrain.

She had asked the couple with whom they were due to stay in La Paz whether she could bring anything for them from the UK and their unusual request resulted in her hoiking a shopping trolley with her to Bolivia. La Paz is situated in a big bowl where it is warmer down in the dip than the surrounding high countryside which is desolate and cold.

Pamela and Christine spent some time trekking to get fit, carrying supplies bought in La Paz and melting snow or sterilising water from streams. They followed paths dotted with eucalyptus trees and the odd llama or the more elusive vicuña, and encountered remote villages. Some of the paths date from



the 1400s, through terrain almost 5,000 meters high. They came across a school in one village and, having asked what the school might be short of, they gave a donation to buy badly needed light bulbs. In another village, Christine treated a girl with an abscess and they shared their food with the family. Bolivians in these areas did not speak Spanish so communication was through sign language and perseverance. The next morning, Pamela indicated she wanted to take a photo. The mum and daughter squeaked with alarm, disappearing into their house, only to return a short while later decked in their "Sunday Best", brightly coloured shawls and skirts, properly attired for such an important event.

Pamela took with her a book from 1911, which provided the most accurate map of this remote region. Unfortunately, however, they did not reach the mountain they were planning to climb, as Christine started feeling ill, succumbing to pneumonia and pleurisy.

It would be natural to think Pamela would give up at this point, being a single female in a very remote land, but she trekked for a further 6 days on her own. She described some fairly hair-raising incidents to some of us before she left, including theft of her belongings (most of which were thankfully retrieved later). She was running out of food and was forced to ask the locals if she could buy basic supplies from them, although she was aware that they did not have much themselves.

She returned to Kew with the seeds and plants she had gathered. The slides showed fuchsias, lobelia, bromeliads, and gentians. A red gentian was successfully grown in the alpine house at Kew and they also have a cactus which bears Pamela's name.

She set up a fascinating display table of items from South America, including her notebook, a guide to the plants of the region, a beautifully soft alpaca/llama wool rug, a model reed boat, and painted maracas made from gourds. One of the books was "Plant Hunting for Kew" which mentions her trip. She asked for donations to Project Peru, a charity in Lima for street children.

Pamela treated us to a fascinating description of her trip to Bolivia – her slides and commentary providing us with a unique insight into her expedition. She is clearly a woman who is not fazed by experiences many of us would find daunting. You might be forgiven for thinking a talk in August wouldn't get much in the way of attendance, but we had a packed hall of members and some non-members interested in learning more about container gardening.

Eleanor O'Connor

Village Show



The Village Show held on Saturday 7th September was as popular as ever. I think you will all agree, we pulled off another successful show which was enjoyed and appreciated by so many. The horticultural competitions are a draw for both competitors and visitors alike; at one point the marquee was heaving. It is, as Alan Clarke says, "a fine tradition and worth all the work to continue it".

We received a great many compliments from visitors to the competitions marquee, as well as from the competitors. The People's Choice again proved popular with one visitor singling it out as the "best thing in the show"! Unfortunately the winner, Sophie Morrison, had left before the presentation so I didn't have the opportunity to congratulate her personally but her entry was truly delightful and she had obviously put a lot of thought into her miniature garden – shown left.

Stephen Rickard, judging the adult classes for the first time, was impressed by the quality and variety of the entries. I was delighted to see more entries in the junior gardening classes as well as the adult floral art - I hope we can continue to attract more entries year on year.

My very grateful thanks to all those who contributed to the success by entering the competitions; supporting the judges or competitors; setting up the exhibition tables; stewarding or clearing up at the end of the day. As ever, I'd welcome any suggestions you have for next year's show. Visit the website for more photos and a video www.csgshow.org/

Briony Wickenden

Monthly Cup

The Monthly cup was won by Chin Fenton for her Amicia Zygomeris – a new one to me so if you want to know more take a look at the RHS website to learn more. www.rhs.org.uk/Plants/1075/i-Amicia-zygomeris-i/Details



M's Action Diary for September

- Apply path weed killer to say weed free for the rest of the summer
- Feed permanent container plants with a high potash feed, such as tomato food, even though they may have been given slow release fertilizer earlier in the year.
- Plant new perennials to benefit from warm soils. Move those in need of more space or better position. Cut back perennials that look untidy, such as nepeta.
- Dig up, pot on and bring indoors, tender perennials such as pelargoniums. Plant spring glowering biennials like foxgloves and wall flowers.
- Dead head roses, and prune ramblers by cutting out a third of flowered stems at their base.
- September is the perfect time to trim conifer hedges.
- Plant Spring bulbs, except tulips which should be left until November.
- Keep feeding and providing fresh water for wild birds.



Green Gardening Tip for September

Write on flat pebbles or fragments of broken terracotta pots with a permanent marker or use biodegradable wooden plant labels; or cut up plastic milk bottles or yoghurt pots to make some. We will be using wooden labels at next year's Plant Sale.

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Thurs 10th October 2018 – 7.45 pm

As a member of CSGGA, you are invited to join us at the Annual General Meeting. We shall be serving a choice of wine or soft drinks and cheese and biscuits. Minutes of the 2019 AGM, Chairman's Report, Agenda and copies of the audited accounts for the year 2018/2019 will be available via email with the newsletter, or to those attending the meeting, or may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary Jan Bradley. If you have any points that you wish to raise, please contact Jan Bradley as soon as possible. New Committee members are always welcome to help keep the Gardens Association thriving.

Hon. Secretary Jan Bradley 01484 874704 or email janbradley4@btinternet.com

History of British Gardens - Roger Askew

Thursday, 10th October 2019

This talk will start at approximately 8.30 following the AGM. Roger Askew will trace the development of our British gardens from medieval times, through the 17th century parterres and the English Landscape Movement of the 18th century to the taste for garden rooms and "painting with flowers" that typified the 20th century. <http://www.windsorheritagetalksandtours.co.uk/AboutUs/AboutUs.aspx>

August Outing to Hyde Hall

We were so lucky with the weather for our visit to RHS Hyde Hall. Bright skies and a breeze after dull days and drizzle! Our Heyfordian driver, Mark, was a cheery soul who enjoyed giving those of us at the front a running commentary on the driving behaviour of those sharing the roads. Traffic on the M25 was nothing untoward so we arrived in good time for a briefing from the RHS rep and a quick drink in the café before we gathered into two groups for our tours.

Hyde Hall was looking lovely in the sunshine but being situated on top of a hill, it was a little more windy. Our guides explained the history of the place and the story begins in 1955, when Dr and Mrs Robinson bought what had been a working farm for centuries. Mrs Robinson slowly transformed the bleak and windswept land to establish herbaceous borders and a vegetable garden.

The Hyde Hall Gardens Trust was set up in 1976 and in 1993 the garden became the responsibility of the Royal Horticultural Society, having been bequeathed by the Trust to ensure its future survival. Under ownership of the RHS, Hyde Hall was modified to accommodate growing visitor numbers.



We had the pleasure of wandering around a multitude of differently themed areas, including a dry garden, rose garden, birch walk, ponds and a lake, a vegetable garden, and an Australia and New Zealand garden, to name but a few. To quote the Hyde Hall website: "Since its inception in the mid-1950s, this vast garden has established from a handful of trees atop a windy hill to a jewel in the landscape that embraces superb ornamental horticulture, wild woodlands, majestic meadows and stylish gardens that embrace new ways of thinking about our world and our future. From global produce to dry climates, winter wonders, courtyard gardens and arboreta, Hyde Hall delivers something for everyone." I can't match that for magniloquence!

The whole place was well worth a day's visit, including a modern and appealing café for essential pit stops (for those who didn't bring a picnic) and a shop well stocked with everything a gardener might need. We ambled back to the coach at 4pm, having had a very enjoyable time.

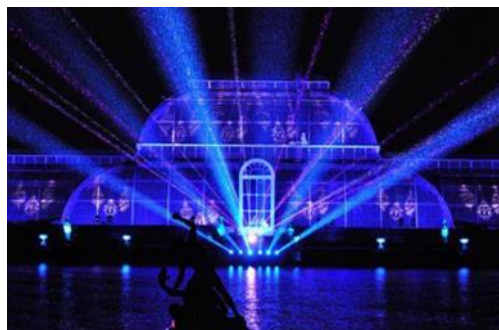
Eleanor O'Connor

Osterley House, Afternoon Tea & Kew Garden Christmas Lights

Wednesday 4th December 2019

We will spend the early afternoon at Osterley House & Gardens, Isleworth, an impressive National Trust mansion, arriving at 13.00 to view their winter exhibition "Treasures of Osterley – Rise of a Banking Family" and Gardens, departing at 15.30. Travelling to Kew we will arrive at The Botanist to have sandwiches, dessert and tea at 16.00. From there we will walk over to Kew Gardens to arrive at 17.30 for the Christmas Winter Lights Trail which lasts 75 minutes. The 2019 Winter Lights Trail includes glittering spiral trees, dynamic laser projections, illuminated vines and mysterious softly glowing fairy fire known as Will-o'the Wisp.

Beverages and snacks (if you've still got room!) will be available at kiosks on the trail, including mulled wine and mince pies. In addition, the shops and eateries will be open. Departing Kew Gardens at 19.45 with an aim to arriving back at Chalfont St Giles at 20.45. The cost for this outing will be £46.00 for members (£51.00 for guests and non-members) which covers Afternoon Tea, entrance to Kew Gardens, coach and driver's gratuity. Non-National Trust members will pay an additional £9.35. Please use the booking form attached and return to Eleanor O'Connor. Organiser on the day: Jacqui Greenham. See contact details below.



Membership Renewal

You should have received a membership renewal form through the post or hand delivered during the last few days. If you have not received it, please let Briony know. Please return your signed form, whether or not you pay by standing order, so that we can keep our records straight. If you have decided not to renew, we will be very sorry to lose you but would be most grateful if you could let someone on the committee know so that we do not send reminder letters and emails unnecessarily. Your 2019 membership cards are valid until the end of the year and the new 2020 cards should be ready once the new committee has been confirmed and the programme for 2020 agreed. Thank you.

Holiday 2020

The Gardens of Essex and Suffolk
5 days Sunday 7th to Thursday 11th June 2020

28 members have already put their name down for next year's holiday. Are you going to join us? 5 days from £599 Departs 7th -11th June 2020. 4* Hotel, Half Board Accommodation. A full programme of excursions and guided tours including Ickworth House, Wyken Hall Gardens & Vineyard, Layer Marney Tower, Marks Hall Gardens & Arboretum, Gibberd Gardens, Gainsborough House, Helmingham Hall Gardens, Gainsborough House, Green Island Gardens, Southwold, Lavenham, Colchester, Ipswich, and many more places of interest. Full details of the holiday can be found on our website or at Tailored Travel www.tailored-travel.co.uk and quote csgg201. **No deposits are due until the end of the year but if you are interested in joining us, please contact Briony – contact details below.**

Your Committee

Chairman and Membership Secretary:

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Committee Members:

Jacqui Greenham	01494 870752
Caroline Jackson	01494 876685
Ravi Kudhail	01494 874709
Eleanor O'Connor	01494 875646

New Committee members are always welcome. We are a friendly bunch! Please contact a committee member to find out more if you're interested in joining us.

Dates for the Diary

Village Show Feedback Meeting

Wednesday 25th September, 8.00 pm at the Gardens Association Hall, School Lane. Come along and share your ideas for the future.

CSGGA Christmas Party

We hope you will join us for our Christmas Party on Thursday, 12th December, 2019. Full details and costs will be available in October but we will again be enjoying food prepared by To Dine For and our traditional quiz.

Membership renewal

Please pay your membership fees by 31st October, 2019