

CAMBRIDGESHIRE ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

"With One Heart Let us Be Men of Understanding"

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'PREVIEW'

SPEAKERS LIST INFORMATION

Geoff Hales

Geoff Hales read English at King's College, London and wrote his Ph.D. thesis on the novels of George Orwell. In 1975 he went to Tonga in the South Pacific as the first lecturer in English at the new university there. On returning to the UK, he settled in Cambridge, where he still lives, and for several years taught English as a foreign language. In 1985 he left full-time teaching and started his own one-man theatre company, 'Travelling Theatre', which performs one-man shows about great writers, most recently Samuel Pepys. He has appeared all over England and in Prague, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Germany and Switzerland.

Horticultural Talks & Tours

Please make contact for bookings, rates and availability.

An excellent presentaiton I can reccommed attending if you have a chance is

'**The Chinese Gooseberry Man**' compiled and read by English actor, **Geoff Hales**. He cleverly tells the story of some of the trials and difficulties encountered by Ernest 'Chinese' Wilson in his plant hunting years in China as well as some of his great successes. Listening to Geoff speak helps bring Wilson's expeditions to life.

For details of his other presentations, contact:

Geoff Hales

Travelling Theatre
101 Brampton Road
Cambridge CB1 3HJ
United Kingdom
01223 212104

'The Chinese Gooseberry Man' the travels in China of E H Wilson the famous plant-hunter
Travelling Theatre
Victorian Evening
Private Kipling
The Murder of Dickens
The Beautiful Pea-Green Boat Show
One man in a boat
One man on Bummel
A wander round Wodehouse
Anthony Trollope
To Sea in a seive

Over the sea to everywhere
Samuel Peyps
Off with his head

Horticultural Talks & Tours

Current talks are listed below. For more details on his rates and availability, please make contact.

Caradoc is sometimes available at short notice to cover for last minute cancellations.

Garden Tour Guide

Charles Darwin's Famous Plants

This talk has been prepared to mark the bi-centenary of Charles Darwin's birth. On the 27th December 1831 the Beagle set sail from Plymouth on what was to be one of the most important scientific voyages of the century. Charles Darwin (1809-1882), was to discover many new and important plants during this voyage (1831-1836), and this talk illustrates some of his most interesting botanical finds and stories connected to Darwin's plant discoveries.

William Lobb, Cornish Plant Hunter in America

This talk has been prepared to celebrate the bi-centenary of William Lobb's birth in 1809. Lobb (1809-1863), was an intrepid Cornish plant collector who was so successful in finding new plants that many gardens can boast of containing a 'Lobb plant'. He travelled widely in south and North America on behalf of the famous Exeter nurseries of James Veitch & Son. His well-known introductions to Britain include fuchsias, escallonias, *Berberis darwinii*, *Ceanothus*, *Fremondodendron*, *Lapageria rosea*, *Crinodendron*, the Monkey Puzzle, (*Araucaria araucana*, and many other conifers, most famously the highly controversial Wellingtonia, (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*).

Plant Hunters & Pioneers; The Story of the Veitch Nurseries of Exeter & Chelsea.

You would be hard-pressed to find a garden in Britain that does not contain a 'Veitch' plant or one derived from their nurseries. This illustrated talk highlights some of the well-known and interesting plants introduced by this important firm. They were the first commercial nursery in Britain to sponsor their own plant collectors, returning many hundreds of new plants. The Veitch Nurseries sent twenty-three collectors to many countries over a seventy-two year span which included William and Thomas Lobb, Richard Pearce, John Gould Veitch, Peter C. M. Veitch, Frederick Burbidge, Charles Maries, Charles Curtis, James H. Veitch, Ernest H. Wilson and William Purdom.

Ernest 'Chinese' Wilson

Born in Chipping Campden, Gloucester, Ernest Henry Wilson (1876-1930) collected plants during several highly successful trips to China. His first two trips were on behalf of James Veitch & Sons, Chelsea before

moving to America to work for the Arnold Arboretum in Massachusetts. His first trip to Central China was between 1899 and 1902 in search of the Pocket-handkerchief Tree, *Davidia involucrata* and secondly, in Western China from 1903 to 1905, principally for the Yellow Poppy, *Meconopsis integrifolia*. On his first trip to China, Wilson discovered 400 new plants earning him the title of 'Chinese' Wilson. He went on to collect more plants in China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, India and Africa and by the end of his career he had discovered approximately 1,000 plants which were previously unknown. In 1930 he and his wife were tragically killed in a car accident in the U.S.

Charles Maries, The Plant Collector

Charles Maries (1850-1902) was from Warwickshire and introduced many well-known garden plants from his trip to Japan, China and Taiwan between 1877 to 1879. Many of his finds bear his name such as *Abies mariesii*, *Davallia mariesii*, *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Mariesii', *Platycodon grandiflorum* 'Mariesii' and *Viburnum plicatum* 'Mariesii'.

Seaside Gardening

An educational session giving helpful, practical advice on the particular challenges of gardening on the coast. This talk is illustrated and discusses useful plants which are easily available from most local nurseries and garden centres and comes complete with a useful advisory handout to take away.

The Olive

The olive (*Olea europaea*), is a powerful 'Tree of Peace' and has long been associated with immortality, holding a special place throughout history for its strong symbolic and spiritual significance. In recent years, olives have gained in popularity in Britain as a garden plant but did you know that the oldest olive in Britain is now nearly 100 years old? This talk recounts some of the stories attached to the olive through the ages, including its uses, symbolism and also advice on growing trees in Britain today.

The Lobb Brothers and their Famous Plants

These two intrepid Cornish collectors were so successful in finding new plants that most gardens or homes can boast of containing a 'Lobb plant'. William Lobb (1809-1863), travelled widely in South and North America, returning many well-known plants to Britain. These included the Monkey Puzzle, fuchsias, escallonias, *Ceanothus*, *Embothrium*, *Lapageria*, *Crinodendron* and later, many conifers, most famously the Wellingtonia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*). Thomas Lobb (1820-1894) collected plants in Singapore, Java, India, Malaya, Borneo and the Philippines for the new fashion of growing greenhouse plants. He was forced to return to England with a damaged leg which had to be amputated on the kitchen table. Following nearly 20 years of travelling, he was never to leave his home again. Due to the quantity of material about the Lobb brothers, this talk can be given as a synopsis of them both or can be divided as a William Lobb or Thomas Lobb talk.

Richard Pearce, The Plant Collector

Plymouth-born Richard Pearce (unknown-1867) collected plants in South America including the lovely *Azara microphylla*, *Eucryphia glutinosa*, Hippeastrums and the gorgeous orchid *Masdevallia veitchiana*, for which he had to climb a 12,000ft mountain to find. Most importantly, was his discovery of the tuberous begonia,

Begonia boliviensis from which trailing begonias were established. This talk is illustrated with many of his other interesting finds from Chile, Patagonia, Peru and Bolivia.

John Gould Veitch, The Plant Collector

In 1861, John Gould Veitch (1839-1870) became the first Western plant collector to be allowed into Japan. Although his movements were strictly controlled, he was still able to discover many new garden plants including Japanese Maples, lilies, and attractive conifers which were received in Britain to great excitement. Later he collected more interesting plants from Japan, the Philippine Islands, Australia and South Sea Islands before an early death in 1870 from tuberculosis, aged only 31.

Links to other sites are for reference and further information.

No responsibility will be accepted for advice or views expressed by other organisations.

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