

1st December

Winter

SPOTLIGHT EAST

Newsletter for Members the East of England Area of
NAFAS

Welcome to the Winter 2024 edition of our Area newsletter; full of news of the events, celebrations & festivals that fill the last months of the year, leading up to the "Festive Season" But first we have some late summer items that missed the 1st September deadline – too late to include last time, but too good to miss.

Aylsham & District Flower Club

Some members of Aylsham and District Flower Club decorated the Flower Marquee at the Aylsham Show in Blickling Park this year. They have been doing this for several years and have raised thousands of pounds for charity. Each year there is a different theme, this year was "Happiness is..." and each member decided on their own interpretation. Some titles were "gardening", "playing board games", "my imagination" and of course "flower arranging."

A different charity is chosen each time, this year it was Big C. At the end of the day Tom from "Ireland's" auctioned off all the arrangements to a very generous crowd of show attendees, taking over £1200.



The Aylsham show gives us money for the flowers, the committee came up with the "Happiness is" theme then each arranger decided on their subject and interpretation. Obviously they shared their ideas to make sure things weren't duplicated. We all staged our own exhibits; the show supplied the marquee and bases. Some members plan together what they are going to do. The Aylsham show is a one day agricultural and rural show held in the grounds of Blickling Hall, all the usual country show things, livestock, two rings and loads of stalls, circus, fairground rides. It's always a lovely, well attended day, over 15,000 people this year.

Words & photos Lynne Burrell,

At the end of August members of **Feering Flower Club** took part in the nearby flower festival at Coggeshall Church, as they have been doing for many years.. Because of the timing of the show, their report & photographs often miss the deadline for the September 1st Spotlight. This year we decided to include them in this December issue along with other Late Summer /Autumn Festivals which were too good to leave out.

This year's theme was the "The Parables of Jesus", an unusual & demanding title to interpret. It's not easy to tell a story through flower arrangements, but the designers rose to the challenge, filling large spaces with beautiful, well researched "floral stories".



Photographs Beverly Moore

1 The Unforgiving Servant – Karen Bartholomew 2. Pearl of Great Price - Sylvie Cooper 3. Building a Tower, Counting the Cost - Sue Bunting 4. The Rich Man & Lazarus Jayne Lawson

Members of **Dereham & District Flower Club** took part in the 'Memorable Journeys' flower festival in our local Church over the bank holiday weekend at the end of August, along with Church arrangers and local Florists. It was a great success and raised over £4,200 towards the Church's building project and received rave reviews in the local press and from visitors.

The title was unusual, giving scope for interpretation on so many different levels: some represented actual journeys to favourite destinations; others included journeys through life; some were light hearted, some reflective. There was really something for everyone - no wonder it was so popular.



Here are some of our members' creations highlighting some fabulous talent. Some members were creating large exhibits for the first time and they absolutely smashed it!

Helen Evans, Chairman, Dereham & District Flower Club

More photos on following page



Top left - Jacqui Aldous- "Ipswich Town's Journey to the Premiership

Bottom left - Ian Nickerson – "A Florist's Lifetime Journey"

Centre - Penny Howes – "The Circle of Life – Everyday is a Memorable Journey"

Right - Jan Lawler "Scott's Journey to the Antarctic"

Memories of Summer – Flower Club Outings

Beverly Moore, Herts & Essex Boundary Flower Club writes:

"What a wonderful time we had on our visit today at **Rochford's International Rose Trial Grounds near Hertford**. The weather was glorious. We enjoyed coffee & biscuits on arrival and looking forward to what was to come even if the roses were now at the end of their growing season; but there was a reason for visiting this late in the season as you will see from the later photos.

Rochfords International Rose Trials trial roses on behalf of rose breeders from across the world. Varieties which are not yet commercially available are submitted to trial by the breeders. They are the only independent trials site in the UK which trials unnamed seedling roses providing a unique opportunity for rose enthusiasts to view and judge roses not yet available & today on our visit we were able to be judges for ourselves. Kerry explained what the judge has to look for based on the Rose Health, Flower, Overall Appearance & Scent.

“ We all set off with our clip boards; for some getting down to smell the roses had us bending low and needing help to get back up again but it was fun. All of the roses judged, it was time for a light lunch and an opportunity to ask questions about anything to do with roses, Kerry is so knowledgeable.

It was soon time for us to pick up our secateurs/scissors as we were given the ok to prune or pick any of the roses. The beds with roses that had been grown for 3 years were a popular row and our members had great fun snipping away.”



Members of the club later shared their designs using Rochfords roses on the club Facebook page.

“We learnt a lot about roses today and all thanks to Kerry who tends the Roses beds by herself and also to Katy Rockford for her hospitality. We have been invited back next year in June when the roses will be looking even more plentiful.

A great day out”

Beverly Moore .

Visit to Beth Chatto's garden in Colchester –

We had a great day at Beth Chatto's beautiful garden in Colchester in September. We were so lucky with the weather which proved perfect for viewing the different gardens. The plant centre was popular with our members and quite a few plants came back to Norfolk with us. To top it all off, we had a lovely raffle on the coach on the way home. Highly recommend visiting Beth's garden at any time of the year.



Smashing Pumpkins

The Harvest season isn't complete without a display of arrangements in pumpkins. Here we feature **Aylsham & District Flower Club** who held a "hands-on" working evening for their club meeting in October. Members were briefed in advance about what mechanics & flowers to bring, with the option of cleaning out the pumpkin at home if they preferred.

It was a lovely workshop meeting with Crystal Dyball (Club Chairman) demonstrating a pumpkin arrangement and then members making their own. It is always amazing how different they all look when they're finished. There was lots of time to chat to people as well as being creative. Crystal not only provided inspiration, but a fun, friendly evening. There was a suggestion that members might like to eat the pumpkins later



Dereham & District Harvest

A few members of the Flower Club helped decorate St Nicholas Church in Dereham for Harvest Festival in September. It's always a privilege to decorate this beautiful Church



Left Val Fisher ; Centre Jan Lawler, Top Right Helen Evans ;
Bottom right Lavinia Pirett

Our members do about half of the displays, some advanced arrangers and some still relatively new to flower arranging. The arrangements are a nice mixture of the font flowers, pedestals and windowsills. All the exhibits were fabulous and as ever, I'm very proud of our talented members; they never disappoint.

Helen Evans, Chairman, Dereham & District Flower Club

Ely Harvest Festival

This year's theme for the mid-October Harvest Festival was "Home & Garden". Our Wisbech team (of the Ely Flower Guild) led by Lesley Beeton were asked to depict an allotment in front of the Altar in the Lady Chapel.

A display of vegetables, including a giant pumpkin, took pride of place, creating a focal point in the centre, surrounded by floral depictions of an Allotment by Ann, Veronica, Christine and Lesley. Christine's husband Colin "made" the shed for us.



The whole event is a spectacular celebration of the Harvest. We are very proud of what we have achieved - making designs in a stunning setting.

Lesley Beeton, Kings Lynn Group

Norwich Flower Club

As part of our celebration of Joyce's presidency, we enjoyed a Halloween themed coffee morning yesterday with delicious M&S treats. After viewing some interesting Norwich Flower Club memorabilia including medals and photo albums, we had the pleasure of Brenda Tubb demonstrating for us. She created some beautiful arrangements, whilst regaling us with funny stories including her spaghetti and porridge loving chickens!

Miss Piggy roses, carnations, stocks and a variety of foliage were used in the arrangements.



I was very fortunate and won a gorgeous design in the raffle

We all thoroughly enjoyed our time together as always.

The proceeds will be donated to Joyce's chosen charity LILAC, a cancer charity that works to improve the lives of local people affected by cancer in Norfolk and surrounding counties.

Words & photos Gillian Allen

Herts & Essex Boundary Flower Club

The October meeting was a working evening with the theme 'Harvest'. The usual club competition was also staged. The weather was bad which affected the turnout and table top sales could have helped with more members attending.



Photos Beverly Moore

Loddon Flower Club



Many flower clubs have discontinued the monthly members competition. Loddon is a flower club that regularly holds them, often asking the demonstrator to judge the pieces. Photo ,previous page shows Jenni Baker and autumnal themed competition arrangements from Jenny Frosdick, Penny Mills and Tricia Loades Photo Tricia Loades.

President's Day Saturday 5th October - On a sunny Autumn day a capacity audience gathered at Mildenhall for President's Day and celebrate with Sue Brinton as her term of office comes to a close. We were delighted that Sue's daughter came along to join the celebrations.

The delightful arrangements to welcome members were arranged by Diane Legget, Chairman of the Colchester Group and featured beautiful anthuriums. In the morning we welcomed back precious gem expert Maria Pennington with her presentation on Carl Faberge, the Russian goldsmith and jeweller, best known for creating the exquisite Fabergé eggs

At lunchtime, numerous stalls gave members time to browse, but there was also the opportunity to enjoy the lovely weather outside and watch the beautiful swans with their signets.

After lunch the audience were treated to an amazing demonstration by National Demonstrator Dawn Weaver from Cheshire. Her title was "Artistic Licence". Dawn certainly wowed the audiences with her amazing handmade wicker & bamboo containers and the stunning flowers.

Lavinia Pirett /Brenda Eyers. Photos Lavinia Pirett



JDS&E Judges Training The East of England Area of NAFAS is running a Judges Training Course next year beginning in January. Our Area is only one of two Areas across the UK to run this course. It's something the JDS&E Committee feel is important to enhance the Continuous Professional Development of the Area and further promote the art of flower arranging.

To encourage members to find out more details about the course, an informal and informative taster day took place in Mildenhall. By going along, members found out about the responsibilities and qualities required of a judge and had a go at judging a mock competition and awarding places. They also had a plant ID exercise to test what knowledge they already had. The taster day then helped them decide if they want to take it further.



The mock competition ... Title is "Wood and it be lovely"

(More entries on the next page)

The course will run from January to June 2025 with four day sessions followed by a mock test in May & a Test Day in July. The tutor will be Valerie Best, a National Judge, Adjudicator & instructor with many years' experience.

If you're interested in becoming a judge & taking part in the training, please email steffielaing7@sky.com

Stephanie Laing, Area Judges Representative



More entries in the mock competition ...

Title is "Wood and it be lovely" you decide.

Click onto the JDS&E page on Area website <https://www.nafas-east.com> to find out how the judge ranked the designs

And talking of Judging...

Pip Bensley ,Chairman Wessex & Jersey Area of NAFAS, writes:

“Spent a fantastic day at the RHS Malvern Autumn Show judging the NAFAS Future Talent Competition. 15 competitors from different areas competed to win a guaranteed place at Chelsea Flower Show next year. The class title was 'Razzmatazz'. It was a foam free class and was judged using the RHS Chelsea criteria. I judged with Jane Rickard, from the Surrey Area, and the lovely Jonathan Moseley presented the prizes.”

Congratulations to **Yvonne Wagstaff (Kings Lynn Group)** on obtaining a Very Highly Commended in this class at Malvern. Yvonne was chosen to represent East of England from the high standard of her work at the Hunstanton show earlier this year – particularly her entry in the foam free exhibit in Class 3 – “Take Flight”



Photo Pip Bensley

The Norwich Group of Flower Clubs celebrated its 65th anniversary at the Late Autumn Show, held in early November at the St Faiths Centre, Horsham St Faiths

There were 2 classes – Class F1 “A Sapphire Celebration” to reflect their anniversary year.

And Class F2 “Let’s Get Creative”

The Mackney Vase is awarded for one year to the exhibitor who is judged “the best in show” This year the best entry went to Rachel Borenkova for her design in Class 2

Jacquie Aldous, Chairman Norwich Group of Flower Clubs



Left – 1st Tricia Loades - Sapphire Celebration

Right 1st & Best in Show – Rachel Borenkova – Lets get Creative



Top left Rachel Borenkova 2nd Class 1 Bottom left Jacqui Aldous 3rd Class 1
Centre Tricia Loades 2nd Class 2 Right Jacqui Aldous 3rd Class 2

Two New Demonstrators in the East of England

After 14 months of hard work, **Lorraine Gagen** became a NAFAS East of England Area Demonstrator. She passed the demonstrators' test in the Dorset and Guernsey area. Lorraine would like to give special thanks to Irene Hickson and her wonderful team of ladies for all their help and support

You can see some of Lorraine's designs in the Cambridge Group report on Page 24 .

The second demonstrator to qualify is **Violetta Veikniene**.

Tricia Loades from Loddon Flower Club writes "Our November meeting saw a new demonstrator for us in the shape of Violeta Veikniene with her demonstration subject of 'Floral Elegance, a showcase of Nature's Beauty'. Our members were really impressed with her style of arranging and really liked her designs. Everyone enjoyed Violeta's demonstration and thought she was a breath of fresh air with her selection of arrangements at the end of the evening. . We hope she will make a return visit to us sometime in the future."



Photo Tricia Loades

Norwich Flower Club For our October demonstration, we had the pleasure of welcoming Violetta Veikniene, who owns V.V Flowers (a florist in Norwich). She is also a member of Norwich Flower Club.

Violetta, originally from Lithuania, has enjoyed fantastic success at flower shows recently. Her first trophy was at Harrogate Spring Flower Show in April 2024, where she was awarded second place for her two designs. At the National Flower Show in Chelmsford, she won 'Best in Show' for her incredible design based on the title 'Lights Camera Action', which was truly stunning.



In November a group of arrangers from Loddon Flower Club made their annual journey to Norwich Cathedral to arrange the poppies for Remembrance Day.



Remembrance Day at Norwich Cathedral, Loddon Flower Club

Photo Tricia Loades

East of England Area Council

The October Council Meeting, followed by the AGM, was fast paced & upbeat, as Area Chairman, Gloria Goodley, urged us all to be positive. We celebrated Sue Brinton's many successes in her role as Area President, which now sadly has come to an end. But we were delighted that Gloria presented her with some gorgeous flowers, and we were all reassured to know that Sue will still be in the background to offer support whenever it's needed. (photo next page)

After the official business of the morning, the newly qualified demonstrators were presented with their certificates by Sue Brinton. Not all of them were able to attend due to prior commitments, but it was great that the demonstrators who had trained with us from other Areas were able to join us for the presentation. Julie Richardson had come from the Isle of Wight. (Wessex & Jersey Area)

She is happy to demonstrate in the East of England because, it was revealed, she is Judy Wynn's daughter and would only charge for travelling within the East of England, from Judy's home.



Presentation to Sue Brinton

Stefan Carolan had come down from Kilburn (London & Overseas Area) and had a great day, really enjoying the enthusiasm of the meeting. He was booked to present his "Unfinished Book" demonstration at the Kings Lynne AGM on November 5th. (unfortunately no photographs are available of the event)

After lunch Lavinia Piret, our website lead administrator, updated us on the relaunch of the restructured & updated Area website www.nafas-east.com It had been the intention of the media team to do a power-point presentation involving several team members and lots of wizzy slides & diagrams. As is the way, the Jubilee Hall technical team couldn't get their equipment co-ordinated. Fortunately a printed Media Pack was available and circulated to all delegates at the meeting, and subsequently to all clubs. (More on the website relaunch on Page 20 & 21)

And finally, Rachel Borenkova entertained us with some leaf manipulation which we then had to replicate with the aspidistra leaves provided. Some of us found it harder than it first appeared.....



Words & photos Lindi Carrington

Website Relaunch

The new website was relaunched on October 24th after intensive work by the media team and their technical adviser Phil Bean. The objective was not only to refresh its appearance, but to make it easier to find what you're looking for - in other words "easier to navigate the website". Everything is laid out before you from the "landing page" - that's what you see first of all when you click on.

It is now easier to get in touch with the website administrators if you have an inquiry because there is a "contact us" button on each page. Please do get in touch if you're experiencing a problem. The new "search" function is absolutely brilliant! For example, you want to get in touch with a demonstrator but you've forgotten the surname - just type the first name into search on the JDS&E page.

We're sure the new brightly coloured Media page is going to be really useful. One click takes you to all the information you need - whether it's how to create a QR code or you're looking for fundraising ideas. All this information is available in the printed media pack which has been circulated to all clubs, but the ability to access it on line means that it is available to all members. It should provide support when delegating tasks to less experienced people and encourage them to volunteer to do things (for example- producing a poster) which previously they may not have felt confident about.



There were some nervous moments as the old website was taken down and the new one loaded. You may have seen the “holding notice” explaining what was happening if you tried to access the website during that time. We didn’t really know how long this would take, but fortunately it all went to plan. Then there was the task of testing it - looking for glitches. It is important that the website displays correctly on all types of mobile devices, not just a computer screen. So we all read it, clicked buttons, open pages on our phones & tablets, of all different ages & specifications. There were some issues; for example: jumbled lines of print, pages not scrolling down properly ... things that are really irritating for the user. As soon as we let Phil know he was able to fix it, like magic.

We will do our best to keep the website up to date, but please remember that to benefit you have to help us by telling us what information needs to be revised –for example, when new officer have been appointed or new venues are being used.

Lindi Carrington, Editor Spotlight East

Several clubs have sent reports of their recent AGM's – it never ceases to amaze the many different formats these occasions can take.

Stowmarket & District Flower Club

Last night, 24th October, was our AGM which was very well attended. I would like to say a big thank you to Petrina Miles for all her hard work during her time as chairman. She has done an excellent job. We now welcome Kate Ager as her successor and wish her well. Kate presented Petrina with a gift for her beautiful garden. We had a few words from Pauline Squirrell and presentation of chairmanship to Kate Ager and presentation of 25 years of service to Ann Brunker, Di Balaam and Julia Eeles(who unfortunately couldn't make it) A big thank you as always for the ladies on refreshments and to everyone who brought cakes! You are all stars!

Our club competition was also held last night, entitled "The Local Pub "
It was great to see so many lovely entries, so many thanks and well done to everyone that entered. The Novice prize was awarded to Tina Taylor, Intermediate prize went to Margaret Knock , and the Advanced section had joint winners Denise Shaw & Julie Head..

Our guest speaker was Simon White from Peter Beales Roses , who entertained us with his talk on Chelsea & Hampton Court Flower Shows - my goodness what a lot of work goes into that!

What a fun idea for a club competition – can you guess the names of the pubs? They're really easy, but answers are on Page 23 if you need help.



Words & photos Julie Head.

East Suffolk Group

Many readers discovered the amazing Francine Thomas, “one of New Zealand’s most influential Floral Arts Designers” during lockdown when she presented a series of Zoom demonstrations from her workshop in the southern hemisphere. Her creativity, enthusiasm & energy ensured that she soon had a huge following worldwide. Francine visited the UK earlier this year on a demonstrating tour of a number of venues across the country. **East Suffolk Group Chairman, Giovanna Roberts**, jumped at the opportunity to work with her at a workshop in south London.

Following the **Group Annual General Meeting** in early November, Giovanna led a workshop entitled “Inspired by Nature... and Francine Thomas from New Zealand”. With Francine’s approval, Giovanna shared techniques & ideas developed at the designer’s workshop. The ticket price included all materials & flowers, and quickly sold out to the more advanced flower arrangers amongst us. It was a modern foam free design incorporating orchids. As you can see from the photos it was an intricate design, but the concentration & patience of all the participants was rewarded by the variety of stunning designs.



Lindi Carrington. Photos Giovanna Roberts/Lindi Carrington

Answers from page 22

1. Tina Taylor Rising Sun – 1st novice
2. The Chestnut Horse
3. Margaret Knock – Rose & Crown – 1st intermediate
4. The Bell
5. The Swan – Julie Head & 6. Lock & Barrel – Denise Shaw Joint 1st Advanced

Cambridge Group AGM

On Saturday 2nd November the Cambridge Group held their AGM which was followed by a demonstration and afternoon tea. Gloria Godley, East of England Area Chairman, was guest of honour.

The demonstration was by "The Three Wise Women", otherwise known as Lorraine Gagen, Naomi Wells & Rachel Borenkova, 3 of East of England's recently qualified demonstrators. They put on a marvellous display "Following Yonder Star" and the final stage was an absolute delight. Well done for entertaining everyone so brilliantly.

Lorraine said that all the clubs present gave us fantastic support and their show of appreciation at the end really touched our hearts. Naomi thoroughly enjoyed working with Rachael & Lorraine and was grateful for the opportunity and the fantastic reception to the designs. Rachel summed it up – "we had a blast" .



Annual Afternoon Tea sellout

A fabulous afternoon at our annual **Colchester Group Christmas tea party** and demonstration. A wonderful selection of food and chat with friends followed by an amazing demonstration by the lovely Mark Entwistle from Cheshire.

As Mark will be giving this demonstration to many clubs throughout the UK in the next few weeks he asked to just post one photo of his Angel Wings design - worn by Committee member Helen Bird.



The afternoon tea - for 110 people - was catered by "Team Abell" They describe themselves - "as a family we fundraise for the Colchester neo natal unit"

Everyone is busy with **Christmas workshops.....** this one's a bit different
.....Wroxham Flower Club at Rackheath Village Hall.

On the evening of Wednesday 15th November we held our Festive Workshop which was very well attended by members and visitors.

Jill Clarke expertly guided us through making a festive table arrangement where we made pairs of bunches of evergreen foliage and our chosen decorations, and then cable tied them onto sticks (keeping to minimal foam use). We then had a small amount of foam in a dish that the sticks were inserted into, we then added more greenery (and a candle for some) to bring the arrangement together.

Not only is it a great idea by Jill but it made it easy to transport. One of our guests took hers home on the train to Suffolk and it was easily packed into a shopping bag. This easy design allows us to keep the arrangement going through the festive season and we can add fresh flowers for Christmas if we desire.

The committee decided to make arrangements for the raffle for a change, and it was a great success . We had as always, lovely refreshments and beautiful cakes made by the committee.

It was a wonderful night to see the hall full, and a fun & friendly atmosphere. We also welcomed some new members. Thank you to everyone , and to our visitors, We hope to see you again, you will always be welcome.



It wouldn't be Christmas without David Wright's annual fundraising demonstration!

On social media David says
 "I know I'm nothing special,
 In fact I'm a bit of a bore!
 But when it comes to charity dems,
 Who could wish for more"

You may not agree with the first two lines, but the rest is certainly true: David's "I Have a Dream" demonstration at Filby Village Hall raised **£2,200** for Suffolk Air Ambulance & the James Paget Hospital cancer charity. It was a great team effort. David thanked his team: Judy, Sara, Sharon, Anna, Liz, Marion, Sue, Veronica & David on music

Photo next page)



Photo David Wright

There are still many workshops & festive Open Meetings yet to take place – we look forward to sharing your reports & photos of these in the next edition of Spotlight (published 1st March; copy deadline 21st February) alongside news of your Spring meetings & events.

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas & a peaceful New Year.

Lindi Carrington & The Media Team