

West & Midlands Iris Group



Newsletter
February 2021



Top: 'Trenwith', TB, (Nichol, 1985); Above: 'Nampara', TB, (Nichol, 1984)

See 'My Lockdown Silver Lining' pp.30-33 Photos: BIS Image Library

Cover photo: Alison Gregory, TB Seedling - 'Frost & Flame' x 'Bishop's Robe'

A Word From Your Editor

Before I turn to this issue, I am sure you will all wish to join me in thanking Pat Jacobsen for the tremendous work she has put into the *Newsletters* she has edited and the great pleasure she has afforded us all in reading them. An appreciation of Pat's contributions to the Group over many years can be found on page 6.

It was summer 2019 when Pat decided that the time had come to retire. I had just resigned after a very difficult two and a half years as Hon. Sec at the Hardy Plant Society and had promised myself a year without additional responsibilities. I offered to take over from 2021, if Pat would continue until then. I could have no idea that I would have to approach my first edition with none of the usual *Newsletter* content – no shows, only one garden visit, no tea and talk and no opportunities to gossip with fellow members and charm them into writing something for me!

Fortunately, the W&MIG is full of generous folk with fascinating tales to tell. In our Collectors' corners, Anne Milner updates us on her collection of John Taylor's iris, while Ben Lawn from Somerset and Sue Griffith in Birmingham explain their motivations in starting collections of Ferdinand Cayeux introductions and Bob Nicol's iris, respectively. Others offer their experience and expertise and I am particularly grateful to Christine and Gordon Link of The Gobbett Nursery, for agreeing to contribute a short piece on growing the wetlands iris. This issue is as much about people as it is about plants. Present Chair, Jeremy Handy; former Chair and experienced exhibitor, Judy Pollitt; and horticulturalist and fairly recent convert to Irids, Sue Bedwell share with us just what prompted their passion for iris. The common thread?- the W&MIG of course!

For myself, I have always liked iris but could never get them to grow well until I moved to my present southish facing Welsh hillside in the Severn Valley. I brought with me just two iris, IB 'Langport Wren' (right) and an unnamed sib. Once settled, I joined various garden-related groups and, as new friends discovered my interest, my iris numbers burgeoned with kind gifts. After visiting the stand at Malvern, I joined W&MIG in 2015.
(cont'd overleaf)



At present the country remains in the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic and another national lockdown. Perhaps by the time you read this, things will have eased a bit, but it seems unlikely. Nevertheless, being optimistic, Jill Whitehead has organised a very interesting programme of visits for us for later in the year. I sincerely hope that at least some will go ahead. It will be wonderful to be able to meet with fellow members again and catch up in person with what is happening in our iris world.

My heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to this, my first *Newsletter*, to those who have supported me through the process and especially to Jill and Alun Whitehead without whom it probably wouldn't have happened. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I have enjoyed compiling it.

It is never too soon to start thinking about the next edition. If there is anything you would particularly like to see featured please let me know.

Happy gardening, stay safe and don't forget to 'Find Us On Facebook'.

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Arrangements for the 2021 Annual General Meeting

Saturday March 20th 11.00am via Zoom

Dear Members

You will no doubt understand that the arrangements for the AGM this year will have to be somewhat different from those we normally follow. The Committee has decided to go ahead with a virtual AGM via Zoom on 20th March, but we are aware that some of you may choose not to use Zoom. So, we will be emailing you all with the necessary papers and would like to invite any comments, proposers or seconders to reach me by 18th March.

The AGM meeting will allow us to 'chat' and 'meet', albeit in a very different way. After the official business there will be a short presentation entitled 'W&MIG – The Good Old Days', looking at some of the older photos when we all looked less grey! and some of the notable events of the past years. Nothing serious but hopefully entertaining!

If you would like to attend the Zoom meeting just email me and I will email the link nearer the time.

All the best and we hope you are all keeping well,

Jill Whitehead (Hon. Sec.) info@westandmidlandsirigroup.org.uk

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 2020 AGM as published in the 2020 Winter *News Bulletin*
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Officers' Reports
5. Election of Officers
6. Malvern Show
7. Effie Osborn Award
8. Any other Business

Pat Jacobsen – An Appreciation

Jennifer Hewitt

Since moving house, too much is stored in my loft waiting for attention, including earlier copies of the *W&MIG Newsletter*, so I can't record the year when Pat joined the group but it must be getting on for 30 years ago at least.

Peter and I had been responsible for the *W&MIG* display at Malvern for fifteen years or more before looking for someone to take over the role. A couple of years later it fell to Pat. She took on the whole responsibility for liaising with the Show organisers which Peter had done, and for the design and execution of the stand. Both aspects need a lot of work and worry as the societies' area has been moved around and the requirements of the Three Counties and the RHS have often been changed. Sourcing display equipment and plant material, and organising the rota for manning the stand over an increased number of days, takes more time and effort than anyone not involved can believe. And everything was done on a shoestring. I'm as delighted as anyone with the recent successes and the benefits to the group, but a bit of such luck in earlier days would have made life different! Pat coped tirelessly, tactfully and efficiently with everything thrown her way – and was the first to thank everyone who contributed.



Pat at the W&MIG Malvern Display in 2007 (W&MIG Archive)

As if that weren't enough, Peter's sudden death in 2000 left us without a *Newsletter* editor, and who stepped in? Firstly Glyn Roberts, until health forced him to resign. Again I can't give a date, and apologise if I'm forgetting anyone. My recollection is that Pat helped him for a couple of years, then took on the whole job, and we have a long run of journals full of interest and enjoyable to read and re-read. She has a knack, as with Malvern, of finding people and subjects less familiar to many of us, and, moreover, has had to deal with changes and improvements in the technology available. That alone has been demanding but the results have benefited us all. *(Pat's earliest issue in 2011 introduced colour to the Newsletter for the first time. Ed)*

No society like ours can persist successfully without people like Pat, able, willing and always there when needed, a good friend and good company too. Her life in other ways hasn't been smooth but she's soldiered on and now fully deserves a rest which should be enjoyable – but please don't go away, Pat, we'd miss you! Every word of thanks and appreciation has been more than earned so enjoy them and, we all hope, rewarding years to come.

In addition to all the work that Jennifer has talked about, Pat served two terms as Honorary Secretary of the Group between 2006 and 2011.

For all her commitment and service to West & Midlands Iris Group Pat has received the Effie Osborn Award, not once but twice, in 2006 and in 2014, proving, if proof were needed, the very significant contribution she has made to the Group over many years.

As she has helped us to enjoy others' irises, I thought it would be nice to ask Pat to tell us about one of her favourites. (Ed)

Iris 'Loop the Loop' takes my prize, having grown here for me ever since I moved in twenty-six years ago. Surviving constant competition, shade from a new poly tunnel and a bay tree (thanks to my neighbour), my overgrown buddleia, and five years' total neglect, 'Loop the Loop' has given me blooms at every possible chance. Surprised by sun after five years, Loopy produced a 6' spike with 7 branches and 18 buds! She hasn't repeated that, but whenever my overenthusiasm for other plants allows, she still holds forth. ***Pat Jacobsen***



How I Caught the Iris Bug

Jeremy Handy

I was asked by Judi, the editor, if I would write a piece about what started my iris 'obsession'. Obsession? I really don't know what she means.

Gardening for me is an inherited interest. Most of my relatives including my father and both grandfathers have worked in gardens and on allotments, mainly for food to feed their families but also growing flowers to send to market. Just like them, I love being out in the fresh air getting my hands dirty.



Personally, I can't think of many things better than gardening in this modern world where so much is working against creation. It is so satisfying making beautiful spaces by growing plants and also producing veg that tastes far better than supermarket products.

In addition, the benefits to mental health are becoming more apparent, especially in these troubled times. Even the mundane part, such as weeding, has a therapeutic benefit to it. I must admit that without gardening, the recent lockdowns would have been somewhat unbearable.

I have grown many types of plants and crops including the usual dahlias, chrysanthemums and gladioli. So what got me interested in iris? My interest was actually started by two chance encounters.

The first, in the mid 1980's, was meeting Maurice Woodfield of Woodfield Brothers near Stratford upon Avon. This was the start of a long close friendship which only ended with his passing in 2019. Woodfield Brothers had a nursery specialising in perpetual flowering carnations, delphiniums and lupins. Maurice was a real plantsman who could grow anything to a high standard and was a real source of knowledge. Both Maurice and his brother Brian were awarded the Veitch Memorial Medal by the RHS for their outstanding work on lupins.

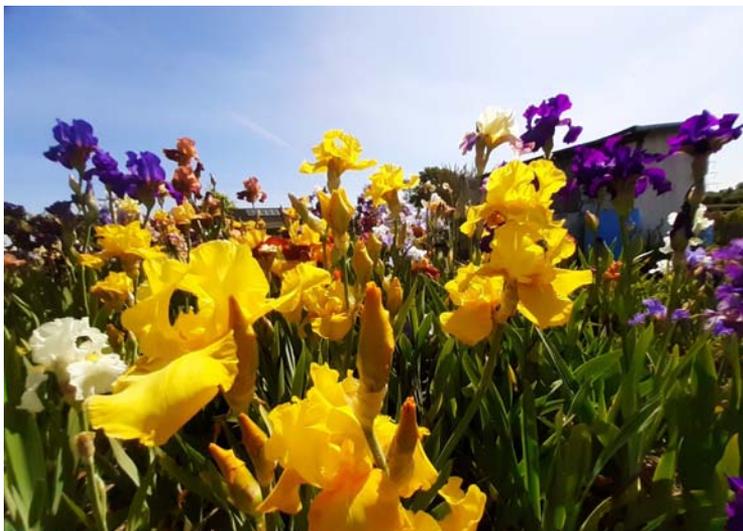
Maurice had another horticultural interest unlinked to the nursery; it was bearded iris. It was on one of my early visits to his house that I was wowed by 2 large beds crammed full of tall bearded iris in a patchwork of different colours and patterns. It was quite stunning and unlike anything I had seen before. It was a palette that any artist would be proud to work with. Some years later Maurice bought me a collection of bearded iris from Cayeux as a thank you for some work I had done for him at home and for helping set up their gold medal lupin displays at Chelsea. I still have many of those original cultivars all adding to the colour of my display in the garden. In addition to my collection of irises I am now looking for lupins introduced by Maurice as many of them have already disappeared.



And on the allotments

The second chance encounter was only a few years ago when Sheila and myself were looking for somewhere to go out for the day. We came across an advert for an iris show. Obviously I'm talking about the West & Midlands Iris Group's annual show. Up to this point I didn't know that there were societies for irises. It was an interesting day. I was impressed by the quality and variety of the flowers and I was soon being relieved of £7.50 for subs. Until joining the group, bearded iris to me were just tall bearded. Now I found there were more types of bearded iris to learn about as well as beardless irises and other Iridaceae plants.

From that initial collection for the garden I have now ended up with both back and front gardens full of irises, with a few other plants to give interest later in the year. As well as the gardens there are now two allotments and a third coming online this year solely for the purpose of growing irises. Finding out that there were more types of irises meant my interest grew and as a result my collection has grown in many ways. I now have a small collection of bearded species, some siberians and a growing appreciation of the finer and more delicate types, such as miniature tall bearded iris and border bearded. My interest has also expanded into hybridizing. I don't expect to breed any real winners and that is not what a hobby should be about, but the act of planning a cross, planting the seed and growing on, not knowing what the end result will be is intriguing.



Some seedlings on the allotments, flowering for the first time in 2020.

In any hobby I have tried to be fully involved, not to be important but rather to be in a position where I can get to know more people to learn from. Knowledge is always the real key to a successful hobby and I would encourage members to be more involved as it is a sure way to learn more. I now sit on the BIS Executive Committee, I have one of the BIS trial gardens and am on the judges training programme, all to increase my knowledge of the iris family and how to cultivate them.

So what does the future hold? Well it could become a serious hobby!

Life as an Iris Widow

Sheila Handy

You'll have read Jeremy's article describing his entry into the world of irises, and you'll no doubt have seen me tagging along to meetings and shows.

I find clear enunciation very important when telling friends that we are at an Iris Society event. Their initial response is often – oh we didn't know you were Irish! You might wonder why I'm even at an iris event with a minimal knowledge of growing and breeding and no actual plants of my own. I'm not saying I don't like iris – I do – but whereas Jeremy is an all or nothing kind of a hobbyist I like to do a bit of everything. I do love our garden and enjoy the variety in horticulture rather than a particular plant. And I often join him at the allotment where I have a very comfy garden chair so that I can sit and read or catch up on emails whilst admiring the view.

What began as a small collection of irises gifted by a good friend has grown to be a large part of the back garden, all of the front garden, a greenhouse, two allotments and a poly tunnel – with another allotment due to come online in the spring! It's a battle of wills to retain some lawn for my dogs to run on as Jeremy extends the borders 'just a little' each season. Holidays and weekends away are timed around iris shows – and I have been sat at the back of a few of those busy typing school reports for my class! As Jeremy has moved onto hybridizing in his greenhouse I am more often left alone in the house (this is not a complaint!), waiting for him to return with an updated count of the number of seedlings that have poked through.

I've learnt a lot watching and listening and could hold a decent conversation with someone who isn't a specialist. But I expect you'd soon find the cracks with even a modicum of expertise. But, as many non-experts will say, 'I know what I like'. There is nothing more beautiful than a whole swathe of iris on the allotment on an early summer's evening and some of the tiny species in pots on the garden table are absolute jewels. My



phone camera is full of images of iris, particularly in the evening light. I do enjoy the more muted colours but my absolute favourite has to be 'Crackling Caldera'. The lovely Fred Raines remembered my comments on it for a whole year and brought one to the next West and Midlands show.



'Crackling Caldera' © Jill and Alun Whitehead

So there perhaps is a clue as to why I do tag along to events (no – not the free iris!) The W&MIG is without doubt the most welcoming organisation I have ever been part of. Right from our first visit whilst on a day out we were accepted by this lovely group of people keen to share their passion and knowledge with anyone – regardless of their iris history (or lack of). That's unusual in a society of any kind, where those without the knowledge often feel condescended upon by those with it. The group was and remains encouraging to new people, and willing to involve them in the organisational parts of the group at whatever level they feel able. We have found some wonderful new friends in its membership. More recently I have seen the group caring for one another during lockdown and isolation even at fair distances from each other. The group is still as strong and caring as it ever was.

So yes, I do lose my husband to his ever expanding collection. I do lose large parts of garden and big chunks of the weekend. But irises and the people who love them have enriched our lives in many other ways. Their beauty and kindness respectively are well worth a little neglect from my husband – and it keeps him out of trouble too.

The Batts Trophy

Jennifer Hewitt

Jim Batts was a founder member of our Group. He responded enthusiastically in 1974 to my letter asking if he'd be interested and he remained a strong supporter although, because of disablement, he couldn't usually come to events. One of Jim's other interests was jewellery making and a few years later he sent me a gift, a rectangular copper plaque which he'd made. It had the BIS logo with BIS at the top left, and at the bottom right he'd added 'West Midlands Group', our original name.

To my great regret I missed him on the only occasion when he came to a meeting at Marjorie and Leonard Brummitt's garden in Banbury. He wasn't able to stay long. I saw him at the gate but was at the other end and could not detach myself fast enough from people wanting to talk. It was only a year or two later that he died, leaving me only a memory of a kind and generous man.

And the plaque. We'd begun holding our annual shows and I donated it as our first trophy, named in his memory. Originally awarded for the most points gained each year, it later went to different classes but hasn't been seen for some time. For personal reasons as well as its links with Group history this saddens me and I'd dearly like it to be found. If anyone knows of its whereabouts or was awarded it in recent years, please pass any information to the *Newsletter* editor.

Plant Profile



I. graminea* var. *pseudocyperus

From Section Limniris, Series Spuriae this lovely little iris has elegantly arching leaves which allow the blooms to be more easily seen.

These flowers are larger and more robust than *I. graminea* but, sadly, are not scented. A real bonus are the very attractive seed pods that will last on the plant well into late winter. Ed

National Collection of John D Taylor's Iris in 2020

Anne Milner

I'm sure that every article written in 2020 will be starting with something like 'what a bizarre year!' First we had almost solid rain from September till March and an extremely mild winter, with hardly even a frost, then a month of dry with occasional frost at night, and temperatures up into the 20s during the day. Then everything went to hell in a hand-basket, as we reacted to the coronavirus pandemic with lockdown and everything cancelled. When I started to write this, I was still envisaging that we would all be back to normal soon – how short-sighted I was.

To get to the object of the exercise: the Taylor irises seem to be okay, thank goodness, and several new to the collection have opened for the first time. The first new one to open was 'Fiorellino', an MDB that came from the USA a couple of years ago. It turns out it was dug during a rescue, so the resulting two different irises in the same pot is not as surprising as it might seem. Sadly, neither is 'Fiorellino'. However, when I checked with the sender, they had kept some pieces behind, and those had flowered correctly, so I am hoping to get the right one soon. So the two rogues are:



After contacting the lady from whom the irises had been rescued, we were able to identify them both, as both had been growing near Fiorellino. The yellow is 'Footlights', Hager 1979 and the blue 'Bit More', Miller 1988. So those were easy in the end!!

The other new ones to open were 'Joanna Taylor' an MDB named for his granddaughter, which fits the descriptions and contemporary photos. Then came 'Jane Taylor' an SDB kindly given to me by John Mullen from Kent. This was named for John's great-granddaughter.



MDB 'Joanna Taylor'



SDB 'Jane Taylor'

While I'm on the subject of dwarf irises, I had two that needed identification. The first came from a nursery in Holland as 'Adrienne Taylor', which it is not. The second came from Fred Raines, who told me it came from Jeff, and it *might* be a Taylor introduction. It doesn't seem to match any sadly, and so I have been hunting for its name too. Then, having asked in the *BIS Newsletter*, Christine Skelmersdale came up with 'Little Episode' for the KJ No ID and Claire Austin suggested 'Banbury Ruffles' for Fred's little blue iris. Both look pretty promising to me. I wish historic TBs were as easy to identify!



'Little Episode': Rawlins 1981



'Banbury Ruffles': Reath 1970



Then of course the IBs start to flower. A question on the BIS Facebook page made me study 'Peggy Chambers' a little more carefully. The lady asking the question had rescued her iris from the Garden of the Rose, the day before it closed for good. With my hat on as BIS Librarian, I have the planting plan for the irises there from 2004. Looking at the IB/BBs that were planted, the only two possibilities for the mystery iris were 'Peggy Chambers' and 'West Vale', both John Taylor's irises. Sadly

I don't have any photos for the latter, and only a brief description, suggesting a lightish plicata. 'Peggy Chambers' on the other hand seemed to be far too dark. Looking a bit further, I realised that a mature flower is liable to be much lighter than a newly opened one. Might this be weather, soil or what? John Mullen kindly sent me a photo of his 'Peggy Chambers' showing the change beautifully. His is growing on sunny sandy loam, with chalk beneath, in North Kent. Mine is on Cotswold brash in Gloucestershire. Has anyone else noticed this?

Taking things slightly out of sequence, several new TBs flowered too. A couple of years ago I received several irises from Anne Blandamer, John's daughter, including the iris he named for her that only settled enough here to flower this year. Anne wasn't sure of the names of some, as they hadn't flowered in her garden for several years. So I was pleased to see that 'Mary Taylor' flowered well, and what I think must be 'Marsh Dawn'. All Anne's irises came from her father's garden. As I have no reference photos for the latter, any thoughts from anyone who might remember it would be appreciated. It is difficult to describe the colour as photos taken at different times show a different colour, starting rather mauve, and turning pinker. The flower when first open could be described as having horizontal falls, and the orange beard stands out strongly. As the flower matures, it becomes more of a pinkish mauve, very hard to photograph accurately, with a much more conventional shape.



Right: Might this be TB 'Marsh Dawn'?



TB 'Anne Blandamer'



TB 'Mary Taylor'



IB. 'Piona'

One final twist of fate: I received two irises from Prague very late in the season last year, and decided that there was no way they were going to flower this year, as they were not growing much. Then suddenly, right at the end of the TB season, IB 'Piona' and SDB 'Carilla' decided they would flower after all.

Both absolutely match the descriptions, thank goodness.

Clearly, I am still searching for other John Taylor irises, so if anyone knows of any, please get in touch. Also, never to be forgotten, any of Arthur Bliss' irises.

Photos © Anne Milner: www.blissiris.co.uk

Right: SDB 'Carilla'



Some Hints on Showing

Jennifer Hewitt

Unfortunately I wasn't able to attend the 2019 Show and of course there was none in 2020, so these notes may be out of date, being based on things I noticed nearly two years ago, but I hope newer members may find them useful.



Photo: BIS Early Spring Show 2018 ©Jill and Alun Whitehead

I won't repeat the article in the 2018 *Year Book** which was meant to be fairly comprehensive – if you don't have that edition, borrow it from the BIS Library via Anne Milner – but one point I'd like to re-emphasise is to use the minimum amount of water in show vases and keep the wedging newspaper above it so it doesn't get soggy and fail to support the spikes.

Do all you can to keep each spike vertical though obvious exceptions are the entries in multi-spike classes for beardless irises of which more later. It is unfair and indeed bad manners to allow a spike to lean over and perhaps interfere with other entries, so if it's grown with a kink at or near its base, trim off the minimum necessary. If this means it will be uncharacteristically short you can put (soggy) paper at the bottom of the vase but at clearing-up time, be kind to the Show Secretary and make sure you empty it completely.

Whether in single vase or multi-spike classes, standing vases directly in front of or behind others does those further back few favours (unless of course you want to put a poorer one where the judges may not notice its defects). So try to 'stagger' them if space allows. This makes for a better general display for visitors to see and we are, after all, hoping to persuade them to grow irises and perhaps join us, as well as allowing judges to evaluate every part of every entry. This goes for all entries including those in pots. In 2018 a pot of a very short red-flowered irid (sorry, I don't recall its name) was modestly placed right at the back of its class. Maybe it wasn't overlooked during the judging but 'tallest at the back, shorter in front' is a good principle always, not least if there are, for example, four spikes of beardless in one vase. Fiddly as it is, try to arrange them attractively so each can be seen. The more attractive we can make our displays, the better they will serve our purposes.

**Jennifer's more comprehensive article 'Stagecraft' also appeared in the W&MIG Newsletter 2019 (ed)*

Seeds For Free

As we won't be having a stand at Malvern this year, there are lots of seeds up for grabs! Just send an SAE to Alison Gregory, 91 Church Road, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, GL53 0PF And don't forget to tell her what you'd like

Seed	Pkts
Californian Hybrids	10
<i>chrysographes</i> 'Rubella'	1
<i>chrysographes</i> Black form	1
<i>ensata</i> 'Lion King'	1
<i>foetidissima</i> aurea	1
IB x'Maui Moonlight' (yellow)	1
Juno hybrid yellow/white	14
<i>laevigata</i> 'Variegata'	1
<i>latifolia</i> violet-blue	1
<i>louisiana</i> 'Black Gamecock'	7
<i>orientalis</i>	13
Pacific Coast Broadleigh Hybrids	21
Siberica hybrids	118



<i>setosa</i>	3
<i>sibirica</i> hybrids	118
<i>spuria</i>	54
SDB	1
TB	95
<i>tuberosa</i>	2
<i>unguicularis</i> 'Walter Butt'	1
<i>Crocus goulimyl</i>	1

Seeds or Genes?

Judy Pollitt

(Illustrated with some of the Iris from Judy and David's Garden)

The seeds of my love of irises were probably sown in childhood but only broke their dormancy later in life when the conditions were right.



'Carnaby'

My mother was no plantswoman and in fairness, her pocket handkerchief back garden had little to entice a would-be gardener. I do, however, remember as a child admiring one or two tall bearded irises, probably *I. germanica*, as it bloomed before the other two varieties, a variegata and a pinky mauve one which might have been 'Susan Bliss'; sufficient for my mother to claim that the iris was her favourite flower.

Asters, Grandad's rose from his old home, and 'easy' spring-sown annuals like nasturtiums all became imprinted on my memory too. I also recall a distant relative who had an allotment and grew a colourful array of irises some of which he used to bring home in his wheelbarrow as cut flowers. These were lovely but I had no idea what they were; I would just gaze at them transfixed.

Growing up, after leaving school I trained as a Physiotherapist in London. Marriage and a family followed. With two small children to bring up and husband David away on business for protracted periods,



'Jacoby'

my early married life allowed little time to develop an interest in plants and gardening. David's work necessitated several house moves and I enjoyed buying plants for those gardens. Life only began to settle down when, with the children away at university, we found ourselves settled in a Georgian town house in Pershore, Worcestershire where I embarked on a career change and became an antique dealer, opening my own shop there. The long, narrow south-facing walled garden lent itself to the creation of a deep herbaceous border which became home to a collection of bearded irises bought at the Three Counties Show in Malvern. Living in close proximity to the showground I became a regular visitor to the various shows and it was there that I encountered the Iris Society and enrolled as a member. And the rest, as they say, is history. But not quite.



'Piute Pass' (top) & 'Echo de France'

Having joined the W&MIG I met, amongst others, a keen member and iris grower, Suz Winspear. Suz grew the bulk of her irises, mainly tall bearded, on her allotment in Worcester. Some time after making her acquaintance she was obliged to give up her allotment and offered me her irises. David and I had by then moved to our current home of some thirty years, between Pershore and Worcester. A former farmhouse and riding stables, the 2/3 acre garden was literally a green field site, a blank canvas. Our first priority on moving had been to dig a deep pond to accommodate our son's precious koi carp. Two large allotment-sized vegetable plots followed and it was these, by default, that had to be sacrificed to Suz's irises. When today I look down the list of plants we inherited I am surprised to see how many we have 'lost'. Our soil and conditions do not lend themselves to growing bearded iris. The soil is

heavy clay and drainage is a problem. All garden and kitchen waste is composted and finds its way back into the soil but any improvement fails to compensate for ever more common weather events.

It was clear that Suz's irises could not be allowed to occupy the vegetable garden indefinitely and, although there was as yet no master plan for our new garden, David ('Dave the Slave') set about digging two large rectangular iris beds at the front of the house which are still the main focus of our iris collection today. Smaller beds for dwarf irises have since been incorporated in a formal area of the garden, edged by rose trellises, and a number of more robust (border) varieties are planted out in the large island beds, a number of 'Historics' being examples.



The spaceager 'Thornbird'



'Oh Jamaica'

When selling plants at the Show I always tell customers how easy the TBs are to grow; a rather sweeping claim and one with which David, who largely maintains them nowadays, would not necessarily agree. I have to admit that, in my mature years as an iris grower, I am less concerned with the names and am happy to like those that like me and enjoy them for their intrinsic beauty; others can battle with the more 'difficult' ones. This is probably reflected in the fact that I am now leaning more to the intermediate and dwarf bearded and am slowly building up a small collection of Siberian irises and other beardless types. Down near Brighton, my daughter has established a nice gathering of Siberian irises and the intermediate bearded irises also seem to thrive in her conditions. Perhaps those 'seeds' were really something in the genes.



How I got Bitten by the Iris Bug

Sue Bedwell

It took me a very long time to get the iris bug. I gardened from a very young age, cutting a clematis in pieces and putting these in the flower bed where my mother put all her cuttings. She had very green fingers.

I went to Waterperry as a student. We did sell bearded iris on the herbaceous department but I was more interested in the glasshouses and vegetables. I did a year on both these departments after I finished my training; at this time I was very parks and gardens orientated. I then did a further 16 years running the glass department. As I started on this article I thought never any irids during this period but then realised that in the largest greenhouse there was nothing to grow on the top shelves in winter so every spring we sowed seed of florists freesias and sold them as cut flowers early the following year. Also bulbs were grown in the autumn to be sold in pots for the winter market in the shop, crocus and I think maybe Iris reticulatas, (but this was about 50 years ago). Still not bitten though.

When I left Waterperry I started to help the Nerine Society at Malvern. I still do but have, over the years, got fed up with all the pests that go with them. By now interested in bulbs and alpines for a great number of years, after a trip to South Africa I became interested in all bulbs South African and started going to South African Bulb meetings.

Somewhere around 2010 I went to an Iris Society or West Midlands show somewhere in the Pershore area. Although I liked the odd plant of bearded iris in the garden I was not that interested. However, I started to go to some outings and since then I have got more and more interested in iris, more the bulbous and species than the bearded, although I do like the SDB's.

Conclusion - most of the Amaryllids have gone from the greenhouse and there are getting more and more irids and iris in the bulb frame and small greenhouse (right). Also a number of bearded iris in the garden.



Great Expectations!

Fern Harden

This is turning out to be a very strange year, with most of us confined to our homes due to the virus. I have previously dabbled with some TB hybridisation, but with little success. This year with more time on my hands, I decided to do some serious pollinating. The weather helped, being so dry and sunny (in my part of the world). To my delight a number of my crosses have 'taken', but one in particular stands out from all the others, due to the amazing size of the seed pod.



'Pink Matters'

X



'Lullaby of Spring'

The cross is between TB 'Pink Matters', (Margie Valenzuela 2013) M, 34" (86cms), bitone, pink standards, deep pink falls. It came from America two years ago and so far has been strong, with good stems and large blooms. Crossed with TB 'Lullaby of Spring', (Schireiner 1987) 38" (97cms) E,M, bicolor, mimosa yellow standards, pastel mauve falls. It's a very strong plant with sturdy stems, bearing ten or more blooms. This iris has an Honourable Mention 1989; Award of Merit 1993.



The seed pod (left) now measures 5" (12.7cms) and still growing. My other seed pods (right) are 2.5" to 2.75" (6.4 to 7cms) in size. I don't know if size matters in seed pods, but I look forward to harvesting the seeds and growing them on.





Finally my seed pod ripened in early August. I removed it from the stem and hung it up-side-down somewhere cool for the seed to fully ripen. The seed pod produced 69 good seeds (left), which I then placed in a small fabric bag.

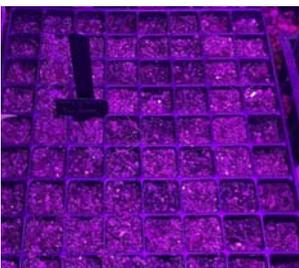


On October 11th 2020 I started to soak my seeds in water. Each batch of seeds in their small fabric bags were carefully labelled with their cross details. I changed the water daily for 14 days. On day 14 I made up a mild bleach solution (1 part bleach 10 parts water) and soaked the seed for a further half hour. They were then rinsed twice with clean water. Each bag was set in damp 'pearlite' in a plastic lidded box and placed in a 'fridge at 5 degrees Centigrade.



After 77 days my first batch of seeds started to germinate. I removed them from the 'fridge and box (still in their bags) and placed them on top of the damp 'pearlite' on a window sill for 2 days covered with cling wrap.

They were then planted in a gritty compost mix into individual cells (it was what I already had.) They are now in 10 to 12 degrees Centigrade with a grow light suspended 15 inches above the tray. The grow light is on 'vegetative mode' for 14 hours each day.



They will remain like this, gradually moving the light source up as they grow until they are of a good size at which point I will 'pot them on', gradually hardening them off ready for planting out on our allotment in early May. Hopefully I might be lucky and see my first blooms in 2022.

Photos © Fern Harden

Weaving a French Tapestry in Somerset

Ben Lawn

I first started growing irises when my Mum gave me some rhizomes for my new garden at the first house I bought with my then girlfriend (now wife) Juliet.

Although they were just your common or garden *Iris pallida*, they are a wonderful garden plant; resilient, tolerant and wonderfully fragranced. These particular plants are special in one other way; they have (as my Mum tells it) been passed down through my family since the time of my Great Great Grandmother, a lady named Josephina Schaefer. They are my equivalent of the family silver, and I often refer to them as the 'Schaefer Irises'.

I soon bought a few more varieties to supplement the *pallida*; 'Quechee', 'Susan Bliss' and 'Blue Rhythm' were amongst that first group. I quickly realised that I preferred the simpler, more tailored style of older historic irises over the blousier, ruffled style prevalent in most modern irises.



Ferdinand Cayeux with fellow
Iris breeder Olive Murrell

When we moved house just over 6 years ago, all of a sudden I had a much bigger garden to fill - more irises! I had found Anne Milner's site about her Bliss collection and had bought a few from her ('Romola', 'Evadne', and others I don't recall) and also Woottons of Wenhaston. My order from there included my first Cayeux irises. These were 'Lugano' and 'Depute Nomblot', two irises that I liked the look of, but didn't really appreciate the significance of then.

Fast forward maybe a couple of years and I saw the BBC coverage of Chelsea, with a feature on

Richard Cayeux's stand. Although most of his own creations are too ruffled etc or me I none the less looked on the Cayeux website and discovered the irises of his great grandfather Ferdinand Cayeux. I was hooked when I saw the elegant form of 'Seraphita' and the intense rich gold standards and subtle colour graduations on the falls of 'Esclamonde'.



'Esclamonde', 1947

After that more Ferdinand Cayeux varieties have followed, all the ones sold by Richard Cayeux and Woottons, plus some from other collectors of historic irises such as Anne Milner ('Voltigeur') and Sarah Cook ('President Pilkington' and 'Victor Hugo'). Ferdinand introduced nearly 500 irises in his lifetime, starting with 'Ma Mie' ('My Darling') in 1906 and ending with Lugano in 1947 (but not registered until 1959) (*photos p.43*), winning all 11 French Dykes medals (award of the French medal ceased in 1938 and didn't restart again after the war). At present I grow 43 of his wonderful irises, but I would still like to grow even more.

So I've now decided that the time is right to make my collection official. I have applied to Plant Heritage and they have approved my proposal to form a National Collection, and invited me to come forward with a full application when I have all my ducks in a row. I have formed contacts with the Botanical gardens at Pruhonice in the Czech Republic, who have kindly agreed to send rhizomes, as well as in the USA where a great many of his irises are still grown.



'Seraphita', 1946

If anyone in the group grows any of Ferdinand Cayeux's irises, or has any information they think might be useful to me finding more, then please do get in touch—somersetlawnranger@gmail.com.

Growing Wetland Iris in a Garden Soil

Gordon and Christine Link

Now, not being experts on wetland iris, this is just our thoughts after growing them for about five to six years in the open ground in Shropshire.

We have grown Japanese iris in pots on our small nursery for ten years or more, but these get irrigated everyday during dry weather in the growing season. Our stock plants of Japanese iris are grown in the open field in two beds of between seventy and ninety plants but generally just one of each variety. Plants are dug and split when time allows and potted into 1.5 or 2 litre pots.



I. ensata 'Dirigo Pink Milestone'



I. ensata 'Veinette'

Damp cool summers are no problem but the dry weather of the last two summers here in South Shropshire, hasn't exactly suited moisture loving iris. This last year we had hardly any rain from the middle of March until the end of September. As our soil is fairly heavy clay it is difficult to work most years until about May, then if we do get a dry summer it tends to crack up badly and resembles concrete.

We gave our iris a couple of irrigations this last summer, but they really needed more. We do grow a lot of other plants besides iris including small trees, shrubs and perennials on our two person nursery. These are all grown in pots and they require irrigation every day during hot, dry weather. As our only supply is from our own borehole the potted plants have to take precedence, so I'm afraid I am rather mean with water for the iris beds. This last summer I must admit some have suffered with the lack of moisture. Growth has been reduced, being definitely less vigorous than usual and the flowering of some varieties has been poor. This is partly my own fault as they have had hardly any feed this year. So I must do better this coming year, giving more feed and definitely more moisture, especially before flowering.

We also grow a range of Siberian iris, but they seem to put up with neglect and dryness much better. They have increased in size and flowered really well.

We have several Louisianas planted out. They spread like weeds in our soil but hardly ever flower, so I don't think we will continue with them. The pseudata irises on the whole have done quite well, but they too are quite hungry plants. We have also grown these in large pots standing in trays of water during the summer. They do benefit from regular division to keep them vigorous.



I. ensata 'Kozasa Gawa'

We have several *Iris pseudacorus* in pots needing to be planted out; the only one planted out in soil is the hybrid 'Berlin Tiger', which is making quite a large clump now. I admired it at Aulden Farm and was kindly given a piece by Alun and Jill Whitehead.

So this year we must do better with the watering, be more generous with the feed and make time to plant out all the varieties still in pots. Plus try to keep up with the weeding. Oh well!



Right: *I. ensata* 'Taiheiraku'



Above: *I.ensata* 'Sugar Dome'

All photos © C.Link

The Gobbett Nursery, Farlow is currently open by appointment only. Mail order is available and Christine and Gordon will be attending plant fairs around the country almost every weekend from early March to mid-September, circumstances permitting. Check out the venues and stock on their website.

My Lockdown Silver Lining

The Bob Nichol Birmingham Iris Collection

Sue Griffith

In a few years' time someone might ask "so what did you do in lockdown"? A simple answer would be "I spent it on an allotment", but the more interesting reply would be "I started a collection of Bob Nichol's iris".



Bob Nichol's allotment

I'm no stranger to gardening nor to allotments. I've been a gardener all my life (it's in the genes), but I'm no expert on iris. My introduction to Birmingham's allotments came in June 2000 when friends invited me to visit the Harborne Hill site. There I saw some striking tall iris on several plots and asked about them.

"Oh, they were grown by the famous iris breeder", who passed them onto friends before he left the site. He had died in 1996. My curiosity was aroused enough to buy a book about iris but that was all – then. For the next twenty years I was involved in other gardening and allotment projects.

In March 2020, during a chance meeting, I offered to help a neighbour with her allotment at the site. In the early spring, plots need quite a bit of preparation before growing vegetables and flowers can begin, so we spent three mornings a week working hard. It was a very lovely place to spend those first anxious weeks of lockdown - when the traffic stopped, the sun shone and the birds sang. We were able to talk to other plot holders as we were all keen to maintain some human contact, albeit at a distance. One day I asked, "what happened to the iris?" No one seemed to have any on their plots, but Tom, a long-standing committee member, dusted off a framed copy of an obituary hanging in the meeting hut which had been published by the West and Midlands Iris Group.

So, without having anything better to do in lockdown, I had the wacky, rather romantic idea of bringing back some of Bob's iris to the allotment site.

Bob and Jean

Bob Nichol was from a Harborne family and lived here all his life, working as a manager for a machine tool company. He became interested in hybridising iris in the early 1970s and imported rhizomes from America for most of his parent plants until he was able to start using his own hybrids. A founder member of the West and Midlands Iris Group, Bob's obituary in the *W&MIG Newsletter* described him as "an excellent and loyal friend of extraordinary kindness, but with firm ideals and standards which he would not compromise".

Bob decided to name most of his creations after the people and places in the Poldark series. He had the original books before the first television series in 1975; except for the Cornish scenes, the films were produced at Pebble Mill Studios in Birmingham. Bob had to get permission from author Winston Graham's publisher to use these names.

In 1983, Bob sent some seedlings to enter the International Competition in Florence. The plants were grown on anonymously for three years, with only a number for identification, and then judged 'blind'. Very few English hybridisers entered, so his motivation is a bit of a mystery. As he was a shy man, it is possible that he was encouraged by his friend, the charismatic Margaret Owen and her husband Godfrey, from Shropshire. In 1986 Bob won third prize with 'Morwenna' (pale blue self) and Margaret fifth prize with a seedling she named after her late husband. I know Florence well and have visited the 'Giardino dell'Iris' – little did I know then that a Brummie iris had been growing on that sunny hillside.



'Morwenna', 1984
(Maestro Puccini x Full Tide)

Between 1984 and his untimely death in 1996, Bob registered 22 introductions. He generously gave away seedlings to his fellow plot holders and iris friends. After his death, the two and a half allotments, which I have been able to identify from photographs, had to be cleared

and Kelways took all the plants away. Bob's widow, Jean, had naming rights for new registrations and up to 2003, she registered a further 21 introductions. A few plants are still to be found in Nichol family gardens. Jean died in November 2019. (*A tribute to Jean was published in the 2020 Newsletter*)

The start of the collection

Still in lockdown and resting at home after my allotment exertions, I retreated to the internet and sent off a few emails to possible contacts. Rex Harden forwarded my June email to Jill Whitehead who had recently been in contact with Bob's daughter, Lynda Miller. I contacted Lynda and also Jennifer Hewitt who was a friend of Bob's. Both Jill and Jennifer have been very helpful in my quest to find Bob's iris.

Lynda was rather surprised to be contacted by someone wanting to collect her father's iris after all these years. Her mother had also been heavily involved, not only in naming and registering seedlings after Bob's death but also in the social life of the iris world. Lynda is thrilled that the legacy is to be continued for both her parents. Between lockdowns she visited me at the allotment site with her brother and I was able to show them the iris.



Bob and Jean's daughter, Lynda Miller with Sue Griffith (L)

By July, I had become familiar with The American Iris Society's 'Iris Encyclopedia' so knew that Bob and Jean had introduced over 40 hybrids. I finally found some 'Elizabeth Poldark' for sale in Holland – so I ordered five. I was so excited when they arrived! Then my emails started bearing fruit and rhizomes arrived from nurseries and amateur enthusiasts – I was able to 'swop' two of my purchases with them. I have been so impressed and grateful that people in the iris world have been so generous with advice, ideas and rhizomes. So, over this winter I am nurturing eight of Bob's introductions: 'Morwenna', 1984; 'Demelza', 1984; 'Trenwith', 1985; 'Amadora', 1991; 'Elizabeth Poldark', 1987; 'Caroline Penvenon', 1993; 'Kayleigh-Jayne Louise', 1996; and 'Garlanda', 1998 (named by Jean). I might find a few more next year as people within the iris world find out that I am collecting them.

I need more space!

Sharing a plot had enabled me to survive lockdown, get fitter and meet so many interesting plot holders from all walks of life. However, to have space for the iris, I needed my own plot.



'Elizabeth Podark' 1987
'Mary Frances' x 'Paradise'

I was lucky to be given a half plot in September, which although requiring restoration, was basically sound and clean, with a shed. Ironically, it is plot 68b – right next to one of Bob's plots. I have quite a lot of work to do before I can plant out the iris in the spring, so they are having to spend the winter in pots to make sure they get enough light and don't get too waterlogged. I've recently put up a plastic greenhouse where they are sheltering from the frequent Birmingham rain – they are looking content and healthy.

The future

My plot will be designed to accommodate both the iris and my vegetables and cut flowers – I am already wondering if I will run out of space! Encouraged by the formation of the Historic Iris Group, I have also acquired some historic iris 'for research purposes'. I have found some 'relatives' of Bob's iris – maybe I should grow those for comparison? The tendency for collections to expand is probably a tale familiar to irisarians!



'Demelza' 1984

The immediate task is to ensure that I create the conditions to enable my small plants to grow and produce more rhizomes to create new stock. Some flowers this summer would be a bonus. I hope to engage the enthusiasm of other plot holders and get them to 'foster' plants so eventually Bob's iris are spread around the site to ensure that they are never lost to Birmingham again.

Trench Hill Garden Visit Thurs 27th Feb 2020

Fern Harden

Fourteen W&MIG members visited this garden. In the morning it had been snowing and the ground was covered in a white blanket, but by 2.30 pm the sun had come out and melted the snow to reveal a most spectacular garden with breathtaking views.



The garden, which surrounds their Cotswold stone house high up in Sheepscombe, Gloucestershire, has been developed from nothing over the last twenty years or so by Celia and Dave Hargrave. Approximately three acres, the garden is set in woodland, with herbaceous, roses, vegetables, wild flowers, ponds and sculptures.



Celia informed us that she can grow plants for all aspects and has filled her garden with year round interest. A garden for all seasons.

There were a variety of early spring flowers, hellebores, cyclamen, daffodils, snowdrops and crocus, to name but a few. Incredible wood sculptures created from semi-felled and fallen dead trees are featured throughout the garden. No chemicals are used and the garden is based on an eco-system.

At the end of our garden visit we enjoyed our tea and cake in their conservatory, looking out at a variety of bird feeders bustling with a wealth of birds getting their teatime feed.

Despite the chilly wind it was certainly a worthwhile visit and it would be good to visit again during the summer to see a different season.



Photos: © Jill and Alun Whitehead

2021 PROGRAMME

If you hope to come to any of these gatherings please let Jill, our Secretary know - phone 01568 720129 or email jill@auldenfarm.co.uk . Obviously visits will only be able to go ahead if permitted under the coronavirus restrictions in force at the time and if the committee considers that they can do so without risk to members. Jill will keep you updated by email. Please note that visits marked * need to be booked in advance .

Saturday 20th March AGM. This will now be an online event—see p.5.

All relevant documents will be sent out by email in March. There will be a Zoom meeting and presentation for those wishing to attend.

Tuesday 13th April

2.30pm: visit to

Coddington Vineyard,

Coddington, nr

Ledbury, Herefordshire

HR8 1JJ

Cost £7.50 to include
garden entrance and
tea & cake



The Vineyard garden is a hidden delight, peaceful and tranquil and overflowing with Sharon's enthusiasm for gardening. She never stops! It is about 3 acres in size, with sunny borders, a shady woodland area, a lake and masses of primulas growing along the stream.

Bulbs abound in Spring, both in the borders and in the meadow area. Of course, there is the added attraction of the 2-acre vineyard with wines to taste and to purchase as well. They have 2,300 vines of three varieties and their Bacchus wine has won numerous awards. (Jill Whitehead)

The **RHS Malvern Spring Show** is now **CANCELLED**

Thursday 20th May 10.30am Sue Bedwell has kindly offered to supply us with coffee and cake on our way down to Old House Farm and of course a look at her garden. **Monks Head**, Weston Road, Bletchington OX5 3DH

2.30pm: Visit to **Old House Farm**, Fulmer Lane, Fulmer, Bucks SL3 6HU.

Anne Milner explains our connection:

“A couple of years ago, a request was received by the BIS for assistance with restoring a rather neglected walled garden full of irises. After several visits, identifying the problems and some of the irises, and teaching the gardener and local volunteers how to lift and divide, a group of volunteers from the BIS went and spent a day dividing and replanting much of the collection. The gardener was able to complete the work after we had broken the back of it. 2021 will be the second year after this work, and the irises should have settled well enough to be a spectacular sight again. Each bed should contain one or possibly two cultivars, and all are named. Below is a photo sent to me of the 2020 flowering.”



Sunday 30th May 1-4pm: W&MIG Annual Show and Sale, Highnam Community Centre, Newent Rd, Highnam, Gloucester GL2 8DG. The Show Schedule was in the Winter Bulletin and can also be found on the W&MIG website. Plants for sale and refreshments available.

Wednesday 2nd June 3.00pm: Visit to **59 Foregate Street,** Astwood Bank, Redditch B96 6AJ. We meet at Jeremy's allotments, **B96 6LT**, then return to Jeremy and Sheila's for a look round the garden and an early informal supper.* Jeremy gives us a taster:



The allotments which are solely for growing iris were taken on in 2017 and incorporate one of the BIS trial plots. They are in a beautiful setting but can be challenging, especially in a wet winter.

Starting from a blank canvas in 1999 and with recent additional pieces of land, it is very much an evolving garden. As we no longer need a dominant lawn for kids to play on, we now have scope for more planting. Planting is a mixture of shrubs, herbaceous plants and of course irises.



July: We are hoping to plan a group visit with afternoon tea to Bourton House, Bourton-on-the-Hill GL56 9AE. Further details to follow

Saturday 21st August* 2.30pm: Visit to **Poole Cottage**, Coppett Hill, Goodrich, Ross on Wye, Herefordshire HR9 6JH Cost £8 to include garden entrance and unlimited tea & cake! Jill Whitehead gives us a preview:

"I have known Jo and Roy for a number of years and we share the same passion for garden visiting, preferably with a pub lunch! Of course, the chat is usually about gardens and plantings and as Jo is a garden designer, she is a mine of information. Poole Cottage is their 2 acre garden which they have created from scratch over the last ten years and to my mind it is quite a difficult site. But they have overcome that and have created a truly inspirational garden which does shine best in late summer and into autumn. Their productive veg patch is also worth seeing and they are just trying out the no-dig approach so it will be interesting to see how that works out.

Parking is a little restricted at the garden, so it is essential to let me know if you are attending. It is easy enough to park in the village and car share to their garden, so don't let that put you off!"



Sunday 31st October: Lunch, Tea and Talk at Highnam Community Centre, Newent Rd, Highnam, Gloucester GL2 8DG 12noon for members lunch* 2pm: Sue Bedwell – ‘Growing species iris and irids without enough time’

W&MIG VIRTUAL SHOW 2020

Your new Editor, Judi, has asked me to write a few words about the Virtual Show and I am finding it a pretty difficult task! As I said in the *Winter Bulletin*, this is not my usual role, Ian always does such an informative and often amusing show report that he is a hard act to follow. Besides that, I feel the success of the Show was down to you all and as I said in my previous report 171 entries was very impressive. But it was not all about the winners, it was also about those who were first time exhibitors and those who perhaps for whatever reason exhibited again after a few years' break. That is what made it special for me.

I also enjoyed seeing the different irises that you all grow and it made me realise that we have quite a bit of talent within our members, it is just that some of you are shy to share that talent. But I hope that you will all now venture forth and join in our next Show which we sincerely hope will be a 'real' event on Sunday 30th May. As in previous years it will be held at Highnam Community Centre, a lovely light modern building which shows the irises off well. We are also hoping to instigate a new class for youngsters and will let you have more details of that later. Of course, plans may change but keep your fingers crossed and keep taking those iris photos just in case!

Jill Whitehead, Virtual Show Secretary

While many of you will have seen all the photos on the website and the winners on FB and in the Winter Bulletin, I felt it was worth publishing all the winners and runners up here, not just for those members who have no access to the internet but to have them all together in print. I have included breeding and registration information where I've been able to find it, usually on the website <https://garden.org/plants>. If I've got it wrong please let me know. Ed.

Garden Class

Winner : Fred Raines' colourful display of bearded iris (below)



Runner-up: Chris Jarvis' beautifully co-ordinated border featuring Siberian iris

Bearded Class

Only one vote separated the winner's entry from the 5 equal runners-up.

Left Winner : James Watson with 'Captain Quell'
Robert Piatek (R.2013) TB; 95cm; mid-season;
slight fragrance. *Uwodziciel x Jazz Band*



Left : Brenda Nickels
'Wonders Never
Cease'
Paul Black (R.2007)
TB; 102cm early mid
season. Slight fra-
grance. *Time Will Tell*
x (Dream of Gold x
Epicenter)
Award of Merit 2011



Left: Judy Pollitt
'Amadora' - Bob Nichol
(R.1991) TB; 97cm; mid-
season
Morwenna x Warleggan



Right: Brenda Nickels
TB Seedling

Right: Alison Gregory &
Andy Ellis :
'Benton Ankaret'
Cedric Morris (R.1945) TB;
late season; from 2 plicata
seedlings.

Far right: Alison Gregory &
Andy Ellis - 'Frivolite'
Ferdinand Cayeux (R.1929)
TB; mid-season. *Trophee x*
Princess Viktoria Luise



Beardless Class

Here we have 2 joint winners and 4 runners-up, proving just how many excellent entries the competition garnered and how difficult it was to choose.

Joint Winners



Left: Chris Jarvis 'Imperial Bronze', Eleanor McCown (R.1970). Spuria, mid-season, *Driftwood* x *Imperial Night*. Honorable Mention 1972; Eric Nies Award 1975



Right: Judy Pollitt 'Apollo' Hommes, Gerard Dick Patent/PBR 1978. *Iris* x *hollandica*, 79cms

Runners-up

Right: Chris Jarvis 'Dandelion Smile' Anna & David Cadd (R.2005) Spuria, 97-101cm; mid-season. *Ila Crawford* x *unknown*

Below: Anne Milner 'Flight of Butterflies' Jean Witt (R.1972). Siberian 76-91cm. Parentage unknown



Above: Fred Raines *Iris* x *hollandica*



Left: Judy Pollitt 'Cinnamon Roll' O.D.Niswonger (R.1979) Spuria, 107cm *Intensity* x *Elixir*. Honorable Mention 1982

Species Class

Right: Winner Judi Deakin
'Murrayana' originally collected in
Newfoundland by Andrew Murray,
1935

*I was amazed and delighted to win
this one. I believe it speaks more for
a lucky camera shot than my
horticultural skills but a lovely iris
(Ed)*



Runners-up

Left: Jeremy Handy; *schachtii*
Turkish dwarf bearded species

Below: Jennifer Hewitt; *laevigata*
'Richard Greaney', John Carter (R.1991)
61cm Parentage unknown



Which Species Am I ?

I'm a tough, drought and salt tolerant
beardless *Iris* from central Asia. I may grow
up to 45cms but am often smaller. I have
narrow leaves and variable coloured
flowers in shades from blue-violet to
creamy white. I flower in late spring/early
summer but may re-bloom in late summer.
I am the only species in my somewhat
misleadingly named series.

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The first and last iris that Ferdinand Cayeux introduced:
Left 'Ma Mie' (1906) *Right*: 'Lugano' (1947, R. 1959) Photos © Ben Lawn

Photo of *Iris* 'Loop the Loop' p. 7 Creative Commons
 ©https://c2.staticflickr.com/6/5472/10604627516_20527205ea_b.jpg



Fern Harden *Iris unguicularis*