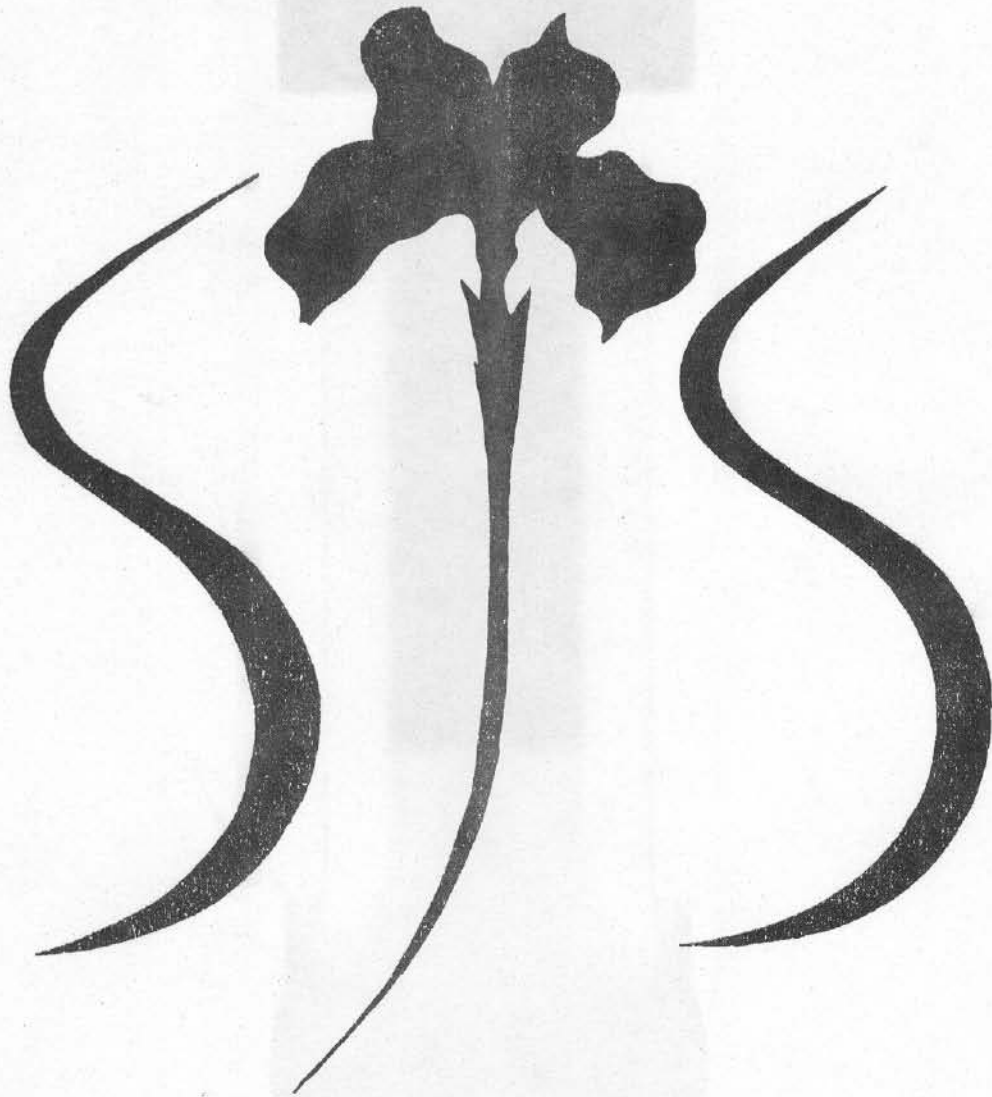


NEWSLETTER



OF THE
SIBERIAN SPURIA AND JAPANESE
GROUP
B.I.S.

The Objects of the Group.

1. Communication between Members in Great Britain and Overseas.
2. A means of exchanging ideas, plants and seeds etc.
3. To assist beginners in growing Irises and to help with problems.
4. To report on Hybridisation.

The Group's Officers.

Chairman Mr. Jack Venner, 'Raven's' Croft, St. Osyth Rd, LITTLE CLACTON.
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Eastern Area Mr. Jack Venner...address as above.....
London Area..... Mrs. Anne Blanco White.... address as above.....
North Western Area..... Mr. Ray Wilson, 'Daleshead', 100, Blackburn Rd. CHORLEY.Lancs.
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Southern Area..... Mr. Ian Smith, 35, Abbey Road, WEST MOORS. DORSET. BH22 OAX.
(See Regional Report for the South.)
West Midland Area..... Mr. Philip Allary, 199, Walsall Rd. ALDRIDGE. Nr. WALSALL.
Staffs. WS9 OBE.

Mr. Jack Venner is also our Show Reporter.

Our Regional Representatives form a valuable part of our Group, they gather information in their area, report on Shows which are held locally, also their research is very helpful in rendering a service to Members, in the quest for more Siberian, Spuria and Japanese Irises to be seen growing in this country. A big thank you to them and also to our Specialists, who also work for the furtherance of our Group's activities .

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1987/1988 ARE STILL £1 per annum.

Please make every effort to pay promptly, non-payment means that you will not receive the July Newsletter.... sorry!

We are continuing with the Plant Sales Scheme, which is gradually gaining momentum, and, together with the sale of seeds, is keeping the Subscription at the present level. Thank you for your support, please have a look in your garden this year and see if you have an Iris which **needs parting**, we would appreciate a portion and will refund the postage.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. JUNE 21st. 1988.

There will be a slight change from last year, you will find a full report in the Editorial. Hope to see you there. J.T.

Editorial.

Nottingham, this year is celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of Lord Byron (Jan. 22nd.) Lucy Edwards is our local representative. She has kindly taken time out of her very busy schedule to select the following extract from his poem 'Childe Harold'.

-- Heaven is free

From clouds but all colours seem to be

Melted to one vast iris of the West, --

Where the day joins the past Eternity.

Thank you Lucy, we hope you have good weather and plenty of assistance in making the Mary (Virgin Mary) garden you have designed for the Cloister of Newstead Abbey. Perhaps you will have time to let us know about this later on.

We send our congratulations to Australia on its bicentenary, and our best wishes to Trevor Nottle and his friends, have a happy Year.

The burning question of the moment, for our Group, is the Late Summer Show at the R.H.S. New Hall. This year the dates are 21st. and 22nd. June, when, unfortunately most of the Irises in the South will be over, so I have sought advice from Ray Jeffs the President of the B.I.S. and here is his statement:-

- (1) The R.H.S. Show in June is so late, it would not be possible to have a reasonably full Show, and certainly not any Bearded Irises.
- (2) As this is the case, we have chosen a suitable date for the maximum number of flowers and exhibitors, to be held at WISLEY on the 11th. and 12th. June, where cars can also be parked and spikes delivered to the actual Show venue.
- (3) To cope with the late varieties and also to 'show the flag' at Vincent Square, we will have an Informal Show at Westminster, perhaps making it a competition, if sufficient material turns up.
- (4) If you would like to hold a Show of your Own at Westminster that could, I am sure be organised, or perhaps you could have a joint Stand turn it into a Show if the material comes in.

I then contacted Sidney Linnegar, who is the Show Secretary of the B.I.S.

Sidney is hopeful that there will be a Show of some kind, which also means there will be a Publicity and Other Stands. No decision can be made until the Committee (B.I.S.) meets at the end of February. to add to the situation Sidney tells me that the R.H.S. will issue Parking Permits for Exhibitors costing £5, refunded if it is taken back within half-an-hour. Parking Meters are at a premium, as we already know.

We (Chairman and Secretary of the S.S. & J.) have decided that, in the circumstances, the Annual General Meeting will take the form of a 'Get Together' around 1.30 to 2.30p.m. on Tuesday the 21st June. (When I tell you that the cost of the room is £7, bookable in advance, I hope you will see why I am reluctant to repeat last years efforts.) I will be on the B.I.S. Publicity Stand, helping out, so if you have any questions or anything you would have raised, please write them down and hand them to me. You see I am assuming, already, that the 'North of Watford Gang' will 'Rally round the Flag', Anne Blanco Whites words, but I heartily endorse them.

RING SIDNEY ON 074/692930, he will tell you the procedure and the latest news, best around late May or early June I would say. He has a difficult job, so be patient. Look around your garden, if you find you have some good Irises, first read your Show Schedule (ring Sidney if you have not got one), then pack them up carefully, don't wave them about like Dame Ednas' Gladioli, take care of them. Board the Bus or Train, or if there are quite a few of you, hire a Mini-bus. Make a day of it, you know the Coach Station is quite close to the R.H.S. Hall, let us all try and help to keep the Traditional Show alive. There may not be an award for you, but does that matter, if you can grow and Show a good Iris, then hear someone say 'Oh! I do like that, it is beautiful that is reward enough. Can we do this as a thank you to growers, hybridisers and exhibitors who have worked so hard, over the years, and given so much pleasure... Support!... Support!... see you there.

We are pleased to welcome 18 New Members to our Group, here is the list, you will find more news, together with addresses at the end of the Newsletter.

Mr. Norman Berekis.	Mr. Brian Jewkes.	Walsall Mutual Gardeners.
Mr. Bob Bray.	Mrs. Viv Moore.	Mrs. Lucy Wilkins.
Mrs. Joy Cooksey	Miss Judith Sandall	Mr. Steve York.
Mr. A.W. Green.	Mr. T. Porter.	
Mr. Alan Harsley.	Mrs. Maureen Smith.	
Mr. & Mrs. L. Hemmings.	Mrs. J.L. Stokes.	

Overseas.
Coen Jansen. Holland.
Clarence Maher. U.S.A.
Jean Peyrard. France.

We hope you will all enjoy reading our Newsletter, and take part by writing in and telling us about your garden and the Irises you grow.

The committee sends sincere thanks to Philip Allery (West Midland Representative) for his sterling work in recruiting new Members in the West Midlands, and in helping to sell Plants and Seeds.

Do I detect an upsurge in people wanting to grow our Irises, and in Nursery Men and Women, at long last, wanting to stock them. Hooray! will 1988 be the year in which 'One more Iris in One more Garden' really catches on. You would have to search hard in this area alone, to find any other colour except blue in the Siberians, only Orientalis (Ochroleuca) in Spurias and Ensata 'Kaempferi', 'what are they. Year by Year, I am working on this, they are missing so much.

You may have noticed I have not mentioned the weather in 1987. well! read on----- it has been a heartbreaking time for Members in the South and South-East, and now I hear in the West and South-West, the loss of the trees is bad enough, there is also the damage to be reckoned with. 'Plant a Tree' has never been so urgent, I could add 'Plant a Tree Seed'. Then, if your garden is too small, find it a good home. I am reminded of the origin of some of our old trees on roads like 'the Fosse Way', 'Gartree Road' and quite a few more. According to History, the Monks, on their Pilgrimages, carried seeds in their pockets and scattered them as they walked, surely we could find a way to do the same... Our children and grandchildren will have cause to bless us, for our forethought.

Thank you for your Good Wishes at Christmas, have a Happy Iris Gardening Year.

Joan Trevithick.

Chairman's Letter.

Dear Fellow Members. Most of us will not want to dwell on the year 1987, there has been too much damage and too many tragedies. However we should reflect upon the past Iris season and ask ourselves whether it was good, average or bad.

Clearly, the weather, with its unusual Summer rainfall, affected different Irises in different ways. From reports around the country, it appears, generally speaking, to have been a poor year for T.B's, but much better for Beardless Irises.

In my own garden, Siberians were magnificent: Spurias did well: most of the Chrysographes types produced enormous clumps of foliage, but not many flowers. The later flowering Japanese had some blooms spoiled by the rain, but the period of bloom seemed longer than usual.

I believe that Beardless Irises are steadily gaining favour with gardeners, due to the many new, longer flowering varieties that are becoming available, thanks to the Hybridisers, and I must add the influential contribution being made by the S. S. & J supplying plants and seeds: not forgetting the friendly, informative links we keep with our Overseas Members, to whom we send our thanks.

Sincere good wishes to all our Members. The best of Health and Prosperity. Have a Great Iris Year. Happy 1988.

Jack Venner.

My Japanese Iris Experience.

by Norman Payne.

In September 1985, I decided that I wanted a better selection of Japanese Irises in my garden. I found that I would have to import them from abroad, regarding the U.S.A. as the most likely source of supply.

On looking through our Newsletter, I saw the address of Mr. and Mrs. Abrego of Chehalem Gardens Oregon. I wrote to them and in reply Mr. Abrego told me that theirs is a small 'Hobby Nursery' growing mostly Spurias and Siberians. He did, however, suggest that I should contact Mrs. L. Reid of Laurie's Garden Oregon. This I did, and Mrs. Reid sent me her list of some 150 Japanese Irises, plus Siberians and other Iris Species. I could not find a Nursery, here, I regret to say, which advertised so many varieties of these Irises.

For the benefit of Members, I will try to set out the procedure used in purchasing plants from America:-

First I phoned the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, their address is:-

Plant Health Administrative Unit,

Great Westminster House, Horseferry Road,

LONDON. SW1 P2AE. Tel. 01-216 7326/6808 or 6174. (cont.)

I was told that these are regarded as cultivated plants rather than wild ones, therefore no restrictions are placed on Imports.

The costs work out as follows:-

Money Draft. Your Bank will make a charge for this-- I think the Post Office can prove to be cheaper.

Postage on Plants. Import Duty. V.A.T. and Clearance Fee.

Please do not give up ----- read on:-

It was too late to order plants in 1985, so I had to wait until May 1986. My plants arrived on August 27th., having taken 4 days in transit. They will not be allowed into this country without a Phytosanitary Certificate, which you will find enclosed with your plants.

My Irises were fantastic, I could hardly believe that they had come all the way from the West Coast of America. By June and July 1987, most of them bloomed, which means that they spent 10 months in my garden before flowering. Out of 54 plants I only lost one. I have ordered more and now have about 36 different varieties of Japanese Irises. I have set out this years (1987) costs for you:-

Draft to the U.S.A. £220.03. made up as follows:-

Postage £56.90. Import Duty £22.09. V.A.T.% £36.45.

Clearance Fee £2.50.

(The Postman will want Cash or Cheque for the last 3 items before delivering your Parcel. (Total £61.04.)

So the total cost was £281.07. for this I had 57 very beautiful Japanese Irises to go with the 54 from last year.

May I say thank you most sincerely to Mr. and Mrs. Abrego (Tom and Ellen) for suggesting that I contacted Mrs. Lorena Reid, I do not think you could have made a better suggestion.

To Mrs. Lorena Reid, thank you for some very lovely plants, I will do my my best to grow them well and propagate from them. Maybe you will be adding to your list this year, I look forward to seeing it.

If all goes well, I hope to be able, in under two years, to send out my own list in this country, I will be letting you know.

(Thank you Norman, perhaps, later on you will also send us an account of how you grow your Japanese Irises, the old question of 'in or out of water' is raised once again.)

Iris Gardening in France.

by Jean Peyrard.

My garden stands on a sunny slope of the French Alps (1,000 m. above sea level), with clay and limestone rocks. The house is a very old Farm House and the soil near to it is composed of old manure, broken slates, various stones and often coal ash. I have not tested it, but I think it is near neutral. Before planting I add peat, pine needles with more sulphur. Snow usually comes between mid-December and mid-March, but, as you may already know, not this year. Spring is variable, sometimes snow in June. On the 30th May this year (1987), it snowed on my T.B's.

For the last 3 or 4 years our Summers have been very hot, but I am able to water easily. Beds of Siberians receive 9-10 hours of sun in Summer, with some shade at mid-day. Japanese Irises are in a special bed, also shaded at mid-day, they are in a kind of sink (diameter 70cm. depth 50 cm.) and in big pots (10 litres). I wanted to add bog soil, but found that in this region it was too limey.

I also have some clumps of garden Spurias, they bloom irregularly, I keep all the Species as seedlings 2-3 years in pots. I cannot get my Ochroleuca (now called Orientalis) to flower. These are often seen in country gardens, garden Spurias are rare, there are only two Nurseries in France. Louisianas are capricious, except 'D.K.Williamson'.

I cross M.D.B. Irises, but have not tried with the S.S & J's, I just do not have a lot of space. I did, however, sow some seed from the B.I.S. Seed Distribution and this year I was very pleased to have a little flower on a 2 year old Siberian Seedling (20 cm. high.)

My Japanese Irises I plant with peat, pine needles, some clay and fertiliser, but the leaves do not exceed 40 cm. Next year I am going to try more fertiliser.

A Happy New Year to you all.

(cont. over)

(Many thanks Jean for your account of your garden, it sounds beautiful. Jean asks if there is anyone in our Group who has similar conditions, who would like to exchange notes with him. I know we do not have the Mountains, but the late frosts sound familiar. His address is in the List of Members.)

Some Dates for your Diary.

Early Spring (Reticulata) Show.

February 23rd. and 24th.

R.H.S. New Hall.

Late Spring (Dwarf and Median)

Show.

May 4th. and 5th.

R.H.S. New Hall.

B.I.S. Display at Glasgow

Garden Festival.

May 26th. to 30th.

Festival Hall Glasgow.

(See N.W. Report. Ray Wilson).

Early Summer Show.

June 11th. and 12th.

R.H.S. Gardens. WISLEY

(Now B.I.S. Main Show.)

West Midland Group Show.

June 18th.

Held at 'Treasures'
of 'Tenbury'

Late Summer Show.

(Including our A.G.M. 'Get Together').

June 21st. and 22nd.

R.H.S. New Hall.

Siberian and Japanese Irises, Miscellanea. U.S.A. 1987.

by Currier McEwen.

I had told Joan that I would write another update regarding Siberian and Japanese Irises in the U.S.A., but I fear that, instead, this will be a real potpourri. That is because I did not get to other gardens in the U.S. this year and hence, have seen few, except my own seedlings. Elisabeth and I did attend the A.I.S. Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, in mid-April, but there were only three Siberian Irises in the Guest Iris beds and only one of these growing well enough to bloom. That was my own Lavender-pink tetraploid, since named 'Lucky Lilac'. Indeed, it was lucky to be able to bloom, because the heat and dryness there are quite unsuitable for Siberians, and therefore the Iris growers of that area have little or no experience with them. We did see a fair number of Spurias, Louisianas and Pacific Coast Irises, but this was chiefly -- even more than usual -- a tall bearded Convention. It was useful for me to see 'Lucky Lilac' in bloom there, because in our garden in Maine, it is more lavender than true pink -- in Phoenix the pink was less apparent -- another example of how different plants can be in different places, and how important it is to see one's seedlings in other gardens.

A highlight of the Convention for Elisabeth and me, of course, was the award of the Morgan-Wood Medal to 'Butter and Sugar'. This is a new award, presented for the first time this year. With the Dykes at the top, the level of awards for the various series of Irises according to A.I.S. rules is related to the number registered. With the growing interest in Siberians the number of registrations has reached the critical requirements for the next higher level. The Siberian Irises eligible for it were those that had previously won the Morgan Award, so the competition was keen.

(Note: the awards for 1987 have just been announced, Harley Briscoe's lovely 'Steve Varner' won the Morgan-Watd this time.)

Many of you know that the Society for Japanese Irises has, for a number of years held a separate Japanese Iris Convention. This is because they bloom a month after the A.I.S. Convention, which is timed for peak bloom time of the T.B.'s. Some Siberians and depending upon the location of the Convention, often many Spurias, Louisianas and Pacific Coast Irises are seen, but never, of course, Japanese. Years ago, when Arlie Payne and Walter Marx were alive, the Meccas for Japanese Iris enthusiasts in the U.S. were Terre Haute, Indiana and Boring, Oregon, and still earlier had been in New York, at the Brooklyn Botanical Garden's collection and Flowerfields on Long Island. After the deaths of Payne and his followers in Terre Haute, the center shifted to Kalamazoo, Michigan, where Arthur Hazzard carried on the torch. By 1963, Regional Japanese Iris Shows and Garden Tours were being scheduled there, and by 1977, also in Summerville, South Carolina. In 1985, the previously, purely Regional Meeting in Kalamazoo was scheduled as a Japanese Iris Convention. At that excellent gathering it was decided to have such a Convention every two or three years. However, interest and response have been so enthusiastic that they are now scheduled yearly. This year's Convention was in (cont.)

Summerville, South Carolina. In 1988 it will again be in Kalamazoo, 1989 in the Washington, D.C. area, in 1990 in Maine, and in 1991 the Vancouver area in the State of Washington. Elizabeth and I did not attend the Summerville Convention this year because it was exactly at the same time as the B.I.S. 65th. Birthday Celebration in Cannington, and our selection of priorities took us there. We had a wonderful time, but that is a story you know better than I.

On the whole this has been an excellent year in terms of seedlings blooming for the first time, for both Siberians and Japanese Irises. Among the Siberians, at long last, some good tetraploid yellow amoenas are appearing, as well as some from mixed 'green' and 'yellow' breeding. Also our first tetraploid lavender pinks, which have satisfied me, have bloomed. Perhaps the word 'satisfied' is wrong, for I am sure a hybridizer is never truly satisfied: there is always something better to work for. In the blue range, several, blooming for the first time had more ruffling on rounder flowers than I have seen before. In spite of my genuine determination to keep working for flowers of the 'traditional' Siberian form, the round flaring ones predominate. This is inevitable, because the majority of my crosses are with tetraploids, and they almost, without exception have the rounder form. One nice white tetraploid repeater, however, was an exception. It is a fine example of the traditional type. It bloomed over a period of 10 weeks and indeed, on into late August, when even most of the Japanese Irises had finished.

A particularly delightful experience for us this year was a visit by Moteteru Kamo, who is, I believe, the largest commercial grower of Japanese Irises in Japan. I had written to him during the winter asking for his advice and help in selecting Irises of Japanese Breeders that I should add to my breeding stock. In late June he phoned to say that he would arrive on July 3rd. When I met him at the Portland (Maine) airport, he carried a suitcase in one hand and in the other a styrofoam chest (picnic) containing 60 Japanese Irises, beautifully packed and with rubber pouches of ice on top. Much of July 4th. was spent, with his help, in planting them. I had been concerned that his early arrival would find no Japanese Irises in bloom, but happily a few were. I knew that he was particularly interested in seeing tetraploids. Fortunately 'Maine Chance' bloomed during the two days of his visit, as did also several tetraploid seedlings. His comments regarding 'Maine Chance' and a red seedling with a fine line of white edging (subsequently named 'Japanese Pinwheel') were most encouraging to me.

Now, as I write this in October, it is time to harvest the remaining pods from the Japanese Iris crosses and put the garden to bed for the winter. Then, top priority goes to completing the book written for the Society for Japanese Irises until March, when it will be time to start the seeds under lights in the plant room. Work with colchicine will be limited in 1988, chiefly to 'pink' crosses, as I still have no tetraploid pinks in the Japanese Irises and want truer pink; in the Siberians, I expect, however, that efforts with colchicine will again become a major endeavour in 1989, to convert to the tetraploid state, seedlings from the crosses of the Japanese Irises brought to me by Mr. Kamo. That will truly mean a great deal of work, but I look forward to it.

I shall end with a question. In our part of Maine, Spring has proved to be an excellent time for planting both Siberians and Japanese Irises. For example Japanese planted in May 1986 made bigger clumps and better blooms this year (1987) than others planted in September 1985. A few planted in early to mid-October 1986 were dead or nearly so, this Spring. I will appreciate learning what the experience is in England?

(Thank you Currier for letting us share your experiences and excitement in your new crosses, and your meeting with Mr. Kamo. I notice that his address was mentioned by Dr. Wray Bowden in his 'Comprehensive Survey' which we have been printing for some time and which finishes this time. It is:-

Kamo Nurseries, HARASATE, KAKEGAWA. SHIZUOKO. 436-01. JAPAN.

If Members would like to write in answer to Curriers' Question, his address (after March) is:-

Dr. Currier McEwen M.D.. SOUTH HARPSWELL. MAINE. 04079. U.S.A.

His Book 'Siberian Irises', personally signed, is also available from this address.

Price 7dollars (including Postage and Handling).

We have a copy kindly donated by Currier in the Library, if you would like to send for it. (See under 'Group Library' Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt at end of N/L.)

We are certainly looking forward to the new book that Currier is writing on Japanese Irises. I have long been a 'fan'. Ed.)

Siberian Irises 1987.

by Jennifer Hewitt.

All the varieties described here have grown and flowered in my own garden. I would have liked to comment on others, especially Harry Foster's most interesting seedlings, but I have seen them only at shows and do not have any notes on them as garden plants. My aim has been to mention Irises which you might (or might not, in some cases) consider buying from the B.I.S. Sales List or the S.S. & J. Plant Sales when they are available. These include both older and more recent varieties, some that are not yet widely known but are, as a rule, well worth growing. I have, therefore, as well as describing the flowers, which are normally the principal feature, tried to include an assessment of their garden value with comments on rate of growth, health and so on. 'Garden visibility' is a shorthand term for something I consider very, though not invariably, important: it may be explained as:- how a clump of a particular variety shows up from a distance and what contribution it makes to the garden picture. A Siberian Iris in which all parts flare widely and horizontally, or nearly so, will not show much of its petal area when viewed from the side, and if you want a clump as part of a mixed border or bed, you will want to see more of the flower, especially when you are trying to create a colour group, or general view, which depend, at least in part, on being seen from across the lawn, for example. Very few modern cultivars have drooping falls but those which, for want of a better term, could be described as 'downward-flaring', present more of the blade to the viewer and so more colour is provided by a clump.

One further point: growing a large number of varieties in a generally cool, damp, heavy soil, botrytis (grey mould) is a recurring problem, which can be controlled by spraying with systemic fungicide. Siberians which grow in mixed plantings rarely suffer from it, and if you grow yours in this way, or garden in drier conditions than mine (which almost everyone does), you are far less likely to encounter it. I have, however, added a mention in some comments when I have found particularly susceptible varieties, as a warning to you to keep an eye on them. 'Healthy' means a variety is just that. Those not mentioned as tetraploid are, of course, diploid.

AMALYA (Nesmith 1932) This came to me from New Zealand though it was not bred there.

Although over 50 years old, and with small flowers, it is popular with those who like delicate colours: pale creamy pink with a deeper pink flush on the falls. Lots of flowers and makes a nice healthy clump.

ANN DASCH (Varner 1977) A distinctive tall dark blue with a yellow signal. I cannot see the 'dappling' said to show on the falls, but they do have a textured appearance.

Healthy, fairly vigorous, free-flowering.

ANNEMARIE TROEGER (Tamberg 1980) Light medium-blue standards and styles, darker blue falls with a precise clean signal. A most attractive flower but must be seen from above to be fully appreciated as it flares widely, i.e. lacks garden visibility.

BELFAST (Varner 1978) A deep blue which is said to have mottling on standards and falls (not visible to me, so far). Average height, average sort of colour, but pleasant, fairly vigorous, and makes a good effect as a clump, with garden visibility highly rated.

CARRIE LEE (Wiswell 1962) From the U.S.A. via New Zealand, this is a short (24") rich red with clean white signal. very willing to flower, and healthier and more vigorous than other red diploids.

CASTLEGRACE (Nelson 1972) This not only came to me from New Zealand (sent, like the others, by the late Jean Collins who is much missed) but originated there and has won the Begg Shield for the best NZ-raised variety seen at a convention. It flowered prolifically in August 1985 after arriving in June, and I recall elegant flowers of violet-blue but did not make detailed notes, and I am waiting to see it again. I don't think the plant should be blamed for lack of bloom as it has grown well and is healthy: more warmth in 1986 would probably have set it up for 1987. It should be a good garden variety.

CHARTREUSE BOUNTY (McEwen 1983) An unusual colour, white standards and styles with greenish-yellow falls, and a preferential repeat bloomer for Currier McEwen but not, so far, in the U.K. Poor flower shape, narrow and gawky; I keep hoping it will improve. Might do better in other gardens.

COLORADO COLONEL (Varner 1984) A dark blue, healthy and vigorous, late-flowering which is useful for extending the season.

CREME CHANTILLY (McEwen 1981) Vigorous, free-flowering, healthy, a pleasant cream colour, and much admired at shows when exhibited by Harry Foster. Why can't I like it? Partly because of the very ruffled, at times almost pleated, and somewhat twisted

(cont.) r

falls which, to me, lack elegance. But its virtues, which include garden visibility, are such that it deserves its space.

DANCE BALLERINA DANCE (Varner 1982) The first pink tetraploid to be registered, grown from McEwen seed. Has been criticised in the U.S. for keeping the flowers down among the foliage, but here they are at or above leaf-tip level (perhaps all the rain helps). Very vigorous, healthy, and generous with well-branched and -budded spikes; semi-flaring falls are in quite adeep, fairly true pink, and lighter upright standards give it good visibility. Seems to be a ready parent and is reported to be giving interesting seedlings. Still expensive in the U.S.A. and likely to cost a bomb when it is first offered here, but it is value for money in my view.

DAVID HEDDITCH (Bartlett 1985) a pleasant British-bred blue, still on trial, but seems to be a good grower and fairly free-flowering here. Does rather better, and reblooms, in its home garden in Somerset. I like its shape.

DEAR DIANNE (McEwen 1979) Tetraploid. Very striking deep blue-purple with a white edge to the falls, ruffled, about 34" tall. All parts flare and though the flower is delightful, as a clump (even with lots of stems, which it produces with enthusiasm) it lacks presence from a distance.

DREAMING GREEN (McEwen 1981) Tetraploid. A short (28") white with considerable green colour on the hafts and upper falls - at times. The colour is rather variable, often more yellow than green, even on opening, but I think this may be due to weather and other growing conditions.

EXUBERANT ENCORE (McEwen 1985) Tetraploid, preferential repeat bloomer, and in 1987 has fully lived up to its name and made me feel that repeat and re-bloom is not such a hopeless quest in my garden after all! Height given as 24", but most stems are taller here. With large bold flowers in deep blue, with green hafts, upright standards, semi-flaring wide falls and considerable character, it really gives garden value (most stems are double-branched with 6-8 buds). Two clumps gave only one spike in June but a total of 9, giving over 5 weeks of bloom, in August and September.

GOLDEN CRIMPING (McEwen 1985) Tetraploid. Though this has only produced one flower on a 4" stem to date, here, it is so exciting that I feel it must be mentioned. It is a new colour break, a creamy white with crimped yellow edges to the falls. The plant is growing nicely and I hope for proper height and fully typical flowers in 1988. Watch this space!

HARPSWELL HAPPINESS (McEwen 1983) White sibiricas have to have something special about them to attract me and this tetraploid certainly has that something, though I cannot analyse it. As well as being white, with greenish yellow hafts of some subtlety, it is ruffled and flaring and I'd normally complain of its lack of visibility; but it is a shorter one, about 24" at best so far, so I look down on it and love it. Vigorous and ultra-floriferous.

HUBBARD (McEwen 1982) This is a fine, vigorous, dark red tetraploid about which I would write enthusiastically and in more detail if it deigned to flower more often. Worth a try, though; you may have better luck (or conditions). 'Ewen', its grandparent, is a lighter colour and less elegant shape, but it flowers better. Both must be watched for botrytis.

LADY OF QUALITY (McEwen 1982) another tetraploid (they come in clumps...) Light medium blue with a pronounced silver edge on the falls, which have quite a lot of veining on the upper part, slightly paler standatds and style arma. Tailored form with semi-flaring very wide falls - a large flower.

LAVENDER BOUNTY (McEwen 1981) Diploid, a repeat bloomer - has given late summer/autnm bloom here twice, but has been moved and divided rather often, which has probably discouraged it. Also rather prone to botrytis. A good rich lavender-pink (nearly as pink as 'Dance Ballerina Dance'), nice shape, and flowers well each June. In spite of everything, grows vigorously.

PINK HAZE (McGarvey 1969) a diploid, the nearest currently available to true pink (and it is very near) for which Professor McGarvey worked so long and so carefully. It was not introduced until 1980, but it is very healthy and grows extremely well, it is reaching many gardens and fully deserves to be in all. It also flowers generously. The flowers could perhaps be higher above the foliage, bur their shape is elegant and I admire them too much to worry about this.

REDDY MAID (McEwen 1978) A dark red tetraploid with green hafts which combines the virtues of 'Ewen' and 'Hubbard', the former being its grandparent and the latter a

(cont).

collateral descendant. Free-flowering, rich in colour, vigorous, it has a maximum of 3-4 buds and is slightly susceptible to botrytis, but responds well if sprayed with systemic fungicide. Perhaps a bit too long in the hafts for an ideal shape, but not flaring and makes an attractive clump.

SHIRLEY POPE (McEwen 1979) Although the shape undoubtedly fails the garden visibility criterion, the flower is one of my top favourites otherwise. I feel the ideal placing for it is just round a corner where it will come as a joyful surprise, get the close inspection it deserves and won't need to be seen from afar. I am not sure that a mass effect is in its best interests, though it flowers lavishly. It is a self deep reddish-purple, nearly black, especially on the falls which are richly velvet in texture with a bright, white, precise signal for complete contrast. The standards often have white midribs at the base, which are added attractions. It was love at first sight for me and continues to enchant every year, not just me, but all who see it. I do wish it were a more willing parent but perhaps I have to find Mr. (or Mrs.) Right.

SILVER BIRD (Varner 1981) A deep blue-purple diploid with a slight silver edge on the falls, very attractive and a good grower. I'd like to see the flowers more often, though.

SOLE COMMAND (Varner 1980) Whether this named with a naval command in mind I do not know, but it certainly has a strongly masculine and maritime air about it. Bags of character, vigorous, healthy, lots of large bold dark blue flowers, with turquoise and blue style arms, and green hafts (rather long) to the falls. Height given is 32" though it seems taller here, perhaps because it has such impact. Not a top-class flower but for the garden its virtues outweigh its faults.

STEVE VARNER (Briscoe 1976) this won the Morgan Award in the U.S.A. in 1982 and in 1987 is the second winner of the Morgan-Wood Medal which has replaced the Morgan Award and is of higher status. (In 1986, the first year the Medal was awarded, it went to 'Butter and Sugar', Currier McEwen's superb yellow amoena, which had also previously won the Morgan Award). Healthy, vigorous, free-flowering, with up to 4 buds per stem and lots of stems, it has broad parts and though 'White Swirl' is the pod parent, in this case it has not given such a flaring shape, so 'Steve Varner' can be seen from afar. The Colour is a nice light violet-blue. The buds open in an unusual way, the inner edges of the falls remaining tightly rolled with the standards and styles, while the outer edges unfurl but stay upright, until the whole inner part of the flower develops and relaxes and everything 'pops'. A bit like a rosebud, and gives an interesting effect. Altogether a good garden plant.

SUMMER SKY (Cleveland 1939) An oldie, but such a superb attraction in the garden that it should be more widely grown, and unique in its colouring. White styles, light blue standards, very slightly paler falls with long yellow hafts; all these are narrow and spiky (and the shape is passed to any seedlings). But a clump about a foot in diameter should have a wealth of spikes with open flowers at different levels and it draws all eyes from way across the garden; it is very healthy and grows fast. Has 'hooked' more non-specialists than anything else I grow. Starts early & goes on & on.

TEMPER TANTRUM (McGarvey 1969) This is difficult to describe as it is a most unusual colour. It came from the U.S.A. in 1986 and was the most interesting flower of 1987. The registration says 'deep pinkish red' which conveys, to me at least, a quite different colour; perhaps 'deep pinkish red with blue influence' comes nearer to what I saw. Possibly the first bloom was not typical, but I feel fairly certain that this is one which will be a great asset and pleasure in future years as it seems to be a good grower.

WELCOME RETURN (McEwen 1976) This light medium blue tetraploid must be included as, after years of hope deferred, it gladdened my heart with a most generous display starting early in June & a month later the first of a succession of 6 spikes appeared, giving nearly 2 months of repeat bloom, lasting into October. (In its defence I should say that it had been in too much shade until it was moved in 1985; even there, it always gave generous early bloom). Early stems are shortish, about 24", later ones are mostly taller, well branched with 6 buds. A very good garden plant, but needs feeding to keep it growing well or it may be hard-hit by botrytis. Makes a rather wide-ranging clump, so give it space.

There is one final matter I wish to raise, with a plea to all Group Members. If you study the lists of show winners in the B.I.S. Year Book, you may wonder why, when my name appears, the varieties in my exhibits have not included many of those I have described here. The brief answer is that the combination of late seasons and a late (cont.)

garden usually means that the B.I.S. 'Late Summer' show is too early for me (a point to remember if you wish to come and see the Siberians here, though you will be welcome at any time). In 1988 (as you will have seen) the R.H.S. have decided to put back the June show to the 21st. and 22nd. and the B.I.S. Committee holds the majority opinion that 'no-one will have anything left by then', so no Iris show will be staged, merely a display of what (few) Irises may still be available. Now I will admit that my dissent from this opinion and decision has a personal basis, but I have tried to take a wider view too, mentioning Spurias and Japanese Irises which should be given chance, which is normally denied to them. I have not prevailed, but now I appeal to you to bring, or send- they can be staged for you, see B.I.S. show rules printed in the schedules-any and every spike of these or any irises you have in bloom next June at that time. SHOW them - in every sense!

(Thank you Jennifer for such a comprehensive list and description of your Irises. I am sure Members will want to grow them. At the moment we do not have any Sibiricas for Sale in the S.S & J. Plant Scheme, but I hope that Members will 'rally round' and send plants in, so that more will be grown in 1988,)

Spuria Irises.

The Spuria Iris Society U.S.A.

Floyd Wickenkamp has sent in an Information Circular issued by the Spuria Society, which he thought would be of interest to our Members wishing to grow these beautiful stately Irises, not too often seen in gardens in this country. I have divided it into two installments, due to shortage of space. The second part, which includes a list of Cultivars will be published in the July 1988 Newsletter.

Spuria Irises are classified under the Apogon or beardless subsection of the Iris family. The twenty or more species are native to the temperate zone in a band running from Spain and North Africa, through the Mediterranean Countries and Asia Minor, southern Siberia, northern Iran and India to China. The greatest collection of species has been found in southern Siberia, always in sunny areas. For habitat and taxonomic data see 'The World Of Irises' The American Iris Society, 1978 ; or the SPURIA IRISES, INTRODUCTION AND VARIETAL LISTING, The Spuria Iris Society, 1985.

Although there was some activity in developing spuria hybrids and in collecting natural hybrids from the wild before 1900, it was not until the 1920's that serious efforts were made to develop and improve the strain. Since that time, especially on the part of the U.S. hybridizers, considerable progress has been made, and today there are many cultivars in a variety of colors available from commercial gardens.

The greatest concentration of activity in growing and hybridizing spurias is in the warmer and sunnier parts of the U.S., especially in California and the Southwest, including Texas and Missouri, but are being grown successfully in such northern states as Minnesota and Montana and in parts of southern Canada as well as Australia, New Zealand and Europe.

Spurias prefer neutral to slightly alkaline soil and demand plenty of sunshine for good bloom. Even in such hot areas as southern Texas and the Arizona desert they do well in full sun. While they may grow lush leaves in shady areas, bloom is likely to be sparse or non-existent. Spurias are heavy seeders and they like plenty of water during the fall and spring growing seasons, but they also require good drainage. The choice of fertilizer depends on soil characteristics in the particular area, but usually a general-purpose fertilizer high in phosphorus will ~~suit~~ the purpose. Some growers find a feeding of liquid fertilizer such as 'Miracle-Gro' at the start of the fall growth season and in early spring to be helpful. If the soil is heavy clay a liberal application of compost or other humus is desirable.

Most of the commercially-available spurias are 'summer-dormant', that is they stop growing during the hot weather and will survive in most areas without watering to supplement any summer rains. Even in such 'summer-dry' areas as the California Central Valley, water is normally withheld during the summer, reducing the chance of rot.

There are a few varieties which are 'summer-green' (e.g. GLISE), that is they continue to grow during the summer and these varieties will need some watering during dry weather.

In general Spurias are among the taller of the Irises, averaging perhaps 3½ to 4½ feet in height under good growing conditions with a few as tall as five feet or more. However, a number of hybridizers have been working to obtain shorter plants with (more.)

(cont.)

compact blossoms; these have a definite place where space is limited or for use in arrangements. Some examples of the small to medium size blossoms are 'BELISE', 'DUSTY TRAILS', 'AMBER RIPPLES', 'BORDER TOWN', 'RUFFLED CANARY', 'ELIXIR', 'DIMINUENDO' and 'NOW THIS'.

(The second part will be in the July Newsletter, but if you want to know more now, the Spuria Checklist (THE SPURIA IRISES, INTRODUCTION AND VARIETAL LISTING) is in the S.S & J. Library. It is also available (post paid) by sending:-

5 dollars Within the U.S.A. and Canada and by surface mail anywhere.

7.75 dollars By AIRMAIL to Europe and South America.

8.50 dollars By AIRMAIL to Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

To Floyd W. Wickenkamp, Sec-Treas.

10521 Bellarose Drive, SUN CITY. AZ. 85351.

Thank you Floyd, also for telling us of the supplement, which we will be sending for in due course. Best wishes and congratulations on the success of 'Son of Sun' and also to Dave Niswonger for 'Vintage Year'. 'Kaibab Trail' also is doing well, but more of this in Helen's letter, which follows.)

More about Spurias in the U.S.A.

by Helen Grier.

Helen recollected the time she paid a visit to England, Ireland and Holland in 1979, which was a very cold year, but how they all loved the trip, despite this. Combining it with a Daffodil Society tour. I am afraid you would find many changes now Helen, not least the disappearance of many of our meadows, under the plough - as they say. Many hedgerows ripped out. We do our best to compensate the birds and wildlife, but it's not the same. However, we 'fly the flag' and try to keep our gardens as well as possible, I only wish that we could see more Spurias being grown.

Back to Spurias, and over to Helen, who sends her congratulations to Floyd and his now famous 'Son of Sun' which won the Nies Award, having received 93 votes. Dave Niswonger's 'Vintage Year' was runner up. Floyd's 'Kaibab Trail' also won an Honorable Mention. He also has a dark seedling, still under a number, which I think looks very promising, should be a winner. It is my experience that the really dark colors do not bloom until later in the season, and are also a bit slower to increase. One clone of a very dark one, which I have had for about 15 years, one of Ferguson's, has hardly increased at all, and it has not set seeds either. Perhaps it is not in a situation to its liking. So I will transplant it sometime in the future. Bill Gunther, a former editor of the S.I.S. N/L says that here, in California, Spurias can be transplanted at any time, providing they are lifted with a large clump of soil. 10 years ago I dug up about 15 large clumps and gave them to a friend, it was touch and go, but she only lost one.

This year 'Waddi-Zem-Zem', which I have had for about 20 years, and which I have used once or twice, did not set seed, the only time that I can remember. It is mosaic resistant and passes on that characteristic to its offspring. It was created by Carl Millican of Arcadia, California, and is a lovely soft yellow. I have a number of different varieties bred by Walker Ferguson and Frances Combes, which have the 'Waddi' as either parent or in their pedigrees. 'Quiet Cream', (Ferguson) is one of these; it is a lighter yellow--almost cream and one of my favorites, although it is an older clone. 'Golden Lady' (Combes) is a lovely clear yellow, a Nies Award winner.

At the moment Helen is very busy, with the help of her two 'stalwarts' digging out seedling olive trees and stumps of pepper trees. We can hazard a guess that they will soon be replaced with more Spuria Irises and her other favorite Daffodils.

Thanks Very much, do'nt work too hard. Good Iris gardening in 1988.

(Ben Hager, a long time Member of our Group, stocks quite a few Spuria Irises. They include 'Son of Sun' and 'Walker Ferguson', also many of his own cultivars, such as 'Now This', 'Custom Design', 'Destination' and 'Guest Artist' and many more. Write to Ben for his latest list. His address is:- (enclose 1 dollar for cat.)

MELROSE GARDENS, 309, Best Road South, STOCKTON. California 95205.

Trevor Nottle's Letters from Australia.

Trevor wrote in July/August 1987, to say what a wet winter they were having, and that it had disrupted his work in remaking a number of important beds. The Japanese Iris are badly over-run with water couch. He is growing several new Irids 'Dieter Robinsonia' (cont).

is the Lord Howe Island Wedding Iris, 'Aristea Magnifica', 'Aristea Longifolia' and 'Aristea Major'. Later on Trevor gave the Japanese Iris bed, what he calls a 'thorough poisoning' with 'Round up' (glyphosate) to get rid of the super vigorous water couch. It had ruined a fine planting of Japs, and was the only way to treat the wet, heavy soil, full of roots. Now, the waiting time, to be able to plant the water Iris, including I. Laevigata Variegata, I. Pseudacorus 'Ivory Lemon' and 'Sulphur Queen' also I. Versicolor Kermisina which Trevor has added to his collection, also some more forms of Iris Cristata late Dark Blue and Halo. He will be planting Hostas etc., to make it beautiful again.

there are a good many new Japs. around in Australia, from Barry Bray, Gordon Loveridge and Graeme Grosvenor, so he will enjoy choosing them...

Now, in his last letter, just received, Trevor tells me that he will be in England from 18th May to 2nd June, giving lectures on Gardening in Australia at the Tradescant Museum (18th. May), in Surrey for the Hardy Plant Society (21st. May) and later for the Garden History Socy. somewhere near Cirencester (Glos.). Again at the Press day at Chelsea on 24th. May. After that he hopes to do some travelling.. Hope we will be able to see you Trevor... Have a good tour.. J.T.

Iris in East Germany.

by Eberhard Schuster.

Writing about his Siberians, Eberhard says that his 'Butter and Sugar' flowered this year (1987), he has also obtained more of Currier's hybrids, such as 'Hubbard and others. He comments on how 'Butter and Sugar' gives a good yellow effect in his garden. To stop botrytis on Siberians he sprays with some fungicides, Benomyl and others, but he has heard from other growers that they do nothing to stop this effect. A strong plant seldom dies from botrytis! Young new plants are much more demanding. Imports, such as cultivars, seem to require more care and protection here.

In November 1987 Eberhard made his first trip to West Germany giving a lecture and slide-show in Hamburg and other towns. He also has an invitation from the West German Society for 'Perennial Lovers' for a slide-show on bog and water plants. Surely this must be 'your dreams come true' we wish you every success. Perhaps when you 'touch down' again you will write and tell us of your experiences. Good luck! J.T.

A Comprehensive Survey of the Japanese Iris

by Wray M. Bowden.

(This is the last chapter of Dr. Bowden's Thesis. Reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the 'Review of the Society of Japanese Irises' U.S.A. We thank Dr. Wray M. Bowden most sincerely, it has been a most interesting account and I am sure, has helped to make Japanese Irises better known. J.T.)

11. Recommended Cultivars.

There are many hundreds of Japanese iris cultivars, from both Japanese and American plantbreeders, that are available for our gardens. The following lists consist of cultivars that I have grown to flowering at Simcoe, or I have seen in the gardens of Bill Ouweneel, Terre Haute, Indiana and Art Hazzard, Kalamazoo, Michigan in early July 1979, or I have learned about from descriptions or illustrations in American Nurseries catalogues, the illustrations in Kuribayashi and Hirao (1971), or they were cultivars highly recommended by Payne and Ouweneel. I have many Kodachromes of Japanese iris flowers in my garden, during the past 16 years, as well as in the gardens of Ouweneel and Hazzard in July 1979.

1. Cultivars from Japan.

(a) Hirao:- Tomatushima; Shinkai-No-Iro (Colour of Deep Water); Mai Ohgi (Dancing Fan); Hekitch (Blue Wave); Chiyodajo (Chiyoda Castle); Narihira (name of a Samurai Warrior); Shinonome (Dawn); Yamata Hime, sometimes incorrectly spelled Hima (Princess Yamato); Shihoden (Palace of Longevity); Kereinaru Kujaku (Peacock Strut); and Tanoshii Kojika (Happy Faun).

(b) Other Japanese Plantsmen:- Maiko-No-Homa; Hisakata; Osho Kun; Shakkyo; Suiten Ishiki (is second word Nishiki?); Yusho (Victory); Warai- Hotel (Happy Priest); Shinse-Kajin (Beautiful Lady); Chidori (name of a water bird); Kuon-No-Yuki (Snow Never Melting); and Hagoroma, sometimes Hagaroma (Robe of Feathers).

2. Cultivars from the U.S.A.

(a) Payne:- Immaculate Glitter; The Great Mogul; Red Titan; Confetti Shower; Enchanted Lake; Fashion and Fancy; Popular Acclaim; Sky and Water; Spirit Lake; Strut and Flourish; Vintage Festival; Western Symphony; Fashion Model; Glitter and Gayety; Orchid Majesty; and Jewelled Sea;

(cont.)

(b) Marx (Marhiao): Pink Triumph; Blue Pompon; Pastel Princess; Jewelled Komono; Valiant Prince; Stippled Ripples; Azure Ruffles; Rose Prelude; Snowy Hills; Sea Titan; Royal Pageant; Peacock Dance; Summer Storm; High Cascades; Imperial Velvet; Reign of Glory; Royal Ramparts; World's Delight; and Driven Snow;

(c) Others: Violet Spectacle; White Chiffon; Dawn Horizons; Hue and Cry; Ipsus; Ipsus; Star at Midnight; Worley Pink; Extravagant Plumes; Banners on Parade; Center of Interest; Enchanting Melody; and Leave Me Sighing.

12. Acknowledgements.

I thank many botanists and horticulturists for their help with various phases of my studies and experiments in growing Japanese iris at Simcoe, Ontario, Canada. I especially thank Dr. Shuichi Hirao, Kanagawa, Japan; Mr. Brian Mathew, Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, England. Dr. Roland Moberg, Thunberg Herbarium, Uppsala, Sweden; Prof. Mikio Ono, Makino Herbarium, Tokyo Japan; and W.E. (Bill) Ouweneel, Terre Haute, Indiana U.S.A. with whom I have exchanged many letters from 1970 to 1982. I much appreciated the help of Mr. & Mrs. Y. Kumura (Port Dover, Ont.) and Mrs. Fumiyo Heinig (Burlington, Ont.) with the translations of some Japanese words as well as part of the text of Miyazawa (1929).

(Dr. Bowden continues to give selected references including several of our Members:- Laurie's Garden, Currier McEwen, Ben Hager (Melrose Gardens), Bill Ouweneel (with whom we still maintain contact) and also his own books etc. on 'Forcing Flowers of two Japanese Irises (1979)' 'Control of couch grass in the home garden (1979)' and the nomenclature of Japanese Irises (1984)'.)

Regional Report from the South.

As reported in the July Newsletter last year Adrian's work is taking him out of the Country for long periods at a time. He is, however, prepared to serve on the Committee as Spuria Representative for the time being, but will not be able to continue as the Southern Rep. We thank him for his interest and support and wish him well. Ian Smith has agreed to 'take over' from him, and continue to send in Reports of our Irises in the Southern Counties in the July N/L. Thank you Ian, we will wait with interest. J.T.

Regional Report from London.

by Anne Blanco White.

A Torrent of Darkness.

The Worcester Chronicle for 1052 records a violent wind which 'blew down many churches and houses, scattered many trees and tore up others by the roots'. Probably there were other hurricanes between that and the one a couple of centuries ago which precede the one we are now clearing up. Still, with any luck, there won't be another on this scale, in our life times. A friend came over from Holland by a small airline which flies low and gives a good view of the ground detail: she said that the south-east of England looked like a logging camp, with all the trees laid in one direction and the paths of the wind clearly visible.

We were fortunate in that neither house was damaged and the London garden was unharmed. The top of a neighbour's oak tree was firmly dumped on us, but that was easily dealt with by bringing an electric saw (great invention) up from Sussex. The heavy wood was ferried round to the car park on Hampstead Heath, where they piled the debris from around the borough. Indeed that compost heap developed a sort of science fiction life of its own: every time I looked out of the kitchen window it had moved on beyond another tree, and showed every sign of climbing Parliament Hill. All told, I reckon we lost between 7% and 10% of the trees in this area.

Sussex was much worse off. I went down there on the Tuesday after. No point in going at the week-end when the roads would have been crowded with people trying to find out what had happened to their boats. Couldn't go on the Monday, which was a lovely day. It rained steadily on the Tuesday until tea-time, because it was the only day my son could get off, and he wanted to see the sights, too. When we reached the immediate area we were stuck. The cottage is at the end of a lane, which leads down from another lane, which runs along the edge of the hanger, and all the access roads were blocked along their lengths with trees fallen cross-wise. Each approach had its enormous bonfire attended by muddy men patiently working their way through the interlocked branches, twigs and trunks, so that they could bring the J.C.B's in as soon as possible. Actually, it took a fortnight to clear the roads adequately and the work is not really finished yet!

We discovered later that those in residence had got together, with their power saws and cut a route up to a farmhouse from where they could take four-wheel drives over the fields to a road that was mercifully clear. The electricity was off for ten days;

people at the top of the hill had no water for a fortnight, and it was weeks before the telephone was reconnected. Mind you, the power and phone cables looked very pretty draped over the trees.

We scrambled through the woods at the bottom of the hill over, under and through the fallen trees. About a fortnight before the gale, I had said to a new neighbour that if he didn't want trouble with his insurers and his foundations, he would have to do something about the stand of balsam poplars occupying about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre, and busily taking over our land as well as the rest of his. They smell lovely, but the suckers are as thick as tree trunks in their own right. He now only has to clear away the stumps and suckers, which is no mean task, for the wind laid the lot flat on my Iris beds and vegetable patch. Worse still, he's going to give me a rather old-fashioned look the next time I suggest he should do something. With true nobility, though, he did all the heavy clearing.

Access to the actual cottage was blocked by a fallen 60foot trifurcate gean, with main trunks some 18" through. I thought one of the biggest bits was lying on top of my favourite clump of snowdrops, which has an I. Histriodes in the middle, but actually it was parked clear of them. Elsewhere, we lost more plums than greengages, which was odd; had to re-erect several apple trees and clean up the bullace which had been invaded by a wisteria. Trees and shrubs on the slope had to be propped and braced, and every time I went anywhere I was diverted by yet another plant needing attention. Rosa 'Kiftsgate' had been draped over elders and up an oak tree and all the supports had given up the unequal struggle. Have you ever tried to deal with a 20 year old specimen of this vicious plant laid out on the ground? Take my advice - light a blue touch-paper and stand well back. A small spinney was virtually twisted together, yanked up and dumped in the stream bed; it will have to wait until Easter. We've lost count of the bonfires and have enough firewood to last us through the next life too.

The garden is only some five acres in extent, but it was surprising how the loss of some landmarks made it difficult to locate plants. It was necessary to stop and think out exactly where they were before setting out to find them. But there is more light around the place as a result of the thinning of the poplars, oaks and elders. And there was one delightful incident: I was standing in the crown of what had been a yew tree, salvaging wood for stakes, when I realised that there was some wire netting under my feet. (We fence the plants, not the garden.) I stopped to think what could have been there, and then, rather gingerly, continued clearing. Finally, the wire netting was freed, gradually sorted out from its contents and raised up. At the same time, a 6' Ginkgo sapling heaved a sigh of relief and gradually straightened its aching back. It didn't even need staking to keep it upright. Another gardener suggested that a species so ancient would be accustomed to such treatment.

We own land, too, up on the hanger, and there is real devastation among the beeches where the hurricane crashed over the crest of the hill. Old trees are lying everywhere, but we are not going to try and replant. There are two main reasons: one is that it is very difficult to establish nursery-grown stock on steep hill sides, where they need regular attention which we can't give; the other is that the sites are open to all those characters who feel that they can make better use of the things you have paid for.

What we shall do is actively spread the plants which would normally colonise such a site, in order to stabilise the soil surface - - things like foxgloves have an excellent root system for this purpose. There are enough beeches left to provide mast for natural regeneration, and the other plants will offer some protection to seedlings from the depredations of the wild life. In their turn, of course, they will be eliminated by the beeches. Furthermore there is going to be a magnificent crop of oysters and, in about 5 years time, with any real luck, there will be an outbreak of birdsnest orchids which are rarely found in the area at present.

Cleaning up, which will take most of the year to complete, has seriously upset my gardening arrangements, but to misquote some unlucky poet:-

'Change and decay in all around. I see

Room now to plant for new posterity'.

(Thank you Anne, I can only feel how dreadful it must have been for you and your family. If you would like seed of any plants which will help you in your task, I am sure Members, especially (North of the Watford Gap) will only be too pleased to send. Come on now friends, Anne has worked long and hard for the good of the Iris Society, let us do this to show our appreciation. Meanwhile Anne, how nice to find your 'true fossil tree', don't do too much. Best wishes for 1988. J.T.)

Regional Report for the West Midlands.

bu Philip Allery.

It is my pleasant duty to welcome those new Members of the Group who live in the West Midlands, and to offer them my help in securing an added dimension to their enjoyment of their gardens by the introduction of modern Irises. Hopefully these new Members will also join in the activities of the West Midland Group, a very friendly body, whose Annual Show at Treasures of Tenbury Wells is a highlight of the year. The date is 18th June, there you will have the opportunity to see and compare modern hybrid Sibirica cultivars, as well as other Irises.

As promised, in July, here is my Report on the visit to Jennifer Hewitts garden at Cleeton St. Mary. It is 12 years since Jennifer welcomed me to the ranks of the Iris growers living in the Midlands, and I have visited 'Haygarth' on many occasions since.

The visit on 4th July 1987 was extremely enjoyable. It provided an opportunity to see and compare many good Sibiricas in the setting of a sunny, well-planned environment, rather than the Show Bench; and I came away with a mental note of cultivars to be bought in the future, feeling that the journey had been well worth while. Jennifer has written about her ~~Iris~~ Sibiricas in the early part of the Newsletter.

In the July Newsletter I will be writing about the Iris Societies in Japan, because of news that the B.I.S. has awarded the 'Foster Memorial Plaque' to Dr. Shuichi Hirao President of the Japan Iris Society, established in 1930. This prestigious award was instituted in 1926 in recognition of Sir Michael Foster's 'achievements and assiduous efforts in collecting and hybridising irises'. The 1987 award has been made to Dr. Shuichi Hirao in recognition of his widespread activities in advancing the cause and culture of the Japanese Iris, not only in his own country, but in the West. It is seen in Japan as a great honour for Dr. Hirao in particular, and Japanese horticulture, in general, to receive this plaque.

(Thank you Philip for your able assistance. Please convey to Dr. Hirao our congratulations and best wishes for 1988. J.T.)

The Group Library.

Copies of the following American Books and Publications are obtainable from the Hon. Librarian:- Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt, 'Haygarth', Cleeton St. Mary, CLEOBURY MORTIMER, KIDDERMINSTER. Worcs. DY14 6QU.

Siberian Irises by Currier McEwen.

The Spuria Irises-Introduction & Varietal Listing-1985. Editor James J. Foreman.

Newsletter of the Spuria Iris Society.

Review of the Society for Japanese Irises.

Journal of the Siberian Iris.

The Genus Iris, subsection Sibiricae. B.I.S.

Alphabetical Table and Cultivation Guide to the Species. B.I.S.

All back numbers of the S. S. & J. Newsletters.

Please include Postage when requesting items.

Treasurers Report.INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1987.

17.2.87. Newsletters and Postage.	£ 59.83.	Subscriptions.	£ 75.50.
Seed Envelopes.	2	(Commuted Subs.)	39
Leaflets.	3	Donations.	15.54.
R.H.S. Room.	6	Interest.	3.86.
21.7.87. Newsletters and Postage	65.45.	Seeds.	10.39.
B.I.S. Literature.	7.05.	Plants.	40.45.
Receipt Book	3.70.	Lit. N/L sold.	5.70.
Postage (Inc. Pcls. and Stationery).	17.30.	Stock:-	
		Newsletters.	16.15.
		Covers	5.60.
	164.33.	B.I.S. Lit.	5.75.
Surplus	16.11.	Leaflets.	1.50.
Commuted Subs.	39		
	£ 219. 44		£ 219. 44.

(cont.)

Accumulated Fund	£ 107. 29.
Commuted Subs.	39
Surplus	16. 11.

Interest	£ 2.41.
Cash in Bank	89.05
Interest	1.45
Cash in Res.	40.49
N/L's, Covers etc.	29
	<u>162.40.</u>

Total Cash in Bank & res. A/c £133.40.

signed.... J.Venner.

Your response in sending seeds plants and donations, means that we are able to keep the subscription at £1 per annum, at least until 1989. The sub. is payable on the 1st, July please, there are one or two outstanding. Unfortunately the rate of exchange has made payment difficult, in some countries. This, in addition to higher Bank Charges, has hit our small Group rather hard. e.g. a 6 dollar 50. cheque sent in yielded 88p. Needless to say I did not cash it, the Member sent Currency in the prescribed way. International Money Orders (P.O.) are available in most countries. Cheques can be drawn on a Bank in the U.K. or on National Giro. All made payable to the S. S. & J. Group. BIS. I will do my best to get a 'fair deal'. Please write if you have any difficulty. Back Numbers of the Newsletters are available:-

1976 copies send 33p. in stamps. 1981, 1982 & 1983 43p. in stamps. 1985 53p. in stamps.

Regional Report for the North West.

Ray Wilson has undertaken to organise a B.I.S. Display Stand at the Glasgow Festival during the period 26th. to 30th. May 1988. He asks Members if:-

- (1) Can you supply plants in pots? (To show not to sell).
- (2) Can you transport them either to a prearranged centre, or take them to Glasgow?
- (3) Can you help to man the stand at the Festival Hall at any time during the period?

Please contact Ray whose address is 'Dalehead', 100, Blackburn Rd., CHORLEY. Lancs. PR6 8TJ. Chorley 78691.

LIST OF MEMBERS.

British Isles.

Mr. P. Allery, 199 Walsall Rd., ALDRIDGE. Nr. WALSALL. WS9 0BE.
 Mr. J. Ashford 'Edenvale', Sandown Farm Lane, NAIRN. Scotland.
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 Mr. & Mrs. Hemming, 17, Grange Hill Rd. KINGS NORTON. BIRMINGHAM. B38 8RE.
 Mrs. J. Hewitt (Librarian), 'Haygarth', Cleeton St. Mary, CLEOBURY MORTIMER. KIDDERMINSTER. DY14 0QU. (Siberian Specialist) (cont)

(the following should have been included in the previous list... sorry!)

Mr. M.Barber, 7, Eastwick Rd. WALTON-on-THAMES Surry. KT12 5JAW.
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 Warstone Rd. SAREDON. CHESLYN HAY. WALSALL. W.M.
 Mrs. I.Radford, 54, Repton Rd., WEST BRIDGFORD. NOTTINGHAM.
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 Mr. I.Smith, 35, Abbey Rd. WEST MOORS. DORSET. BH22 0AX.
 Mrs. M.Smith, 129, Erdington Rd., ALDRIDGE. WALSALL. W.M.
 Mrs. J.L.Stokes, 14, Hambridge Close, STAFFORD.
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 Mr. D.A.Trevithick, address as above.
 (Seed Dist. Offr.)
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 (Chairman & Show Secty).
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 Mrs. L.Wilkins, 17, Lancaster Avenue, ALDRIDGE. WALSALL. W.M. WS9 8RE.
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 Mrs. E.Wise, 197, The Parkway, IVER HEATH. IVER. Bucks. SLO ORQ.
 Dr. Marion Wood, 132, Arkwrights, HARLOW. Essex. CM20 3LE.
 Dr. R.I.Woods, 8, Copples Ave., GREAT SHELFORD. CAMBRIDGE. CB2 5AQ.
 Mr. S.York, (Foreman), Bardills Roses, 34, South Street, DRAYCOTT. Derbys. DE7 3PP.

(Please check to see that your address is correct, I do not know some of the code no's)

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Frau. M. Ahlburg, 3171, Rotgesbittel, HOHES FELD. . West Germany.
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 Mrs. F.Love. (Pres. N.Z. Iris Socy.) 11, Frederick St. CARTERTON. N.Island New Zealand.

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Secretary of B.I.S. Mr. P.R.Maynard. address in Member's List.
Secty.of Species Group. Mrs. M.Fraser. address in Member's List.
U.S.A.

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Editor of Siberian. Mrs. J.Hollingworth. 1015, Windwood Lane, WEST LAKE. IM. USA. 47906.

Editor Jap. Iris Review. L.M.Welsh, 7679, West D Avenue. KALAMAZOO. MICHIGAN. 49009.

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Mr. J.Foreman (Pres. Siberian Soc.) 1360, West Michaels Rd. TIPP CITY. OH. 45371-2028. U.S.A.

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W.MIDLAND:- Mrs. Pat Foster, 76, Peachfield Rd. GREAT MALVERN. Worcs. WR14 4AP.

Remontant Group:- Mr. P.Allery address in list.

B.I.S.Publications. Mr. N.Watkins, 31, Larkfield Rd. FARNHAM. Surrey. GU9 7DB.

Seed Distribution List.

I. Laevigata 'Gomuhoshi x Sekainosara' 25p. (vs). Laevigata 'Alba' (m). Lav. 'Variegata' (s)
 I. Laevigata (blue) (vs). I. Laevigata Mixed (s).
 I. Pseudacorus Bastardii (p). I. Pseud. 'Golden Queen' (p). I. Pseudacorus (P). I. Pseud. Alba (vs)

I. Pseudacorus 'E. Turnipseed' (m). I. Pseudacorus Variegatas (m).

I. Versicolor Mixed (m). I. Versicolor (m). I. Versicolor 'Vernal' (vs).

Series Kaempferi (Emsata) all at 25p.

Jap Iris Min. Diploid M83/132 x unknown (vs). Jap Iris Diploid Repeaters mxd. colors and forms (vs)

Jap. Iris 'Returning Tide' x unknown (vs). Jap Iris Mxd. Diploids colors & forms (vs).

Jap. Iris Diploid Intermediate (small flowers on stalks of intermediate height 84/71 x unknown (vs)).

Iris Ensata 'Ruby Red'. (s).

Tripetalae. I. Setosa (m). I. Setosa Aloisia Hybrid (vs). I. Setosa I n Hokkaido (vs).

I. Setosa Pallas (m). I. Setosa Red/Purple (s). I. Setosa Savill garden Form (s).

I. Missouriensis. (s). I. Sintenssii (s). I. Orientalis (vs).

Series Sibiricae. Most at 15p.

I. Sibirica Mxd. (m). 'Orville Fay' (m). 'Nottingham Lace' (s). 'Caesars Brother' (m).

'Red Flare' (m). 'Outset' (s). 'Emperor' (s). 'Eric the Red' (s). 'Violet Joy' (vs).

At 25p. Pink Diploids (vs). Mixed Tetraploids blue/white repeaters (vs).

I. Chrysographes (vs). Chrysographes 'Black Knight' (vs). Forrestii x Chrysographes (vs).

Chrysographes x Chrysofors (mixed) (p). Wilsonii Hybrid (m).

Section Spuria. Spuria Mixed (s). 'Imperial Ruby' selfed (s). 'Violet Bloomfield' (s).

U.S.A. Seed. 'Tiger Blue' (s). 'Bold Horizon' (s). All at 25 p. I. Carthalinae (s) Delavayi (s).

Packets of seed are 15p each, with Special Seeds at 25p. Please add Postage 13p. 26p. according to number of packets. Seeds are in short supply so alternatives please.

(vs) denotes, short supply, (s)-short supply. (m)-medium supply. (p) plenty.

Please send to Mr. D.Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Road, RADCLIFFE-on-TRENT. NOTTINGHAM.

NG12 2HY.

.....

Name and Address.....

Plants Available - I. Foetidissima 'Citrina', 'Gerald Darby', 'Holden Clough' all at f1.

Bob Bray would like I. Aurea, Ochaurea, Monspur, Cambridge Blue, Dorothy Foster, A.J. Balfour, A.W. Tait and Halophila.

Sorry there has not been enough space to include information from New Members, excerpts from your letters. I will print them in the July Newsletter, I promise. But what about writing in and telling us more about your garden, in the meantime, Take care.

Joan Trevithick: