



121 YEARS

CHS NEWS

October 2024

In joy or sadness flowers are our constant friends.

Kakuzō Okakura

CONTENTS

Monthly meeting	1
Monthly outing	1
Welcome to	1
From the Committee	1
Gone, but not forgotten	2
Report-back	3
• Exhibits	
• Garden Day	
Recommended reading	6
Meeting places	7
As a matter of interest	8

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 4 November 2024 at 19:30 at The Athenaeum

Members: No entrance fee

Visitors: R30 per person

Next month's speaker needs no introduction. He has become a household name and gardening celebrity. Leon Kluge will be telling us about his multi-award-winning exhibit at ...

CHELSEA 2024

OUTINGS

Sat, 10 November at 14.30 – visit the garden of member, Anne Gleeson, in Upper Kenilworth.

The house is a 1930's double-storey Arts and Crafts style and the garden is shady and surrounded by trees. The previous owner was a horticulturist and created the structure although a lot of the plantings have changed since then. It is a challenging garden because of the trees and shrubs needing

constant thinning or trimming back and some beds getting no sun during winter and then very hot sun in summer. There are lots of old *Azaleas*, *Rhododendrons*, *Plectranthus* and *Heliotrope*. Leaves are just left to compost naturally under the trees and logs used as features. You can also see *Clivia*, *Aspidistra*, herbs and a few vegetables and raised beds of lavender for the bees.

Limited to 20 members. RSVP to Glenda by 7 November.

WELCOME TO ...

... Fiona Pape. We hope that membership of the CHS will bring her as much pleasure and knowledge as it does the rest of our members.

FROM THE COMMITTEE

On the Tech front: The Facebook and Instagram pages are working well, with regular updates via Jenny Liedtke. The website is currently being revised and will soon 'go live'. Claire Shaban will be training 3 committee members to manage it in future.

On the PR front: We are busy producing a poster for advertising ourselves at nurseries. There will soon be a new look for advertising talks and outings.

On the Portfolio front: Cherise Viljoen will co-ordinate Speakers in future, supported by Belinda du Rand. Anne Gleeson will arrange Outings. Any suggestions you have for either good speakers or interesting private gardens, please pass this information on to these three ladies.

On the Nursery Table front: Next year we are considering swapping our nursery table for a raffle table – members bring prizes, tickets are sold, and lucky tickets are drawn according to the number of prizes available. Please let us know if you have any thoughts on this idea.

On the Committee front: If you would like to join us in helping run the Society, please let Glenda know. We welcome fresh ideas and support in all we do.

On the Public Events front: Our first ever Garden Day event, together with FOTAG, held at Arderne Gardens was very enjoyable and successful. We are hoping to make this an annual event and to tap into the huge social media campaign, as run by the Garden Day Team. [See page 3]

On the Member front: Apart from the CHS having Ordinary Members, some of whom are elected to the Committee, there are also Honorary Life Members [see the footer on page 1]. This appointment is for “... persons, whether ordinary members or not, who have rendered outstanding service to the Society or to horticulture and have been elected as such at an Annual General Meeting”.

GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

MIKE BYREN

A past CHS member who claimed to have been the longest ‘serving’ member, having joined the CHS in his twenties, passed away last month. He was an acclaimed orchid grower, and also exhibited for many years at our flower shows. His judging expertise was called for on many occasions. He ran, at one time, his Wildroot nursery from his house. The Byrens were next door neighbours to the Ackermans. When Mike and Sylvia moved, the Ackermans bought their property, which is their garden as you see it today. Mike was a very active and long-standing member of the Cape Orchid Society.

Our condolences go to Sylvia and family.

JIM HOLMES

A tribute by John van der Linde, a member of IBSA and the Clivia and Cape Horticultural societies

“It was probably in the late 1990s that I first came across Jim’s name. I went to a plant sale at his nursery where he was selling a batch of the then still rare yellow Clivias. He was pointed out to me by one of my Clivia Club friends.

Later when my wife and I went to shows like those of the Orchid Society and the Cape Horticultural Society (CHS), we often saw the name “J. Holmes” among the top prize winners.

I eventually put two and two together. This J. Holmes person was not just a hobbyist, like most of the other exhibitors, but was the very same professional at whose commercial nursery I had bought my yellow Clivia.

When I joined IBSA (Indigenous Bulbs of South Africa) I met the man behind the plants.

I recall him telling me about himself, that he had come from Canada as a young man and had worked as a horticulturist near Stellenbosch.

Jim started his own business in the late 1970s with the name Cape Seed and Bulbs.

Whilst Jim had a “bread and butter” business to run, he multi-tasked. He also had the most amazing talent and love for propagating difficult, interesting and rare plants. He really had “green fingers”. He corresponded and exchanged plant material with people around the world. As I discovered, Jim was in fact well-known in the wider horticultural world and not just in South Africa.

At monthly IBSA meetings Jim usually brought in trays of bulbous plants in flower, all meticulously labelled. As members gathered around the plant table to listen and to learn, he would explain their origins and how to grow them.

The plants that he brought were mostly indigenous but there were the occasional exotics like his rare Peruvian daffodil. If Jim had a special favourite, it probably was Oxalis. He had a collection of species from all over.

Many have bought from Jim at the annual Rare Plant Sales. His stall was always popular. Jim made a cross between two *Cyrtanthus* species (neither of which flowered well). His new cross, “Cape Bells”, flowered really well and many people have them today.

Jim supported the meetings and Shows of a number of plant groups. To mention but one, he regularly exhibited at the annual CHS Flower Shows, winning trophies in many categories. Over the years, his exhibiting turned to selling

plants at their shows and also to putting on stunning displays of his beautiful plants. They were always an attraction and a visual delight to all who attended.

Jim was one of a kind, a top plantsman yet a real gentleman, humble enough to give time to any keen beginner. It was a privilege to know Jim. IB SA members are among many who will miss him.

Jim's passing is a great loss to the world of horticulture. Our sympathies go out to Ann and family."

Jim joined the CHS in the mid-1990s and was a very keen exhibitor at our flower shows. Because of his extensive knowledge and contribution to horticulture the world over, the Committee was in the process of approving Jim Holmes for Honorary Life Membership. Sadly, this was not to be as he passed away on 30 September 2024.

For those who do not know the process, a CHS member who considers a person worthy of being an Honorary Member [see On the Member front, page 2], shall submit a written nomination to the Honorary Secretary. This nomination will be put before the Committee and, should the Committee approve, its recommendation shall be submitted to the next ensuing Annual General Meeting. Should the nomination not be approved, no reference to the nomination shall be made at any general meeting, and the reasons for non-approval will not be given to the member who submitted the name.

REPORT BACK

October Exhibits

Indigenous:



Clivia miniata "Green Tanchoo x Hattori – Rabbit' – hybrid seed grown; first flower. [Top row, left]

Crassula ovata – small bush in pot; medium watering. [Top row, centre]

Freesia laxa – spreading each year.

Salvia "black and blue" – large bush to 1½ m; hard pruning back; usually looks dead but suddenly pops out.

Acokanthera oblongifolia(?) – young new leaves are red; scented flowers; milky sap – poisonous. [Top row, right]

Pelargonium fulgens X – spreading; waterwise.

Ivy *Pelargonium*

Senecio elegans – indigenous annual; usually has bright purple-pink flowers, but this year a few have white flowers. Collect seed when the plant starts dying in summer; sow autumn.

Ixia hybrid

Leucospermum conocarpedendron “Green Tree Pincushion” – a species, not a hybrid; widespread on the southern Peninsula; easy to grow; adapts to different soils but grows slowly.

Pelargonium ‘Regal’ hybrid – long-lived; grows quite tall; needs to be cut back in autumn; looks really good if allowed to scramble up in amongst the branches of a bigger shrub. [Above, 2nd row, left]

Schotia brachypetala “Weeping Boer Bean” – growing on pavement; flowers now (seeds from last year’s crop). [2nd row, centre]

Haworthia retusa(?) [2nd row, right]

Exotic:

Odontonema strictum

Argyranthemum ‘Margeurite’ – grows to waist height; gets late morning sun till evening; prune back after flowering; grows easily from soft wood cuttings.

Raphiolepis indica “Indian Hawthorn” – now up to a metre after approx. 2 years; waterwise; copes with total shade in winter and medium sun in summer.

Malus floribunda? “Crab Apple” – full sun all day; blooms from late winter.

Ceanothus (species or cultivar unknown) “Californian Lilac” – originally from California, USA, so it does best in a mediterranean climate; slow-growing, but spectacular in flower (Spring only).

Azalea – flowers in Spring; grows in the shady part of the garden; given general feeding and acidic compost; it is important to water well in the hot summer months.

Campanula (Campanulaceae) “Bell flowers” – the leaves are alternate with larger, broader ones at the base of the stem and smaller, narrower leaves higher up; flowers have 5 petals, mostly blue to purple (can be pink or white); flowers nearly all year. They have been growing in my garden since I moved in 18 years ago.

Buddleia salvifolia



Left to right: *Ceanothus*; *Azalea*; *Campanula*; *Buddleia*

Garden Day

On Sunday, 20 October, we celebrated this day, together with FOTAG, and had a picnic on the lawn of Arderne Gardens, then taken on a tour of the gardens by Paul Barker. Everyone was asked to adorn their head or hat with something floral – and these were a feast for the eyes. Prizes were awarded for The Most Fascinating, The Biggest and Boldest, The Most Indigenous, The Most Diverse Indigenous and The Most Delicate headgear.





RECOMMENDED READING

THE PLANT HUNTERS by Toby Musgrave, Chris Gardner and Will Musgrave

Submitted by Jean Fillis

Thousands of us enjoy gardening and visiting parks and gardens. Yet few of us stop to wonder where the plants come from, and fewer still think about how these plants came to be here in the first place. How many of us know that the explorer who found over 300 Rhododendron species was one of two survivors of a party attacked in an uprising, that the man responsible for establishing the tea industry in India singlehandedly fought a gun battle with pirates and that the plant hunter who introduced many conifers was gored to death by a bull in a pit. Many also survived hunger, disease, hyperthermia, drowning and being attacked by indigenous tribes.

Yet, they still set sail to the unknown. One of the earlier explorers was Sir Joseph Banks. He was born in 1743 into the Aristocracy in Lincolnshire, became interested in plants by 13, and studied Botany at Oxford. He became one of the richest young men in Britain at age 21 when he inherited his father's estate and decided to take a different course to the other rich young men who went on the Grand European Tour in their Gap year. He was hired as a Naturalist on an 8-month long Fisheries expedition to Canada. His collection from the trip was the basis for his Herbarium and is now in the British Museum of Natural History.

2 years later, he joined Captain James Cook on his first circumnavigation. He paid 10,000 pounds (which was 2 years income from his estate) for himself and 9 others including a Swedish naturalist, a draughtsman and 2 artists of whom only 2 survived besides Banks. 94 men, including a troop of marines, set off in a flat-bottomed wooden sailing ship measuring only 32 metres by 9 metres. They sailed to Madeira, then to Rio, where the Portuguese refused to allow them to land. Banks made secret night trips and collected over 300 plants before they left to round Cape Horn, then across to Tahiti, where the natives were very friendly.

Here Cook observed the transit of Venus, the main task of the expedition, which was hoped to improve navigation. He had been asked by the king to look for the Southern Continent, so they set off for New Zealand, which they fortunately found after 3 months at sea. They circled around for 6 months, stopping off at likely spots to replenish and collect plants as the crew had suffered infested food, Scurvy and disease on the long voyage. Banks was amazed at the size of the tree ferns and collected 40 new species and 360 new plants, even though some of the Maori tribes were friendly, most were aggressive.

They were then fortunate to find Australia and they sailed up the East coast, where they stopped at Botany Bay and collected many well-known species, including the Banksia, Waratah, Acacia, Grevilleas, Eucalyptus and Acacias. Finally, the ship struck one of the many coral reefs, nearly sank, but was finally refloated, leaking badly, but a suitable beach was found 6 days later, and it was repaired. The next stop was Java, where they found the area infested with Malaria mosquitoes which caused so many deaths that by the time the ship reached Cape Town in March they had lost more than half of the original crew. The ship finally arrived back in Britain in 1771, nearly 3 years after starting the voyage. Banks spent the next year collating and doing a detailed study of his dried plants- he had collected 1300 new species and 11 new genera. However, he had not brought back live seed or plants as he was only a scientist at that time.

A year later Cook started planning his 2nd trip around the world and Banks wanted to join him again. The admiralty refused as he wanted to bring his pack of greyhounds and his private orchestra along. King George the Third had inherited Kew and appointed Banks as his Scientific Advisor which enabled him to send Francis Masson on Cook's voyage in his place. As you read last month in the newsletter, Masson spent 3 years in the Cape and collected live plants and seeds for Kew. Over time, Banks persuaded the King to open his private grounds to Plant Science and collected rare plants from around the world. His idea of exchanging commercial crops with British colonies helped them to emerge as a world power although it led to the exploitation of humans and natural resources as well. Banks was the President of the Royal Society for 42 years until his death aged 77.

He is credited with introducing over 7000 new species and his greatest gift to the average gardener is his creation of a systematic and worldwide plant hunting programme that ensured that thousands of new plants would become available across the world.

MEETING PLACES

The earliest written record of CHS meetings starts in 1924. The 22nd AGM was held in the Argus Board Room in June of that year. Committee meetings at that time were held in the Board Room of Grant, Grant and Company.

By way of a change, the 1926 AGM was held in the Reception Room of the City Hall at 3.30pm! An exhibition of 12, 9 and 6 roses, distinct, was to be held at the same time.

Over the years venues for meetings seemed to be the workplace of the Chairman at the time. These continued to be at Grant, Grant and Company, Adderley Street; also General Estate and Orphan Chamber Board Room; at the South African Association, Church Square, Cape Town for a while; at the Cape Times; the Mountain Club Room, Yorkshire House, Strand Street, Cape Town; Minor Rondebosch Town Hall; and Kirstenbosch Hall from 1951.

It is not clear whether monthly general meetings were held in the early days. It seemed the focus was more on organising flower shows and being invited, by the likes of Lady Phillips of Vergelegen, Mr JW Jagger of Lourensford, or Miss Struben in Rhodes Avenue, for the committee to hold an 'at home' (possibly the forerunner to our outings) for CHS members.

The Honourable J. W. Jagger, M.L.A., has kindly consented to place "Lourensford," Somerset West, at the disposal of the Committee of the Cape Horticultural Society, who will be at home to members of the Society on Saturday afternoon, Jan. 23rd, between the hours 3 to 5.30 p.m.



R.S.V.P.
Hon. Secretary,
P.O. Box 2345.

TEA.

FOR the convenience of Members a char-a-banc will leave the Tramway Office, Darling Street, at 2 p.m. (Return Fare 8/-) provided there is sufficient demand for this mode of conveyance.

As it is necessary to make the final arrangement I shall be glad if you will advise me immediately, enclose the fare, should you desire to engage a seat or seats.

The return journey will be commenced at 5.30 p.m.

Miss Struben has kindly consented to place her Garden, "Luncarty," Rhodes Avenue, Claremont, at the disposal of the Committee of the Cape Horticultural Society, who will be at home to members of the Society on Tuesday afternoon, Nov. 17th, between the hours 3 to 5.30 p.m.



TEA.
R.S.V.P.
Hon. Secretary,
P.O. Box 2345.

MOTOR BUSES FROM NEWLANDS
AT 3, 3.20, 3.40, 4 AND 4.20 P.M.



The Kirstenbosch Hall (presumably the former Sanlam Hall and currently the Richard Crowie Hall) was used as a meeting place for 23 years and another 26 for the annual CHS Flower Shows.

In June 1974, a change of meeting venue was suggested. It seemed "that Kirstenbosch was not a very popular venue". The Athenaeum was chosen as a possible venue and a Special General Meeting, to discuss changes to the Constitution, was held on 4 November 1974 at 9.30pm, exactly 50 years ago to the day we will hold our November meeting.

The move would incur certain expenditure and was minuted as such at the time [below]. Our current efforts sound like history repeating itself.

... expenditure from funds, the committee felt that this was warranted if it enabled more members to attend the society's meetings. It was generally agreed that the Society should take steps to improve its image and to attract, not only its present members, but gardeners in general in the Southern Suburbs. Prof. Schelpe said that he felt that the function of the Society was to promote horticulture in such a way as to prove itself the premier Horticultural Society in the Western Cape. To this end, a start should be made by sending out monthly news letters, even if this step should be found to involve further cash outlay. In addition Presentation Tables could become a feature of meetings and members could be invited to exhibit unusual or rare specimens from their gardens. Additional activities, such as practical meetings, could be held as and when demanded. In short, the Society should make itself felt by being scientifically horticultural but on a level helpful to and understood by the layman. Mr. Chunnett said that, in matters horticultural, he

AS A MATTER OF INTEREST ...

- **Video camera** – does anyone have a camera they no longer use and would like to donate to the CHS? We have been borrowing one up to now.
- **Senecio elegans** – Isabella Hayden has seeds for this indigenous annual [right]. They should be sown in autumn. These seeds will be available at the next meeting.
- **End of year Christmas party** – this will be held on 2 December. We will be looking for prizes for a raffle that evening. More details will follow shortly.
- **Ceropegia sideralis** – the British Cactus and Succulent Society journal, Cactus World, has published the finding and identification of this species. Susan Armstrong and her sister, Sally Hey, have spent the last three years observing and recording the growth of this plant. Unfortunately, the publication of this article was done without their knowledge or consultation.



This article may be of interest to you. It is very familiar to the ongoing poaching situation here.

[British succulent society chair quits over row about taking specimens from wild | Plants | The Guardian](#)

- **Bees talking to plants:** A recent episode of Gardeners World featured two of Bristol University's scientists, Prof Jane Memmott and Prof Daniel Robert, showing how plants communicate with bees and other pollinators to encourage them to visit their flowers. Some plants have devised ways to show which flowers have already been pollinated and have no nectar left in them, and some use electrostatic charges to attract pollinators and to "push" pollen onto them.

Watch this interesting piece, [gardeners world 2024 episode 28 - YouTube](#). Forward to the 7:50 minute mark if you don't want to watch the entire episode.

Watch [gardeners world 2024 episode 30 - YouTube](#) as episode 30 continues the exploration of how plants communicate with insect pollinators. Forward to the 5:45 minute mark.

