



# LILY GROUP Newsletter

AUTUMN 2023

Photograph © Melvyn Herbert

## Summer garden visit in west Wales

SEE PAGES 4, 6/7



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## Chairman's letter

Jamie Compton

My time as Chair of the RHS Lily Group has come to its conclusion. It has been an honour to serve the Membership and to work with my colleagues on the Committee. There have been changes since I became Chair a few years ago, a change of editor for both the Newsletter in the shape of Chris Clennett and our flagship Lilies & Related Plants with Mel Herbert. We sadly mourned the death of a former Chair Pat Huff. Since retiring, she stayed on the Committee to provide invaluable help to our Seed Coordinator and now Deputy Chair George Battle. We have welcomed Gary Davison as wizard of technology and Janus Agoston a professional botanist in Hungary. In my humble opinion it was about time we had a more pan-European representative on our Committee. We have also welcomed Madeleine Tinson from bonnie Scotland, lily grower extraordinaire, and due to take over the Chair of this Committee on your behalf.

I am just finishing writing a paper on *Lilium pensylvanicum*, the Daurian lily, and I have just been informed that the world authorities on plant naming have rejected a proposal to conserve Ker Gawler's *Lilium dauricum*. This means that the inappropriate, but valid, name *Lilium pensylvanicum* must stay for this east Asian species.

It is not alone, we already have *Simmondsia chinensis* from California, *Scilla peruviana* from the western Mediterranean and *Asclepias syriaca* from Canada and USA. Botanists I hear you say!

Back to lilies, it was such a treat to visit Mel Herbert's Welsh garden in July and I have written a report so will not dwell on this here, save to say that there are few growers of lilies who have the ability to fully understand the botany of their plants as well as Mel. For me it has been a mixed year in Wiltshire, too hot and dry in the early months and windy and wet later, but after a visit to Bleddyn and Sue Wynn-Jones where I was given a lily they collected in Vietnam, I was thrilled when it set a flower bud. A beautiful turkscap emerged with a cream background tinged with green and a deep red mid-zone. To me this resembles images I have seen of *Lilium primulinum* but Bleddyn and Sue have it as *L. poilanei*. What was extraordinary was the scent at night, a heady mix of sickly sweet and horse-breath. I wonder what pollinates it?



Photograph © Mel Herbert

Below, Unnamed Asiatic Lily in Chris's garden

## NEWSLETTER NEWS

**Chris Clennett**

This Newsletter is the first to be produced in-house and now only reaching you as a pdf. For various reasons, partly down to your Newsletter editor and partly because of other delays, it also reaches you much later than usual, but this should be a one-off problem. This year has seen several fascinating events for

the Group and we have details here for members to read. It has also seen your Newsletter editor double his lily collection – from one to two!

Nothing very special - a beautiful white-flowered lily, but it's a tentative step toward growing more interesting species.



Photograph © Chris Clennett

## YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

**Irene Hopton-Scott**

Just a reminder in case any of you are in doubt - all renewal subscriptions are due on 1st January each year. A reminder and payment advice will be sent to you on 1st January.

Please note that all our communications are done by MailChimp and email. It is therefore important that you notify the Membership

Secretary on any changes to your email. Those few members who do not have access to the internet will continue to receive the Newsletter by post but may miss out on other notices.


Contact the Membership Secretary - email: [lilygroupmembers@gmail.com](mailto:lilygroupmembers@gmail.com)



Lilies in Ceredigion - See pages 6&7 for the full report....



Photographs © Gary Davison

 <b>RHS</b> Lily Group					<b>RHS Lily Group</b>				
<b>Statement of Income and Expenditure</b>					<b>Balance Sheet</b>				
<b>Year ending 31st December 2022</b>					<b>As at 31st Dec 2022</b>				
<b>Income</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>			<b>Assets</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>		
	£	£				£	£		
Subscriptions	3,700	3,185			Community Current Account	510	635		
Seed Distribution	1,810	1,190			Community Deposit Account	5,579	1,083		
Bulb Auction	1,496	1,323 (net)			National Savings Account	11,589	11,587		
Misc Sales	25	300			PayPal Account	866.9	15		
Interest	5				Undeposited Funds	137	107		
Subscriptions 2023 paid in December 2020	770								
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£7,807</b>	<b>£6, 906</b>			<b>Total Capital and Reserves</b>	<b>£18,667</b>	<b>£13,427</b>		
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>			<b>Deferred Income</b>				
General Administration	493.3	758			Subscriptions in advance 2023	£1,415			
Seed Distribution	200.19	-			2024 & 2025				
Bulb Auction	118.7	-							
Publication of L&RPs		6392			<b>Accrual</b>				
Newsletters	935.5	1,155			Seed List Postage 2020- 2022	£298.02			
Website	258.19	574							
Zoom Subscription	143.88	115							
QuickBooks Subscription & training	467.38	739			<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>£1,713</b>			
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,616.54</b>	<b>9,733</b>							
		-£2,827							
<b>Excess/Loss of Income for the Year</b>	<b>£5,189.22</b>	<b>-£2,827</b>							

I Hopton Scott September 2023

## RHS Lily Group

## Honorary Officers and Committee Oct.23–Oct.24

### Madeleine Tinson, Chair and Lily conservation

E-mail: maddy.tinson@gmail.com  
Parkhead House, Parkhead Gds, Burghmuir Rd, Perth,  
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### Tony Dixon, Secretary & Pollen coordinator

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### Irene Hopton-Scott, Membership Secretary and Treasurer

E-mail: lilygroupmembers@gmail.com  
The Coach House, Candleford Mews  
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### Melvyn Herbert, Editor *Lilies & Related Plants*

E-mail: lindmelve@yahoo.co.uk

### Chris Clennett, Newsletter Editor and representative RHS Bulb Committee

E-mail: mac.clennett@btinternet.com

### Duncan Coombs, Links with botanical and other gardens

E-mail: dcoombs@warkscol.ac.uk

### Gary Davison, Digital media

E-mail: davisongary99@gmail.com

### Janos Agoston, Scientific advisor

E-mail: agoston.janos123@gmail.com

### Jamie Compton, Taxonomic advisor

E-mail: jamiecompton@madasafish.com

### CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

Keith Baldie, Walter Erhardt, Axel Hintze,  
Jürgen Koch, Alan Mitchell

### OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Alisdair Air



Find us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/groups/2617608858556096



Latest News and Updates

www.rhslilygroup.org

# Lily Group Garden Visit

Saturday 8 July, Ceredigion, West Wales

Jamie Compton



Saturday 8 July was a showery day in mid Wales as about 20 RHS Lily Group members descended on Mel and Lin Herbert to see their garden, a few miles west of Lampeter. Luckily the showers stayed off during our visit until it was time to leave. On our arrival we were treated to the sight of some yellow hybrid lilies in pots near their conservatory which to me resembled either 'Belladonna' or 'Yellow County'. Mel informed me that these were meant to be *Lilium leichtlinii* subsp. *leichtlinii* purchased some 20 years ago as 'Greeny-yellow species' from a UK nursery. Also in pots looking good were the clear white, yellow throated *L. regale* 'Album' and *L. nepalense* with its chocolate blotch. Near the garden gate were

many small pots of young lily plants for sale, all proceeds going to the Lily Group funds. Already we could tell that this was going to be a feast for the eyes and few of us would venture home empty handed.

Mingling anonymously with the membership was an enjoyable experience eavesdropping on the successes and failures of lily growing in various parts of the UK. Mel has an encyclopedic knowledge, especially of species lilies, amply evident throughout his one and a half acre garden. This is set within his eight acre holding, sloping quite steeply in places down to the little river Aeron glimpsed occasionally meandering at the bottom of a south-east facing bank. The soil in his garden is neutral to slightly acid and free draining – ideal for growing many species of lilies. Moreover, Mel has plenty of mature tree cover so that those shade lovers can get their feet into rich woodland mulch. Ferns and other woodland plants such as a good collection of *Disporum*, *Disporopsis*, *Polygonatum* and *Arisaema* complement the lilies.





Near and slightly above the entrance to the house are some flower beds adorned with lilies and other interesting plants. Mel grows three species of *Galtonia* in these beds; the white-flowered summer hyacinth *G. candicans* and the green-flowered *G. princeps* and *G. regalis*. There is also an interesting hybrid between *G. candicans* and *G. princeps* that has appeared spontaneously. Lilies which Mel and Lin grow in this area include an orange hybrid sold to them as *L. wilsonii*, three different forms of the American species *L. pardalinum* subsp. *pardalinum* as well as *L. pardalinum* subsp. *pitkinense*, *L. pardalinum* subsp. *wigginsii*, *L. canadense*, the yellow flowered



*L. martagon* var. *flavidum* and very dark almost blackish *L. martagon* var. *cattaniae* and the stalwart Asiatic trumpet *L. regale*.

Near the front gate in what Mel and Lin call the Stumpery, the Asiatic species predominated. Here the pink speckled *L. wardii* was just coming into flower, the orange wheel lily *L. medeoloides* was in full flower and there were a few last flowers on *L. tenii*, *L. duchartrei* and *L. lankongense*.

In the woodland garden the Jinfushan form of *L. taliense* with pale creamy yellow turkscap flowers speckled heavily with purple and with a purple nectary furrow looked stunning. Here too Mel and Lin have their natural hybrid *L. taliense* x *L. tenii* with heavily speckled pale yellow flowers. The upright bowl-shaped orange flowers of *L. pensylvanicum* complemented orange flowered *L. tsingtauense* and the western American red flowered *L. occidentale* was just going over.



Just beyond the main garden is a stable where there is less a sign of animal activity just row after row of lily seedlings in flower was the trumpet lily *L. leucanthum* and beyond the stable inside a polytunnel was the fine leaved *L. leucanthum* var. *centifolium* and young plants of the rare American *L. iridollae* in bud.



It was left for me to present the Lyttel trophy to Mel. A justly deserved award for his tireless work as Editor of Lilies and Related Plants and for his superb collection of lilies. Naturally several purchases were made on departure.

# BECOMING A PLANT GUARDIAN

Madeleine Tinson

I have recently been awarded Guardianship of three Backhouse Hybrids by registering them with Plant Heritage. A simple process, but first you have to have the plants. Luckily for me I started buying lilies when there were still Nurseries growing a range of species and old hybrids.

Have you recently tried to source lilies, then found the choice of species limited and old hybrids developed by hybridizers such as Derek Fox or the Backhouses almost impossible to buy commercially. As members of the Lily Group, either through the Bulb Auction or the seed sale there are the opportunities to possibly purchase them.

We as lily growers need to conserve these endangered species and cultivars. I discovered

that 'Early Bird' and 'Sutton Court' are both on the Threatened Plant List, which is a scary thought as they are the nicer ones.

Even Caroline Thomson, a descendant of the Backhouse family, could not source any of these lilies at her ancestral home, Sutton Court, so concentrated on the Backhouse Narcissus for which she holds a National Collection.

Do you grow a species lily or have an old Hybrid then I urge you to think about becoming a Guardian or even better join in the plans for a Dispersed National Collection. You don't need to have a huge collection, just a few.

The Lily Group needs to be at the forefront of the Conservation on lilies. Please contact the committee for more information

## DISPERSED NATIONAL COLLECTION

Duncan Coombs



Photograph © Madeleine Tinson

I am trying to establish a Dispersed National Collection of *Lilium* species. If at this initial stage you feel you would like the *Lilium* species you grow to be part of this collection, please email me at [dcoombs@warwickshire.ac.uk](mailto:dcoombs@warwickshire.ac.uk) stating: 'what *Lilium* species you grow and approximately how many of each species you are growing'.

Put very briefly, the advantages of such a Collection would be:

- 1 To help ensure *Lilium* species remain available for the enjoyment of all.
- 2 The Plant Heritage Exchange Scheme. This would enable members to offer *Lilium* species to other members and to request other *Lilium* species that are difficult to obtain.
- 3 Members of the Collection would have access to other holders and will have access to information about the cultivation of these plants.