

The Peony Group

of the Hardy Plant Society



Newsletter

Autumn 2014



'Judy's White Peony' in April 2014



Paeonia cambessedesii on raised bed in April 2014

This issue of our newsletter is dominated by accounts of our first Peony Day, organised by our Chairman: an account of the proceedings by our Secretary and an appreciation by a new member, Karin Proudfoot. I will not repeat what they say, except to add my thanks to all concerned, especially Judy Templar. Following the success of this meeting, we are looking forward to our next Peony Day in Wiltshire, as announced herein. To highlight the main business, we have separated Kath's account of the Peony Day from her report of the AGM, which appears later in the newsletter.

The peony season was a very early one, an illustration of the law of cussedness so often inspired by the English weather. Last year we had an early meeting at Spetchley Park with not a peony in flower. This year we chose mid May, and watched helplessly as many of the early species Judy had hoped to show us in her garden flowered beautifully and then faded (see photos opposite and back cover). However several peonies were looking good on the day, notably 'Late Windflower': see cover photograph from Karin.

We welcomed Vivienne McGhee, past Chairman of the HPS, on the day, and she has contributed an article about her conversion to growing peonies.

I thank Irene Tibbenham, Karin Proudfoot and Judy Templar for supplying photographs for this newsletter. Please order from the seed list to keep our peonies and our group growing.

From the Chair**Judy Templar**

It was a delight to see so many of you at the Peony Day on May 11. With the early season I was afraid that, in strong contrast to 2013 when no plants were in flower, all my peonies would be over. In the event, although some had finished flowering, plenty were still performing in my garden. You can see accounts of the day elsewhere in the newsletter. Next year we are heading further south to Wiltshire for the AGM and Peony Day. I hope this will give those members living in the south of the country a better chance to join us. See the notice about the event on page.

Irene Tibbenham, our Treasurer, alerted me to a proposed Peony Trial at Wisley. I got in touch with Mark Heath, the RHS Trials Development Officer, who told me that planting is due to start this October and assessment will continue until 2018. He is very happy to arrange for our Group to visit when judging is taking place by the forum, perhaps after a year or two of establishment. The list of 'promised' entries for the trial

includes many lactiflora cultivars and hybrids, some species and some shrubby peonies. Watch this space.

Another interesting communication came via Kath Carey who had an email from Maxime Rome, Scientific coordinator of the Lyon Botanic Garden. The Botanic Garden has the French National Collection of Peonies. They are looking for new taxa for their collection. And what a mouth watering list it is. Wouldn't we all like some of these?

Pp. algeriensis, brownii, californica, cathayana, clusii, decomposita, jishanensis, kesrouanensis, obovata, parnassica, saueri, sterniana

Kath has replied to the email and I have also been in contact with some suggestions. If you know of anyone who has any of these species perhaps you could let Kath or myself know. Will McLewin has already supplied them with some plants, the last he could spare this year. Sad for me because when I asked him for *P. decomposita* they had all gone to France! I will have to make do with the seeds he was able to supply. As you know I love propagating from seed but impatience is taking hold in my old age.

Report of the First Peony Day, 11 May 2014

Kath Carey



Our study day was planned for 2013 but was deferred due to illness of one of our speakers. It was rescheduled for this year and more than 40 people gathered in the Christie Hall Wansford near Peterborough. Two talks were given, followed by visits to two gardens.

Looking for Peonies in the Wild - Judy Templar

Over many years Judy has travelled to Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean islands. Her first trip took her to Crete with like-minded plant enthusiasts who were knowledgeable on the local flora. *Paeonia clusii* is endemic to Crete but they did not

visit the site where this beautiful small peony with white flowers grows. On a subsequent trip to Rhodes, she caught up with *P. clusii* ssp. *rhodia* growing in light shade. This is a less compact plant than *P. clusii* but both require very good drainage and protection if grown outside in the UK.

And then to the Greek island of Samos where she saw *P. mascula* growing in deep shade with its typical magenta pink flowers.

In the Maritime Alps the party she was travelling with had been promised a hillside pink with flowers of *P. officinalis* ssp. *huthii*. Imagine their disappointment when they found that the flowers had all dropped their petals. Then, with the aid of binoculars a few plants high up the slope were found to have a few flowers lingering. This is a lovely attractive low growing plant with rose red petals.

Iran was the location for one of her trips. On the east side of mountains facing the Caspian Sea where the climate is moist a creamy white peony was found growing under light shade of sparse deciduous trees. The tomentose carpels and very hairy underside of the leaves indicated that this was *P. daurica* ssp. *tomentosa*. On the drier western side of the same mountain range, only a few miles distant, grows a wonderful peony with deep yellow flowers and most attractive blue/green foliage. It was a great disappointment to Judy that her group did not see this yellow peony. She was able to show us pictures of this peony that a friend kindly sent.

On a trip to the Pontic Alps, NE Turkey the group found many pink peonies growing on a steep scree slope. In the past these peonies have been called *P. mascula* ssp. *arietina*. But Judy could not understand why because the leaves of the plants were hairy and the leaves more divided, with narrow, pointed leaflets like *P. officinalis*. She is pleased that Hong De-Yuan, in his monograph *Peonies of the World* describes the plant as a distinct species *P. arietina*. It should have tuberous roots. Short of digging them up and examining the roots there was no way to verify that. And digging up is not an option.

The slopes on the northern, moister, side by the Black Sea are clothed with tea plantations. Higher still rhododendrons, primulas, trollius and epigaeas caused great excitement. A *wittmaniana* type peony is reported to grow there and the leader of the group went in search of it. He found it growing on a slope at 2200m in light shade. The flowers were in tight bud so one stem was cut, stood in a bottle of water and carried with them until a few days later the creamy white bowl of petals opened, revealing the boss of yellow anthers and rosy purple filaments. The carpels were quite glabrous so this would make it *P. daurica* ssp. *macrophylla*.

The last peony found on this trip was above Artvin at around 1180m. This was the pink flowered *P. daurica* ssp. *coriifolia*.

Judy took us on a journey of exploration and showed us the wide range of form of many of the species peonies. Some may need tender loving care if grown in the UK but most are much more robust.

Peonies in the Garden - John Hudson

John has about 100 peonies in his garden of about 1/3 acre. His flowering season starts in early April and lasts till early July. He began with some of his many species.

Peonies in gardens go back a long way. Two in particular are *Paeonia mascula* (often called the male peony) and *P. officinalis* ssp. *officinalis*. They are similar in flower colour with the latter having more divided foliage, and tuberous roots. Another plant with blue grey foliage that has been known some time is *P. 'mollis'* with its cyclamen pink flowers. Whether this is a separate species or a form of *P. officinalis* remains open. Over the centuries various forms of *P. officinalis* have been selected, among them the typical, double cottage garden peony beloved by so many despite its floppy habits. It is usually called *P. officinalis* 'Rubra Plena' (though may be a hybrid with *P. peregrina*). *P. officinalis* 'Anemoniflora Rosea' is an attractive small plant. *P. peregrina* (the Constantinople peony) has shiny foliage and single luminous red flowers. *P. tenuifolia* has the finest ferny leaves of any peony and single red 'tulip' flowers.

In trying to name the various species it is important to examine the carpels, sepals and bracts and this particularly applies to *P. daurica*, which in Hong's monograph (2010) includes several subspecies that are distinct as garden plants. *P. daurica daurica* has lovely wavy edged leaves and pink flowers. *P. daurica coriifolia* is magenta pink. *P. daurica mlokosewitschii* is yellow as often grown in the UK but may have pink or cream flowers in the wild. *P. daurica wittmanniana* and *P. daurica macrohyllla* are white or cream and much confused in cultivation. All are beautiful plants and worth of a space in the garden.

From Asia come *P. anomala* and *P. anomala veitchii*. They are similar but *P. anomala* has only one flower per stem whereas *P. anomala veitchii* has more than one. *P. anomala veitchii* also starts into growth very late but soon catches up with its pink flowers, variable in shade, in late May; there is also a white form.

Growing from seed is the most economical way to obtain species peonies, as few are available commercially. One must be aware that peonies easily cross-pollinate. Tracking seed raised plants from *P. mlokosewitschii* through three generations has shown variations in colour from pale pink fading to white through to a much brighter pink, as well as the expected yellow.

Two well known deliberate crosses in the garden are *P. mlokosewitschii* x *lactiflora* 'Claire de Lune' and *P. x smouthii* (*tenuifolia* x *lactiflora*). These are two beautiful plants – Claire de Lune with single cream flowers and yellow stamens and *smouthii* single dark red ones.

The multitude of species have a wide range of foliage from rounded to very finely divided with the colour varying from bronze, to bright green and almost blue and leaf surface from shiny to matt.

The most widely grown peonies in British gardens are selections from the Chinese species *P. lactiflora*. They have a much wider range of flower colour and form than the other species, including many doubles, and have several flowers on a stem. Unlike most species, many *Lactifloras* are scented. They flower later, alongside early roses in late May-June. Their foliage however is more uniform and generally coarser.

Propagation of named *Lactifloras* is conventionally by division. Alternatively, one can sometimes break off a piece of rootstock, with a bud attached, by smartly lifting a dried-up stem in late autumn.. This can be planted in a pot and a satisfactory plant soon results. Bob Brown has described this method. It seems to work with *Lactifloras*, but not with the early species, in John's experience.

And as for companion planting, in his garden he uses tulips and *Geranium psilostemon*. White and yellow *Iris spuria* look good with similarly coloured peonies, providing a contrast of form.

There are a few tree peonies tucked into his garden. Their blooms are sumptuous and the foliage good but they do have the drawback of looking like dead sticks in the winter. 'High Noon' with its semi double yellow flowers with crimson flares is a joy and the Gansu Mudan are robust plants with flowers ranging from red to white with purple flares. If buying the latter they may be grafted or seed raised.

Garden Visits

Our day finished with two garden visits just a few miles from our meeting place. By this time the drizzle was starting again but being hardy planters we were not deterred. First Judy's garden that was crammed packed with peonies and other lovely plants in a gravel area. Then to a garden whose owners are not members of the HPS but willing to open for us. It was a delight with its different levels and fern corner. We had a long, informative day and made our way home full of ideas.

Impressions of the peony day and garden visits

Karin Proudfoot

As a new member of the Group this was my first experience of a Peony Group Day. It was a hugely enjoyable occasion, and a big thank you is due to all those who organised it.

The two talks, from Judy Templar and John Hudson, complemented each other very well, and Judy's mention of *P. chusii* reminded me of the excitement of seeing it in the mountains of Crete. How disappointed we had been when our botanist guide told us it would not survive outside in this country. Following John's recommendations of peonies for the garden, we headed off into the steady but light rain for our two garden

visits in King's Cliffe. I went first to John and Hilary Barratt's garden, tucked behind an old house built on the site of an even older orchard, from which one large apple tree survived, beautifully pruned to a flat-topped shape. We also particularly admired a magnificent Stag's Horn Fern in the lofty conservatory which even contained a pool, an impressive vegetable plot, and a pretty soft brick-red *Meconopsis cambrica*, which Hilary said had just appeared among the yellow ones.



Judy's garden the rain was heavier, but we were still able to enjoy the peonies, flourishing in her heavy clay soil. We had already admired photographs of those which had flowered a week or two earlier, but those we saw in flower included two contrasting clones of *P. veitchii woodwardii*, one with pale pink flowers, the other with rich pink flowers and more finely cut foliage. I was delighted to see *P. emodi* in flower, having bought one at the morning's plant sale. Others which caught my eye were *P. daurica daurica*, with clear pink flowers and broad rounded leaflets on pinkish stems, and *P. × smouthii*, with deep pink flowers over fine foliage. Several of us also commented on a beautiful clematis, a large-flowered *C. koreana* hybrid. Finally we sought shelter from the rain in Judy's kitchen for much-needed tea and cake.



By the time we reached

What a splendid day, with so many friendly faces, both familiar and unfamiliar, two fascinating talks, and the garden visits. I'm already looking forward to the next one, but I've learnt one important lesson – get there early! My friend and I arrived before the official start of registration, only to find the car park nearly full and the early birds emerging from the hall with the pick of the plants from the sales table!

Peony Day

Sunday 26th April 2015

The annual meeting of the Peony Group will be held on Sunday 26th April at the South Wraxall Village Hall, South Wraxall, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 2SE.

Registration and coffee/tea will be between 9.30 and 10.00am followed by the AGM.

We are delighted that David Victor, a past Chairman of our Group, has agreed to give a talk about the development of his new garden in Somerset and the place that peonies play in it.

Plant explorer and nurseryman Tom Mitchell of Evolution Plants will talk about his nursery with peonies playing a prominent role.

In the afternoon we have the opportunity to visit Tom's nursery where he has an exciting array of plants, some introduced from seed collected in the wild. There will be peonies for sale. Tom took on the late Jim Archibald collection of herbaceous Eurasian peonies. These are now housed in a poly-tunnel and it will be a privilege to be able to see them.

Tickets for the day cost £10 for members, £12 non-members and include two talks, the nursery visit and tea/coffee/biscuits through the day but not lunch. Please bring your own. The local pub is close by.

Booking forms may be downloaded from the Peony Group page of the HPS website or contact Judy Templar by email judy@jtemplar.plus.com or by writing (with sae) to Judy Templar, 117 Wood Road, King's Cliffe, Peterborough, PE8 6XR

A Visit to Georgia

Judy Templar

On May 12 2014, the day after our Peony Day, I flew to Georgia to catch up with a Greentours group on a botanical trip. The first few days were spent in the north where we saw spectacular alpine flowers such as the tubby plum coloured *Fritillaria latifolia* and lovely yellow *F. collina* with primulas, trollius and sheets of *Galanthus platyphyllus* over the famous Cross Pass.

All very exciting but my real reason for going was to see the Georgian peonies. On day six, as we drove to Bakuriana my chance came. Our lunch stop, near to Igoeti, is a location for *P. tenuifolia*. Whilst the rest of the party munched on their lunch I headed off amongst the low shrubs and soon found the ferny leaves and hairy carpels. The flowers were all over but I was pleased to see them there.

In the afternoon we came to a site where *Paeonia daurica coriifolia* grows. (Georgian people, understandably, call it *P. caucasica*) The plants were there but again, too late – all flowers over. Several sites were visited but no flowers were found. It seemed as if this trip was doomed to failure as far as peonies were concerned.

Above Bakuriana *Paeonia daurica macrophylla* grows at a higher elevation. The next day we set out in rainy weather and indeed we saw the pale yellow flowers from the bus. Despite the rain we all piled out and set too, photographing these lovely flowers.



Now, it has to be said, these plants had a different look to them from those I saw in NE Turkey four years ago. The flowers were pale yellow whereas the Turkey flowers were creamy/white. The plants in Turkey were altogether more robust. I suspect that neither of these differences would be enough to justify a different

name. However, in Georgia, this plant is called *P. steveniana*.

I had opted to go on the extension trip to Lagodekhi, the fabled site of *Paeonia mlokosewitschii*. Oddly enough nobody else had so I had a guide/driver all to myself.

We hired a guide from the Lagodekhi Nature Reserve to take us to this place. Through rain, wind, thunder and lightening I struggled up the mountain. The two men were mightily impressed with this old lady!

You may have guessed, when we arrived all peonies had finished flowering.

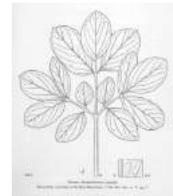
Now, next year at an earlier date say April 27 (the day after our Peony Day) perhaps I'll try again. Anyone want to join me?

***Paeonia mlokosewitschii* in Georgia**

Judy Templar

Since the publication of the monograph Peonies of the World by Hong De-Yuan in 2010 I have been agonizing over what seems to me to be a controversial reduction of *Paeonia mlokosewitschii* to a subspecies of *Paeonia daurica*. In *P. daurica* Hong is insistent that the number of leaflets/leaf segments of lower leaves is 'mostly 9, rarely 10 and very occasionally 11. He cites this as a difference between *P. daurica* and *P. mascula*, whose range is from 11 to 22. In my own garden the lower leaves of *P. mlokosewitschii* are always more than 9, usually 11 or more. This characteristic is the same whether from plants grown from wild collected seed or nursery acquired plants. (see also the article on "Molly" in our newsletter. Autumn 2012)

Martin Page shows a drawing of what I consider to be a typical lower leaf on page 16 of his book The Gardeners Guide to Peonies. F. C. Stern in A Study of the Genus Paeonia describes *P. mlokosewitschii* from herbarium specimens collected near the village of Lagodekhi. A drawing of a lower leaf shows 13 leaflets.



Drawing of P. mlokosewitschii lower leaf by Stella Ross-Craig, from F.C. Stern 'A Study of the Genus Paeonia'



Paeonia daurica ssp. coriifolia

In Georgia I saw many plants of *P. daurica subsp. coriifolia* and *P. daurica subsp. macrophylla* and without exception all had lower leaves with 9 leaflets.

As you know from the account above I struggled up to the peony site in Lagodekhi in appalling weather. Under difficult conditions I

was able to observe that plants there had the same characteristics as my plants at home, namely more than 9 leaflets on the lower leaves. See photos of lower leaves.



P. mlokosewitschii in Lagodekhi, left and the Bakuriani Botanic Garden, right

Hong states that *P. daurica subsp. mlokosewitschii* is relatively distinct from the other subspecies in shape of leaflets and type/amount of hairs beneath but does not mention the difference of leaflet number.

I am no taxonomist but it seems to me that my observations of plants in Georgia at the type locality of *P. mlokosewitschii*, together with the distinctions that Hong described, suggest that a case could be made to regard *P. mlokosewitschii* as specifically distinct.

Musings of a Peony Novice

Vivienne Mc Ghee

It was with a little trepidation that I offered to write a few lines for this Newsletter. I am neither a writer nor knowledgeable about peonies. In fact my membership of the Group started in a series of co-incidences and my interest in peonies has developed as a result.

My musing begins with an e mail to the Group Secretary when I was Chairman of the Society and making contact with the Committee of each of the Specialist Groups. As a result I joined the Peony Group. Around the same time I was staying with my daughter in Washington DC and had a trip to a large park somewhere in Virginia. We took a wrong turn just after the entry and happened upon a field of peonies in bloom. There

were no signs or story boards in sight and although I took some photographs I have since lost the camera without having extracted all the pictures. It was memorable even though I did not know one peony from another.

All of this set me thinking about growing peonies. Some forty five years ago or so I had tended, what was probably, *Paeonia* 'Rubra Plena' in my mother in law's garden but did not rate it as a worthy mixed border plant. As far as I could see it flowered, maybe for a week if we were lucky, then faded and was knocked out by any shower of rain leaving boring green leaves. So when I was planting the borders here in Worcestershire about ten years ago I was reluctant to plan to include a peony of any sort. I was persuaded to plant *P. lactiflora* 'Duchess de Nemours' followed by *P. lactiflora* 'Krinkled White'. They are beautiful and now the border would not seem complete without them. Even though I have several other peonies now these are still my favourites.

Both have a similar form and habit. From early spring their reddish shoots push through the ground. These red shoots grow quickly and unfurl to show off handsome green foliage. In early June the large flowers burst open from pinkish buds that are also flushed with green.

The mature flowers of 'Duchess de Nemours' are creamy white, bowl shaped, large, double and scented. I see, from Gail Harland's description in the HPS Peonies booklet, that "The Duchess" as I call her, is grown as a cut flower in the Netherlands – so maybe next year I will sacrifice one stem for the vase! The flowers of 'Krinkled White' are pure white, single and with a most appealing



arrangement of rich golden yellow stamens. I see from Gail's book that it was raised in USA and introduced in 1928. Maybe there was one in the field in Virginia.

I have found that the flowers on both plants continue to show for several weeks and in all can be in flower for over a month. My plants have increased gradually over the years and this year many flowering stems providing focal points for the border. Even now in October the plants are handsome within the border as the foliage gently decays in yellow and green flushed with red providing an attractive backing for Chrysanthemum 'Ruby Raynor' with the yellowing leaves of a hosta nearby. The also

hide the bare stems of adjacent asters. All this from an early spring feed and inconspicuous circular plant supports that are left in the ground all the year round.

I now grow many more peonies, enthused by the knowledge and enthusiasm of members of the Group. Thank you all for your patience whilst I sort out my *masculas* from my *tenuifolias* and my *dauricas* from my *emodi*.

Follow up on Tree Peony Grafts

Kath Carey

September 8th 2010 was 'Tree Peony Grafting Day. I did five grafts and proudly took them home. One died the first winter and the next year the root stock completely swamped another. So then there were three. Two years ago I knocked the survivors out of their deep pots, (late September 2012). One had made no roots at all on the scion and was still completely dependent on its nurse root. The other two had a few small roots. I used a sharp knife to remove the root stock from these two and replanted them back in their deep pots. The remaining one was replanted with its nurse root in the hope that it might make become an independent plant. All three pots were sunk into the ground. Yesterday was D-day to see how the plants were faring. I have just knocked all three plants out of their pots. The two with the root stock removed have both made good root growth below ground. The 'weaker' one was a surprise as it was trodden on last year and lost most of its upper growth. The third one had made good upper growth and was the only one to flower earlier this year but still had not a single root from the scion. Being in a brutal frame of mind I removed the root stock, then scrapped the side of the scion to expose the cambium and replanted it. I think the chances of it surviving are remote but it has its chance. So it looks as though I have two out of five survivors.

Seed Distribution

Judy Templar

Following a wonderful year for peony flowers the seed set has been disappointing. I have very small numbers of some items listed here, in some cases only sufficient for one packet.

There are pictures of some of the parent plants but remember that seed may not come true from garden grown plants. See also the photos in Autumn Newsletter 2013. I am continuing to use Hong's nomenclature with the 'old' names in brackets.

Seed List 2014

HERBACEOUS

- ex. ***P. anomala* ssp. *veitchii*** (*P. veitchii* var. *alba*)
- ex. ***P. anomala* ssp. *veitchii*** (*P. veitchii* var. *woodwardii*) pale pink, elegant form, 75x110cm.
- ex. ***P. anomala* ssp. *veitchii*** (*P. veitchii* var. *woodwardii*) dwarf, deep pink, red stems with finely cut foliage. 35x76cm
- ex. ***P. anomala* ssp. *veitchii*** (*P. veitchii* var. *woodwardii*) deep pink
- ex. ***P. arietina***
- ex. ***P. cambessedesii***
- ex. ***P. cambessedesii*** (small, dark leaf form)
- ex. ***P. corsica*** (*P. russoi* var. *reverchonii*) 58cm,
- ex. ***P. daurica* ssp. *daurica*** (*P. mascula* ssp. *triternata*) leaves with typical upturned wavy margins.
- ex. ***P. daurica* ssp. *mlokosewitschii***, yellow, form in general cultivation.
- ex. ***P. daurica* ssp. *mlokosewitschii***, yellow (McLewin, wild pop. Lagodekhi, E. Georgia)
- ex. ***P. daurica* ssp. *mlokosewitschii***, cream with pink veining (McLewin, wild pop. Lagodekhi, E. Georgia)
- ex. ***P. 'Judy's White Peony'***
- ex. ***P. lactiflora* 'Antwerpen'**
- ex. ***P. lactiflora* 'Immaculee'**
- ex. ***P. lactiflora* 'Krinkled White'**
- ex. ***P. lactiflora* 'Lord Kitchener'**
- ex. ***P. lactiflora* 'Mme Gaudichau'** the emerging shoots and leaves remain a striking deep red until flowering time when they turn to a glossy green complimenting the dark red, semi double flowers. Good autumn colour.
- ex. ***P. lactiflora* 'Red Rover'**
- ex. ***P. officinalis* ssp. *huthii***
- ex. ***P. officinalis* 'mollis'**
- ex. ***P. tenuifolia***
- ex. ***P. tenuifolia* (*P. biebersteiniana*)** This plant is taller with less finely divided leaflets than the above plant. Both have bright red flowers.

Herbaceous hybrids

- ex. ***P. 'Archangel'***

SHRUBBY

- ex. ***P. delavayi***
- ex. ***P. ostii***

Gansu group

- ex. ***P. 'Joseph Rock'*** (Arnold Arboretum form)
- ex. ***P. white*** (*rockii* lookalike McLewin code 1.1.4)
- ex. ***P. pink/purple single***

Suffruticosa Group

- ex. ***P. 'Yachiyo-tsubaki*** (syn. 'Eternal Camellias')

The seeds cost 50p per packet. UK members should make cheques out to “The HPS Peony Group”; overseas members should add the amount to their renewal payment at the start of next year. I may not be able to supply all your requests so perhaps you should send a ‘limit cheque’, omitting the amount but writing at the bottom of the cheque ‘not to exceed £x’, ‘x’ being the maximum amount your request would cost. I can then complete the cheque for the cost of the seeds supplied.

Please write with a list of your requests, enclosing a self-addressed sticky label and a large letter stamp to:

Judy Templar, 117 Wood Road, King’s Cliffe, Peterborough, PE8 6XR



P. cambessedesii
small dark leaf form



P. officinalis ssp. *hutthii*



P. Mme Gaudichau’



P. tenuifolia ssp. *biebersteiniana*



P. Gansu Mudan
(McLewin code 1.1.4)

The day dawned drizzly but not enough to hinder 40 plus people who journeyed to Wansford near Peterborough to gather in the local hall. It was humming by 9.30am with the meeting not due to start till 10.30am. The plant sales table was doing brisk business. The tea and coffee were very welcome.

Apologies - Apologies were received from Kate Dilley and Peter Johnson.

Minutes of the 2013 AGM - These were taken as read as they had been circulated previously, and copies were available before the start of the AGM.

Matters Arising - There were no matters arising that were not covered by the agenda

Chairman's Report (Judy Templar)

Judy welcomed every one and particularly the several new members who had joined that day. It was good to have a crowded room for this Study Day following our AGM. She mentioned that she had attended the Group Secretary's meeting on October and found it very informative. It gives a real feel of the workings of the HPS and how plans are made for the future. She outlined her plans already afoot for next year's AGM(see below).

Secretary's Report (Kath Carey)

Several HPS members have contacted me over the last twelve months with queries regarding membership of the group and where to buy peonies. The latter led me to put together a list of suppliers. This was by no means comprehensive but does give a start to anyone searching for a particular variety. I receive cheques from time to time from new members and currently have been sending them to our treasurer for banking. This means expense in postage and I would suggest that I pay them direct into the branch account local to where I live and notify our treasurer by e-mail of the payment. This was accepted

Treasurer's Report (John Richey)

The group has had a stable year financially (to 31st December 2013) and with the promise of 2014 being noticeably improved. Subscription renewals via standing orders and cheque payments are also stable. Our primary expense, the Newsletter, has been produced at a lesser cost for an expanded final product. Our expenditure is well thought out and the e-mailing of a significant number of copies again alleviated the rising cost of postage. The subscriptions for 2015 should be at £5.00 for UK members and £6.50 for overseas. This was accepted

Membership Secretary's Report (Peter Johnson)

We have 94 members of whom 28 are overseas. Most have supplied e-mail addresses, which helps greatly with keeping our costs down.

Newsletter Editor's Report (John Hudson)

John Hudson confirmed our current arrangement for newsletters, namely a coloured hard copy in the autumn mailed to all members, with a spring newsletter e-mailed where practical and both to be placed on the HPS web site and available to all HPS members. This arrangement has largely been responsible for keeping our finances in such a healthy state. Previous newsletters are on the web but it should be noted that the pages are

in printing order rather numerical order. John Hudson notified the meeting of his intention to step down from 2015.

Any other business and date and venue for the AGM 2015

Our newsletter editor is always looking for copy. These need not be lengthy articles but a couple of sentences about peonies you have grown or noticed, or something you have found in a book. Photos welcome.

Judy proposed that next year's AGM is also in the form of a study day. The suggested date is Sunday April 26th 2015. See notice on p. 8

Joan Hobson from the audience thanked the committee for their work.

Autumn 2014 Treasurer's report

Irene Tibbenham

The income from this year's highly successful Peony Day provided a welcome cash injection to the HPS Peony Group reserves. Additionally a number of attendees were encouraged to become members of the Peony Group which is a positive turnaround from the trend these last few years. Sales of the latest HPS booklet 'Peonies' by gardening writer Gail Harland were also popular, with the added bonus of having Gail on hand to sign copies. The plant stand was a magnet for attendees – mirrored in the high sales; and our thanks go to those who donated a fine selection of plants.

With annually increasing postal as well as printing costs, this financial boost allows the group more flexibility in organising its budget for next year.

At the AGM, it was agreed to hold annual subscriptions at £5 for UK members and £6.50 for overseas members. If at all possible, please pay your subscriptions by 31st January 2015. If you are unsure, do feel free to contact me – details at end of newsletter.

Payment can be made in three ways. Firstly via cheque sent to the Treasurer; secondly via standing order; and thirdly, for those with internet banking, consider paying online. Following are details to do this.

- Make payment to HPS Peony Group
- Account number: 00097592
- Sort code: 30-92-06
- Use your name as a reference in the payment
- e-mail me at marktibbenham@btinternet.com to confirm payment has been made.

Officers of the Peony Group, 2013 - 14

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Seed distribution is by Judy Templar, see above.

Membership of the Peony Group is open to all members of the Hardy Plant Society. If you are interested in joining, please contact the Secretary at the above address.

Copy deadlines are 31 March for the Spring Newsletter and 30 September for the Autumn Newsletter.

The opinions expressed by the authors are their personal views, and are not necessarily endorsed by the HPS Peony Group. The editors reserve the right to edit all contributions as necessary. Copyright of all contributions remains with their authors.



