



## **BSBA Newsletter, August 2026**

### **A few words from Penny, our chair:**

By the time this Newsletter reaches you we might at last have had some rain which will be a relief to all the gardeners amongst us. If this is a taste of things to come, perhaps a topic for a future exhibition should be 'Drought-tolerant Plants'. Anyway, whatever the weather throws at us during August, I hope our various trips on Thursdays in lieu of meeting at St. Andrews are a success. It's a bit of an experiment so we'll have to wait and see if it's worth repeating. Please let a member of the committee know if you would like a lift. In the meantime, try to keep cool, keep painting and, if we don't see you in August, don't forget that we start again at St. Andrews on 3 September.

Best wishes  
Penny

Sadly, long standing member of BSBA, Rose Warville, passed away in May. Rose was a much-valued member of the group. We shall miss her both for her bold, distinctive art work and also for the encouragement she gave to other members of the group, always with a smile and sense of fun. Our thoughts are with her family at this time. (Janet)

Rose was a great collector of botanical art books which her family have very generously given to BSBA for use by members. These books, along with art materials including books, brushes and paints from Lilla Streether's collection, will be available for members to take in return for small donations at Jan Robertson's Summer Tea Party on August 13. All money donated will be given to Dorothy House. Please come armed with cash! The beautiful butterfly painting at the top of this newsletter was painted by Lilla as were these paintings which were on show at a recent celebration of Lilla's life:



Thank you, Lyn, for the photos.

The **BSBA Calendar** has been produced each year since the group was formed. However, this year is the first time that we have not had enough pictures submitted to form a calendar. Please look through your stash of completed work or use the hot weather as an excuse to sit in a cool room and paint something new for next year's calendar. The submission date has been extended until 3 September when we return to meet at St Andrews.

From Kathy Needs:

**'In Bloom' How Plants Changed our World** at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

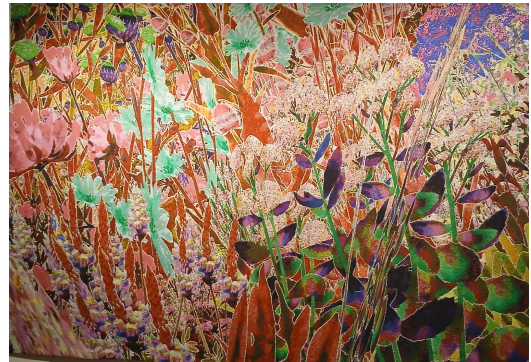
The information we were given about this Exhibition was: 'It asks what do we really know about the plants and flowers in our gardens and window boxes? Beyond their beauty many have hidden histories, tales of exploration, obsession and knowledge'

I really didn't know what to expect when I arrived or how long it would take to view. The Exhibition was displayed over four rooms and was a mixture of art works and objects including drawings, paintings, rare prints and ceramics, some exhibits were interactive which included smelling 'roses', 'tea' and 'opium'! It took two hours to browse the exhibits, which was much more than just viewing over 100 artworks! I was particularly fascinated by the pressed flower diaries dating back over 300 years.

The final room was thought provoking, especially the splendid tapestries by Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg which simulated the vision of bees and butterflies as they encounter an artwork of flowers in early spring and midsummer from her award winning 'Pollinators Pathmaker'. Also, in this final room were displays by Justine Smith, working with paper and currently using 'banknotes' to display plants and flowers from her 'Nature' series. I was fascinated by her work!

There was so much more to this Exhibition than just viewing Botanical Art, it contained many different views and thoughts about art and plants and the people who made it possible for us to enjoy our world of plants and flowers.

An excellent day out!



Thank you for this Kathy and for the photographs of Justine Smith's paper bank note flowers (left) and Alexandra Ginsberg's beautiful tapestries (detail right).

When I visited the 'In Bloom' exhibition I was impressed by the historical links going back to the Tradescant family in the C16 and their links to the London Garden Museum and formation of the Ashmolean Museum itself. One wall contained a very large, interesting 'family tree' of the most influential plant hunters who have made our gardens what they are today. (Janet)



If you have not already been to the exhibition there are only a few days to catch it as it ends on 16 August.

## Laura Silburn Workshop:



From Lyn:

We had a great workshop with Laura Silburn on May 15th. She brought lots of foliage and fruit, and we were happy little painting nerds spending the whole day mixing greens. While Laura wasn't against buying ready mixed greens, she explained that because we are unaware of the composition of the colours in a particular tube or pan (for example sap green or olive green etc) it is subsequently difficult to vary that pre-mixed paint to match a leaf, and it can produce very unexpected results.

She is teaching a clear method to mix greens from three primary colours and then uses a chart to adapt the results to match the plant you are painting. Laura starts with three brightest primaries, explaining that you can always dull greens down, but if you start dull (with a stronger red element) you can never brighten up your subject later. Thanks to Rosie and Theresa for organising the day.

Thank you, Annabel, for the photographs above of Laura Silburn's workshop on 'Mixing Greens' which was held in May. I did not attend the workshop but hear that it was a very successful day. I did however subscribe to Julia Trickey's Botanical Art talk in July where Laura demonstrated her method of mixing greens. Laura's work relies heavily on shades of green, she paints a lot of ferns, and she has evolved her own method of mixing all shades of green from a basic principle using just three primary colours. The colours that she particularly recommends are Cadmium Yellow, Winsor Blue and permanent Alizarin Crimson. Laura demonstrated how to make a basic colour chart, the top row made up of ten squares mixed from only yellow and blue which give the purest, brightest greens. Working down the chart the smallest amounts of red pigment are added to the top row colours to give fifty shades of greens from lime through blue and brown to grey. By matching the leaf or fruit to be painted to a square on the chart one can work out exactly how to mix the required colour. A very logical way to look at colour

mixing. Very generously Laura has allowed students to print out a copy of her chart to work from – although it would be excellent practice to make our own chart! (Janet)

## **RHS Bridgewater**

A short stay in Manchester in July enabled me to visit RHS Bridgewater the Society's newest garden and described as a 'modern garden in a historic setting.' The garden is situated on the site of the former Worsley New Hall in Salford, Greater Manchester. Landscape architect Tom Stuart-Smith created the masterplan for the garden and other award-winning garden designers have brought 'gardens within a garden' to life. At the heart of the garden is an 11-acre walled garden which is one of the largest Victorian walled gardens in the UK. Built to service Worsley New Hall (demolished in the 1940's) it contained a series of kitchen gardens to grow fruit and vegetables. The restored walled garden now contains a large kitchen garden and a paradise garden at its centre, surrounded by a series of smaller gardens serving the local community. These include the Peel learning garden, Community Grow, Community Wellbeing and the Orchard Garden with its bee and butterfly garden.

Creating a new garden has enabled the RHS to implement a green ethos throughout the site. Examples of this include the use of insulating green roofs, water saving measures and use of recycled materials. The site is large and includes lakes, woodland, glasshouses and a Chinese water garden with a pagoda now nearing completion. As usual with RHS gardens there are enticing plant sales, gift shop and cafes for refreshments. In line with serving the local community one can even take a bus from central Manchester and be dropped outside the garden's welcome building.



The chimney at Bridgewater originally used to heat the glass houses and a view of the kitchen garden.

### **From Jan:**

Not all news is bad!

A UK biotech startup has developed a sustainable way of satisfying the demand for palm oil which is used in everything from chocolate to shampoo. The company is

producing 'lab-grown' palm oil in a former sugar factory on Merseyside. The Clean Food Group says its product is chemically identical to pure palm oil but can be made in giant vats using waste products such as leftover bread.

### **Tree of the year:**

Ten trees that have withstood everything from cannon fire to a plane crash are in line to be named 'Tree of the Year 2026' by the Woodland Trust. The shortlist includes the Crowhurst Yew in Surrey whose estimated age is c. 4,000 years. In 1820 villagers discovered a cannonball embedded in the trunk thought to have been fired by Cromwell's troops. You can vote for your choice of tree from the shortlist by visiting [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)  
(Janet)

### **Workshops and courses:**

13 November: BSBA day workshop at St. Andrews Hall with Julia Trickey.

The BSBA Committee are trying to arrange for Simon Williams to give a workshop, this is likely to be in May 2027. Further details of these workshops will be sent out to members soon.

Fungi: Drawing and painting mushrooms, 8-9 October 2026 with Lucy T. Smith at RGB Kew. See the Kew Website for details [www.kew.org](http://www.kew.org)

Introduction to Botanical Drawing, 3-4 October 2026 with Mhorag McDowall at Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh. See details of this and more courses at [www.rbgeshop.org](http://www.rbgeshop.org)

Introduction to botanical painting – pears, 14 September 2026, with Liz Shipman at West Dean, KLC School of Design, London. [www.westdean.ac.uk](http://www.westdean.ac.uk)

### **Websites of interest:**

[www.juliatrickey.co.uk](http://www.juliatrickey.co.uk)

for full details of Julia's courses and online Botanical Talks

[www.illustratingnaturesdetails.com](http://www.illustratingnaturesdetails.com)

for details of Sarah Morrish's courses. Sarah has gravitated away from strictly botanical subjects and is now illustrating natural history subjects. Stunning birds, worth a look!

### **Exhibitions:**

*Henry Moore: Monumental Nature* is running until 31 January 2027 at Kew Gardens. The exhibition invites visitors to explore the powerful relationship between sculpture and

the natural world. The Shirley Sherwood Gallery has an exhibition of work from her collection, entitled: *Monumental Botanical Art* complementing the perspectives shown in Moore's work.

The Society of Botanical Artists will be holding Plantae 2027 at the Mall Galleries in London from 10 June to 19 June. Calls for work will open 9 September 2026.

For full details see [www.soc-botanical-artists.org](http://www.soc-botanical-artists.org)

Curzon alerts us to the following exhibition at the Russell- Cotes Museum in Bournemouth. 'Flower fairies: Enchantment by the Sea. The exhibition runs until 4 October. <https://russellcotes.com/event/flower-fairies/>

Josie White gave the BSBA exhibition "The Lifecycle of Plants" a plug with her article in The Society of Botanical Artists publication where she detailed her work involved in producing her paintings for the exhibition.



(Apologies for the poor quality of reproduction)

### **August outings – Dates for your diary**

Please remember that we are **suspending painting for the month of August** and are instead having a few outings, friends very welcome to join in:

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|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6 <sup>th</sup> August 2026  | The Botanical Gardens, Bath, 10.30 for 11am<br>Meet at the coffee kiosk in the Gardens. The kiosk is situated near to the gate at the north of the garden. |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> August 2026 | 'Tea in the Garden' at Jan Robertson's, 2 – 5pm                                                                                                            |

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| 20 <sup>th</sup> August 2026 | 'Special Plants', Greenway Lane, Cold Ashton, Chippenham<br>SN14 8LA<br>Open under the NGS scheme – entry £7.00<br>Meet for coffee there at 10.30 |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> August 2026 | The Courts, Holt (National Trust)<br>Meet inside for coffee at 11.00am                                                                            |

And once again don't forget about the BSBA exhibition running all season at **Bowood House and Gardens**. If you have visitors to entertain this summer, or just want a day out, Bowood is always an interesting and lovely place to visit and serves a splendid afternoon tea.

Stay cool in the heat,

Janet

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