

LILY GROUP Newsletter

AUTUMN 2024



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Changes**

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Chairman's letter

Madeleine Tinson

Another wet day in Scotland, the sun having rarely put in an appearance. Many lilies have succumbed to the dreaded botrytis, still they managed to put up lovely heads of flowers.



The wet weather has been perfect for slugs and snails. I hear we should welcome them into the garden; 'No' not when the snails delight in climbing up the stems of my lilies and nibbling till the heads fall. Pure vandalism as I see it. So, I have traps all over the garden, filled with the cheapest lager and they work. Not sure about my reputation with the neighbours as I wander the garden, cans of lager in hand.

Into August and the last lilies are flowering. In the greenhouse *Lilium speciosum* var. *clivorum*, as up here the season is not long enough for them to flower outside. These late lilies have coped with the weather: 'Lady Alice', 'Anastasia', white *henryi*, 'Scheherazade', 'Leslie Woodriff' and 'Ypsilanti'. Also, *Lilium henryi*, *superbum* and *lancifolium*.

I will have some of these lilies to donate to the bulb auction. Please donate some of your surplus, not forgetting the seed of course.

There will be a new format for the auction this year, look out for details, to make sure you are ready to bid.

Plans are in place for the AGM. Dr Brian Bergman, an expert in hybridizing with many years of experience and many named varieties to his credit, will share with us 'how to get started,' and show us many of his successes. Duncan Coombs will also show his pictures of his trip to China this year.

A note in your diary - The AGM will be on Saturday 5th October at 2 pm BST.



Photographs © Madeleine Tinson

Spring garden visits

Duncan Coombs

On the wet and rather cold morning of 10th March, members of the RHS Lily Group and The Fritillaria Group set off to visit the gardens of Dr Martyn Rix and that of Paul Cumbleton and Colin Everett. The sun shines on the righteous and the sun duly emerged enough for us to enjoy a memorable series of visits.

Martyn met us with his customary infectious enthusiasm and showed us around his developing woodland garden. Unfortunately, since arranging



the visit the season had slowed and the Erythroniums were not yet out, but there was plenty to see, including several magnificent tree magnolias and a fine specimen clump of the bamboo *Chimonobambusa tumidissinoda*. In his greenhouse there were several fritillaries in flower including *Fritillaria anhuiensis* and

Fritillaria sororum.

Following on from Martyn's garden some of us found time for a very quick lunch at Knightshayes, plus a brief snatched visit to the woodland garden where tree magnolias were in full bloom. Then we went on to the garden of Paul Cumbleton and Colin Everett.

Here we were met by a fine display of bulbs and corms flowering in their front lawn. There was a fine display from flowering South African bulbs in one greenhouse and a very organized collection of many rare and unusual *Fritillaria* in another. It was very enjoyable to be able to see, photograph and discuss such unusual plants with experts. Many of these fritillaries were not flowering this year because of the spring weather pattern. Early mild conditions had brought development on, but this was halted by subsequent unusually cold weather, causing the bulbs to go into survival mode and split into smaller bulbs rather than to flower. If only I could be so unruffled by such an unfortunate event!

In all a very enjoyable day and one which I hope sees the beginning of more joint ventures between the Lily Group and the Fritillaria Group.



Below left, *Lilium souliei* at Lake Tianchi, Yunnan

Below right, *Cardiocrinum giganteum* var. *yunnanense* near Wolong

RHS Lily Group AGM 2024

Tony Dixon

Saturday 5th October at 14.00 (London Time - BST)

For the last three years, members from all over the world have joined our AGM by Zoom. This gives Lily Group members a chance to meet committee members (and each other), catch up with news of the Group's activities, conduct essential Lily Group business, hear informative talks, ask questions and enjoy the opportunity to share informal chat. Suggestions for future activities will also be welcome.

We hope that this year, you will be able to join us too. Our Chairman, Madeleine Tinson and Treasurer, Irene Hopton-Scott will be reporting on the past year and offering their view of current and future prospects.

This year we are very pleased that Dr Brian Bergman, who has many years of successful experience in hybridising lilies and has registered many named varieties, will be speaking to us on

how to get started with hybridising, illustrated by photos of his own successes.

In addition, committee member Duncan Coombs will share photographs of his visit to China this year.

Please note the time and date in your diary – details on how to join the AGM will be sent out by e-mail.



Photographs © Duncan Coombs



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Latest News and Updates

www.rhslilygroup.org

Accounts summary

Irene Hopton-Scott

Dear Lily Group Members

I hope that you will take a moment to look at the Summary of the Lily Group's financial transactions over the last 5 years - below.

As you will see, our major financial commitment is, as it always has been, the publication of our journal - *Lilies and Related Plants* - on a 2 year cycle. Our Editor, Mel Herbert, is hard at work preparing for the next edition due in December 2025.

It takes the best part of 2 years' income to produce the journal and, as you can see from the

summary, its costs have recently been increasing faster than our income. Up until now we have been able to absorb the costs by reducing other expenses: e.g. this Newsletter and the general Lily Group running expenses which are kept to a minimum.

Over the next few months the Committee will be assessing what we need to do to continue to produce this excellent journal in its current form and we will keep you informed of the Committee's findings.

Irene Hopton Scott,
Treasurer

Summary of RHS Lily Group Accounts 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023

	31 Dec 2019	31 Dec 2020	31 Dec 2021	31 Dec 2022	31 Dec 2023
Bank Balances					
Barclays Current Account	901	4,593	635	510	1,049
Barclays Deposit Account	83	83	1,083	5,579	2,300
NS&I Investment Account	11,413	11,587	11,587	11,589	11,599
PayPal Business Account	270	-	15	867	285
Undeposited funds			107.00		20
Total Monetary Assets	12,667	16,263	13,427.00	18,545	15,253
Liability for subscriptions paid in advance	(-2,029)	(-1,449)	(-1,109)	(-1,285)	(-795)
Principal Areas of Income					
Subscriptions	2,385	2,930	3,185	2,445	2,935
Subscriptions paid in advance	2,029	1,449	1,109	1,285	795
Seed Distribution - net proceeds	764	960	1,190	1,610	1,211
Bulb Auction - net proceeds	430	1,232	1,122	1,308	891
Donations					351
Misc Sales	-	-	300	131	418
Total Net Income	£5,719	£6,654	6,906	6,779	6,601
Principal Areas of Expenditure					
Publication of <i>Lilies & Related Plants</i>	5,961	-	6,392	100	7,576
Newsletters	2,495	1,327	1,155	943	458.88
Website		145	574	258	180
QuickBooks subscription and training		553	739	467	409
Zoom subscription			115	144	144
General Administration	1,311	844	758	386	537
Total Expenditure	9,767	2,869	£9,733	2,298	9,305
Net income/ Deficit	-£4,048	£3,785	-£2,827	£4,481	-£2,704

RHS Lily Group

Honorary Officers and Committee 2024–2025

Madeleine Tinson, Chair and Lily conservation

Email: maddy.tinson@gmail.com

George Battle, Vice Chairman, Seed Manager and Website Editor

Email: geordiebattle@gmail.com

The Oaklands, Gorst Hill, Rock, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY14 9YR, UK

Tony Dixon, Secretary & Pollen coordinator

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Irene Hopton-Scott, Membership Secretary and Treasurer

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Melvyn Herbert, Editor *Lilies & Related Plants*

Email: lindmelve@yahoo.co.uk

Chris Clennett, Newsletter Editor and representative on RHS Bulb Committee

Email: mac.clennett@btinternet.com

Duncan Coombs, Events and links with botanical and other gardens

Email: dcoombs@warkscol.ac.uk

Gary Davison, Digital media

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EMERITUS MEMBERS

Chris Brickell CBE VMH

Harris Howland (Past Chairman), Rose Voelcker

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

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

OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Janos Agoston, Jamie Compton

Zoom presentations for Autumn

Chris Clennett

This autumn members of the Lily Group have two Zoom presentations to enjoy. The first, given by your Newsletter editor, Chris Clennett, was on 21 September and concerned the genus *Erythronium*. The subject of Chris's PhD studies at Kew Gardens, the presentation showed members the morphological and DNA research undertaken, leading to the Kew Monograph on Dog's tooth violet (Trout lily or Fawn lily in North America).

In cultivation, the lower elevation species are the easier (if that is the right term!) to grow. They require a shade in a maritime climate and are hard to grow where continental conditions prevail, as are the high snow-bound mountain species.

Members can also look forward to a second Zoom presentation in November. This time,

Duncan Coombes will introduce us to the techniques of scaling lily bulbs to create more plants – a valuable skill that could help us preserve and multiply more lilies. Look out for an email detailing how to join the talk soon.



Photograph © Chris Clennett

RHS Lily Group Bulb Auction 2024

Scott Cook

This year we will be running our annual fund raising Bulb Auction via the website www.32auctions.com. This will give members an improved experience, similar to Ebay, with instant notifications to participants email address of any bids. It will make the administration of the auction more manageable and still maximise the money raised for the group.

32auctions has been supporting organisations to raise funds online since 2009 and to take part UK members need only register their email address. No other details are required. I have used the website to donate to other organisations fund raising efforts and have had no problems with spam.

As always, there can be no auction without you, the members', generous donations of bulbs so please send your spare bulbs to:

Andrew Holmes, Strathtummel, 17 Lower Oakfield, PITLOCHRY, PH16 5DS, Scotland from Monday 7th October until Saturday 19th October.

For queries regarding donations Andrew can be contacted on a.m.holmes@btinternet.com

On October 31st, all current UK members will be sent a link via email and by clicking on it you will be able to see the lots available in the upcoming auction. You will then need to ask to participate in the auction by clicking the button on the website. When I confirm the request, the website will send you a confirmation email letting you know you can now participate.

As this part of the auction requires human intervention I would suggest that members do this as early as possible and not leave it until the last day of the auction. If you have questions or

problems with the sign up process, please let me know on gardener272@yahoo.co.uk and I will assist. Fortunately, it is a simpler process to carry out than to explain in words!

The auction will go live at 0900hrs on Saturday November 2nd at which point all those who have asked to participate will be able to place bids on their chosen lots. You will receive an automatic email notification of your bid and be updated if you are outbid at any point. You will no longer have to list five primary and secondary bids. Simply bid on the lots you would like and cross your fingers!

The auction will close at 1700hrs on Saturday November 9th with the winning bidders being automatically notified by 32auctions that they have been successful. This will be followed in the next few days by a Paypal invoice from Irene for the total amount payable, including postage, as in previous years.

Once payment of the Paypal invoice has been made Andrew will pack up and post the lots to the winning bidders. Postage will hopefully be complete by 23rd November.

Good luck to everyone!



The amount of work involved in preparing the annual seed list is prodigious, involving not just ensuring that the seed is received from recipients globally, but that it is then written up in a fully comprehensive list to be dispersed globally. George's role for this charitable group often involves battling with various elements of red tape, not just in this country but far and wide. Fortitude would be the word that comes to mind and is an attitude I have witnessed during our Committee meetings in my several years as a fellow Committee member and past Chair of the RHS Lily Group.

Collectively all those who know George will agree that he is indeed a worthy recipient of this year's Lyttel Cup.

The Lyttel cup is awarded to an individual for worthy work leading to the encouragement of the cultivation of *Lilium*, *Fritillaria* and *Nomocharis*. It was first given in 1939 to celebrate work done by enthusiasts of these genera and although now sometimes a biennial event, it remains a high honour within the RHS lily group. Today, of course, *Nomocharis* is part of *Lilium*, so is included there.

George Battle is the compiler and co-ordinator of the seed list for the RHS Lily Group. He is also the webmaster, who frequently updates the Lily Group's website and like Hans Sloane in the 18th C and Joseph Banks half a century later, sits at the heart of a hub that connects lily enthusiasts around the world.

As master of seeds for the group, George is in the best possible position to communicate with fellow lily growers and tirelessly deals with members queries, often directing them to the right source of knowledge if he cannot answer a query himself.

