

Gardening Group

March Report by Sue Holmes

An enthusiastic gardener, broadcaster and speaker on all things horticultural, not my words, but I think it described our speaker Sarah Hopps perfectly.

Sarah ran a nursery for 14 years which she laughingly said was a definite learning curve, but now spends her time giving talks, at shows doing question time sessions and escorting gardening holiday tours. Perennials are her favourite plants, and she brought a few along to share with us. Sarah's best piece of advice, do not buy on impulse, check the conditions required. Right plant, right place.

We were taken on a whirlwind tour of UK gardens, again her advice, do not try to do too many gardens, sit and enjoy, wear suitable footwear and in our climate rainwear and umbrella. To start our tour we headed north, Floors Castle, then on to Edinburgh, Palm House, the Botanic gardens have so many zones, Drummond Castle, Italian gardens, Branklin alpines, Speyside, drab house but beautiful gardens, Castle of May quirky reminders of the Queen Mother. Inverewe Gardens – unbelievable - warmed by the Gulf Stream. Ayrshire had a high unemployment rate, Prince Charles taking over Dumfries House to create employment for local people. Northumberlandia's creator has his own private garden, along the same lines, Logan botanic tropical gardens. Across the water to Ireland, Mountsteward formal gardens, Dublin and Helen Dillon's former garden, Power Court, Japanese garden, Bantry Bay with its many pots. Back to the mainland, North Wales Bodin, Laburnum walk and ravine, Portmerion gardens, Linden gardens with fabulous views of Powis Castle and its micro climates, National Botanical garden of Wales, similar to Eden project. Over to the totally tropical Isles of Scilly, where the first handkerchief tree was grown. Abbotsberry, splendid gardens, Sussex prairie cleared by fire, not to be tried at home. Chris Lloyd's Gt. Dixter changing displays using pots and the sunken garden packed with plants, Sissinghurst formal designs soften by the planting. RHS Wisley, perfection, everything labelled, Beth Chatto pioneering gardener. Wells and the lady farmer who pinched farmland to create a prairie garden even changing the colour of the cows. Roy Strong's very personal garden, the National Arboretum, Wollerton Old Hall beautiful gardens, Tatton Park. And back to our own beautiful part of the world, Fountains Abbey, Newby Hall, Thorp Perrow, and ending with Hannah's Meadow.

If anyone interested in joining Sarah on one of her tours, they are organised by Deidre Brown Travel, Benningbrough (deidrebrowntravel.com)

Friday, 3rd May. Stainton Village Hall. 1.45pm Members Afternoon/Bring and Buy.

Friday, 7th June. Visit to Scampston Walled Garden and Hall

Friday, 5th July. Visit to Tudor Croft (Guisborough) and Wynyard Hall

Friday, 2nd August. Visit to Helmsley Walled Garden.

Friday, 6th September. Visit to Jarrow Hall and Halls of Heddon (nursery)

For more information about garden visits contact – Pauline Fawcett on 01833 638020.