

A HORTICULTURAL HISTORY

THE RAPID ACCUMULATION OF A FAMILY OF FOUR IN THE 1950'S, ALSO SAW THE RAPID ACQUISITION OF AN ALLOTMENT, FIRSTLY AT PORTCHESTER AND THEN HAYLING ISLAND.

DURING ALL THE YEARS THEY LIVED AT HOME, THE FAMILY WERE NEVER AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR, WITHOUT VEGETABLES AND SUBSEQUENTLY FRUIT. NEEDS MUST!

A PROCESS I KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE, WHICH IS ALSO VERY FAMILIAR TO THOSE OF MY FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES, BOTH THEN AND THROUGH EVERY YEAR SINCE THAT TIME.

BECOMING INVOLVED WITH THOSE OF SIMILAR GARDENING INTERESTS IS INEVITABLE. THE TALKS AND THE FLOWER SHOWS ARE PART OF THE ANNUAL LIFE OF ALMOST ALL CLUBS AND SOCIETIES.

THE DAY SOME OF THE "OLD BOYS" AT PORTCHESTER ALLOTMENTS SAID: "*YOU OUGHT TO PUT THOSE VEG. IN THE SUMMER SHOW YOU KNOW!*" (I DID AND BEAT THEM), WAS THE START OF AN INCREDIBLE LIFE OF EXHIBITING AND JUDGING AT EVERY LEVEL FROM LOCAL TO NATIONAL FLOWER SHOWS, (ALSO WITH COUNTY SHOW TRADE STANDS) AND FROM FEDERATION ALLOTMENTS AND GARDENS, RIGHT UP TO SOUTHERN AND NATIONAL BRITAIN IN BLOOM COMPETITIONS, AND ON TOWARDS LIFE WITHIN THE RHS FRUIT GROUP AND THE NOW DEFUNCT RHS AFFILIATED SOCIETIES COMMITTEE.

A COMPLETE KALEIDOSCOPE OF EVERYTHING HORTICULTURAL.

LIFE ON HAYLING SAW MY COMPLETE ABSORPTION INTO THE SOCIETYS' LIFE. WORKING AS SECRETARY AND ASSISTING WITH SHOW ORGANISATION TO BEING A MEMBER OF THEIR FEDERATION QUIZ TEAM. A COMPETITION WON MORE THAN ONCE IN THE HALL OF SPARSHOLT COLLEGE, DURING THE EVENING OF '*FEDERATION DAY*'. BESIDE ME, AT THIS MOMENT, IS THE PEWTER TANKARD AWARDED TO ME ON ONE SUCH OCCASION IN 1972 FOR THE HIGHEST AGGREGATE SCORE. I HAVE REMAINED A MEMBER OF H I H S, FOR ALL THE YEARS SINCE, CERTAINLY MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS.

THE PROPOSED RENEWAL OF THE ORIGINAL HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT APPLE COLLECTION, (DATING FROM 1984 TO MARK OUR SILVER JUBILEE, AT THE INSTIGATION OF CHAIRMAN PETER MAUNDER AND PLANTED ON COLLEGE GROUNDS, GIVES ME ENORMOUS PLEASURE. NOT LEAST, SINCE FOR 15 YEARS, FROM THE FOLLOWING YEAR 1985, AFTER PETER MAUNDER PERSUADED LORD JOHN SELBORNE OF THE BLACKMOOR ESTATE, TO COMMISSION A TROPHY AND ANNUAL FRUIT COMPETITION IN HIS NAME TO COVER THE ENTIRE FEDERATION MEMBERSHIP SHOW AREA ON A YEARLY BASIS. THIS RAN FROM 1985 UNTIL 2002, AT A DIFFERENT SHOW EACH YEAR.

I WAS FORTUNATE TO WIN THE TROPHY ON THE VERY FIRST OCCASION WITH LORD SELBORNE AT FEDERATION DAY TO PRESENT IT. I WAS ALSO GIVEN A YOUNG LOCAL TREE. THE CULTIVAR '*NANNY*' ORIGINATING FROM EMSWORTH. APPROPRIATE IN THE WORDS OF TYNESIDER PETER MAUNDER: "*THIS, SINCE YOU CAN'T MAKE UP YOUR*

RUDDY MIND WHETHER TO LIVE IN HAMPSHIRE OR SUSSEX!" WE HAD, THE YEAR BEFORE MOVED FROM HAYLING TO TANGMERE!

I HAVE, AT THE VERY KIND OFFER OF THE COMMITTEE, ASKED FOR THAT SAME CULTIVAR IN THE NEW COLLECTION, TO BE MARKED IN MY HONOUR.

IT IS NOW JUST A FEW MONTHS BEFORE I REACH NUMBER 88.

LOOKING BACK NOW OVER SOME 37 OF THOSE, TAKES ME TO THE OCCASION IN 1982, AT THE COMPLETION OF THAT YEAR'S QUIZ FINAL, WHEN I APPROACHED THE STAGE , RESPONDING TO AN EARNEST REQUEST FROM BILL BOYD, (ONE OF OUR ILLUSTRIOUS FOUNDER MEMBERS), FOR SOMEONE TO TAKE HIS PLACE AS QUIZ QUESTION SETTER , THE POSITION HE HAD HELD SINCE THE VERY BEGINNING. " *BILL*" I SAID: "*I'LL TAKE ON THAT TASK IF YOU WISH.*"

A POSITION I WAS TO FILL FOR SOME 10 YEARS , WHICH MARKS ALSO, THE BEGINNING OF MY CONTINUOUS ASSOCIATION WITH THE FEDERATION IN MANY ROLES UP TO THIS VERY DAY. BECOMING CHAIRMAN IN SUCCESSION TO MY DEAR FRIEND PETER MAUNDER IN 1994. HE BECOMING PRESIDENT AT THAT TIME. SUBSEQUENTLY FOLLOWING HIS TRAGIC DEATH, AFTER A PAUSE, PRESIDENT FROM 2004.

ALL THOSE YEARS HAVE GIVEN ME ENORMOUS PLEASURE, PARTICULARLY THE MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET SO MANY PEOPLE SHARING THE SAME INTERESTS AND LOVE FOR EVERYTHING HORTICULTURAL.

IT IS SENSIBLE, AT THIS POINT IN LIFE, TO PASS ON MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO ANOTHER. I WISH THAT PERSON WELL AND EXTEND MY DEEPEST THOUGHTS TO ALL THOSE WITH WHOM I HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO BE A PART OF THE HAMPSHIRE FEDERATION OF HORTICULTURAL SOCIETIES .

PETER COLLETT WEDNESDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2019.