

Out and About: Guernsey, October 20th



Above and below right: Andrew Lanoe's greenhouse

was told to ask the driver to put me off at Laser Wash! The bus really did zip around the twisty lanes through the houses and then along the coast, where I spotted several members on the beach, before depositing me right in front of the Clematis Nursery.

It was a most fascinating visit. Rather like our visit to Winchester Growers in the Spring the sheer scale of



White form of *N. filifolia* in Andrew Lanoe's collection

Caroline Stone

Pretty much ever since I joined the Society I have wanted to visit the Nerine Festival in Guernsey, so this year when we decided to make it a Society trip I was determined to make it. I am so glad I did—it was pure pleasure. I flew from Exeter at a ridiculously early hour of the morning and then found the buses that zip around the Island were very convenient for getting about. Andrew Lanoe had organised for us to visit Guernsey Clematis Nursery. I conferred with the bus information desk and

operations and the way that the problems are dealt with in commercial horticulture were intriguing.

From there we repaired to Andrew Lanoe's house to see his newly refurbished lean-to greenhouse—how that term fails to do it justice! Guernsey brings on greenhouse envy quite often. Travelling around the island you see many lovely ranges of glasshouses which are crying out for proper use now the trade in



Rose Rankilor with Andrew Lanoe

Guernsey Group of Plant Heritage. Rose Rankilor has been the organiser for the past few years, and was there to welcome us. Candie Garden has the oldest greenhouses in the British Isles and in previous years the display was put on in the Lower Greenhouse, but this year it is out of bounds pending repairs so the slightly smaller Upper Greenhouse was being used.



cut flowers has gone elsewhere. The floor of Andrew's greenhouse was covered with nerines, with many treasures to be found amongst them. He is growing both species nerines and *sarniensis* hybrids in the greenhouse, as well as pots of *bowdenii* cultivars outside.

In the morning we assembled at the Candie Gardens to visit the Nerine Festival mounted for several years now by the



It was an interesting show with a different range of *Nerine sarniensis* to those we are used to seeing. It was good to see a steady stream of visitors coming in while we were there. Nerines were on sale and apparently on occasion there have been brisk sales when a cruise ship has come in to port and some of the passengers have found their way up to the gardens. We didn't manage to buy quite so many I suspect, however....

We went from the Candie gardens to see the glasshouse where the collection of nerines is held. This was recently awarded National Collection status by Plant Heritage. And here we were able to buy more nerines!!

The Guernsey Group have been able to get a lease on an area in a commercial glasshouse.



Joanna Sadler inspecting part of the National Collection

Quite a bit of work was needed to get it ready for use. The ground was levelled and stone laid, and now the collection is grown on commercial benching there. Volunteers from the membership work hard at propagating and repotting so that the annual display can be put on and there be plants for sale.

Some plants have been retrieved from sites around the island so in the collection there are examples of the flowers

previously grown for commercial cut flower trade.

The Plant Heritage Group were very hospitable and it was a delight to be able to see not just the Nerine Festival but also behind the scenes of the National Collection.

Andrew Lanoe had also organised for us to visit the Victorian Walled Garden at Saumarez Park, and then on to one of the last of the commercial growers of *Nerine sarniensis* on the island, Roger Beausire. In his now slightly dilapidated greenhouses the nerines still grew and flowered in rows. It felt rather like time has stood still and it was a privilege to be able to visit. The bulbs in places were scrambling over each other having been producing offsets for some years without disturbance.

We had all taken a few extra days to explore Guernsey and we experienced the most glorious weather. Sunday on Herm, an off-lying island, was hot and sunny without a cloud in the sky. There was plenty to discover. I made a point of going to Castle Cornet, and was lucky enough to be the only visitor and so had a personal tour by the tour guide, the retired deputy harbourmaster. He was informative not just about the castle and its history but Guernsey, the sea currents all sorts of things. I had gone particularly because this was where Sir John Lambert was imprisoned after the Restoration. He is thought the most likely introducer of *N. sarniensis* to Guernsey. A



In the Plant Heritage glasshouse

small area of garden is planted up in front of the building where he is believed to have been housed. The centrepiece contained some flowering *N. sarniensis*.



'Guernsey lily' by Tim Fortune



Sir John Lambert's garden

I was surprised not to see more nerines in gardens around Guernsey but I did see this sculpture by Tim Fortune (it is over a metre high) when I visited Saumarez Manor. It would look super outside the Five Arrows gallery at Exbury.



One of Roger Beausire's glasshouses