



Course 37 students pictures with Ian Leese (centre standing) and David Barnes (tallest, back row) on their first day at Kew.

NEWS OF KEWITES AT HOME AND ABROAD IN 1999

Compiled by J. R. Woodhams

Our Membership Secretary forwarded a letter from **William Bessler** (1967) requesting to rejoin the Guild. Bill states that he was a Guild Member until he left England for the middle east where he lived and worked for almost 20 years. He states " I now live on my farm in southern Spain

amongst 2,500 ancient olive trees (some of which are said to be over 1,000 years old) and I am working toward building a nursery to grow rare plants – palms and cycads being my passion!"

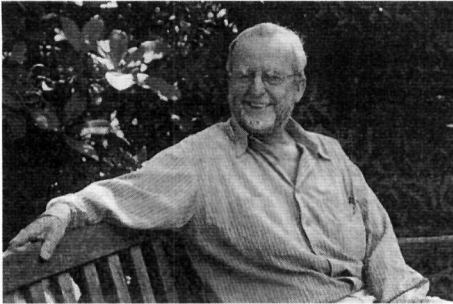
Ken Burras (1954) wrote to the compiler in November. Ken mentioned that he thought Patrick Nutt a very worthy recipient of the George Brown Memorial Award and added that he had not seen Patrick (a contemporary of his on the Kew Course) since their time at Kew – over 45 years ago now!

Regarding his own activities Ken writes, "Though I remain a Floral B Committee member for the R.H.S., I stepped down from membership of the AGM Sub-Committee and the Wisley Trials Committee (all too time consuming) and I am just about to retire as Gardens Secretary and Adviser to Wolfson College (Oxford), though I remain Adviser to Lady Margaret Hall and St. Catherines Colleges". Ken says that he teaches quite a bit for the English Gardening School which operates out of the Chelsea Physic Garden. The courses he is involved with are both of one year duration, one is 'Plant and Plantsmanship' the other 'One Year Course in Practical Horticulture'. He teaches the plant content of the latter and has the students for one day each month. Ken's letter continues "One interesting project at the present time is my involvement with a massive tree survey at Tortworth Court in south Gloucestershire. The tree collection amounts to over 360 specimens and many are contemporary with the original plantings at Westonbirt down the road. I have never seen a better *Zelkova carpinifolia* and that goes for several other species. The great house and grounds are to be developed as an hotel by the Four Pillars Group, hence the Local Authority insistence on a proper tree survey – which is where I come in".

The February 18th 1999 edition of *'The Grower'* magazine featured, under their News heading on page seven, an article relating to **Sean Clifford** and his work at H. R. I. Efford with Poinsettia. Sean worked in the Jodrell Laboratory at Kew during the late eighties on aspects of post pollination responses within the *Orchidaceae* especially in relation to the genera *Oncidium* and *Odontoglossum*. Sean was pictured with a Poinsettia at Efford and summed up his H. D. C. experiments on controlling plant height by confirming that at present quality Poinsettia plants cannot be grown without using chemical plant regulators. He mentioned that spectral filters offered the best alternative for the future.

A Guild member until recently, **James (Jim) Dalglish** (1954) died at the end of April 1999. A letter from Neil Bryson was printed in the *'Richmond and Twickenham Times'*, (Friday April 30th 1999). The writer speaks of Jim's connections with Squires Garden Centre in Twickenham mentioning that Jim was Father Christmas at the Centre and operated their Plant Clinic answering all the questions about shrubs and plants. The writer states "Many local kids who worked in Squires part time, including my son, will have experienced Jim's beaming smile and wonderful sense of humour and it was good to see so many of them at his funeral". The writer goes on to say that he was lucky to have worked with Jim for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea some years ago, after he left his post as Superintendent at Hampton Court. They worked together at Cremorne Gardens in Lots Road, Chelsea, making a new garden on the site of the old Victorian riverside pleasure gardens. The writer concludes "So one day, take a little time out from your busy lives and visit Cremorne, just one of the gardens Jim planted and spare a thought for a lovely man who made our world a nicer place to live in and who we lost too soon".

Under 'News of Kewites' published in 1997 (*Kew Guild Journal* Vol. 12, No. 101:53) it was reported that **Roy Forster** (1957) had retired from the Curatorship of the VanDusen Botanic Garden in Vancouver, Canada. Roy wrote to the Editor this year mentioning his retirement and saying that 1999 had been a good year for him. Roy stated that he has been made a Member of the Order of Canada in recognition of his service to the garden and his many other contributions to horticulture and botanic garden development. He also mentioned that he had finally got his book *'The Woodland Garden'* published – with colleague Alex Downie. Roy adds a personal summary as follows: "I have been fortunate in having had two careers in the public service in Canada. First, 14 years at the H.R.I.O. Vineland, where I was privileged to work on ornamental plant breeding, inheriting the mantle of pioneer horticulturist Dr. Frank Palmer. I



Roy Forster

The *VanDusen Garden Bulletin*, March 1999, leads with Roy's award and states "To put it mildly, VanDusen staff and Roy's many friends were delighted with the news of this honour. Apart from his duties at VanDusen we remember his ability to attract and energise volunteers to the garden and the stimulating leadership that he has provided on many botanical study tours for garden members to many countries. His appointment to the Order of Canada is justly deserved". Congratulations Roy, from the Kew Guild.

Rupert Golby (1983) and **Isabelle Van Groeningen** (1988) featured in an article in *The Times*, (Thursday July 15th 1999) by Robin Young headed "Designers will revive glory of gardens past". The article accompanied by a photograph of Rupert and Isabelle followed English Heritage announcing the first two winning designs in a £1.5 million programme to create fitting contemporary gardens at some of its historic showpieces. Rupert submitted the winning design for the walled gardens at Queen Victoria's seaside home, Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, while Isabelle created the winning design for replanning the south moat at Eltham Palace in southeast London, the former home of the textile millionaire Stephen Courtauld. Isabelle was quoted as saying "The new design and planting have been conceived to enhance some stunning features such as the moat walls, yet add a flair of today".



Rupert Golby and Isabelle Van Groeningen, the first two winning designers announced by English Heritage. (Photograph by Findlay Kember)

Students and staff who worked in Services Section L.C.D. through the early seventies will remember **Edward (Ted) Kelly** (1975). Ted was a member of the tractor and mower operating team, though on entering Kew in 1965 he had worked in the Alpine and Temperate Sections before moving to Services. The compiler met Ted on a visit to Saville Garden near Windsor in September and learned that he had suffered heart problems earlier in the year and had needed surgery at Brompton Hospital in London. However, all had gone well thanks to the hospital team and Margaret looking after him and Ted was again back at work at Saville. **Margaret Kelly**, *née Hutchins* also worked at Kew, first in Registry in the Director's Office Building and then transferring to the Herbarium Library, working for five years under the then Librarian, **Ray Desmond**. Margaret left Kew in 1976 and now works as Activities Officer at a retirement home near Maidenhead.

was happy to have had some success in making new hybrids of *Rhododendron* capable of withstanding colder conditions. Secondly, to have had the good fortune to have been chosen as the first Curator of the VanDusen Botanical Garden where I was able to bring together my background in applied science, teaching and the art of gardening to make a garden for all seasons and several purposes of service to the public. Through all stages of my career, I have enjoyed the support, the tolerance and the regard of my colleagues, my co-workers and the volunteers on whom so much depends".

Jeff Kempster (1985) wrote in January 1999 to congratulate **Richard Ward** (1963) on his Presidency of the Guild. Jeff stated that it was as a result of Richard's membership publicity drive that he now wished to revive his membership of the Guild, mentioning that his wife Sylvia had been busy behind the scenes ensuring some of his contemporaries would do the same. Jeff states that he has moved many times over the past ten plus years and that he is currently the Parks Manager at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

Chris Kidd (1996) sent the compiler a marvellous letter packed with news about Kew people and life at Thenford. Chris comments "Life here at Thenford House near Banbury continues at a frantic pace and as usual there are not enough hours in the day. The walled garden restoration has entered a new phase, the glasshouse (Mr. Heseltine's 'Crystal Palace') is finished and full to the brim with exotics. George Carter has been appointed Landscape Designer and his plans are starting to come together so we are looking at a two to three year implementation. My wife **Gwenda**, *née* **Kitchener**, has a new part-time job restoring a vicarage garden in a nearby village for a lovely family and has her work cut out there. She will be taking a break next June, however, while she has our new addition to the family, (I'm hoping for a son and brother for Rebecca). Rebecca is now walking and beginning to talk. She has turned our world upside down and inside out and is the most extraordinary thing to happen to either of us".

Chris mentions that it is two years since he and Gwenda left London and regrets that they have not been more in touch with Guild activities. He mentions that a number of friends and colleagues have left the London area recently citing the extra expense of living around the Capital. **Robert Brett**, who left the Orchid Unit, Tropical Section at Kew at the end of the summer phoned Chris recently to say that he and wife Monica were in Cambridge. Monica is working for the World Conservation Monitoring Centre there and Robert has the post of Glasshouse Supervisor at the Cambridge Botanic Garden.

Kay Maguire (1998) and **Jo Scrivener** (1996) have both visited Chris at Thenford. Jo's parents live in a nearby village and he visited shortly after his Ernest Thornton Smith Travel Scholarship which he used to go and study botanic gardens in Sri Lanka and India. He was hoping to take a job at Syon Park. Kay apparently has a number of wonderful sounding jobs running concurrently and according to Chris "Has more energy than I ever had or am ever likely to have".

John Swarbrick (1997) paid a brief visit last year arriving in a van provided by the company he worked for, planting trays and tools rattling around in the back. Chris indicates they would have liked John to join them at Thenford as Propagator and indeed John, if you do read this Chris would like you to "get in touch".

Sarah Higgins (1996) dropped by to see Chris quite recently. Sarah seems very happy with her work as Features Editor for *The Garden* (R.H.S. Magazine) though not so enamoured with having to live in Peterborough.

Back in the London area **Matthew Vincent** (1993) continues to expand his business, The Kew Gardener Limited and has recently moved to different shop premises at Kew Gardens station giving improved accommodation. Matthew is now father to George, born last year. **Wayne Page** (1990) is working for Matthew replacing Chris and with a colleague heads up the landscaping side of the business. Wayne informed the compiler that The Kew Gardener Limited staged a display at the Regents Park Flower Show in July 1999 for which they were awarded a Gold Medal.

Jane Reynolds (1993) is Head Gardener at a private garden, The Holt, at Regents Park. Jane regularly sends posters to Thenford advertising their open day – Chris promises to attend one as soon as time permits! Gwenda has been in touch with **Alan Hulme** (1994) by phone. Alan is still working in Edinburgh and when last contacted was organising a promotion relating to Arboriculture.

Chris seems to have much enjoyed a visit by **Chris Bailey** (1995) fresh from a round the world holiday with **Lance Ingram** (1995). The holiday exploits included, among other things, being held at gunpoint by the U.S. Police for a motoring offence, to hallucinations on a cliff top following imbibing some frightening alcoholic concoction in New Zealand. *Chris Kidd writes* "Chris and I reminisced until early in the morning, at times both of us splitting our sides with

laughter. Chris told me that he has nearly finished his course on teaching and will by now have a Cert. Ed. after his name as well as Dip. Hort. Kew."

Gwenda's family hail from Chester and on a recent break there she visited Chester Zoo and saw **Mark Sparrow** (1999). Mark has a number of plant conservation plans in the offing linked to trips abroad. Nantwich is close to Chester and is the home of **Dan Slack**, who is about to return to Mauritius where he successfully completed his year out on the Kew Diploma.

(Great 'News of Kewites' Chris. But interestingly only two of 13 ex Kewites mentioned in your news has bothered to join the Kew Guild. Could we get application forms to them?! Ed.)

David Barnes (1997) apparently left the London area and returned to his native Midlands, to Dudley Council where he initially trained. However, Chris added a sentence at the foot of his "news of Kewites" letter to say "Stop Press, Dave has just telephoned to say he has got the Head Gardeners job at Warwick College. This is just 20 minutes away from us at Thenford so I expect to be seeing a lot more of Dave in the near future". Thank you Chris for so much news of younger Kewites. It would be so good to have them all as Guild Members!!!

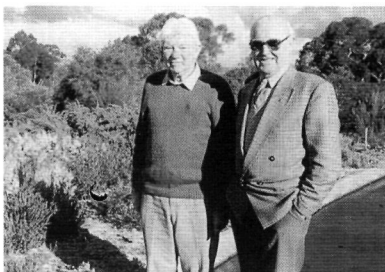
A little bit of history came by the Editor in late 1999. The *Leela Magazine* is published quarterly on behalf of Hotel Leelaventure Ltd., Mumbai, India. The January 1999 edition mentioned one **Gustav Krumbiegel** who joined the Mysore State Service in 1908 and retired in 1932. "Whatever he touched he adorned" the magazine quoted from the 1937 *Kew Guild Journal* 62 years ago! Krumbiegel worked at Kew in 1888. Mr. Krumbiegel's daughter currently lives in Fulham, London, to whom Richard returned the magazine. Wow!



Debra Lewis, Manager, Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, wrote to our Editor in September enclosing a photograph and obituary for **Charlotte Emily Ashley** (*née* Sharp and pictured left) sent in by her daughter. Readers of the *Guild Journal* may recall (Vol. 12, No. 101:52-53) seeing an article by **Nigel Hepper** about Charlotte. This stemmed from Nigel meeting her and her daughter, Iris Clack, who is a Friend, whilst they were attending a Friends of Kew coffee morning on 4th September 1996. Charlotte was then 103. The obituary

states that Charlotte Emily Ashley was born in Brentford on August 31st. 1893. She died shortly before her 106th birthday on 14th June 1999. Charlotte was employed probably from 1911-1914/15 (before the First World War) as a housemaid to **Dr. Otto Stapf** who was then Keeper of the Kew Herbarium. The photograph here shows her reading her second telegram from the Queen on her 105th birthday. Interesting to note that the Kew Guild came into being the year that Charlotte was born. Thank you Iris for informing us and condolences from The Guild on the loss of your mother.

Noel Lothian (1940) who is a Past President of the Guild wrote to **Richard Ward** from his home in Crafers, South Australia in March 1999 congratulating him on the honour of being elected President of The Guild. Noel stated that the Presidency was a suitable reward for the support given over many years to Guild activities and he states "I recall with heartfelt thanks the assistance you gave me when I was in that position and your many kindnesses that have been extended to other Presidents". Noel concludes "Unfortunately my days of extensive and distant travel are over but I will be with you in spirit when you preside over the Annual Guild Dinner in May. Please convey my best wishes to all who attend".



Noel (left) and John Taylor, Christchurch, New Zealand, August 1996 – from the Editor's Archives!

Dr. Chris Marchant (formerly a member of the Cytology team in the Jodrell Laboratory) sent news of his activities at Lumby, British Columbia, Canada. Chris says that the weather up to early December had been unseasonably mild, no lying snow and only morning frosts which had allowed him to continue planting out trees from his nursery. He says "We need to get on with planting as everything is starting to get large and there are thousands of spruce, fir, cedar, pine, larch, walnut, oak, maple, mountain ash etc. I have at last developed a system of deterrents to reduce rodent and deer damage but it's labour intensive. Managed to sell a batch of trees and shrubs last spring to the government, Department of Fisheries!"

Chris is married to Alison and they have a son Ross, for whom they acquired a horse this year. However, it proved a bit too misbehaved for Ross so Alison is using the horse to go riding with a friend and apparently the discipline is making the horse behave better. Chris continues "I recently did some advisory work at Vancouver on the erosion problem of the Point Grey Cliffs – the very same problem I worked on some 20 years ago! A solution is still being discussed while all the time buildings get nearer to the edge".

The letter states that Chris had been in touch by phone with John Hubbard, son of **Dr. Charles Hubbard**, C.B.E. (Dr. Hubbard was Deputy Director and Keeper of the Herbarium and Library retiring in 1965). He also mentions that he keeps in contact with **Christine** and **Vernon Heywood**.

Cyril 'Mitch' Mitchelmore (1947) featured in *The Horticulturist* – the Journal of the Institute of Horticulture (Volume 9, No. 1, Winter 2000:21) recording the occasion of his receiving the 1999 Institute of Horticulture President's Medal. The citation outlined Cyril's career, the opening sentence of which I quote, "The recognition of the sobriquet 'Mitch' throughout U.K. horticultural education circles speaks volumes for the affection and honour in which he is held".

After training at Kew and Manchester University he was appointed in 1948 to the staff of the Lancashire College of Agriculture, where he commenced his teaching career, teaching horticultural science. Ten years later he moved to Northop, Flintshire as Principal of the Welsh College of Horticulture and Principal Agricultural Officer for the county of Flintshire. The citation mentions 'Mitch's' dedicated work to serving horticultural education in a wider field, devoting much of his limited spare time to this end.

Listed are other honours awarded to him, including the Presidency of the Kew Guild (1984), the Veitch Memorial Medal from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1986 and election to Fellowships of both the Institutes of Horticulture and Biology. "Mitch" was President of the H.E.A. (forerunner of the Institute of Horticulture) in 1982. The citation continues "Even in retirement and despite suffering from deteriorating eyesight, 'Mitch' continues to further horticultural education. He accepted the invitation of the National Examination Board of Agriculture, Horticulture and Allied Industries to be Chief Assessor for all examinations in Horticulture and allied subjects from 1987 to 1992 and then, in 1993 was appointed external examiner for the National Examination Board in Singapore".

The text mentions that 'Mitch' is a long serving member of Horticultural Affairs Standing Committee and a loyal supporter of I.O.H. events and concludes "He is eminently worthy of this award for Outstanding Service to Horticulture from the Institute that he helped to found". I am sure members of The Guild would wish to add their congratulations.

A number of Kewites had mention in the above cited volume of *The Horticulturist*. **Professor Sir Ghilleen Prance**, President of The Linnean Society of London and Kew's immediate past Director (President of the Kew Guild 1992/3) delivered the 25th Eric Gardener Memorial Lecture in September 1999 at the Linnean Society in London. The volume gave the outline text of his talk 'Exploring and exploiting biodiversity'.

John Sales (1958), Guild President 1994/5, provided a feature article entitled 'The future of the visited garden' in which he discusses garden visiting which expanded rapidly last century and seems set to continue in the 21st. century. John highlights the need for clear conservation objectives.

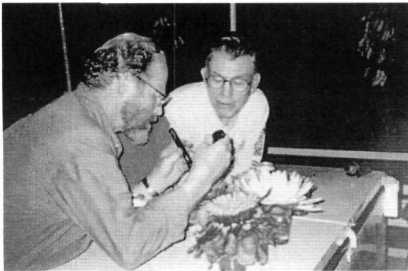
Alan Barber (1965) has become an Amenity Sector Representative for the I.O.H. and **Kenwyn Pearson** (1975), Guild Vice President (1998/2000), is Vice Chairman of the Institute's Professional Affairs Committee.

Also mentioned in the same volume under 'People and Places' on page 25 **Mark Flanagan** who left Kew, (Wakehurst) in 1997 to take up the post of Keeper of the Gardens at Windsor Great Park, is to take part with **Tony Kirkham**, Head of Horticultural Services at Kew, in a plant collecting expedition to the Sichuan Province in central China. Tony will lead the expedition and, as Kew is extending the number of organisations involved in such projects, this consortium will include the Howick Arboretum in Northumberland and Quarryhill Botanic Gardens in California. The expedition will be assisted in China by the Chengdu Institute of Biology.

Last but not least **Susyn Andrews**, S.S.O. Horticultural Taxonomy, working in the Herbarium at Kew, is mentioned among the consultants and contributors to *The Royal Horticultural Society New Encyclopaedia of Plants and Flowers*, a new edition which has been published by Dorling Kindersley.

Patrick Nutt (1953) communicated with the compiler on a number of occasions throughout the year. He wrote in February to say that he was accompanying a party of Longwood Gardens students on a field trip to Costa Rica and was one of the chaperones for the group. Patrick says "It is good to be able to keep up the with students even though I am approaching 70".

He also mentioned that he was returning to Brazil in two weeks and that the Captain of the Amazon River craft that he had used before on plant hunting trips had engaged Patrick as a



Patrick Nutt (right) and colleague examining *Victoria amazonica* flowers. Note the bananas hanging outside the window.



Patrick Nutt (right) and colleague searching for *Victoria amazonica* seed pods – the Amazon.

guide this time (see photos above). He hoped it would again be possible to collect seed of *Victoria amazonica*. Indeed a further communication confirmed that seeds were collected and that the expedition had been a great success; the expedition explored the Solimoes and Rio Negro rivers. Patrick indicated seeds of *Victoria amazonica* and *V. amazonica* var. *randii* were found and he included a copy of a letter of thanks from **Professor Sir Ghilleen Prance** (1999) for seed samples from this expedition which were being germinated both at Kew and at the Eden Project in Cornwall. He mentioned that he had heard from **Andrew Pierce** at Denver and had sent him Guild membership renewal forms. He had written to **John Eislely** (1964) to encourage him to rejoin the Guild, but had not received a reply.

Patrick included a photocopied news sheet from Fairchild Botanic Garden in Florida which stated that **Dr. Brinsley Burbidge** had resigned his Directorship at Fairchild and was due to take over as Director of the Denver Botanic Gardens in February 1999. The article mentioned that Dr. Burbidge would be remembered for accomplishments at Fairchild including the building of the new Conservatory and the establishment of the Gate House Museum.

Patrick obviously enjoys keeping busy and enclosed information in one letter about the restoration of Bartrams Pond in the historic Bartram's Garden in Philadelphia. John Bartram

purchased a 100 acre plantation in 1728 on which to create a garden. Part of the site had a natural wetland area which he developed for growing water plants. The area now needs restoration and Patrick is assisting in this project. Patrick was also in touch with **Emma Fox** who graduated from the Diploma Course this year and is now Supervisor of the Palm House at Kew. Emma has become interested in water plants and reintroduced *Victoria cruziana* to the House 15 display during the summer. I am sure Emma and Patrick will keep in touch on matters aquatic.

Patrick was also able to show **Beth Rothschild** (1989) and her party round Longwood back in the summer and from her letter to Patrick the visit was much enjoyed by all. Patrick also hosted a visit by **Sarah and Jim Buckland** (1982) in late summer. Patrick says in a communication in November that he has tried to live up to the George Brown Award which he received this year from the Guild. I am sure all would agree that you have indeed achieved that and more. Thank you Patrick for all the information and help you provide.

Soo and Keith Parker (1987) responded to a note from the compiler in December. Soo says they are well settled in Cumbria, living in Cockermouth with their son Michael and Chloe the Bull Terrier. Apparently the Lurchers that Soo had with her when she was at Kew passed away a couple of years back. Keith is working as Head of Amenities and Leisure Services for Copeland Borough Council, which stretches from Whitehaven to Millom (including such wonderful places as Wasdale, Ennerdale and Eskdale). Soo states "Keith's job is enormously varied for a Horticulturist and involves not only parks and open spaces but also arts and museums, refuse collection, car parking, public toilets and Christmas lights! Keith also tutors for the Institute of Waste Management and is working on Best Value and Performance Management Networks with A.D.L.O. He has recently completed an M.B.A. degree in his spare time". Congratulations Keith.

Of her own endeavours Soo said "On a more down to earth note, I am still working as Head Gardener for the Lake District National Park at Brockhole, though due to back problems I only work three days each week (almost as good as being retired!) Brockhole is an Edwardian garden on the shores of Lake Windermere, consisting of ten acres of formal terraced garden, ten acres of woodland and ten acres of pasture (mostly unimproved wildflower meadow). On my days off I write a weekly column for our local newspaper and do a modest amount of design and consultancy work". Good to hear that all goes well for you both and I am sure many feel as you when you say "Sometimes it seems like only a few months since we were all in the Lower Nursery together, and sometimes it feels like a different lifetime".

Leo Pemberton (1988) provided the compiler with news relating to the opening on May 1st. 1999 of the Hextable Gardens and Heritage Centre. Leo mentions that, at first sight this may appear to have little or no connection with Kew, but goes on to mention that the Hextable Gardens were formerly part of the Swanley College estate, later the Kent Horticultural Institute. This horticultural centre has had several close connections with Kew writes Leo "starting with the three famous lady gardeners of 1896-8 who had to dress like young men (mesdames **Cope, Gulvin and Hutchings**). Mysteriously (!) they were the only women gardeners until the First World War when, because of manpower shortages, many more women gardeners were employed – another seven came from Swanley". *The Guild Journal* printed an appreciation but they were not kept on at Kew. There were no more lady gardeners until the Second World War and they, like their earlier counterparts, had to go – but there was no mention of appreciation in the postwar Journal! Leo writes "at the end of the war the Kent County Council took over the estate and the Kent Horticultural Institute was established under the Principal, Winifred Corbett. Early staff members were the late **George Brown** and **Charles Joy** (1937). Between them they encouraged a succession of Kew students – myself, **John Sales** (1958), **John Hale** (who retired from Kew in 1993), **Helen Raven** and **Geoff Collins**. They were followed by **Tom Wood** (1960), Guild President 1996/7 and **John Gaggini** (1963). More recently, at Hadlow College (which superseded the Swanley site), **John Leeson** (1989) and **Carlos Sombrero** (1984) have reversed the progression and are on the staff". Leo concludes by saying the Hextable Gardens and Heritage Centre will provide the local population with an historic garden and maintain part of our horticultural heritage.

Udai C. Pradhan (1972) wrote in September saying "*The Kew Guild Magazine* arrived some time ago and it was wonderful going through it and reliving the past while learning of recent events". He indicates that there is much to catch up on following rejoining the Guild after more than two decades. Udai sends condolences regarding the death of **Professor Jack Heslop-Harrison**, who was the Director during his Voluntary Studentship at Kew. Congratulations are sent to **Dickon Bowling**, **Dr. Peter Brandham**, **Dr. H. Burkill** and **Mr. Tudor Harwood** for being honoured with the Kew Medal.

He says that it was Dickon who taught him the techniques of the laboratory culture of orchids and transplanting them in the greenhouse and indicates that he has successfully applied the techniques in the Himalayas for the propagation of Himalayan native orchid species and for commercial Cymbidium production. He says "I particularly remember Dickon with the huge black Tarantula that he brought back from an African trip and carried around with him. I wonder if he still nurses it?!"

Udai mentions **Dr. Peter Thompson**, who at that time was working on his book *Growing Orchids from Seed*, which is now well known. He continues "At the Orchid Herbarium I worked with **Dr. Phillip Cribb** (I now help him as a Member of the Orchid Specialist Group) who had just joined the staff, **Jeff Wood** and **Peter Hunt** (I still correspond with him while registering my Orchid Hybrids) and the late **Dr. R. E. Holtum** was my mentor there. In the evenings Dr. Holtum and the late **Dr. N. L. Bor** used to take turns to take me to the Herbarium where I used to make notes on Indian Orchidaceae. These notes later formed the base for my book, *Indian Orchids: Guide to Identification and Culture* in 2 volumes. Dr. N. L. Bor was well known to my Grandfather, Raisaheb Bhim Bahadur Pradhan, who was the Manager of Sikkim Forests under the then Chogyal (King) of Sikkim and had accompanied Dr. Bor on his field trip researching the grasses of Sikkim."

"I married Tej, my school girlfriend, on return home and we celebrated our Silver Wedding Anniversary last January. We have three children, Hemlata, Satyam and Sanjivini. Hemlata graduated last year in Fine Arts from Poet Tagore's University, Viswabarati and received a second grant from the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation of Canada to travel to Kew and do her Diploma in Botanical Illustration which she completed with distinction. Her hosts at Kew were none other than Richard Ward (our Guild President) Wiens and their family. She has been accepted for her Masters Degree in Natural History Illustration and Ecological Studies at The Royal College of Arts in London and is looking for sponsors/grants/scholarships for her tuition fees. Satyam completed his Diploma in Horticulture from the Singapore Botanic Gardens and has joined our small plant business becoming the fourth generation in this trade. He intends to carry on the breeding of Orchids, Anthurium and a few bulbous plants that we export regularly to Holland and Japan. He is also raising many Orchid species from the Himalayas for the trade. Sanjivini has joined college and will be studying economics which she feels has so much to do with conservation".

Udai states that with his wife, Tej, he founded and was publishing the *Himalayan Plant Journal*, though this had to be discontinued because of political instability (Gorkhaland Movement) in their area. They also lost many valuable orchids, though since this time have been busy catching up with their lives. He says "We left home for months on end and went to Sikkim during the period of agitation, where we had the opportunity to complete *Sikkim Himalayan Rhododendrons* and *Himalayan Cobra-lilies (Arisaema) – Their Botany and Culture* (now in its second edition). We are contemplating once again reviving the *Himalayan Plant Journal* and look for support from Guild Members. Later on we hope to set up the Himalayan Plant Trust that can take over the publication of the journal and serve as a catalyst in activities related to conservation and economic exploration of Himalayan plants for the benefit of people here. Any Guild Member wishing to share thoughts, experiences and intending to participate please write to: himalaya@dte.vsnl.net.in or fax: 0091-3552-55673. The mailing address will be in the listing of Guild Members in the *Journal*.

Udai concludes "If you plan to visit this side of the Himalayas do let us know. We do not have the facilities of great comfort here, but Tej, I and my family will be very happy to take you

around and partake our meals and experiences with you. As we welcome the next century let us all join together to share the concern we feel for our natural world and the next generation more intensely. Through the medium of plants let us help bring about happiness, goodwill and prosperity that may assist in healing the world and making it possible for young people to face the challenges of the forthcoming Millennium. May immense happiness and good fortune be yours in the New Millennium."

Whilst scanning through a back number of *Horticulture Week* (November 5th 1998:6) the compiler noted an article headed '£5m Jersey botanic garden bid'. **Rebecca Ransom** (1988) and **Bruce Labey** (1987) were listed as two members of Jersey Botanic Garden Trust which was hoping to obtain the funding to buy Steephill Gardens, a six hectare property near St. Helier, then in private hands. The property's features include a Victorian-style fernery, Mediterranean garden, Grade II listed manor house and many mature trees. Kew was asked to provide a feasibility study, **Greg Redwood** from Kew's Technical Support Unit visiting the site to assess the estate. Offering much potential; the property is close to St. Helier and would be ideal as an educational facility to serve the schools of the area and indeed the whole Island. However, the compiler has recently learned that funding was apparently difficult to obtain. Jersey is exempt from British government backing or lottery funding.



Joe Rowntree. (Photograph courtesy of *Horticulture Week*)

Joe Rowntree (1996) was featured in 'Move of the Week', *Horticulture Week* (March 18th 1999:48) on his appointment as Curator at Sheffield Botanic Gardens. Joe will oversee the transformation of the gardens using a 5 million pound grant from the Heritage Lottery Urban Parks Fund. The work will be carried out in consultation with the Friend Group and as part of his remit Joe will set up a plant database, give demonstrations and lead walks round the gardens. Joe was Head Gardener at Wyeford Estate in Hampshire before moving to Sheffield Botanic Garden. (Not currently a Guild member though! *Ed.*)

Mrs. Stella Ross-Craig was presented with the Kew Award "for outstanding service to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew". The medal was presented to her on the 24th November 1999.

This was only the ninth Kew Award given to date.



Left to right: The Director, Professor Peter Crane, Professor Gren Lucas, Dr. Bernard Verdcourt, Dr. Peter Green, Marilyn Ward, Stella Ross-Craig, and Dr. Simon Owens.

A letter from **John Simmons** (1958-1995) arrived at the end of March. John indicated that he was well into another busy year, "We are scheduled to lead tours to the west coast of America in May/June and round the Mediterranean (on a cruise) in October and Castle Howard has a Royal Visit, public opening *et al.* There is another summer book deadline for Jill Hamilton and plenty of consultancy work". John mentions that the April edition of *Country Life* was to run a feature on Castle Howard covering its tercentenary etc.

The compiler received a return phone call from **Alan Stuttard** (1973) and

gleaned a little about Alan's work for the City of Worcester. Alan took a job there some ten years ago as Assistant Director of Leisure Services and now holds the post of Head of Cultural Services. In common with other local authorities, parks activity has widened and Alan mentioned that they have recently received a £1/3m Lottery Grant to go toward a £1/2m project to build an exhibition in one of the City's Museums to be entitled 'The Worcestershire Soldier'. Over the past

year and more he has been engaged on the development of a new golf course which will be finished and open in spring 2000.

Alan Titchmarsh (1974) was voted Television Gardening Broadcaster of the year for the third successive year at the Garden Writers Guild awards held at the Savoy in September. He also supported the Guild in a much appreciated way when he acted as M.C. at the Annual Dinner in May. Recently he has been awarded the M.B.E. in the New Years Honours. Congratulations Alan.

Horticulture Week magazine's 'Move of the Week', (July 15th 1999:40) featured **Andy Vernon** who has taken the post of Sales and Display Manager at The Palm Centre based at Ham near Richmond in Surrey. Andy spent almost four years at Kew working in the Palm, Waterlily, Temperate and Evolution planthouses following his gaining a B.Sc. (Hons.) in Horticulture and European Studies from the University of Nottingham in 1994 and training at the Royal Horticultural Society in 1995.

Work on aspects of commercial top fruit production undertaken by **Dr. Tony Webster** (1968) and colleagues at Horticulture Research International, East Malling, featured on a number of occasions in *The Grower* through 1999. The week 24 edition (June 17th 1999:28-29) pictured Tony within an article based on information given at an East Kent Fruit Society thinning event at Hadlow Place Farm. Though Tony is often featured in relation to trial work regarding fruiting cherry production, this particular article discussed the impending demise of Carbaryl as a fruit thinning agent for desert apple orchards. Tony presented information on alternative products and discussed their use and especially the timing of spray applications.

Hon. Editor **Richard Ward**, together with his wife Wiena and daughters Alexandra (ten) and Sparkle (eight), flew to Calcutta in late March for a three week holiday. They travelled by train and road into Sikkim and on to stay with Guild member **Udai Pradhan** and his family. Richard said that he was relieved to hand over the Presidency of the Guild in September to Professor Arthur Bell after the busiest and most tiring year of his life! (or maybe it's something to do with his age!)

John (Log) Whitehead (1972) wrote to say that he was lucky back in 1988 to see the mass flowering of *Puya raimondii* which happens about every ten years. During conversation with **Pamela Holt** (1974) at the 1998 Guild A.G.M., John found that Pamela had recently returned from Peru and mentioned that the Puya's were in flower again. John made arrangements to travel to Peru in October that year and was rewarded with seeing around 1,000 of the giant ten metre tall inflorescences.

John also mentioned that a cheap air ticket for himself and his partner Brenda (Bren) to Gambia in February 1999 provided onward journeys into sand storms in Mauritania and Baobab hunting in Senegal. He says they went to see the big 23 metre girth tree at Fissel but it had blown down in 1997, though they found another of 25 metre girth elsewhere. John wrote "We saw substantial groves and young trees in more or less elephantless areas of west Africa". **Sandra Leche** (1977) had written to John from Chile to say that she had been botanising with Roy Lancaster in the Andes. A communication (March 1999) from Log was to say "Great season for Wordsworth and daff hunting at Ullswater and Dora's Field".

THE KEW STUDENTS' UNION ANNUAL REPORT 1999

By Christopher Weddell, President

Time as ever has flashed by: Course 34 have departed after three hard years and were presented with their Kew Diplomas by David Bellamy. This was followed as ever by the student vote of thanks, which this year was given by Dan Slack in his own inimitable way. Five members of Course 34, however, found it difficult to leave the cosy world of Kew Gardens. Anthony Blanchfield took up a short term contract to work in the Princess of Wales Conservatory, and Iris Otto-Knapp, Emma Fox, Helen Long and Kathy King all took up permanent