

The West & Midlands Iris Group

*Founded in 1974, as The West Midlands Iris Group, the **and** was not added until 1992. Seven members of the BIS met after being contacted by Jennifer Hewitt and several others expressed interest. They agreed to publish newsletters, to hold meetings and visits throughout the area. John Taylor became the first Chairman and Jennifer the first Secretary.*

BRITISH IRIS SOCIETY



West & Midlands Iris Group
Newsletter 81 February 2011



The first Newsletters were duplicated A4 sheets, with a change of format in 1994 to printed A5 publications. The real breakthrough was in 2011 when Pat took over the reigns and we had COLOUR!!

BRITISH IRIS SOCIETY



'Orinoco Flow' AGM, Cy Bartlett – Border Bearded
Dykes Medal 1994

West & Midlands Iris Group
A Retrospective: 1974–2007

Each Editor has brought their own unique style which we have enjoyed and all have given freely of their time. In 2007 A Retrospective was published to mark 33 years of the Group.

Malvern over the Years –

We missed the first Malvern Spring Gardening Show, as our first stand was in 1987. Over the years many members have contributed, stand design has changed but the ethos stays the same –

A chance to share our iris enthusiasm!



*Our first exhibit at the Malvern Spring Show -
1987*



*Malvern in the
early years*



2007 - Pat took over the reigns

2012 a venture into RHS judging!





*2012 Fern Harden as
Artist in Residence*



2015



*Our first RHS
Gold medal in
2014 came as
a surprise!*





Royal
Horticultural
Society

RHS MALVERN SPRING FESTIVAL

2018

BEST NATIONAL PLANT SOCIETIES EXHIBIT



***2018 Best National
Plant Societies exhibit
and a Gold medal –
wow!***



In 2019 the Group exhibited at Gardeners' World Live and were thrilled with their Platinum Award





The Malvern/Gardeners' World team were presented with the Pilkington Award by the BIS, this is given for outstanding service to the Society.





*Sidney Linnegar and his
shirt!*



*Sue Bedwell showing
off the new W&MIG
aprons!*

*Members and
their irises*



John & Mary Taylor

*Many Group visits were made to
'Saltwood' – their home at
Moreton-in-Marsh – the first was
in 1975*



1976

*Peggy
Chambers*



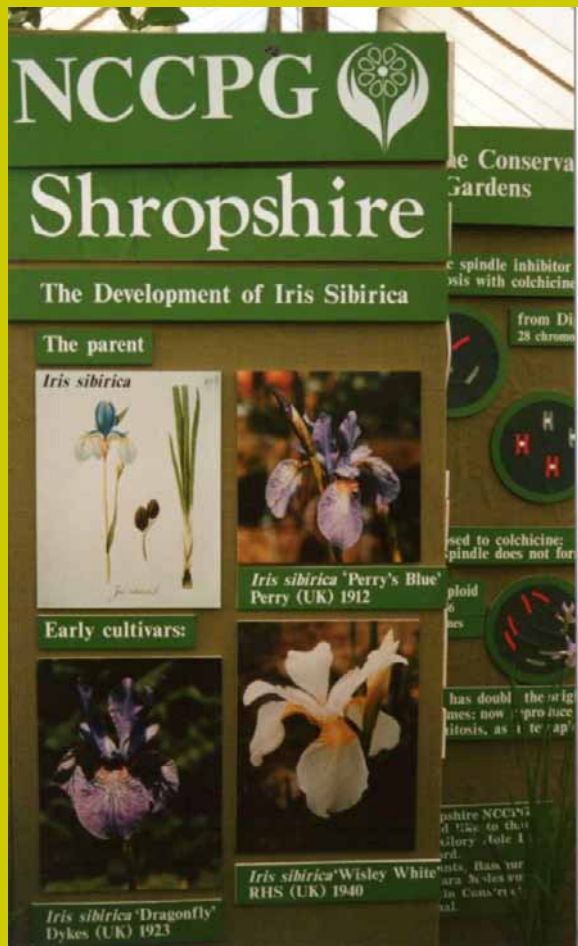
Bob Nichol was one of our founder members and he and his wife Jean often hosted Group visits and even AGMs



Jean presented 'The Bob Nichol' trophy to the BIS in 1999 - 'Amadora' & 'Trenwith' two of Bob's irises



***‘Clee Hills’ one of the
first irises that
Jennifer registered -
1979***



Margaret Owen did much to support our Group and also to spread the word about irises



In 1992, she organised a Plant Heritage exhibit at Chelsea which featured irises.



'Morwenna' Bob Nichol



*'Splashdown'
Doris Hansford*



*'Godfrey Owen'
Margaret Owen*



*‘Aldridge Visitor’
Phillip Allery*



‘Wyevale’ Maureen Foster



‘Glanusk’ Harry Foster



‘Alexia’

Cy Bartlett joined us in 1980, he organised several Cannington events, called 'Cannington Capers' which proved to be very popular. His garden was one of the host gardens for the Convention



Ken & Beryl MacLeod were both very keen supporters of our Group. Ken raised a number of seedlings but only registered one 'Honeyhole Prelude'



2017 - Fred Raines was awarded the Souvenir de M. Lémon Trophy by the BIS for his 'Canary Girls'

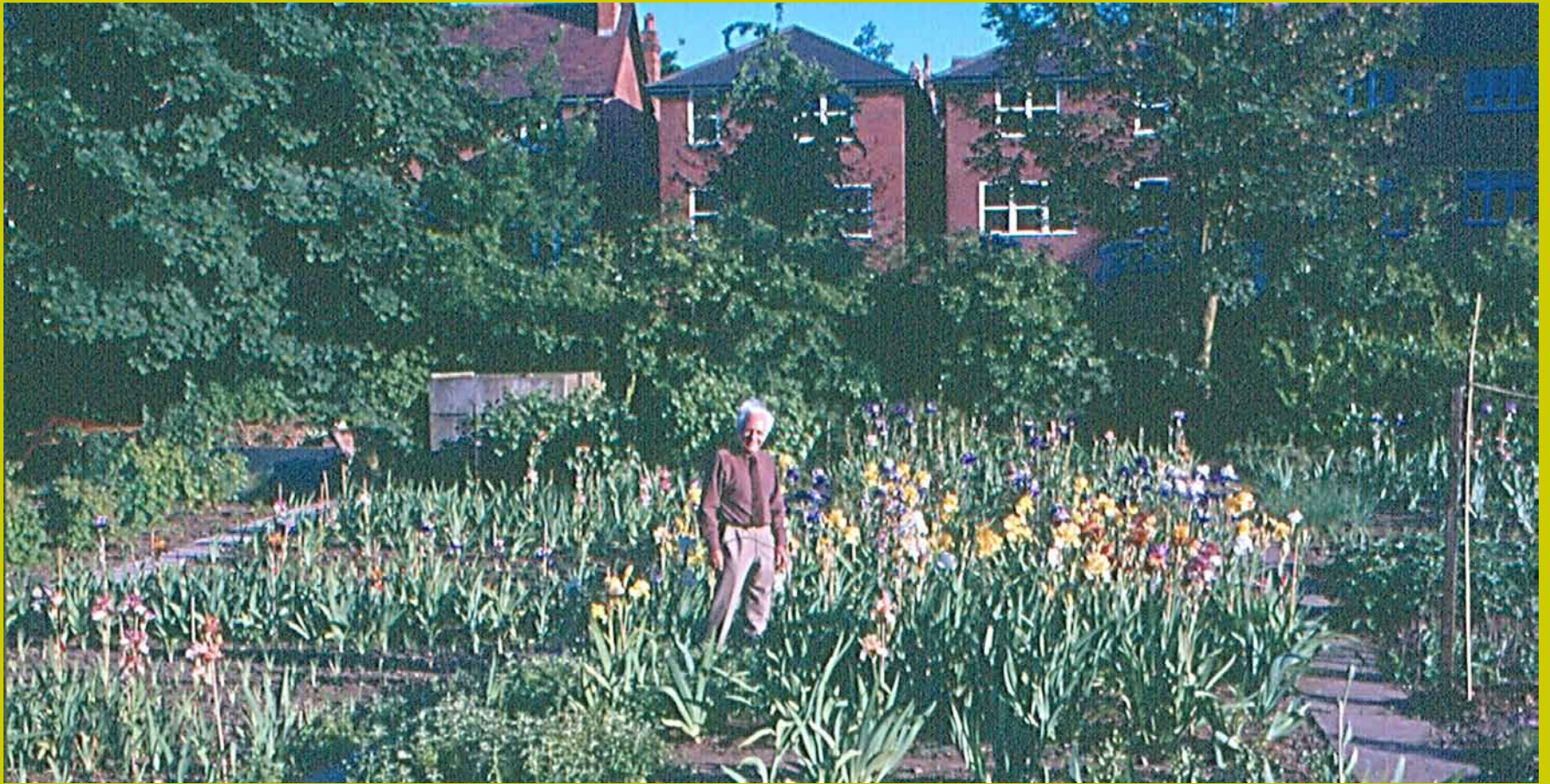


*Some of the
Groups Events
through the years.*

West & Midlands Iris Group Shows

*Our first display was at Acton Pigot in 1980
but our first competitive Show was 1982*

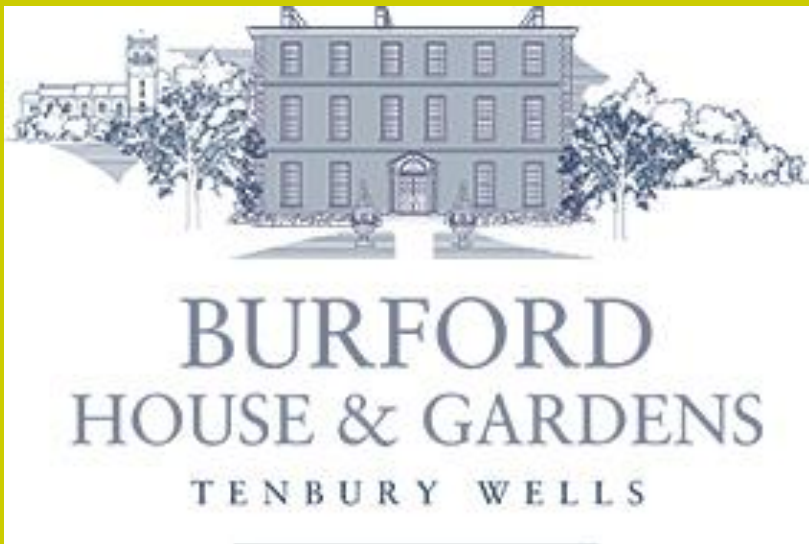




*1982, we held our first Show at the Grove Hall,
Harborne and we also visited Bob's allotment.*

One of our early shows, 1985





We held several very successful shows by invitation of John Treasure. The gardens attracted the crowds, which certainly helped us! Another excellent venue was David Austin roses, David being one of our members.



*2008 saw us at
Pershore College,
that was the year
when we ran out
of vases but we
saw the variety of
wine that our
members
consumed!*



*The advantage of
Persshore was the
delights of the
HPS garden.*



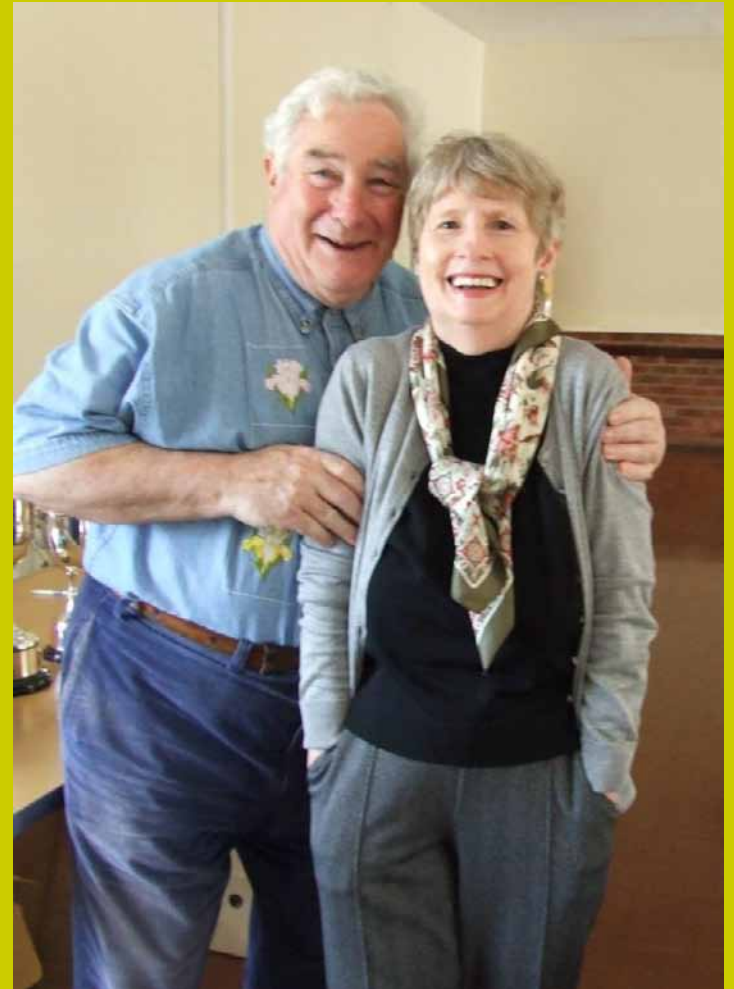
Audrey Fox, a keen exhibitor with Sidney and John Beale. John was Show Secretary despite living in Doncaster!



***1st Prize for
Audrey***



*2009 saw a new
Show Secretary,
Ian*



*Sidney Linnegar often
judged our shows and
Pam Roberts always did a
sterling job on the teas*



*2011, we were in for a treat -
Michael Castle displayed some
of his art work*



Michael Castle



*Alan Sedgwick was a keen exhibitor
and in the 1980's he offered to
finance our first trophies.*





Doing an 'Acton Pigot'! 1980, 1981 and 1984. Margaret Owen offered to open her garden and hold a plant sale and everybody got involved.



The crowds turned out in force and so did the sun!



Margaret Owen, with a hat as always and Bob Nichol



*Plant sales were very popular – Bob Nichol,
Jennifer Hewitt and John Taylor - 1981*



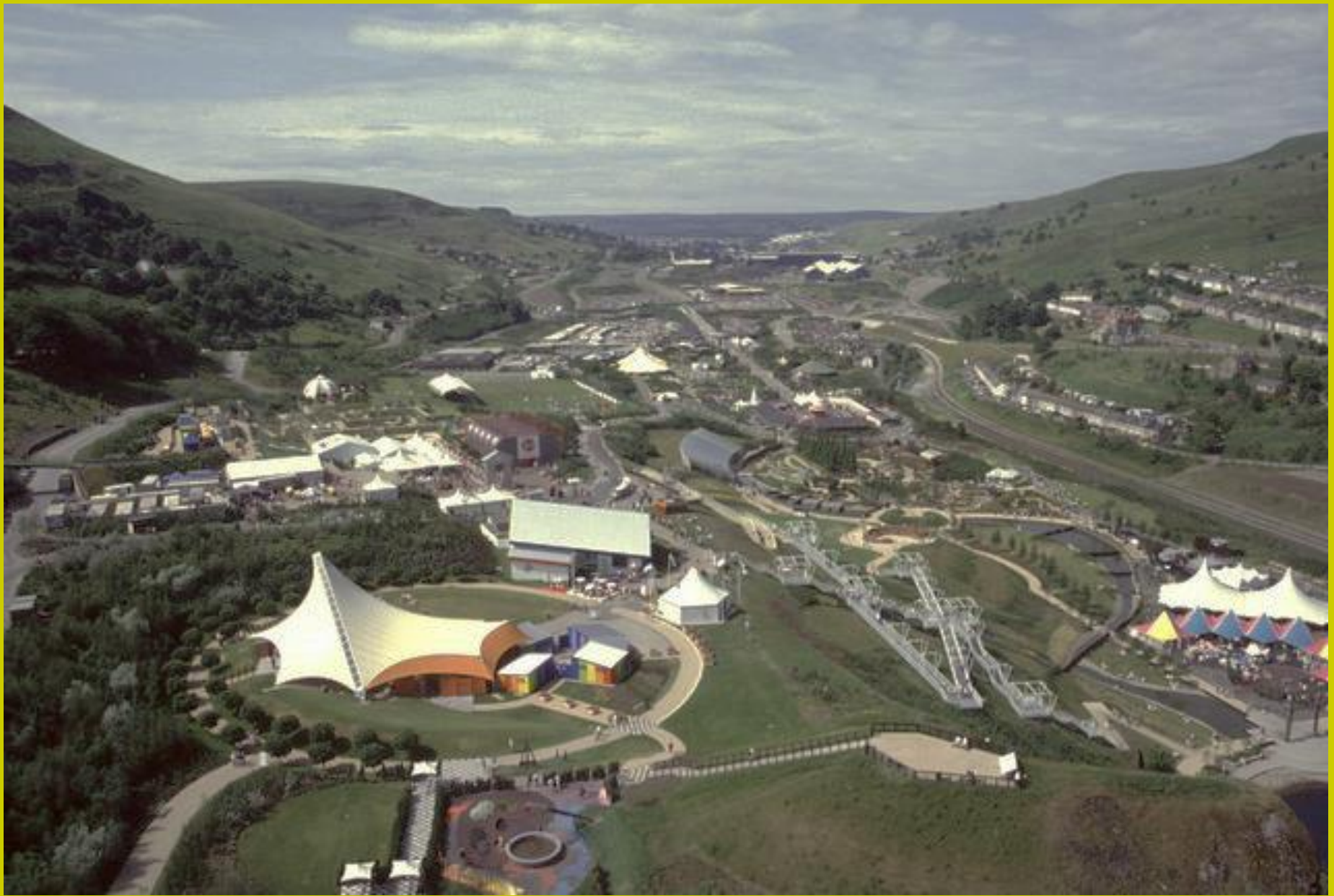
So were the teas!



1982 saw us at Jennifer's, Cleeton St Mary for a plant sale and garden visit. Peter Hewitt and John Taylor



Group visit to Bryan Dodsworth's garden in 1991, he was one of our members and a very successful hybridiser - gaining 12 Dykes medals.



National Garden Festival Ebbw Vale April – October 1992

The Festival attracted over two million people, 550,000 plants were planted but it was not all about plants, of course there had to be a dragon – in fact I suspect there were several!



Harry Foster was the driving force behind our involvement, he ensured that irises had a very high profile. It was one of the five festival flowers, around which planting, shows and events would feature for a month. An 'iris rainbow' featured about two thousand spikes, naturally arranged and delighted the visitors – some 52,000 visited on the first day of our Show, which was a show record. The BIS Summer Show was held there with Jennifer as Show Secretary and W&MIG mounted a publicity stand.





Filming 'Name the iris' Competition in the Foster's garden for Gardeners World

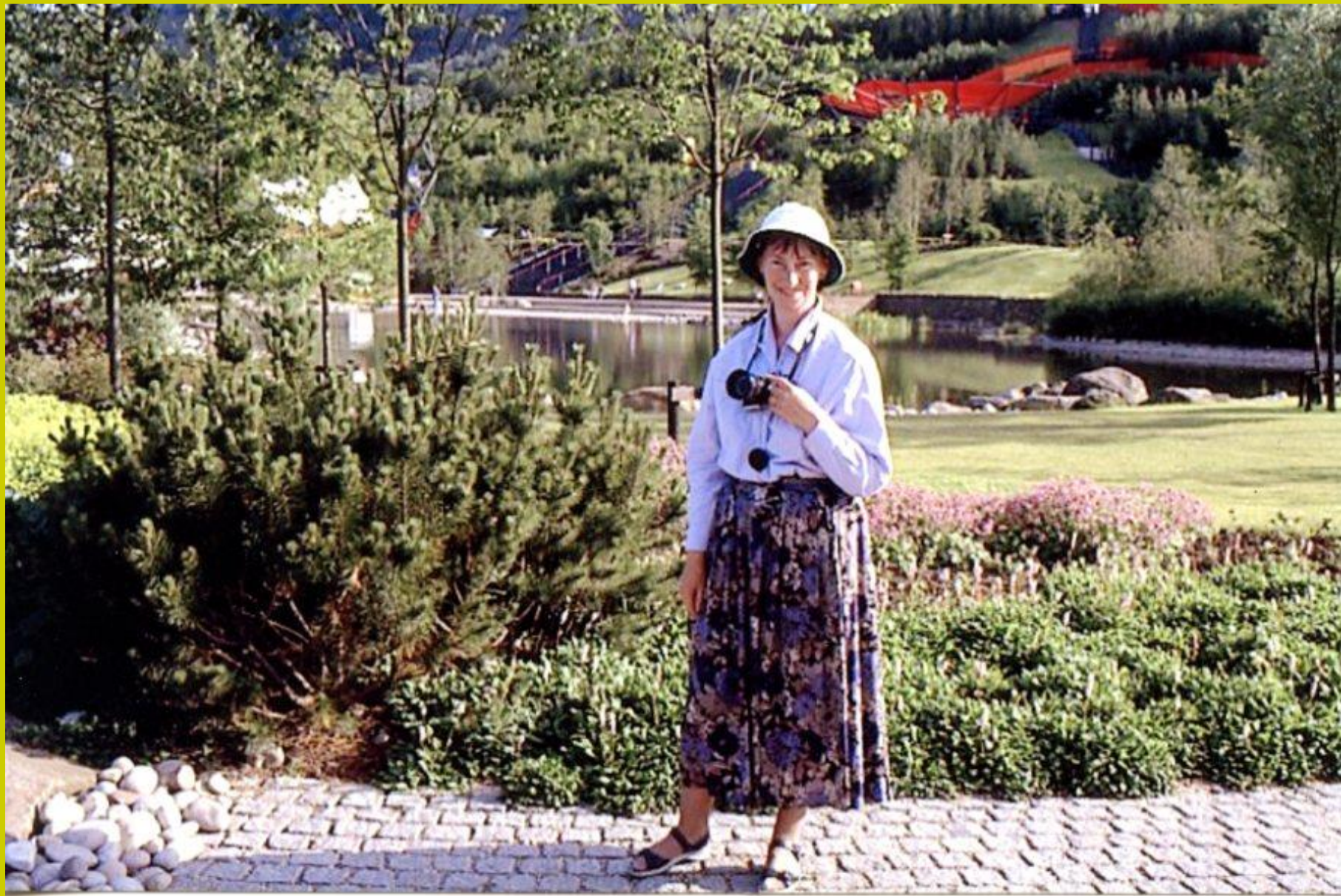


‘Festival Crown’



Iris was the June flower of the month.

Rainbow Fantasy – ‘Festival Crown’ Maureen Foster



Maureen Foster at Ebbw Vale



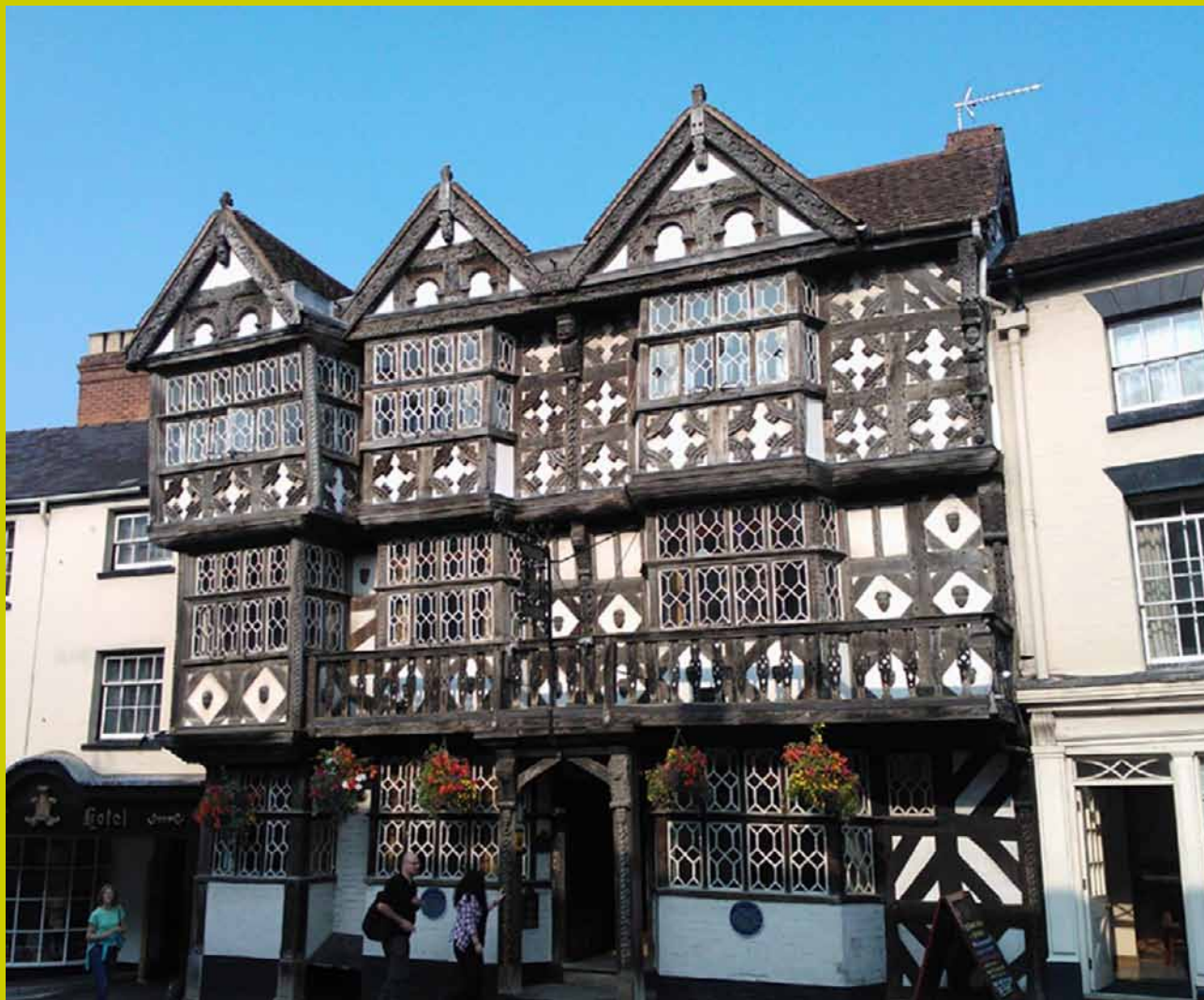
1998 – a visit to Jennifer's with some judges training in progress – all paying attention!



*Judy and David Pollitt have
always welcomed us – this was
in 1999*

*Judy was very successful at
the Shows, often gaining the
most points.*





In 1999 we celebrated our 25th anniversary with a members lunch at the Feathers Hotel, Ludlow followed by talks from Cy Bartlett and Jennifer Hewitt.



Philip Allery decided that the Group needed more publicity, so he mounted an exhibit at Hollybush Nursery - 2001



*2001 saw the
first visit to
Aulden Farm*



Convention Guest Irises at Cy Bartlett's Garden



TOP LEFT
"Berlin Tall Boy" (Tamberg unreg.)
Photo: Helena Butcher



TOP RIGHT
'Dunkler Wein' (Tamberg '95)
Photo: Jennifer Hewitt

CENTRE
'Snow Job' (P.Black '98)
Photo: Jennifer Hewitt

LOWER RIGHT
'Ribands' (Grosvenor '93)
Photo: Helena Butcher

LOWER LEFT
Lane to the iris beds.
Photo: Glyn Roberts



In 2002 the BIS held its first iris Convention, it was organised by W&MIG. 86 members joined us, from France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Australia. USA and of course some from home!



Guest Iris Beds
Photo: Glyn Roberts



LEFT TO RIGHT

'Devonshire Cream' (G.Sutton '99) TB Photos: Glyn Roberts
'Emily Anne' (Hollingworth '99) Sib
'Salamander Crossing' (Schafer/Sacks '99) Sib



LEFT TO RIGHT

'Walker Ross' (Chapman '96) AB Photo: Jennifer Hewitt
'Headline Banner' (G.Sutton '98) BB Photo: Jennifer Hewitt
'Volatile' (Craig '96) TB Photo: Helena Butcher

*Some of the guest
irises at Claire
Austin's.*

*Over three hundred
irises were planted
over the two sites.*



*Despite the weather,
there were smiles to
be seen!*



*Mike Lowe (USA) at
Hadspen Garden*



*At Spetchley Garden
the sun came out!*



In 2004 we were approached by Gardens Illustrated, could they feature our Show!!





Even exhibitors are allowed 'forty-winks' while the judging takes place!



In 2009 we visited Trentham Gardens, John Trinder organised an iris garden tour for us.



2010 - a visit to see The Bliss National Collection, Anne and Suz Winspear – who was once the BIS Historian and our Chairman.



*2012 AGM
was held at
Ashwoods*

*We said thank you to
Peter Farrell who had
been our Treasurer for
years and welcomed Rex
as Treasurer and
membership secretary.*





Our 2013 AGM was at Sue's – spotting the irises in the snow was a little tricky!



In 2013 we presented Jennifer with a painting of her Dykes medal winning Iris 'Peter Hewitt' in recognition of her work for W&MIG.



In 2015 we went to Birtsmorton Court, a moated manor house, most were impressed by the garden but it was the tools which impressed me!



*Birtsmorton - ten
acres of garden.*



Claire Austin invited us to her garden and nursery in 2015



In 2016 we visited 'Covertside' the home of John and Lyn Sales and made a new friend!



West & Midlands Iris Group
Tea and Talk

British Iris Breeders & Sir Cedric Morris
Sarah Cook



Ex Head Gardener at NT Sissinghurst
National Collection Holder of Sir Cedric Morris Irises
2015 Chelsea Gold Medal Winner

2.00pm - Sunday 6th November 2016
Highnam Community Centre
Highnam, Gloucester GL2 8DG

£5.00 including tea & home-made cake

All Welcome

***Our first members'
lunch and Tea &
Talk were enjoyed by
all***

*Members present at first meeting
Pat Foster, Doris Hansford, Jennifer Hewitt,
Ernest Bomford, Ray Bomford, Bob Nichol,
John Trinder*

*Several others had sent their apologies, in 1975
there were 18 members and the original subs
were 50p per year!*

*Thank you to them, to you and to all the
other members who have worked tirelessly
to make the group what it is today.*