Volume 21 No. 3
Autumn 2014

'Just knowing where to look' – Chris Kidd on creating a new hybrid of the Giant Waterlily

– (Plant Profile Page 14)

ventnorensis

journal of the ventnor botanic garden friends' society

autumn/winter opening times

10am till dusk daily
For opening times for Visitor Centre, *edulis* Restaurant and Plantation Room Café, Plant Sales and Greenhouse, please call the Garden on 855387 or check website, www.botanic.co.uk

exhibitions/events

29 October
DONATION DAY – For one day only! Instead of standard Garden Admission fees, pay as little or as much as you like. Support the Garden further and bring along all your family and friends!

31 October
HALLOWEEN WALK – Join Marc Tuckey for a special Halloween Walk of VBG. 7pm. Tickets £9 Single / £30 Family. Call 855397.

1 November
GHOST WALK AND BONFIRE – Join Marc Tuckey and his team for a spooky Ghost Walk and then warm up around a roaring bonfire. 6pm. Call 855397.

7 November
DESIGN WALK – 12 midday.

9 November
ISLE OF WIGHT WEDDING FAYRE – Discover everything you could need for your big day. 11am – 3pm.

12 November
VBG LECTURE SERIES: Memory's Silence: Self and Place. 7pm.
Readings from Silent Music and Mapping Memory by Julian Wolfreys

5 December
DESIGN WALK – 12 midday.

6 – 7 December
OPEN STUDIOS AT CHRISTMAS – A festive Exhibition brought to you by Open Studios

17 December
VBG LECTURE SERIES: Charles Dickens and the Inventions of Christmas. 7pm.
A festive edition of the VBG Lecture Series brought to you by Julian Wolfreys

20 December
CHRISTMAS GHOST WALK – Join Marc Tuckey and his team for a festive Ghost Walk. 6pm. Call 855397.

17 January
VOLUNTEER FAIR – Looking to boost your CV? Like to make a difference but not sure how? Come along to our Volunteer Fair to find out about all the opportunities in the local area. With over 20 different charities and organisations, there's something for everyone. 11am – 3pm.

Propagating the Giant Waterlily. Photograph by Julian Winslow

Ventnor Botanic Garden Friends' Society

President
Brian Kidd

Chairman
Chris Kershaw - 852409

Vice Chair
David Grist - 852100

Treasurer
Kay Grist - 852100

Secretary
Rosemary Stewart - 292107

Membership Secretary
Caroline Peel - 872375

Events/Advertising
Mrs Debbie Honeybourne - 854044

Editor Friends' Website
Colin Smith - 856578
Email: smith3c@hotmail.com
www.ventnorbotanicfriends.org.uk

***Ventnorensis* Editor**
Roz Whistance - 753090
rosalind.whistance@btopenworld.com

Gardening Volunteers
Wednesday mornings 10.00 am
Jean & David Kelley - 853221

Curator
Chris Kidd

Garden Address
Ventnor Botanic Garden
Undercliff Drive
Ventnor
Isle of Wight
PO38 1UL
Telephone: 01983 855397
Fax: 01983 856756

Contents

Regulars
Curator's Notes 2
Chairman's Message 4
Editor's Letter 7
Plant Profile 14
John Curtis's Autumn Update 8
Weather in the Garden 18

Notice Board
Dates for your Diary 5
AGM Advance Warning 5
Christmas Evening 6
Volunteer Fair 6
Garden Volunteer Meet 7
Discounts for Members 7
Book Launch, Silent Music 13
Tropical House Appeal 26
Design Walks 16
New Members 28

Friends' News
Opening Times ..... Inside Front Cover
Botany Club Report 10
Heritage Centre Opens 11
Hosting Horticultural Students 17
Hop Picking 22
Former Treasurer's 90th 27
Harold Hillier Award 27
Volunteering – Harvest ..... Inside Back

Special Features
Buoy Story 3
Betjeman and Memory
by Prof Julian Wolfreys 12
Children's Visit by Jan Wyers 16
Students in the Garden 16/17
VBG for the Perfect Wedding 19
Taking the Garden to Parliament 20
Coastal Art with Prof Robin Mcinnes 23
Meet the Artist in Residence 24

Ventnor Botanic Garden Friends' Society Registered Charity No. 1080835

Printed on the Isle of Wight on 50% recycled paper using vegetable based inks

recycle

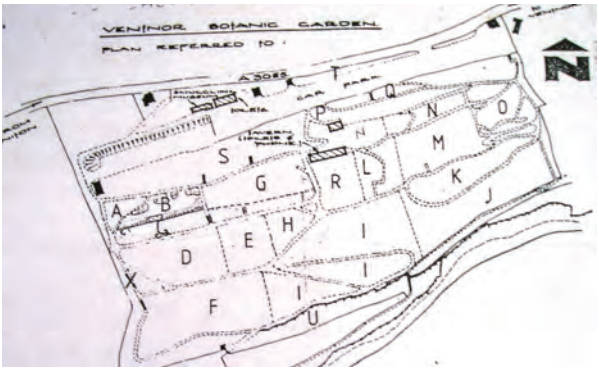
Curator's Notes

The ongoing transformation in turning this Garden from a begrudgingly funded and misunderstood municipal function to a high level visitor attraction is something to be very excited about, says **Chris Kidd,** who begins with a return to NBC Wales

In September I travelled to the National Botanic Garden of Wales, having been promised some spare southern hemisphere plants by their Curator, Simon Goodenough - VBG's first Curator. The first time I had visited the Welsh garden Simon hadn't been in post long and was rather beleaguered. I'm sure he'll agree that their garden lacked direction, the nursery was, erm, "troubled", plant records were similarly "troubled" and the plant collections and garden needed some work. To put it mildly. In my mind I could see the things that Simon was about to start changing. The transformation has been startling, to say the least. It is now firing on all cylinders and Simon is infectiously excited about a tremendous leap the garden will soon make with the reinstatement of a vast and historically important lake system.

The similarities of my first visit to VBG and the work we did in those first years since 2000 isn't lost on me . . . I have a map of VBG prior to 2000 and comparing it to the garden we have now, well, it bears little resemblance. I suppose the Grade II listed path system (not listed until after 2000, may I add) is the same. I shed no tears for parts of the Garden that were formerly called "Q Bank" and the enigmatic, and minimalistic, "G", in favour of The South African Terraces and The Mediterranean Garden. The scope of works we undertook would have daunted any of us, had we foreseen everything we did in the next 10 years, but this should be viewed as just another transformation; there had already been quite a few. The land that Hillier began to populate was transformed into the prototype garden that Simon and Deb gave purpose to following the storm of '87, starting the fleshing out process that sees nearly all the land populated by plant collections now.

Simon now has a similarly daunting and exciting prospect with the next phase of Wales, and so do we at VBG. The ongoing transformation in turning this Garden from a begrudgingly funded and misunderstood municipal function to a high level visitor attraction is something to be very excited about. The oncoming prospect of new garden development at VBG should make us infectiously excited about a tremendous leap the Garden will soon make too.



Before 2000: Ventnor Botanic Garden as it was

Buoy Story

How did the rusting, sculptural buoy find its way to the Garden? **Chris Kidd** tells the intriguing story

The buoy located at the top of the flight of steps arising from above The Tunnel was found washed ashore at Blackgang by Geoff Blake, the fisherman from Ventnor Haven. Geoff dragged it back to the Haven where it caught the attention of Phil Le May, who asked Geoff if we could have it at the Garden. Phil's idea was to turn it into a coin collection box, much like the disabled mines that used to be found on esplanades after World War II to collect funds for charitable causes. Geoff agreed, having previously contacted the original owners of the buoy who were quite happy that it no longer posed a threat to shipping.

We borrowed a JCB that was working in Ventnor and used it to lift the buoy onto the flat-bed truck belonging to Trevor Nobes. Our real problem came with getting it back off the truck at the Garden . . . In doing so, using brute force and ignorance, we ruined the bed of Trevor's lorry and had to buy him a new one. The buoy then sat in our yard until we had a JCB on site to move it up into position, where it has intrigued people ever since.

Buoy zone: From Newfoundland to Ventnor. Photograph bottom left by David Whistance.

John Hill, long-time volunteer at the Garden, noted that the writing on the buoy indicated it was from Francophone Newfoundland, and on a visit to that part of the world made contact with the harbour authorities there, who told him the story behind how it got to us. It was a navigation buoy off Newfoundland that slipped its chain. The authorities monitored its progress using the telemetry device attached to its top (stolen before it reached the Isle of Wight), and it took two years to drift across the Atlantic to where Geoff found it. They gave the accompanying pictures of our buoy to John.

Chairman's message

In a coin of the cliff between lowland and highland
At the sea-downs edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks there's an inland island
The ghost of a garden fronts the sea

The sea as a cure for illness,1968 John Betjeman,
Poet Laureate and quintessential Englishman (1906-1984)

Many of you may have seen the amazing 1969 BBC TV production: *A Bird's Eye View*, one of the first helicopter cine broadcasts, which is on a continuous loop display in the new Heritage Centre, officially opened on 13 October by Professor Robin McInnes. If you haven't yet seen it, I commend it to you now.

No doubt the choice of the lugubrious, melancholy music of Holst's Planets – "Saturn" to accompany his commentary, in contrast with the jaunty seaside music for the views of Ventnor's terraces, was John Betjeman's own, to reflect the sadness of the empty hospital.

This poignant reminder of our Garden's heritage has been presented to us by John Curtis just as two old friends of Ventnor and the Garden return with their own interpretations of this magical setting.

Julian Wolfreys, Professor of English at Portsmouth University and musician with The Nightwatchmen has kindly agreed to present the next two "Cafe Botanique" evening lectures. "Memory's Silence: Self and Place", on 12 November, coincides with the launch of the 2nd edition of his book "Silent Music" [see Page 12]. Then on December 17 he has promised us readings from Dickens' Christmas works, with a seasonal helping of ghosts! (A review stated: "You would have to be dead to know more about ghosts than Julian".)

The other returnee is our new "Artist in Residence", Judy Rodrigues, whose studio at the front of the Tropical House you must visit. She holds a "Hill Hassell" Research & Development Arts Council Award and grew up on the Island. Like Prof Wolfreys, her memories of place are mapped and reflected in her art. [see Art in Action Page 24]

From our Heritage and the past to the task in hand . . .

It was gratifying to receive offers of assistance to upgrade the propagation area following my recent appeal. David Grist will be leading on this, also the "Nammet" outbuilding that will provide an Education resource and a home at last for our Friends' Library.

Jan Wyers has had a hugely busy and successful summer with her own daylily commercial enterprise and yet still found time to organise and present her Schools Education Workshop on Seed Dispersal. [see Page 16] Jan, we hope you told the children that they mustn't ask their parents to take them to those exotic destinations you showed them on the map in term time!

Jan is almost unique; my appeal resulted in only one other new "Education" volunteer. To develop a core foundation programme in horticulture we will need a partner organisation with experience and government contracts and so we are beginning discussions to explore this.

Meanwhile we have established a VBGFS Education Fund and an apprentice selection panel. We've also made new friends at the new Free School in Ventnor, where Key Stage 3 pupils (ages 11-13) now have the chance to learn the basics of horticulture as part of the National Curriculum. You may hear more about events: "Science and Plants for Schools", the campaign for School gardening and the twitter campaign "YoungHort" related to this.

Botany Club enters its second year and a number of forages and forays are planned. Our thanks to Sylvia Clare and Chris Kidd for keeping us botanising. We need to help Chris finish off the sterling work he and the other gardeners have been doing, re-cladding the Tropical House, whilst we eagerly await the results of what he and the BBC have been cooking up in the pond! [see Page 14] The outings for our displays at Chale and Wolverton were fun. Congratulations to all concerned.

Finally, along with your continued (enhanced even!) active commitment in fund-raising and helping Debs Honeybourne with events, we should pause to consider how blessed we are to have two other very special ingredients at VBG, namely: a Botanical Curator, Chris, who can select the DNA of our accessions so that we remain at the cutting edge of our changing climate zone (and who can also recount so well the Garden's evolutionary tale) and John, our CIC Director with his dynamic energy and inventiveness. A rich palette indeed from which to paint this special Garden on the "inland island in a coin in the cliff".

A Merry Christmas to all, with not too many scary ghosts (Professor) and the "Nightwatchmen" to entertain...

Chris Kershaw, Chairman

Dates for your Diary

Following the huge success of this year's VBG Big Summer Party and the Friends' Soirée . . .

The 2015 Big Summer Party will take place on 24th May

The Friends' Soirée will take place on 26th June

AGM – Advanced Notice

The AGM will take place on Thursday, 16th April at 7pm

Further details will be published in the Spring edition and will be sent to all those on the email mailing list.

Christmas Past and Present

'The hearts that throbbed so gaily then': Charles Dickens and the Inventions of Christmas'

An evening of celebration on 17th December

Come and celebrate Christmas with a very special evening with musician and literature professor Julian Wolfreys. Julian will consider the roles of music and narrative in the idea of Christmas for Charles Dickens, reading from *A Christmas Carol* and making music with his band, The Nightwatchmen.

Our ideal of the Christmas celebration has been very much shaped by the writings of Charles Dickens. But while today we're happy to emulate the holly swags and mistletoe and the family jollity as portrayed in *The Pickwick Papers*, Julian Wolfreys, Professor of Literature at Portmouth University, points to the ambiguities in his Christmas writings: "Dickens sees Christmas as a point in time, and a 'place' where the past and future can meet in the present through the work of memory and loss, the significance of love and care, Christmas for Dickens takes us 'out of time' briefly, it suspends everyday time and invites us to look at matters from a different perspective."

Christmas as portrayed in Dickens' The Pickwick Papers

Volunteer Fair – *Saturday 17 January*

Have you got time to spare? Would you like to make a difference but not sure how?

Following the success of last year's Volunteer Fair we have decided to host another. Come along to find out about all the opportunities in the local area. With over 20 different charities and organisations, there's something for everyone.

Or are you connected to an organisation that would like to attract recruits?

Contact Kirsten Morris at the Garden if you would like a stand.

Dear members . . .

You know when you have friends round and they look enviously at your garden and say "What a lovely place to relax." And you think: "Relax? With all that needs doing? There's the grass to cut, the bulbs to plant, the potatoes to sow . . .

Well this issue of *Ventnorensis* celebrates Ventnor Botanic Garden as a place where you can enjoy the Garden and everything that goes on inside it. So meet some of our visitors, lecturers Professors Robin McInnes and Julian Wolfreys who on these pages are following up or introducing their topic: respectively, Coastal art, and Memory and Music. Also, why not see the Garden through the eyes of our new Artist In Residence, Judy Rodrigues.

What is even more relaxing of course is seeing other people working in the garden, and I commend Chris Kidd's riproaring piece about creating a garden in the House of Commons. (Page 20) It's a good thing gardening pays so much better than journalism or I think Chris might be tempted to swap his spade for his pen. Though I'm sure he'd miss those nights of wading in the lily pond (Front Cover and Page 14) . . .

I welcome your contributions to the new look *Ventnorensis* in the new year. Copy to me, rosalind.whistance@btopenworld.com, by March 31st.

And have a very happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Roz Whistance, Editor

Gardening volunteers meet every Wednesday morning at 10am, at the far end of the car park. Bring hand tools and a drink to have at coffee break.

DISCOUNTS for members

The following suppliers have kindly agreed to give discounts to Friends' Society members. Please be aware that discounts and other benefits of VBGFS membership are subject to change. **Remember to take your membership card with you – a discount will only be given if you show it.**

Eddington House Nursery	Eddington Road, Nettlestone/Seaview: 10% discount
Deacons Nursery	Moor View, Godshill: 10% discount.

We're making strides towards wellbeing, but all is not well

John Curtis on exciting developments taking place in the Garden against crippling happenings outside

For body and soul: eludis Restaurant

Vision takes time . . . and money. We first talked about an Artist in Residence at VBG as part of the IoW Council Bid in November 2011. You can see that Judy Rodrigues has now settled into the studio we built for her in the front of the Tropical House. We have also opened a Heritage Centre to present the story of the TB hospital, and The Mushroom Experience, a fruiting chamber for exotic mushrooms which is complete with a viewing window and access through a heavy trap door to the Victorian caverns below the Old Hospital. Thanks to Jonyth Hill, Robin McInnes and Chris Kershaw for their help.

By the time you read this we will have announced a brand licensing agreement with our first corporate partner, Liz Earle Beauty Company, which will strengthen brand positioning and build a new garden at VBG designed in collaboration with celebrity ethno-botanist and Liz Earle Ambassador, James Wong. The added visibility for VBG through their marketing clout will help us build visitor numbers in 2015.

The final touches are being made to a wellbeing sanctuary that will bring in a number of practitioners from Pilates instructors, yogis and sports massage therapists to VBG to resurrect the history of healing on the site. We believe the combination of the tranquillity of the Garden, healing foods from *edulis* Restaurant, and their wellbeing treatments will offer an antidote to the stresses of the modern world in the same way that the Hospital provided relief to the incurable disease of that time, tuberculosis. Back in 2011 we set out the objective to attract visitors who are as interested in wellbeing as in plants. In 2014 we are at last underway. We will continue rolling out improvements that can create a financial future for the Garden, but all is not well at VBG.

The Undercliff Road gave way last winter and dented our summer visitor numbers despite our continued investment in marketing. As a fledging enterprise striving to break even, you want your customers to be able to reach you. Island Roads helpfully returned our road signs guiding people to us down the A3055. A snapshot 2013 survey revealed that 10% of our summer visitors came spontaneously while driving around the Island. That 10% is now gone as well as those put off by the massive ROAD CLOSED signs proudly stationed miles from the actual closure. If the Island wants a viable botanic garden, then the road needs to be repaired. When we hosted a community gathering on the subject at VBG, one resident commented: "During the war we would have had that fixed in a week." A fitting comment when you research the Bailey bridge design which Eisenhower credits with helping the Allied Forces win WWII. The Bailey bridge moves away from a heavy concrete "pin and pour" approach to a lighter more flexible design that recognises the fact that the undercliff will keep moving as wetter winters become the norm due to climate change. At VBG we trust this logic will prevail.

Our To Do list continues. We have to progress the Living Collection. We have serious work to do to create better experiences for our Volunteers. We have to create new office and library space for staff, Friends, and Volunteers. We have to fund more apprentice and work experience opportunities at the Garden. We have to finish the Tropical House Appeal so restoration can be completed. And I have to stamp out the lingering culture from Council times. Please get involved with the giving programme launched by the Friends, send them a donation today, and support our ability to keep delivering. Lower visitor numbers mean your support is more needed than ever.

Looking for a Christmas gift that keeps on giving all year round?

Buy an Annual Pass for unlimited access to VBG!

Available at the Ventnor Botanic Garden Gift Shop

Botany Club goes on a Fungus Foray

Pick me! Botany Club has mushroomed

It's Autumn – so Botany Club went on a Fungus Foray around the Garden. We were extremely lucky to have the Island's expert, Dr Colin Pope, as our leader with Chris Kidd leading the way.

Almost immediately, on the top lawn, we found a clutch of tiny 'little brown jobs' just peeping out of the grass and for each type Colin showed us the structure, and explained how they interact with plants and trees. Beside the Tropical House were several cosy clumps of ink caps. The gills beneath the white cap soon darken and secrete a black liquid 'ink' filled with spores. Did you know some groups of mushrooms are called a 'troop'?

Our searches were profitable on the western boundary and in the woodland on the south side. We found parasols, fly agaric, brown rollrim, yellow spindle, false chanterelle, boletus, brittlegill and several more. Colin told us whether the new find was edible and advised us not to take any risks. A treat near the end was when Chris spied a cluster of 'dead mens' fingers' nestling between some tree roots!

Rosemary Stewart

On the shoulders of the past

A new Heritage Centre for the capturing, storage and sharing of precious living memory is opened

Professor Robin McInnes, John Curtis and Jonyth Hill open the Heritage Centre

On 13th October John opened the Heritage Centre with its exhibition on the legacy of the Royal National Hospital for Diseases of the Chest, which once occupied the site of Ventnor Botanic Garden.

"The way to bring the Garden forward in time is to stand on the shoulders of the past," said John. So here is a centre where memories can be captured and displayed on audio, in photographs, in written diaries and on video right here in the Garden.

With John at the opening ceremony were Professor Robin McInnes and Jonyth Hill. Prof McInnes's stepfather, Dr Eric Laidlaw documented his experiences at the hospital. Prof McInnes said: "In 1829 Sir James Clark, a physician, said there's nowhere along the south coast of England better than the Isle of Wight undercliff to improve one's health. This was noted by Sir Arthur Hill Hassell, a great scientist and polymath. . . He decided a national hospital was a good idea, within a year he'd found the funding and a year after that the first block was opened." Over 100,000 patients were treated from all over the country.

Jonyth Hill also has personal recollections of the hospital. "Having done some TB nursing myself, and knowing my father had convalesced here I took more and more interest in the building and the people that have been coming into it." She has been collecting an archive, interviewing former patients and staff.

Jonyth Hill discusses exhibits

John pointed out that there is limited time left to capture the memories of those who experienced the hospital and appealed for any thoughts or contacts. He also addressed the intriguing question of the large trap door beneath his feet. "We're not getting all the support we need to rescue the Garden, so where we have trouble with people we put them down there and get big guys to stand on it."

In fact the trap door is an opening to a wealth of vaulted caverns that will slowly be unearthed and opened. Already Chris Kidd has started a mushroom chamber there. It is another part of the past captured and used for today.

Roz Whistance

John Betjeman, Memory and Place

While our new Heritage Centre captures and celebrates memories associated with the Garden, visiting VBG lecturer **Julian Wolfreys** explores the way the laureate's poetry subverted the memory of England's past

Professor Julian Wolfrey

Born in 1906, a contemporary of Louis Macniece, and educated at Highgate School by T S Eliot, John Betjeman (originally Betjemann) is at first reading something of a poetic anomaly. Popular when many of his contemporaries were experimental, as much known for his television appearances, and, seemingly, the keeper of some late-Victorian nostalgic flame in the face first of modernism and subsequently modernity, John Betjeman is best remembered for holding on to and revering - albeit with a quiet comedic eye - a passing world of lawn tennis, tea parties, and a somewhat mythologised, if not mythical Englishness. (And Betjeman, it has to be said, was chief amongst those who appeared to do the mythologising.)

To capture Betjeman's poetic world, recall Ealing Films' first colour production and the last of its great comedies, The Ladykillers (1955). Very much at the film's heart, indifferent to a world of busy train termini, noise and pollution, is Mrs Wilberforce. Mrs Wilberforce belongs and largely exists in a world of Boccherini, the memory of society parties, and the death of the 'old Queen', Victoria. She is immune to cynicism, criminality, raucous behaviour, and boorish manners. She is immune because her memories cocoon her; not simply a constellation of imagined places, ghosts of what was once real and to which she can escape. These are her alternative, virtual reality, which allow her to exist while everything around changes, often, it appears, for the worse.

The poems provide pithy memory pictures of place, in which the self can find and express its desires

Betjeman's poetry presents such virtual worlds. Their appeal to wistfulness and whimsy though are not simply the signs of a nostalgic retreat or desire, so much as an alternative imagining on the poet's part. They provide pithy memory pictures of place, in which the self can find and express its desires (Miss Hunter Dunn). While Philip Larkin claimed in *Annus Mirabilis* that sex 'began' in 1963, "Between the end of the Chatterley ban / And the Beatles' first LP", engendering a moment when 'life was never better', Betjeman seems slyly to suggest that, really, it was going on long before that, somewhat surreptitiously and perhaps even a little subversively "in the car park till twenty to one", in the early 1940s.

Not in London in the 'swinging sixties', but in the alternative suburban England of leafy Aldershot.

It is instructive to compare *A Subaltern's Love Song* (the poem we often misremember as 'Miss J. Hunter Dunn') with *Annus Mirabilis*. It is Larkin who is the nostalgic. He yearns after a moment that falls between two events (the lifting of the ban on *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in November 1960 and the release of *Please Please Me* [22 March 1963]), for which he was already too late. That 'never better' tells it all. So-called 'sexual freedom' was for the poet the beginning of the end, the nostalgia of the phrase belying a bitterness, a misanthropic dyspepsia that Larkin ill disguises elsewhere.

For Betjeman however, the memory of Joan Hunter Dunn is a powerful and subversive force. From his initial vision of a young woman 'Furnish'd and Burnish'd by Aldershot sun', and the poet's being completely overcome ('Love-thirty, love-forty, oh!'), to images of the beloved's shorts on her bedroom floor; from the journey out into the summer night, into 'woodland ways' just the other side of Camberley where suburbia meets an older, quite Shakespearean world of the disorder love can bring once we leave the built environment; there is no nostalgia here. Memory is a force as powerful as desire, as love (which clearly has a double meaning in the poem). It arrives to bear witness to the quiet dissolution of order and propriety at the heart of Establishment England. This is what Betjeman remembers, and this is the Betjeman we should remember: a very quiet and a somewhat radical witness of the times.

Julian Wolfreys is Professor of English Literature and Director of the Centre for Studies in Literature, at the University of Portsmouth.

Roz Whistance

Listen to the Silent Music: a book launch

Julian's novel, *Silent Music*, is also a study of memory and how it relates to place and music, maybe the music you have grown up with. The story is set here on the Isle of Wight, and Julian will present readings and, with his band The Nightwatchmen, will play music to complete the experience and the memories.

Memory's Silence: Self and Place.

Readings from ***Silent Music*** *and* ***Mapping Memory.***

Wednesday 12th November, 7pm, free entry.

Giant Waterlily

Named in honour of a queen, it was the cause of a bitter bust-up between great institutions and is now starring in a new BBC TV show filmed at VBG

The genus Victoria is that of the Giant Waterlily, named in honour of Queen Victoria. There are two species within the genus, V. *amazonica,* the first species to be found by explorers, which inhabits the hot seasonal flood plains of the middle reaches of the Amazon tributaries, and V. *cruziana,* found much higher in the waterways. The arrival of these plants to Europe is a well-documented story; they caused a public sensation, created intense rivalry between the great institution of Kew and private estate of Chatsworth, an embarrassment to Kew's director and an architectural legacy that survives to this day. There is a case to be made that the requirements needed of a house in which to grow this "vegetable spectacle" drove innovations that revolutionised the construction industry, the pattern of load bearing iron roof frames mimicking those of the waterlily leaf is still recognised as remarkably efficient.

Beneath these overt and grandiose stories are subtler but nonetheless fascinating insights into plant evolution and genetics. The first study of the genetics of Victoria were undertaken by a couple of German doctors in the 1920s. As part of their research they confirmed for the first time a hybrid between the two species, which they didn't formally name but simply referred to as a hybrid. This was the first reference to a hybrid being possible, though no reference was made to the plant being an improvement on the parents, showing what we call hybrid vigour or heterosis.

It wasn't until the 1960s that Patrick Nutt recreated this hybrid and formally named the resultant plants V. "Longwood Hybrid" in honour of Longwood Garden where he worked and grew the plants. Since that time Longwood has regularly made this cross and supplied gardens around the world with the marvellous hybrid that is bigger and better than either of its parents, and importantly much easier to grow. The hybridisation has since been copied in the very few other gardens able to grow both parents simultaneously, quite a feat requiring two pools be dedicated to one plant each for a whole growing season. It wasn't until 1995 that it was successfully undertaken at Kew, by a plant oriented gardener. Since then the complimentary hybrid (swapping parents roles) has been made and named in the USA.

We've grown the Giant Waterlily at VBG since 2006, as the hybrid, in the vain hope of creating another record breaking plant, or one or other species as a result of desperation for lack of hybrid seed. It has always been a hope to create the hybrid again here, but it's never easy to convince people in the depths of winter that its worth all the trouble. We became much more motivated when we heard from a colleague at Kew that there was an un-named cultivar of V. *amazonica* that had a remarkable flower trait, a ring of red petals within the white flower. With Kew, we confirmed that this trait was inherited through several generations (it remains unnamed). The next logical step was to use this as a parent in a new hybrid to be made at VBG.

In 2013 we set about growing the unnamed cultivar and V. *cruziana,* and through fortitude and not a little serendipity and luck managed to grow both to maturity. In July we transferred pollen from the cultivar to the emasculated flower of the species. This was carried out on the two other occasions where flower synchronicity allowed. The following winter we found two bags with no seed in, but one with not just seed – but seedlings. We grew on seven of the best and selected two to grow to maturity. On July 9th the new hybrid flowered, and we could confirm the colour trait had been inherited, so we have a new cultivar to add to the Victoria story.

Sara Limb, our Heritage and Botanic Garden Bursary Scheme Intern from 2013, and Chris Kidd hybridising the Giant Waterlily. Photographs by Julian Winslow

Fortuitously we were approached in the spring by a company making a series of television programmes that needed to film Giant Waterlilies. They spent a week with us in the summer filming our new plant, and taking complex time-lapse film of the lily flowering at night, changing from the virginal white female flower on night one, through closing on daybreak and then reopening red on night two. This revealed some fascinating and previously unrecorded insights into the physiology of the process, which is in fact more complex than that previously described. There are definite stages in the flower opening likely to link to anthesis and flower aperture dilation; these will need to be documented. The filming also captured a first, focussing initially on a flower changing to red and then panning to a white flower opening in a single shot – this has never been captured before.

As with every revelation about this wonderful genus, there is another secret hidden waiting to be found. It's just knowing where to look.

Chris Kidd, Curator

Spiky shapes and perky questions

A special day for learning at Ventnor Botanic Garden

I had volunteered to run a class on seed dispersal methods. This is an important part of the life cycle of a flowering plant. One school decided to take this opportunity and they arrived at 9.30 in three mini buses. We looked at seeds and how some of them are dispersed. The children liked shaking the poppy seed heads and asked some very good questions.

We stopped at *Agathis australis* and made a big circle to show how huge it might be in a thousand years, like the oldest in New Zealand where they grow in the wild. We looked at some strange shaped leaves. We also explored Australia and talked about extinction and how special it is when a plant is saved for the future. This also highlighted the importance of botanists, and seeds.

After lunch I was delighted to see many young people investigating the large world map I had laid on the floor. New Zealand and Australia were easy to locate but they found the Isle of Wight was harder to spot. We looked at spiky plants that had lovely patterns and we were lucky enough to see lots of lizards. We just had time to look at a special tree and some amazing cork bark.

The young children were enthusiastic, asked lots of questions, were very well behaved and had a very special teacher and helpers. They were a real pleasure to have in the garden.

Jan Wyers

VBG Trainees in horticulture

One of the principle aims of Ventnor Botanic Garden is to educate, and VBG has been working with Isle of Wight College to take students and train them in the basics of horticulture. The Level 2 Diploma in Work Based Horticulture takes between 18 months and two years and is supervised by Judith Betchley, Horticultural Assessor for the Isle of Wight College. "The course relies on grant funding," explains Judith, "but when everything is working, the Garden is the best possible place for them to learn horticulture."

Students like Aaron and Conrad (opposite) are required to complete 12 units including health and safety; ground preparation; planting; working with others; amenity – the planting and maintenance of hanging baskets in Ventnor town; fencing (in the Garden); and maintenance – pruning, weeding, digging. The course also includes the use of machinery, and Stephen Hannam, who recently qualified, took part in the huge job of digging up, dividing and clearing a section in the Garden.

Hosting young horticulturalists

A special day for learning at Ventnor Botanic Garden

French exchange: Aurore and Laura with Aaron and Conrad

About four years ago VBG was approached by Ryde Rotary who have a link with the Rotary Club of Chateau du Loir (south east of Le Mans) as a local horticultural/agricultural school had asked whether a work placement might be possible. As the youngsters would be in their final year at school (they are usually 16/17 years old) it was decided to ask VBGFS if anyone might be able to host them. Steve and I volunteered and have now hosted three pairs of students; they pay a board and lodging on the basis that I provide for them as I would for my own family in terms of laundry, all meals and Wi-Fi connections(!!!).

We also try to ensure that their weekends are as interesting as possible with trips to Osborne House, London, a day's sailing as well as local shopping trips. Normally, we have set them up with bicycles for the trip along the Undercliff to the Garden from our home at Niton Undercliff but this year, because of the road closure, it was more of an issue. Unfortunately Laura came off her bike going down St Lawrence Shute one morning and split her lip quite badly; Steve and I felt it was too dangerous for them to continue cycling along this very steep route so I needed to drive them in each day. This was a bit of a nuisance and, on the basis of the road closure ongoing next year, I feel we shall have to investigate alternative accommodation for student should they wish to come next year.

If people have spare beds and are happy to host polite, hard-working youngsters, I can strongly recommend the experience – a working knowledge of French is definitely helpful as the students' English is often rudimentary but, given the chance, you may be treated to some real French cuisine! Anyone interested in finding out more of what is involved is welcome to contact me – as I said earlier, it should be a cost-neutral exercise.

Sally Peake

Meet Student Aaron

I'm on a Level 2 course in Horticulture and Working Life. I've been here a year and eight months. I work at the Garden five days a week under Alex Kimovsky's supervision – but I'm trusted with independent projects too.

I'm currently running a salad production unit for Medina Food Service and I run the salad nursery. I love it. At the end, in mid-August, I hope for a diploma and to get enough practical experience for a place at Sparsholt College next October to study Level 3 Botany and Horticulture.

After that I want to apply for Kew. But meantime, to go to work in a botanic garden in Gothenburg in Germany or one in France. I'm teaching myself French at the moment. The French girls' stay helped me with pronunciation.

Weather in the Garden

(July to September 2014) by Chris Watts

July was a fine summer month, especially so from the 9th onwards. High pressure brought lots of dry weather with sunshine; top temperatures reached 27.5°C on the 24th following a night minimum of 19°C, and 27.4°C on the 26th. Even though thunderstorms were around on the 17th and 18th, they gave little rainfall and the wettest day was the 4th, with 75% of the month's total.

August was an altogether different month, dominated by westerlies. The summery weather spilled over into the first week or so, but then things were never quite the same after Bertha's arrival. This ex-hurricane crossed our shores during the second week, bringing wind and rain, then showers in its wake. The weather, although bright, saw temperatures slipping away, and by night under 10°C – very cool by August's standards. Then came Bank Holiday Monday (25th): if ever there was a day which gave credence to the poor reputation attached to bank holidays, then this was it! Midnight to midnight 36.3mm of rain fell, and the highest daytime temperature was the coolest day of the month at 17.4°C.

You could be forgiven for thinking that August and September had swapped roles: September outclassed August in nearly every respect. The month, like July, was dominated by high pressure, and it was dry, sunny and warm. Average maximum and average minimum temperatures were greater than those for August, as was the highest daytime and highest night time temperature. Rainfall, said by some to be the driest September on record, was a fraction of that in August, although Ventnor records show that it was only the sixth driest since 1839: the Septembers of 1851 (3.8mm), 1865 (3.6mm), 1910 (5.3mm), 1959 (6.3mm) and 2003 (4.4mm) were drier. There was a drought of 16 days from the 2nd to the 17th inclusive, and after the equinox (23rd) there was a slight detection of things on the change.

At the time of writing, early October, summer seems to be drifting away with autumn knocking on the door. But at least the extension of the fine weather has hopefully shortened the coming winter.

	Mean Temp C	Air Frost Duration Hrs (No. of nights)	Rain mm	Wet Days (1+ mm)	Rain Duration Hrs
July	*19.0++*	*0.0(0)*	*16.5---*	*3*	*10.0*
Aug	*16.9*	*0.0(0)*	*100.8++*	*12*	*42.4*
Sept	*17.3++*	*0.0(0)*	*9.2---*	*4*	*n/a*

Note: Cols 2, 4, 5 No sign: about average
++/--- : significantly above/below average
+/– : modestly above/below average

Pure joy: Simone and David

Wedding bliss

It was a match made in heaven – or our little bit of it here on the Undercliff.

Simone Dickens, the lovely graphic designer responsible for making this publication beautiful, married David Yates, once of the Royal navy and now local author and leader of long distance Island walks. So how appropriate that they should choose to marry in this very garden, writes Roz Whistance.

As their photographer for the day I was able to see first hand that Ventnor Botanic Garden is indeed a perfect venue for a wedding. Meeting and greeting was Della Pragnell who not only looked the perfect host but also calmed Simone's nerves: "Della really put my mind at rest, and Kirsty and her team did an absolutely wonderful job of the whole day." The ceremony took place in the Echium Room, which overlooks the Garden, and the guests waited with eager anticipation while the wedding party did the legal bit of the day in a room opposite.

While David waited nervously with his best man in front of the guests, *She Moved Through the Fair* played, and then Simone walked in on her father's arm to the sound of the *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*. The ceremony was truly moving: David's vows were said through tears of joy. "Our family and friends were in tears during the ceremony – there was so much love around, in a perfect setting," said Simone.

It was certainly that. There is sometimes a certain awkwardness at wedding venues, a sort of 'best behaviour' that goes with stiff collars and high heels. There was none of that here as friends mingled in the Palm Garden in the late summer sunshine. "So many of my friends said the venue was perfect, and noted how smoothly it went and how relaxed the whole atmosphere was."

Enchanting setting: Guests mingled in the Palm Garden

As for the food – well Kirsty did them proud. "She is a friend, and she pulled out all the stops for us, as she would do for anybody," said Simone, recalling the delicious selection of local meats, exquisite mini tarts and irresistible salads followed by delightful deserts. Speeches, music and dancing into the night ended a wedding day that could not have been bettered.

As Big Ben struck midnight . . .

Never again, he said. But when asked to make a pop up garden in the Houses of Parliament, **Chris Kidd** didn't hesitate – for all that long

White van man: If it's good enough for pizzas . . .

In the last issue of *Ventnorensis* I wrote about an award winning garden we put up at Gardener's World Live at the Birmingham NEC, in conjunction with Visit Isle of Wight Ltd, the destination management company that promotes the Island to the world. At the end of that article I said we would never make another of these gardens. This is the story of that garden.

The first suggestion of another garden installation came during the healing period following the NEC. Backs were mending, sleep deficits refilling and invoices fluttering. Fresh in my mind was the step we had taken towards a Chelsea gold as I drove to the VIW offices at Osborne to meet David Thornton, Liz Walker and the team. What I heard there forced my hand to make a new garden that would fulfil the requirement from David that it should "knock the socks" off a show they had put on last year . . . in the Palace of Westminster.

Let's make a garden with giant palm trees and pool of Giant Waterlilies. Indoors. Upstairs.

We had less than five weeks, so before the end of the day I ordered six *Washingtonia robusta* from Italy. They would arrive the day before the event. I had a plan already brewing of how to transport the Giant Waterlily pads. Over a hundred years ago, Hooker, Director of Kew, sent Giant Waterlily leaves from London to Osborne; we were going to do the same in reverse! While Hooker used the new railway connecting London to Portsmouth, my plan was to turn our vehicle into a giant pizza delivery van, carrying trays of Waterlily leaves instead of pizzas. Obviously palms and pizzas alone do not a garden make, so we would also need to be taking up other VBG plants, and purchase plants from wholesale markets on the day.

These were not the only strange things going to the show. As this was an event to promote the Isle of Wight to a very select audience of MPs and VIPs, in the adjacent room would be an array of our brilliant Island foods and drinks put together by David Brooks from Solent Communications: cocktails, seafood, ice-cream, garlic, beer at a bar, cream teas . . . you get the picture. There were also tables and chairs, acres of astroturf, Isle of Wight Passports, multitudinous knick-knacks, a guitar and a bicycle.

You may have noticed my brief and glib reference earlier to this all being upstairs. A reconnaissance visit a week earlier revealed a series of wide stone stairs to negotiate, and a short corridor to where the garden would be. The room itself had chandeliers and wallpaper by Pugin with a pricetag to make the eyes water and insurance companies wince. We would have to be very careful. And we also hired four hands to help move our, as yet unseen, palms.

The day loomed, and after a nervy period of not finding enough hire vans for our capacious loads, Jason and I found ourselves in North London looking at the second biggest potted Washingtonias I've ever seen. We loaded them into our lorry using a forklift and doubted that six of us would be able to lift them off the ground, let alone up a flight of stairs. It began to rain.

Tabletop triumph: Giant Waterliles make a splash

Security at the Houses of Parliament was considered light on the day, taking only a couple of hours to have the lorries checked inside and out whilst their drivers being questioned by heavily armed police. Once inside, and having wrought the displeasure of every known security person and device known to man simply by parking in the wrong spot, repeatedly, we entered the Great Hall of Westminster to find we would need to move our palms up a much smaller, tighter flight of twisting steps, these being considerably further away. Once up these steps they would then need to be dragged through a very long room resembling one in a stately home, complete with its very own chandeliers and Pugin paper. None of which could happen before 9pm as there was already a function underway in our room.

Consider the lily: and consider the Pugin wallpaper

The next four hours were rather dark. Had Jason Melia not been there to help, motivate the hired hands, break his back and not just get on a train home – and he certainly threatened to do just that at the stroke of midnight – we would not have been able to put the garden in at all. There are some things about that evening that shall remain forever secret, but we nearly, at one point, succeeded in doing to the Palace of Westminster what the entire might of the Third Reich's Luftwaffe and Guy Fawkes' plotting failed to do. When I bid goodnight to a sober, hungry, stone faced Jason in the early hours, with all of our trappings in place, I was mightily grateful it was all over.

The success of the following day, when Dean and Alex triumphantly brought in the Giant Waterlily leaves and the invited guests were astounded by the garden and enthralled with all the Island has to offer, could be measured in many ways. It has been estimated the monetary value in promoting the Island would be measured in five figures. Media coverage was excellent. It was widely recognised that there had never before been anything like the show we put on: MPs of all persuasion were amazed. VIPs saw just what the Island has to offer, and just what our little Garden can do with a few quid and some strong backs. The police on duty ventured timidly into our jungle, men armed as if for war, and wanted to know where we were from with such extraordinary palms and lilies. I've seen two of them here at Ventnor Botanic Garden since.

Going home we all swore never again. We go lost in Chelsea in a convoy of lorries only to find Putney Bridge closed, and missed the last ferry home. There is secret talk of doing it all again next year. I've not told Jason yet.

Abundant: This year's great crop

Cheers! A well-earned beer for volunteer hop pickers

Hop Picking

We were blessed with perfect weather for the annual hop pick. This year's crop was of particularly good quality, which is good news for our own Botanic Ale, brewed by Yates, and for Goddard's, another Island brewery to whom the hops are sold who provided the ale that helped sooth the sticky fingers of the pickers.

‘British Coastal Art 1770-1930’

Prof Robin McInnes at book launch

A Book by Robin McInnes

Few are better placed than geologist, coastal scientist and marine art historian and great friend of the Garden, Professor Robin McInnes OBE, to write a history of British coastal art. In his latest book he has undertaken a major review of the subject, which he introduced to Friends and supporters with a fascinating talk as part of the VBG Lecture Series.

The 260-page publication is a lavishly illustrated overview of the changing British coast through the eyes of artists over the last 250 years. It spans the early emergence of the genre in the late eighteenth century, through the Victorian and Edwardian seaside developments and on up to 1930.

Among the numerous oil paintings, watercolours and prints displayed in the book are examples by the masters of topographical art as well as by some exceptionally talented amateur artists. The book documents the changing natural environments and the physical and social changes and there are also individual chapters on North-East England, East Anglia, South-East England, the Isle of Wight, South-West England, North-West England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

With marbled end papers and gold leaf to the pages this substantial volume can be ordered at rmcinnesbooksandimages.com. Enquiries: rgmcinnes@btinternet.com or telephone (01983) 854865.

'Freshwater Cliffs' by A. H Keate c.1830. Watercolour

Art In Action

Judy Rodrigues is VBG's Artist in Residence. She introduces herself, her background and her new role

Being something of a bibliophile in relation to my work primarily as a painter, the idea for this residency has evolved from the chance discovery of a 1925 edition of 'Flowers of the Field', bought from a bookbarn in Somerset. I was referring to this book while working on a painting of chalkland flora from Tennyson Down.

Inside the front cover of this book I found a gift dedication, dated 1935, addressed to a Sister Gunton, and a letter of thanks, individually signed by the patients of Division 5 of the Royal National Hospital, Ventnor.

The book in a sense acted a talisman of sorts as a link for my imagination and reality, between places and times, nature and culture, health and well being. Through further reading about the Hospital and its founder, Arthur Hill Hassell, I became aware that 2014 was the 50th anniversary of both the closing of the Hospital and the 120th anniversary of the death of Hassell, and I decided to write a letter to John Curtis .

I have strong connections to the Island as it is where I spent my childhood. At 14 I worked for my art teacher Krystyna Trezebska Young at Brading Pottery. During my 6th form I had work drawing and recording archaeological artifacts in the Carisbrooke Castle archives and was given painting tuition from Cedric Carlton at Sandown High School. Always returning to the Island over the years, my developing symbiosis as a painter, through elements of drawing from nature have remained constant.

My father, also a painter, was a strong influence as a contemporary and friend of artists Dennis Creffield and Dorothy Mead. Through growing up with these experiences, I have retained an affinity for their approaches to painting and the ideas of their tutor and mentor, David Bomberg. With these sources and the nature and culture of the Botanic microclimate I have a strong actual and metaphorical landscape in which to develop a new series of work.

After several meetings at the Garden, the working title of 'The Hill Hassell Researach & Development Residency' was agreed upon with John, based on the concept of gardens as healing places, in relation to community, sustainability and well being. Following further meetings and discussion with the Arts Council I began the lengthy grant application process.

The studio's location was explored with John and Phil Le May and it was eventually decided that the Temperate House offered the best light and space. It was agreed we would address problems regarding any 'climate issues' as they arose. It was Chris Kidd who suggested the final studio location, and it is with great thanks to all who helped on that busy Wednesday to clear the space in which I am now very comfortably 'homed'.

In residence: Judy Rodrigues begins work in her new studio in the Tropical House

In Bristol, my studio is at Spike Island, an International centre for the development of contemporary Art and Design, where audiences can engage directly with studio artists, designers, creative practices and businesses through participation and discussion.

As well as raising a family, and my many years of experience working with the public on exhibitions at Spike Island and the Arnolfini galleries in Bristol, my work in relation to art is informed through post graduate qualifications in fine art, and in teaching life classes. In relation to gardens, I have worked on the excavation and restoration of a Georgian garden in Bath, and as a volunteer at the eco home and environmental conservation groups at the Create Centre in Bristol.

In the 'Garden Studio', I work simultaneously on large abstract canvases, alongside developing smaller studies on paper. In collecting and constructing small assemblages and with journals, books and poetry I utilise the walls and the floor space. The 'open studio' remit is a fundamental aspect of my working principle as an artist and in this respect is key to the development of this Residency. By overwintering in the garden I will of course have quieter times to work too.

I am interested in the social contexts of places and new ideas, and welcome anyone who feels they might like to look in and have a chat about – well about anything really for starters!

Stop Press:

We still URGENTLY need funds to replace the polycarbonate cladding which was found to be far more degraded than we imagined after as a result of an inspection of the Tropical House following the October Storm. The cladding will fail imminently and so we are appealing to ALL the Friends, please personally sponsor replacement panels.

DO worry: We need funds to save the roof and protect the building

The brittle nature of the failed polycarbonate panels means we are exposed to wind debris that broke through and made several holes last year and made it harder to maintain temperature. Moreover the quality of the failed panels lets in less UV light, starving the plants to some degree.

The biggest issue is the heater, which has failed due to the control panel and its printed circuit boards being exposed to the humidity inside the Tropical House. The unit has filled with water, so now the burner does not function. Therefore we need to relocate and repair the gas heater which is used with a temperature set point to maintain the temperature above 3°C through the winter and protect the current plants.

Ultimately we need to find a low carbon, less expensive heating solution to allow us to grow a wider range of plants inside and create more of an experience for visitors year round.

Can you help?

Please make any cheques payable to VBGFS and send to Kay Grist, Treasurer, at the Garden address.

Sale Away in May

A Plant Sale will take place on 17th May at VBG.

Plant and sow and cut and divide NOW to be ready with your donations.

Happy Birthday Eric

Eric Everitt, former Treasurer of VBGFS

On 16th August 2014 Rosemary Stewart, John and Jonyth Hill and I went to the 90th birthday party of Eric Everitt in Cannington, Somerset. Many will remember Eric was the Treasurer of VBG Friends in the early 00s and as such oversaw the raising and release of funds for projects such as the transformation of the Temperate House into the first incarnation of the Tropical House. Eric, his dog Skipper, and good friend Bob Milson were regulars on our Wednesday volunteer days and stalwarts of the Friends' Christmas Party every year. I have very fond memories of those days, ginger wine, mince pies, camaraderie and particularly Eric's shortbread – which is the very best in the world.

A huge gathering of Eric's family and friends gathered for a party that lasted all day, we had a sit down buffet after which several of us gave little speeches about Eric. All too soon the time came to leave, but not before Rosemary and I visited Eric's little garden. . . and nicked a few of his plums.

Happy birthday, Eric. If your 90th was anything to go by your 100th will be quite something.

Harold Hillier Award

Susan Dobbs' award presented by Brian Kidd

This year's winner of the Sir Harold Hillier Award for gardening excellence is Mrs Susan Dobbs. Susan opens her lovely garden at Salterns, Seaview every year for the National Gardens Scheme and other charities. The house had been a holiday home but there was not time to care for the garden until she sold her school in London and retired to Seaview with her husband Noel. While doing a Royal Horticultural Society course at Ventnor Botanic Garden she started to work hard on her garden and enjoyed the companionship and exchange of ideas with the other members. Susan thanked the Ventnor Botanic Garden Friends' Society for honouring her with this special prize. She received the trophy from the President, Brian Kidd who gave a very amusing short speech afterwards. Brian is the father of the Curator, Chris Kidd, and well known for his gardening programmes on Radio Solent.

Phil Le May thanked by Chris Kershaw

Members had enjoyed an illustrated talk by Sally Peake on Ventnor Botanic Garden Past, Present and Future and the Friends took the opportunity to thank retired Chairman, Philip Le May, for all his hard work. Current Chairman, Dr Chris Kershaw, presented him with a framed photograph of a magnolia taken by Julian Winslow. Mrs Peake read out a letter from Simon Goodenough, the previous Curator, who praised Philip for his considerable help and sound advice through the difficult times when the IWC had to cease funding for the Garden. He also threw his enthusiasm into his support for innovative and prestigious projects. Curator, Chris Kidd, also recalled Philip's patience and steady hand over this time and his help during the transition to a Community Interest Company.

New members

A very WARM WELCOME to these friends who have recently joined the Society.

Suzanne & David Spindler.....Ningwood
Peter & Carole Reeves.....Bonchurch
Judith Rodrigues.....Bath
Carolyn & Edward Prewer.....Bembridge
Mrs A & Mr T Jefferies.....Royal Wootton Bassett
Suzanne Ribi & Bryce Wilson.....St. Lawrence
Kathy Domaille & G Victoria Truelove.....Ventnor
Louise Ness.....Ventnor
Polly & John Lister.....Yarmouth
David & Susan McGeoch.....Ventnor
Louisa Killpack.....Newport
Robert & Karen Bowden.....Ventnor
Cecilia Rawlings.....Ryde
Carl Bullock.....Shanklin
Frances & William Paul Harrison.....Wootton
John & Jane Jefferies.....Ventnor

Honorary members

Alan Titchmarsh • Simon Goodenough • Brian Kidd

Data protection

Our mail-out labels are printed electronically with a computer. This means that we are subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act. Provided all our members agree to their names and addresses being placed on an electronic database it will not be necessary for us to register the list, thus saving us money.

The Executive Committee undertakes not to let the list be used for any purpose other than for promoting the activities of the Friends' Society. If, in spite of this undertaking, any member objects to his or her name being electronically recorded, please inform the Secretary.

COCO DESIGN CO

Established in 1995

Graphic Design & Illustration signs | artist impressions | magazines | flyers | adverts | logos ...

Telephone: 07530 867318 & 01983 551527 simone.dickens@gmail.com

Design by Simone Dickens Yates, Coco Design Co. Tel: 07530 867318 / 01983 551527 simone.dickens@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERING AT VBG

Home grown harvest

It's been an abundant autumn for produce and September saw a goodly crop of pumpkins which volunteers picked and manhandled into groaning wheelbarrows. Then October 22nd saw a group of volunteers helping to bring more of the harvest in.

They picked malus berries (a type of crab apple) and chestnuts for the kitchen. While we had a break for coffee, the new assistant chef came out to show us some jam that has been made with produce from the garden He also brought out the jars of olives that had been picked the previous week, and a jar of figs.

A harvest festival indeed!

Pick of the pumpkins

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 9AM - 5PM*

THE GARLIC FARM

ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

EAT at our restaurant where our renowned chef creates tasty garlic dishes and much more. **SHOP** in our unique farm shop where a treasure trove of unusual and gourmet treats await you. In our Education & Heritage Centres you can **LEARN** all about garlic and the history of the farm. At weekends **ENJOY** a ride around The Garlic Farm on our tractor trailer.** **TASTE** our range of pickles & garlic.

THE GARLIC FARM

FOR ALL THINGS GARLIC AND MUCH MORE

The Garlic Farm, Mersley Lane, Newchurch, Isle of Wight, PO36 0NR

Tel: (01983) 867333 www.thegarlicfarm.co.uk

*Opens 10am 1st January - 14th February / ** 1st April - 31st October