

Kenya Horticultural Society 1923 - 2023

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Book - Four Volumes

Volume I: 1920's- WWII

Volume II: WWII to Independence

Volume III: Independence to Millennium

Volume IV: Millennium to Centenary

The Kenya Horticultural Society would like to thank Mr Limo Taboi for writing its history, initially from our KHS Council minute books and then with additional research at the Kenya National Archives and other sources.

Limo Taboi is a financial writer and director and sometimes a banker. He has a column on the online page of the Daily Nation and is a two-time winner of Kenya's best business blogger award. He is learning about farming and investment trusts management while completing book-writing projects and digitizing archives of historical research in Nairobi.

He is grateful to the current and past honorary secretaries and officials who have served the KHS for their detailed documentation of the activities of the Society and the districts.

Notable Years for the Society

1923 A&KHS: Agricultural & Horticultural Society formed

1924 First flower show in Nairobi

1924 RHS membership

1927 Rules of the Society and flower show judging published

1928 First affiliated Society at Kitale

1929 First show at Limuru, and a chapter outside Nairobi

1930 First publication of Gardening in East Africa

1939-46 Suspension of activities except for war relief efforts

1955 RHS Chelsea show participation

1956 Royal Charter granted; Queen became RKHS Patron

1957 Lady Muriel Jex Blake Memorial Garden established

1964 Realignment after Kenya's independence
1968 Kilifi/Malindi district formed.
1991 Philadelphia Flower Show stage
1995 Wasaa and the IUCN
1997 Museum Botanical Garden
1998 Wasaa Estate of Peter Greensmith
2014 Gardening Kenya
2017 5th Edition of Gardening in East Africa
2023 KHS Centenary

Abbreviations

A&HSK:	Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Kenya
AS:	Arbor Society
ASK:	Agricultural Society of Kenya
BOAC:	British Overseas Airways Corporation
CSSM:	Children's Special Service Mission
EAAFRO:	East African Agriculture & Forestry Research Organization
EABL	East African Breweries
EAP&L	East African Power & Lighting
EANHS:	East Africa Natural History Society (Nature Kenya)
EAWL:	East Africa Women's League
EAWS:	East African Wildlife Society (incl: Kenya Forest Working Group)
FoCP:	Friends of the Nairobi City Park
FONA:	Friends of the Nairobi Arboretum
KFS:	Kenya Forest Service
HSK:	Horticultural Society of Kenya
KCC:	Kenya Co-Operative Creameries, Kenya Cultural Centre
KHS:	Kenya Horticultural Society
KOS:	Kenya Orchid Society
KUR&H:	Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours Memorial Hall
Norfolk:	Norfolk Hotel
PHS:	Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
RASC:	Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth
RA&HSK:	The Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Kenya
RASK:	The Royal Agricultural Society of Kenya
RKHS:	The Royal Kenya Horticultural Society
RHS:	Royal Horticultural Society (of England)
EAA&HS:	The East African Agricultural and Horticultural Society)
TNHS:	Trans Nzoia Horticultural Society
IUCN:	World Conservation Union/Wasaa Conservation Area

Modern Names

Buildings & Places

Baring Arcade – Uganda House, Kenyatta Avenue
Colonial Treasury Building – National Treasury
Coryndon Museum – National Museum
Devon Hotel – Museum Hill/Casino (now demolished)
EAAFRO Muguga - KALRO and KEFRI
European Hospital – Nairobi Hospital
European School Nairobi – Nairobi Primary School
European School Nakuru – Nakuru High School
Government House – State House
Home – Britain
Memorial Hall – Bank of India building, Kenyatta Avenue
Mitchell Park – Jamhuri Park, ASK Showground, Ngong Road
Theatre Royal - Cameo Cinema
Torr's Hotel – Stanbic Bank building, Kenyatta Avenue
New Stanley Hotel – Sarova Stanley Hotel
Stag's Head Hotel (Nakuru) – Merica Hotel

Roads

Charing Cross - University Circle
Coronation Avenue – Harambee Avenue
Delamere / Sixth Avenue – Kenyatta Avenue
Whitehouse Road – Haile Selassie Avenue
Hardinge Street - Kimathi Street
Connaught Road – Parliament Road

Other Definitions

Americani: unbleached cotton sheeting originally made in America and used in Africa and the Far East (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)
Cable & Wireless – part of the Vodafone Group today

Gardening Seeds & Agricultural Society Breakaway

A unique group trooped into the drawing room of Nairobi's New Stanley Hotel on 15 June 1923. It included government officials, businessmen, farmers, soldiers, traders, church leaders, and homemakers. They ALL HAD a common love for gardening and many were persuaded to attend by Ms Olive Collyer, a keen gardener herself.

They numbered about 25 and were listed as Alexander Holm, William Charles Mitchell, A F Buchanan, John Graham Dawson, A Prise, Andrew Sprunt of the forestry department, Rev James F G Orr, Leonard William Leech - editor of the East African Standard, John Handel Bowles - a Fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society, Catherine Elizabeth Bennett, F M Bicknell, Bessie Dean (Miss B D) Lovibond, Robert Mountford, Lady Muriel Jex-Blake, Dr. Arthur Jex-Blake, Reginald Ernest Randall, Mesdames Hawley, Ferdinand Ainley, Harry William Buchanan, Emma Louise Mayer, D Le Poer Trench, Ambrose Smith, Mabel Constance Playfair, Katharine Elizabeth Stollard and Ms Olive Collyer.

The meeting was chaired by Alexander Holm who was the Director of Agriculture in Kenya. Forming a Society was not the main point of the meeting. Instead, it was to request the Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Kenya, an organization of which some of them were members of, to stage two shows devoted to horticulture in Nairobi every year.

The Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Kenya had been founded in December 1901 under the name the East African Agricultural and Horticultural Society. Its main goal was to promote the agricultural development of European settlements in colonial Kenya, which had been greatly extolled as an agricultural country. It was the brainchild of Colonel John Ainsworth who was the sub-commissioner of Ukambani District and who had transferred the political administration of the Colony from Machakos to Nairobi in 1899. The Society was formed at the urging of the colonial government which aimed to

assist large plantation farmers¹ of the white highlands. The East African Protectorate Gazette of 15 December 1901 stated that:

“.. an Agricultural and Horticultural Society, it is understood, will be brought into existence within the coming year through the indefatigable efforts of Col John Ainsworth and several other gentlemen.

The object of the Society is doubtless to bring into more general notice the great adequacy of the highlands of both Protectorates for European settlement and farming, though the membership of the new Society is open to Arabs, Indians and Africans of respectability.

Besides encouraging the production of vegetables, cereals, fruits, coffee, cotton, rubber, vanilla etc., the Society will endeavour also to organize and push forward the breeding of farm stock and draught animals, besides extending its interest to dairy produce and the artistic culture of flowers.

This new organization will else render value, i.e., service in supplying exact information and technical data to intended settlers and persons desiring to know the tested resources of East Africa and Uganda. The headquarters of the Committee is, at present, at Nairobi. “²

The EAA&HS held its first show on 26 February 1902 at Jevanjee Gardens, Nairobi. It then had another show in Mombasa in July 1903, followed by more shows in Nairobi in 1904 and 1905.

Another show was planned in 1907 but that was cancelled as there was little active interest in the scheme. There was also business pressure, a dry spell and a quarantine caused by cattle disease.³ EAA&HS would go on to hold more upcountry shows such as one in Nakuru in 1909 under the auspices of the Rift Valley Pastoralist Association which was chaired by Lord Delamere, a large landowner and progressive agriculturalist.

¹ Weekly Review, September 26, 1977

² The Official Gazette of the East Africa and Uganda Protectorates, January 1, 1901

³ Weekly Review, September 26 1977

Later, Colonel George Swinton-Home, who had settled in Soy and formed the Uasin Gishu Agricultural Society, organized a show to take place at Eldoret in 1914.

But the onset of the First World War put a halt to agricultural show activities, until the end of the war.

Lord Delamere called for a meeting of representatives of the EAA&HS of British East Africa and the Rift Valley Pastoralists Association. They convened on 15 October 1919 and became the first meeting of the Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Kenya. Lord Delamere became Chairman, with Alexander Holm as the Society's first President. Mr Holm would go on to serve in this position until he left Kenya in 1933.

When Kenya became a British Colony in 1920, the EAA&HS was renamed the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of Kenya (A&HSK)⁴.

The Society opened branches in Nakuru in 1920 and Eldoret in 1924. In later years, following the visit of the Prince of Wales to East Africa in 1928, the Society of Kenya would be granted the prefix "Royal" to their name and would with time, become one of the most active members of the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth (RASC).

Agricultural Society Breakaway 1923

Gardening enthusiasts who wanted to have horticultural shows in Nairobi sought dialogue with the Agricultural & Horticultural Society (A&HSK) and a small group was tasked with reaching out to meet its officials and see if the two sides could find a way to work together to arrange and promote the shows. The group consisted of Captain Ward, William C Mitchell, J G Dawson, Andrew C Sprunt, R Mountford, Reginald E Randall, Lady Muriel Jex-Blake, H W Buchanan, Mrs. Mayer, D Le Poer Trench and Miss Olive Collyer.

They had first convened on 15 June, 1923, at the New Stanley Hotel, where Alexander Holm was elected to chair the first meeting⁵.

⁴ A History of the Agricultural Society of Kenya, Milka A. Achola

⁵ Horticultural Society of East Africa Minutes, 15 June 1923.

Mr Harry Buchanan, who was also a member of the Agricultural Society, told the group that was meeting at the New Stanley Hotel that he was sure that the Society could grant special facilities to horticultural members. The group then resolved, as proposed by Captain Ward, that they formally request for two such shows a year. Ms Olive Collyer said that the annual subscription to the Agricultural Society was Shs80 but that those keen on horticulture felt that Shs10 was sufficient for them to run a branch. The Committee was also tasked with requesting the Agricultural Society for a reduced subscription for members of the horticultural section.

At the time, the A&HSK was experiencing serious financial problems. The government had cut its proposed grant of 7,500 rupees and the Society was appealing for farmers to support the Society with donations and member subscriptions. At their AGM in February 1923, they had considered proposals to allow for faster decision-making as they faced a lack of quorum at meetings and AGM's⁶.

Robert Mountford, a professional gardener, explained that it would not be possible to hold their first show before December 1923 and asked the new committee to inquire if they could feature at the Flower Show of the All Saints Bazaar the following year. All Saints Church was dedicated to be the premier Anglican church in Nairobi. It had been founded by European Anglicans and the foundation stone was laid in February 1917. Lady Muriel Jex-Blake and Miss Collyer agreed to accompany Mr Mountford to meet with the All Saints Bazaar & Flower Show organisers.

They also placed an advertisement in the East African Standard, the main newspaper of the Colony, asking for anyone interested in gardening to send in their names to Mrs Mayer. The advertisement also invited readers to share their views on how to guide the group that now sought to host its first horticultural show in Nairobi.

When the Committee members reconvened on 13 August 1923, at Captain Ward's office, Mr Randall explained that the Agricultural Society members were anxious that the horticultural enthusiasts join up with them, instead of forming a separate body. But others felt they would gain more interest as a separate organisation than as a small part of a big organisation. After some discussion, they decided to form a separate Society

⁶ A History of the Agricultural Society of Kenya, Milka A. Achola

and endorsed a proposal by Mr Mountford to do this. Mr Mountford also explained to the members the advantages of affiliating themselves with the Royal Horticultural Society.

That won the room over and a decision was made to adopt the name - the Horticultural Society of Kenya - proposed by Mr Mountford and seconded by Lady Muriel. They would have their first formal meeting two weeks later at the New Stanley Hotel. They also wrote a letter to the Agricultural Society explaining why they had chosen to be a separate Society.

The budding Society members reconvened back at the New Stanley drawing-room, on 27 August. The meeting was chaired by Lady Muriel Jex-Blake. Attendees recorded were Olive Collyer, John Williamson (JW) Milligan, Ralph Beresford (RB) Turner, L W Leech, F Lewis, Robert Mountford, Robert Cecil Simpson, J W Johnson, H Grahame Bell, Mr Raymond William and Mrs Mabel Constance Playfair, Miss C M Rogers, R F Meyer, P J W Coldham, George Lewis Langridge, A Perry, R W Anderson, E Dobbie, I Anley, M C Monckton, C E Stowell, D B Hoey, Lucy Maud Langridge, and William C Mitchell.

Lady Muriel gave an update on the negotiations that had been held with the Agricultural Society which had led them to present two proposals; either combining with the Agricultural Society or forming a separate distinct Society for the horticultural enthusiasts, which Robert Mountford proposed to be called the "The Horticultural Society of Kenya".

Colonel Turner, who would later serve as the Secretary of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of Kenya and Major Mulligan, opposed this idea of a new Society saying that, with the limited population in Kenya, there would be few new members and that it was better to stay within the Agricultural Society. This was a tacit admission that in Kenya, a colony that had an estimated population of 2.3 million people in 1921, only the 9,651 people of European origin were considered eligible. The slightly larger populations of Arabs and Indians in the colony were not considered.

However, Ms Collyer argued that agriculture and horticulture appealed to two different sets of people and that those she knew in Nairobi's 1923 scene, who were keen on horticulture, had little interest in being members of an agricultural society. She was

supported by other members and Mr Mountford's motion establishing a Horticultural Society, as a separate entity, was unanimously approved.

They reconfirmed all members of the temporary committee to be officials of the new Society. Captain John Lawrence Giffard was invited to join and represent Kiambu, along with Mr Bester to represent Thika. Robert Mountford who was a professional gardener and Peter Whitelaw, who was the Managing Director of seed merchants "Simpson & Whitelaw" on 3rd Avenue in Parklands, were tasked with drafting rules for the Society.

With their new mandate from the members, the Committee moved rapidly, convening over the next few weeks and months. Chaired usually by Lady Muriel Jex-Blake, they would increase the number of meetings in their urgency and conviction to fulfill the tasks they had been given.

At this time, the enrolled and paid-up members were Miss Collyer, Mrs Mayer, Mr Coldham, Mr Grahame Bell, Mr Moncton, Mr R W Anderson, Mr W C Mitchell, Mrs A C Hoey, J W Johnson and Miss E Stowell. All had pledged and paid Shs100 as their subscription. Mr F Lewis paid by cheque while sums of Shs20 were received on behalf of Mr & Mrs. Playfair, Mr George & Mrs Lucy Langridge, and on behalf of Canon and Miss Rogers.

Within a few days of the meeting, the Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Kenya wrote to state its disapproval of the chosen name of the Horticultural Society of Kenya which would lead to some confusion with their already established organization. However, members met in Captain Ward's office on 5 September and agreed, by a vote of 7 to 1, to amend their name to the Kenya Horticultural Society.

At the same meeting, they went line by line through the rules drafted by Messrs. Mountford and Whitelaw and adopted them, with a few alternations, that would be typed out and circulated. They also welcomed Mrs Pirie as the Limuru representative and asked the Secretary to secure a post office box for the Society. In years to come, all correspondence would be directed to the Hon Secretary at P O Box 27 Nairobi.

The Agricultural Society later extended an olive branch to the breakaway Society. The Committee received another letter from the Agricultural Society inviting them to participate in their upcoming show on 5 & 6 December in Nakuru, which was about 100

miles from Nairobi, where they could offer some horticultural classes.

However, the KHS declined, saying there was no interest and no entries to send, and would not be able to organize any exhibitions away from their headquarters in Nairobi where they were planning to stage a show on 14 December, 1923.

First Horticultural Show and First Meeting

The committee drew up a prize list for the show on 14 December that would feature flowers, vegetable and fruit sections with space allocated for exhibitors of each. In the flower category, there would be awards for the best collection of verandah plants, perennials, cut flowers, roses, carnations, sweet peas, verbenas, larkspur and bulbous rooted flowers. Prizes for vegetable exhibits would include rewards for the best collection of cucumbers, potatoes, green maize, sweet corn, and celery among others. The fruit exhibits would include collections of citrus fruit, deciduous and non-deciduous fruits, grapes, berries, sweet melons, watermelons and prickly pines.

Exhibitors in the verandah plant classes were allocated 9x6ft spaces, those with cut flowers and roses were allocated 4x6ft spaces, while larkspur and carnations were allocated 4x3ft spaces. Vegetable exhibitors had 6x4ft spaces while those in the fruit classes would have 6x3ft, except for the citrus fruit entrants who would be allowed 7x4ft spaces.

There was much excitement about the show around Nairobi. The Vice President of the Beekeepers Association wrote to the Society with a generous offer to mount its exhibits. It was decided to allocate space for the beekeepers to exhibit at the show and four new categories of clear honey, dark honey, honey in combs and other collections of honey were added.

There were special prizes offered for entrants in the flower section by Messrs. Simpson and Whitelaw, while in the vegetable section, Mr S M Wimhurst offered prizes for the best collection grown from Wimhurst seeds.

A specimen pot for plant foliage or flowering category was also added following a request by Mr Mountford and later more categories followed for the best exhibit of "unusual interest" and best indigenous plant or flower.

Mr Hilton offered his building to be used for the show, but Mrs Mayer, the Hon Secretary was tasked to enquire about a less expensive venue. She wanted to postpone the show by a few weeks but the others decided to press on.

Better news was received the following week - an offer from William Harold Edward (W H E) Edgley for the use of the Norfolk Hotel for the upcoming show and the hotel's drawing room for committee meetings. The Norfolk had been built in 1904 for the use of European settlers and had become a favourite for explorers to Africa. Mr Edgley purchased the Norfolk in 1923 after he had been managing it for a few years. Mr Edgley's offer was accepted and a decline was sent to Mr Hilton.

Lady Coryndon, Lady McMillan, Lucy Langridge, Edward Battiscombe, Conservator of Forests, and Messrs Minshall, Simpson, Whitelaw, Mountford and Randall were asked to act as judges for the show. Mr Battiscombe had started what is today the Nairobi Arboretum in 1907 as a trial plot for fast-growing exotic tree species to be used as fuel wood during the construction of the Uganda railway.

They also resolved to ask Lord Delamere, Sir Northup McMillan, Mr Holm, Mr Battiscombe, Mr Conway Harvey and the Liwali of Mombasa, Sheikh Bin Ali Salim, to become patrons of the Society. This followed earlier approvals to have Lady Coryndon and Lady McMillan to become Vice Presidents of the Society. Miss Collyer took on the Honorary Treasurer role when Mr Graham Dawson left for Europe, and he later resigned in February 1924.

After taking up Mr Edgley's offer, they held their first meeting at the Norfolk Hotel on 23 November intending to expand the reach and interest of the Society. They decided that firms which were members of the Society could also exhibit seeds and implements if they applied ahead for space. Later, a proposal by Lucy Langridge was carried which allowed for anything that was not on the Society's schedule, but considered to be of botanical or horticultural interest, to be exhibited at the show.

They also created room for children to participate, allowing children of non-members to become junior members by paying Shs2 per year, while groups of Girl Guides and Scouts would be accepted after paying £1.1 per group. The formation of a Junior Branch was later endorsed by an AGM of the Society.

Despite all the work done to prepare, they decided, on 26 November, to postpone the Flower Show to 3 January, 1924. While this was attributed to a need to accommodate members in outlying districts, there may have been other factors.

14 December which should have been the busiest day of the budding Society, when they would stage a spectacular show and exhibit the collections of their members, was instead marked by another meeting at the Norfolk Hotel. There, they instructed the Secretary to publish a list of prizes and cups. They also proposed that the Society should have a general meeting for its members on 14 January 1924, and stage a fruit show in the middle of February 1924.

A sub-committee of Lady Muriel, William Mitchell, Reginald Randall and Robert Mountford was tasked to deal with all matters relating to the show. They would remain behind after the main Committee meeting and review aspects such as the judging, prizes, presentation of medals & certificates, and also negotiate with the Kings African Rifles (KAR) band to perform at the show. They decided to print 750 copies of the class list for the show and distribute them from house to house. Miss Collyer, Captain Giffard, Mr Coldham and Mrs Pirie each agreed to take 50 copies for distribution in their districts.

They ruled that all exhibits would have to be staged by 9am on the morning of the show, and exhibitors could start setting these out the night before. They also added a requirement that all exhibited items, except for table decorations, should have been grown by the exhibitors themselves, and that the definition of perennials would be drawn from the Seedsmen's catalogue. Lucy Langridge would later ask other members if she should relieve herself from judging duties as she was a large exhibitor.

The first show of the Kenya Horticultural Society took place on Friday, 3 January 1924. Staged at the Norfolk Hotel, it was a pre-eminent success⁷ exhibiting indigenous flower, fruit and vegetable plants all brought to perfection. Lady Coryndon opened the show, deputizing for Governor Coryndon who was unable to get away from the Legislative Council. It was in session and that very day, passed amendments to Kenya's constitution of 1919, expanding voting rights and representation.

⁷ East African Standard, January 4, 1924.

Lady Coryndon praised the Society's President Lady Muriel Jex-Blake, Mrs Emma Louise Mayer, the hard-working secretary and Olive Collyer, Hon Treasurer and members of the committee for all they had done to make the first show such a success.

Lady Muriel expressed regret at Sir Robert Coryndon's absence but welcomed Lady Coryndon to the first show. She said the response to the first show had been excellent, and while there were some muddles, these could be excused.

The beauty and variety in the flower section were difficult to do justice to. The flowers were varied and magnificent and proved a revelation as to what could be done in Kenya if the desire, patience and love were devoted to the gardens. It had been proven there was hardly a flower or plant that could not be brought to perfection in one form or another in the colony. They heaped praise on the verandah plants and horticultural display, comprising flowers, apples and plums exhibited by Lady MacMillan which won the first prize as well as the watermelons and sweet melons from the Mount Margaret estate that were also awarded prizes.

Unfortunately, the time of the year was perhaps not good for vegetable growing except where irrigation existed and this may have accounted for the few entries in this class that had artichokes and spinach as the standouts.

Lady Muriel observed that the vast numbers of people who attended was a good indication of the interest in the show and boded well for the future of the Society and other exhibitions. The band of the KAR provided entertainment and kept the public enthralled until late as they withdrew from one of the most fascinating exhibits ever seen in Nairobi.

First General Meeting

After the new year of 1924 started well, matters of finance were soon on the minds of members of the Society. At their committee meeting on 11 January, they discussed starting a junior branch of the Society, moving to ask the upcoming AGM to allow half subscriptions for the half-year to start in February and using Society funds to purchase furniture for their shows.

Members reconvened for the first AGM of the Society at the Norfolk Hotel on Monday 14 January 1924. It was chaired by Lady Muriel Jex-Blake, now President and she reported on the work done by the Society since its formation. This included the success of the first show and activities that the Society had proposed for the future.

She also gave a presentation on the Society's financial position. Members agreed that surplus funds could be used to purchase furniture for the shows. They also unanimously approved the new rules as well as a proposal by Ms Collyer giving the committee authority to make decisions that would benefit the Society and report back to have them confirmed at the following AGM.

It was decided that the next show would be held on 30 May 1924 and another sub-committee was formed to arrange it. Lady Muriel, Mr Randall and Mr Mountford who had been on the earlier group were now joined by Mrs Mayer, Ms Hanna and Captain Giffard. In April and May at the Norfolk Hotel, they deliberated on show classes, judges, stewards, prizes and refreshments that would be offered and sent out invitations to judges and stewards.

The East African Standard published the prize lists that were being competed for and posters for the show. The Nairobi Municipality allowed banners to be hung across the road while the National Bank of India confirmed that they would hold cups safely in their custody. The Police Band was engaged to perform on the day of the show from 3pm to 6pm at a cost of Shs100.

The Sub-Committee also purchased ink, adhesive labels, stamps, envelopes, cards, tacks, and sand for exhibitors. Tables were borrowed from the New Stanley Hotel, the Government Laboratory, Jacobs Ltd and the Medical Department following requests made by Lady Muriel, while tarpaulin sheets were obtained from the Uganda Railways.

The Committee reconvened on 12 June after the show and approved payments to the KAR band for Shs100, Shs7 to the Norfolk Hotel for refreshments for the band and Shs40 for water cans from Haartz Bell & Lawson. Americani or cotton sheets had been obtained from Danzieger & Allen and Smith Mackenzie & Co for Shs36 and Shs54 respectively. There were also payments for prize cards, envelopes, and admission flags. However, Lady Muriel would later lament to the AGM about the poor entries in the vegetable categories.

Interest from other Societies and Organizations:

With the growth of the Society, it continued to strengthen its links with other organizations. They started corresponding with more societies including one in India which offered to exchange plants and seeds with Kenya. Mr Denham offered to write to the Ceylon society to ask about flowering shrubs.

The Society also obtained a membership card from the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). After a member asked to borrow it and use it to attend flower shows during travel in England, they arranged for the Society's card to be kept at the RHS office in London. From there, members of the KHS could present their membership cards and borrow the RHS card for their temporary use.

In March 1924, Lady Muriel started to select seeds from the Royal Horticultural Society catalogue for distribution to Society members. The seeds from the RHS arrived in June, and they were shared by Lucy Langridge, Olive Collyer, Mr Coldham and Lady Muriel who had all agreed to grow the seeds in the country. Lucy Langridge later drew up a weekly list of gardening notes and requested any members who wished to receive the seeds to apply to Lady Muriel.

In September 1924, Mrs Glencairn Campbell wrote from Machakos asking for the cooperation of the Society in holding shows with a proposed amateur Art Society. The Committee decided to add an art section as item number 84 for "any painting of agricultural or botanical interest" to the class list.

The Society had accepted a prize offered by A Shaw of £2.2 and £1.1 for a watercolour painting by an amateur of flowers growing in a Kenyan garden. Ms Collyer later pointed to an anomaly with item No 83 on the class list of the upcoming show, which was the Jackie Shaw Prize in the Art section. She argued that if the word 'amateur' was strictly adhered to, it would lock out a large number of people from competing as most of those who participated also sold their pictures when they could.

Lady Muriel invited members of the Kenya Arts and Crafts Society who had wanted to hold their own show to meet with the committee in January 1925. It was agreed that if the Horticultural Society held a show the following July, and the Arts Society let them

know their requirements, the KHS would accommodate them free of charge.

Around this time the Society was asked to become the official representative of the fruit growers and Mr Langridge and the Secretary were asked to make further enquiries. The Committee resolved that a fruit and vegetable show would be held in February 1925, with a side exhibit of flowers, but not for competition purposes. This would be done if there was sufficient support from fruit growers.

In June 1926 George Langridge asked the Society, through the Committee, if they were interested in the furtherance of the fruit-growing industry from a commercial point of view. Also, if the Society would assist in obtaining a fruit market in Nairobi and dealing with the export of fruit. He said that, while he had no wish to lead a break away from the Society, it was time to ask if there was a need to form a separate Society of Kenyan fruit growers or to have KHS form a sub-committee.

Langridge owned a farm in Ngelani, near Machakos that produced apples, peaches, oranges, guava, pineapples and other fruits.⁸ These had been planted by its previous owner, Reverend Stuart Watt, an Irish missionary with the Church Missionary Society who had previously lived in Australia. In Kenya, he established a farm to support his family, and ordered seeds like eucalyptus and wattle from Australia and maize from Virginia. He became a successful farmer and won prizes at agricultural shows in Nairobi in 1902 and 1903. He had bought the farm from Lord Delamere for £600 in 1908.

The interests of the Society were increasing rapidly and it would soon be necessary to have sub-committees to deal with roses, dahlias and fruits or separate associations would be formed to deal with these particular branches. They offered to assist Mr Langridge to convene a meeting of fruit growers and other interests to consider all proposals to bring back to the Society's members to decide.

Members were having difficulty in getting imported plants and clearing them from Mombasa, and it was discussed whether they should appoint an official agent of the Society. Mr Ford enquired at Mombasa and informed them that Mr John Sutherland at Mombasa was willing to act as a delivery and forwarding agent for a small fee.

⁸ Europeans in East Africa entry - WATT, J. Stuart (Rev.)

Second General Meeting and Growing Finances

Lady Muriel told the 35 members at an AGM at the Norfolk Hotel in August 1924 that after the success of the two shows, exhibits should be shown to their best advantage and asked that a uniform standard of exhibits be set. This opened up discussions on how to improve the shows. While Mr George Minshall proposed that fixed dates be set for future shows, members said that this was not possible owing to uncertain weather. They agreed that three months' notice is given to allow members to prepare their exhibits and identified the months of November, February and May as being suitable.

As Honorary Treasurer, Ms Olive Collyer gave an account of the healthy position of the Society which showed that it had a credit balance at the bank of Shs1,816. They also thanked Mr Edgley, proprietor of the Norfolk Hotel for use of his premises, free of charge for one show, as well as their committee meetings, a cost-saving which had contributed greatly to the financial stability of the Society.

Mr Ferdinand Anley was confirmed as their Honorary Secretary, and Mrs Emma Louise Mayer with Ms Olive Collyer became the Vice Presidents following a proposal by Mrs Langridge at the AGM in consideration of the work they had done to further the Society.

The meeting resolved that all cheques of the Society must be signed by the President and the Treasurer, or one other member of the Committee that would now meet on the first Monday of every month. Later in September, they resolved that in the absence of the President, Mr E W Ford was empowered to sign cheques against the Society's account jointly with the Hon Secretary.

To woo more children to become active at the shows, Mr George Minshall, who was a forester, offered prizes of Shs15, Shs10 and Shs7 for the best exhibits of cut flowers grown by children. Other members also offered prizes including Mr W C Mitchell for best table decoration while Lady Coryndon, Lady McMillan and Lady Muriel offered miniatures of challenge cups that could be kept by the winners.

Updates on finances and members became a regular part of their meetings toward the end of 1924. By October the Society's finances showed a healthy balance of Shs2,025.45. This included payment of 84 memberships, 71 were renewals and 13 new members. They continued to receive more funds as more members joined and paid up

their subscriptions. At the time, the Society had 12 junior members, 10 of which were new.

The 1st of December meeting saw the presentation of the first complete statement of accounts of the Society. Between August and November, the Society received Shs1,348 and spent Shs855.70. It had begun the period with Shs1,816.95 in the bank and ended with Shs2,309.25. Through November, 120 members paid their subscriptions with 24 of them being new members. 14 junior members also paid.

In November 1924 Shs348 was received including Shs204 for subscriptions, Shs110 for donations, and Shs32 as prize money from Mr. Minshall to go towards children's prizes. Expenditure included Shs35 to the East African Standard for printing, Shs140 for show boxes and Shs6 for stamps.

Then at their first meeting of 1925, in January, the Secretary, Mr Ferdinand Anley proposed that the Society, whose finances were now flourishing, should open a fixed deposit account at the bank and place Shs2,000 for one year. Lady Muriel seconded this proposal explaining that the Society's goal was eventually to have an experimental garden and show hall and that it was necessary to accumulate funds to achieve this. They voted for this and the deposit was placed later that month.

By March 1925, the financial update would have a proper balance sheet of the Society. Members heard that the Society now had Shs1,535.65 in its current account, Shs2,000 on fixed deposit and Shs34 in hand. Total assets were Shs3,569.65 and with liabilities of Shs160 and a balance to book of Shs3,409.65.

The number of members was 220 of which 187 had paid their subscriptions for the year. The Hon Secretary circulated a list of the 33 members who had not paid and invited suggestions on how to get them to pay. After much discussion, two members were struck off as being hopeless to collect from!

Memorial Hall and Relations with the A&HSK.

The sub-committee for the next show of the Society consisted of Messrs Wiley, Bennett, Russell, and Anley with the President and Hon Secretary. They made some alterations

to the class list of the previous show and also dispensed with the usual show matters of class cards, prizes certificates, judges, and stewards. Reflecting on the growing status of the Society, they had hoped to have the Governor officiate the opening of the show, but as he was not available the Chairman would ask Lord Delamere to perform this task.

The Hon Secretary suggested that they approach the Memorial Hall and inquire about the cost of holding the show there, rather than the Norfolk Hotel. They were still on good terms with the Norfolk but Mr. Edgley had said that the front verandah of the hotel had another booking. There would not be enough space unless a temporary structure was built in front of the verandah, which the members felt would be expensive and unsatisfactory.

It turned out that Memorial Hall was available for Shs100 including the use of the vestibule and two committee rooms on the day of the show. The Hall would be available on the afternoon before the show which would allow for the arranging of exhibits, and also the morning after the event for the cleaning of the hall. The Committee adjourned and went to inspect the Memorial Hall which they found to be satisfactory.

Both Mrs Grahame Bell and Mr Coldham resigned from the Committee in January 1925. Their letters of resignation were read at the meeting on 5 January with Mr Coldham also presenting Shs100 as a gift to the Society. To replace them, Mr C M Dobbs of Kiambu, Major N J Wood, Mr A C Pirie and Mr Reginald E Randall were invited to join the committee.

The flower show which took place on 28 February 1925 had 161 exhibits sent in by 41 exhibitors and was attended by the acting Governor Edward Brandis Denham. One class (No 38) had 18 exhibits and another (No 31) had 15 while two classes had 7 entries and four classes had 6 entries. In three categories, there were fewer than 3 exhibits and these were ruled as not having any competition, while in 5 classes there were no entries.

This was the first show at which prizes were given from the Society's fund. The account tally presented after the flower showed gate money of Shs183.50, entry fees of Shs62 and donations of prize money of Shs106 and Shs53 making a total of Shs408 as receipts. Expenses were Shs100 for the hire of Memorial Hall, Shs252.50 of prize

money, Shs26 for the printing of tickets, and with a total expenditure of shs381.25, the Society made a profit of shs27.25 on the show. This result was considered a drain on the Society's finances and it was decided in future to limit prizes to donations received for the purpose.

One much-appreciated addition at the show was to list the name and addresses of exhibitors. In the past, the Society often received letters after shows, asking for the name and addresses of exhibitors and prize winners. These details were now written on the number cards and after the judges had decided on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes, coloured markers were pasted on the cards.

After the flower show, the Society received a letter from the Director of Education regarding children of Nairobi School attending and exhibiting at the Society's shows. The Secretary was asked to direct them to join as junior members and the advantages to be derived from that.

After their first show in 1925, the Society received a letter from the Secretary of the Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Kenya asking if they would collaborate on an agricultural show to be held in July. This was followed by extensive discussions between the Director of Agriculture, Lady Muriel, and Colonel Turner of the A&HSK that resulted in an agreement between the two societies.

Some of the agreed items were that the KHS would cooperate with the A&HSK to make the horticultural side of their shows a success, the KHS would appoint its own judges and stewards, and prepare a class schedule. Also, at the KHS's own show in June 1925, it would limit the exhibits to flowers, plants, table decorations, jams & pickles and would not show fruits and vegetables.

Relations seemed to have thawed between the Agricultural Society and its now budding cousin, the Horticultural Society. Later in the year, Col Turner would suggest that the KHS take over the gardens at the Agricultural Society showground, but the committee deferred this decision as it was not an urgent matter.

A letter arrived in January 1927 regarding the A&HSK's August show, and they agreed to arrange a schedule for the horticultural section to be a part of the show.

The A&HSK wrote in June 1927 and in September 1928, asking to hire 70 tables from the KHS for a show and these were offered at a rate of Shs2 per table with the proviso that they were returned in good condition.

In March 1928, Lady Muriel judged the horticulture section at a show organized by the A&HSK at Eldoret. Held on 7 & 8 March, the "Great Show Week"⁹ took place at the A&HSK showground. It was opened by Sir Edward Denham, the Colonial Secretary of Kenya and featured demonstrations of agricultural produce and entertainment like dances and horse jumping. According to the East African Standard, on the first day, there were 1,200 attendees comprising 200 Society members and exhibitors, 539 Europeans, 72 children, 60 Asiatics and 305 natives.

In his speech, Sir Edward Denham said the event was 100% better than the previous year. He described it as a district show that, unlike the Nairobi shows that drew exhibits from the whole country, featured produce from the Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia areas, which was a flourishing countryside that would come to be fully appreciated. Farm products were exhibited and won prizes, some of which were later sold including yellow maize, seed maize, wheat, oats, butter and coffee.

Lady Muriel told the East African Standard that it was marvellous to see so many flowers exhibited, given that there had been no rain in the district since September. The entries were small with some classes only having one exhibitor. Most of the classes had entries by Mrs B Steyne and Mrs Dawson. The vegetables were described as exceptionally good, notably the potatoes and tomatoes, which would have aroused more attention if they had been shown in Nairobi.

Regarding the venue for their shows, Mrs Mayer suggested that the KHS should approach the government to request a piece of land south of the railway line next to the Nairobi River where they could build a temporary stall and host their shows. While she was supported by Mr Harold Pirie, the others thought the suggestion was premature.

They decided it would be not possible to do all this in time for the show and nor was it wise to put up a structure that would be demolished as this would deplete their funds.

⁹ East African Standard, March 10, 1928.

They would use the Memorial Hall for the show but Mrs Mayer could sound out to the government on the possibility of obtaining the land.

They also formed two sub-committees for the June show and the A&HSK show in July to appoint judges and stewards. Messrs Anley, Pirie, Bennett, Ford and Wiley would be on the panels for both shows while the June show would also have Ms Rogers and Mr Pirie.

The class list was discussed and Mrs Mayer objected to the class of table decorations being judged by public voting, asking that they be judged like the other exhibits. However, the Chairman said that Mr W C Mitchell, who had donated the prize at the December show, had laid down this condition and that it was to be used at future shows. All committee members, except Mrs Mayer, supported the public vote method.

Society Executive Changes and the Coryndon Memorial

In a short period in early 1925, the Society lost two of its most prominent members. There was the untimely passing of Sir Robert Coryndon in February 1925, a popular Governor of the Kenya Colony since 1922 and a patron of the Society. The Duke of York, who was visiting the country, cut short his hunting trip so that he could attend the late Governor's funeral in Nairobi. The committee expressed its profound regret in condolences to Mrs Phyllis Coryndon and her children and decided to commission a miniature of the Lady Coryndon Cup.

Soon after that, Lady Muriel announced that Sir Northrop McMillan passed away in March 1925 in France, and condolences were expressed to Lady Lucie McMillan who was one of their members. Her late husband was a wealthy American who was an active farmer at Juja. The McMillan Memorial Library in Nairobi was later built to celebrate his life and opened in June 1931.

Mr W C Mitchell was one of the new members elected to take up the vacant seats.

Later in October 1925, they decided to invite His Excellency Sir Edward Grigg, who had been appointed as the Governor of Kenya, to become the Patron of the Society and Lady Joan Dickson-Poynder Grigg to be a Vice President.

Lady Muriel travelled to England for a short holiday and the committee members decided not to appoint anyone to act as President in her absence, but to instead elect a different Chairman at each meeting once a quorum was reached. As it turned out, Mrs Emma Louise Mayer chaired meetings of committees from May to October 1925. During that period, the Liwali resigned and by September so did Mr Pirie who had also gone home for an indefinite period. The Hon Mrs Bampfylde was elected to the committee.

In July 1925 the Hon Secretary Mr Anley informed the Committee that due to continued and serious ill health he was obliged to go away for a change of climate and asked that someone be appointed to do his duties during his absence. It was agreed that Miss Bennett would take up these duties and that Mrs Wiley would also assist where necessary. The members also agreed that Mrs Mayer would be seconded as a signatory who could sign the Society cheques in the absence of the President Lady Muriel.

Unfortunately, Mr Ferdinand Anley passed away at Mombasa in November 1925 and the Society wrote to Mrs Anley to express their sympathy, with Lady Muriel remembering him as the ideal secretary and someone who gave all his time to the work of the Society.

The Government planned to have a new building as a fitting and lasting memorial for Sir Robert Coryndon. It was decided that it would be a natural history museum, containing objects of interest of the flora and fauna of the country, as well as include other objects of historical interest to Kenya, exhibiting them to their best advantage, with different rooms set aside including one for taxidermy.

They sought a site that was acceptable to the Town Planning Authority to put up a building and, after a long search, the Colonial Secretary said they had settled on a plot of land above the Ainsworth Bridge.

In 1928 the Legislative Council approved a grant¹⁰ of £3,000 to go towards a Coryndon Memorial and £2,500 to go to the Natural History Society as disturbance compensation for the surrender to the government of their building and the land on which it sat. The amount paid to the Natural History Society was also for their relinquishing their

¹⁰ East African Standard June 23, 1928

collections along with the building, and £300 a year was voted for the maintenance of the museum every year.

The Coryndon Memorial Museum was opened by Sir Edward Grigg on Monday 22 September 1930. Speaking to the guests who included Coryndon's son, representatives of government departments and historical societies, the Governor said he was grateful that he was able to open the Museum before he left the Colony as he had become increasingly aware of Sir Robert's work for the Colony. This included coming up with a dual policy for development, the establishment of native Councils and increasing production in the native reserves.¹¹ He hoped that the Museum would become a centre of research, arts and science in this part of East Africa.

Rules Tightened, Professional judges, and Relations with the RHS

When the Society had been formed, one of its first tasks was to write to the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) of England and ask for a copy of their judging rules.

In 1925, the Society became serious about ensuring the rules were followed. There was a curious matter at the July 25 committee meeting, when a complaint was received from Mrs R B Turner that one of the judges at the July show had worked the cards and looked at the exhibitors' names before giving his decision. This was discussed and it was unanimously agreed to write to Mrs Turner and ask her to substantiate the statement, by giving the name of the judge in question or to withdraw her statement.

Perhaps unnerved by the Turner letter, the committee resolved to tighten the regulations of exhibiting at shows such as, in the case of public voting for table decoration, it was decided to identify all competitors and that anyone found canvassing for votes would be disqualified. And in March 1926 they added a show rule that ".....complaints in writing must be lodged with the Hon Secretary by 2pm on the day of the show, together with a deposit of Shs2.20"

Miss Bennett, the Hon Secretary proposed that a new judging committee be formed to draw up rules of judging and publish a definitive book of local rules of judging based

¹¹ East African Standard, undated.

upon those from the RHS. This would serve as a guide for future shows, and sales of the book would cover the expense of the publication. The committee members would also be responsible for judging arrangements of all shows and she proposed Miss Collyer, Mrs Simpson, Mr Andrew Sprunt, Mr Randall, Miss W M Galloway, Mr Robert Mountford and Mrs Minshall as members. The judging committee members would also double up as members of the "Finance and General Purposes Committee." Members approved these proposals.

Professional Judges

For the next big show in December 1927, there was a major reorganization of the event. First, they made changes to the class list of prizes for flowers, vegetable and fruits. It was also decided to have the distribution of cups, followed by the sale of flowers at the end of the show at 5:15pm.

The President said the shows, including the new ones, were all clearing their expenses. However, she was unhappy that they were not attracting small gardeners to exhibit. This was partly attributed to a lack of interest among the public. She asked the members to encourage their friends and convince some people who may not consider their 'pot of flowers' exhibit-worthy. Meanwhile, the Society would try and receive more cups for different flowers to encourage more entries.

They later made more changes to the class list and also dealt with the issue of professional gardeners. This was the result of a sentiment that had been expressed that many members, as amateur gardeners felt they could not compete with professionals. They were people who had come from their home countries, without training and with very little knowledge, had moulded new plants to adjust them to the conditions of the country and had many difficulties to contend with.

But they reasoned that the small group of professional gardeners in the country could help enormously with advice and would be valuable to the Society. They had exhibited at shows and their exhibits had reached a high standard.

The President later explained to the members "that it was better to encourage a large number of small exhibitors than a small number of professional ones." They decided that professionals could only take part in five of the categories of "collections of roses",

“collections of carnations”, “collections of dahlias”, “collection of cut flowers of not more than 24 categories” and one extra class which was introduced for a “floral display.”

After that show, a proposal was put forward that the table decorations class should be judged by professional judges, rather than the system they had used of public voting. But first, they decided to get the views of Mrs Mitchell as she had introduced the class and had given the prizes at each show.

Mrs Mitchell said she had no objection to professional judges. But she pointed out that when the judging had been opened to the public, the number of entrants had increased. After deliberating on this the committee decided Mrs Mitchell's prize of shs30 should be divided into two. The tables would be judged by the public vote and by the judges, and a first prize would go to the winner in each category. With that agreed, Mrs Nicholson kindly offered to give a prize for 2nd place of shs10 and the Society would then give another prize of shs10.

It was later considered that the professionals who were not exhibiting should be considered as judges for the shows. Mr Randall was provisionally put down to judge the vegetable section and Mrs Langridge the fruit section at the show on 2 & 3 October 1928.

The show date was moved to 19 December 1927 at the Memorial Hall, and the class list for the 10th show of flowers, plants, fruits and vegetables was published¹² in the East African Standard in September 1927. It listed 101 classes, with only 5 being open to professionals.

Some of the notable items listed in the East African Standard included the Lady McMillan Challenge Cup (Class 3: Roses), the Captain Kenneth Gooch Cup (Class 7: Roses), and the Lady Corydon Challenge Cup, presented in memory of Sir Robert Corydon who was a patron of the Society (Class 11: Carnations).

Others were Messrs Simpson & Whitelaw Challenge Cup (Class 15: Cut Flowers), George Carter Challenge Cup (Class 16: Open Cut Flowers), Messrs Shaw & Hunter Challenge (Class 17: Cut Flowers), Mrs Mayer Challenge Cup (33: Salvias), and the

¹² East African Standard, 17 September 1927

Lady Muriel Jex Blake Challenge Cup, (with a miniature replica) for Class 35, Dahlias.

There was also the Lady Pembroke Challenge (Class 44: Geraniums), the Gladioli's Medal by Gardening Illustrated (Class 46), and the Civil Service Challenge Cup (Class 51: Cut Flowers) that was confined to civil servants and their families. Mrs W C Mitchell donated cups for table decoration (Class 59) and Best Plant in a Pot for the Junior class (Class 60), while Class 61 in the Junior section given by Miss Bennett was for the best collection of Wildflowers in vases.

The East African Standard itself supported Class 66 for the Best Essay while Messrs Sutton & Sons who were major advertisers in the newspaper supported Class 70, for the Best Collection grown from their seeds.

All entries were to be grown by exhibitors themselves while entries under "professional" were defined as "any exhibitors who employs other than African labour in their garden."

The classification of "professional" would carry on till 1931 when it was amended to read that "a professional is anyone who either employs skilled labour or who has been through any professional training." This new interpretation was arrived at after the members decided that any exhibitors who were skilled gardeners should be prepared to voluntarily call themselves "professionals."

Members would pay Shs1 per class and non-members would pay Shs2 per class. In the junior section, entries were free for members while non-members paid 50cents per entry. Those who had cups in their possession were requested to deposit them at the National Bank of India Nairobi a week before. The show would be open from 12noon to 5pm. They proposed to sell all exhibits after the show with funds raised from this going to the care of the Cenotaph.

A few years later, Miss Rickman, a member of the Society living in Naivasha proposed at the 1932 AGM to encourage more participation and show entries. She said that some members were afraid of competing against those with bigger gardens and she suggested coming up with a class for gardeners who grew on less than one acre. This was approved to be included at future shows, and the first entries from small plot holders in Nairobi were set for the May 1932 show, with one class for flowers and another for vegetables.

RHS, Other Societies and judging Support

There was some good news to report as the RHS wrote in November 1926 to say that it had waived the requirement to be domiciled in the British Isles and they would generously award a Banksian medal for the December show.

A judge from the RHS had been at the June show and recommended that this award should go to Mr Harold Durham for his most meritorious exhibit. This was applauded by the members. The medal arrived in April 1927 and was presented to him by Lady Muriel.

The RHS would later write to the KHS describing their methods of marking out spaces at shows. They also sent a copy of their rules of judging along with specimens of the cards used, which was an extension of the additional privileges they were now offering to other societies. The Committee went through the RHS rules for judging to see how to adapt them and proposed to have the revised KHS rules printed and sold to their members at a reasonable cost.

The President in rounding out 1928 gave a caution about exhibits that were still not being staged according to schedules. Lady Muriel said it was important that exhibitors carefully read and abide by the conditions. She said that at the first few shows, to get more members interested in exhibiting, great allowances had been given. But they had learnt a great deal from hosting shows and by reading up rules and the Society and its judges should now begin to demand a tightening of the conditions and stricter attention to detail.

They were now aiming for quality, and not quantity. Judges had been lenient until the Committee insisted on strict enforcement of the rules. The Committee had spent a great deal of time and gone to the trouble of getting the schedules worded carefully to avoid any ambiguity. This was in the KHS book on suggestions for exhibitions & rules of judging, which they had produced to help exhibitors.

The two main faults she had observed were not following the wording of the schedule and a failure to differentiate between “variety” and “kind.” She said that mistakes were possible, but because they may pass once, did not mean they would not be detected on

other occasions.

Mr George Minshall said that in judging exhibits not staged according to the schedule, judges might make mistakes but they did their best and he personally often found it difficult to disqualify an exhibit but he was obliged to do so. Otherwise, there would be no point in being a judge. Mrs Wiley proposed that a majority of show classes be reserved for amateur gardeners while leaving only a small number of classes for professionals. This was after two professional entrants had swept the trophies at a show, leaving no chance for the amateur entrants. The Committee decided to put the matter to the members at the next AGM when they would revise the class list.

Ultimately the matter was not decided, and after much discussion, only a few other items were added to the prize list, and the Secretary was asked to rush and get it printed in the East African Standard. They also continued a practice that had been started with the February show to give more prizes to the vegetable classes, to encourage more entrants and participation.

It was decided that members should be appointed as apprentice judges at the Society's shows to work under the professional judges. Captain Giffard, Ms Lovibond and Mr Grahame Bell agreed to be judges and Miss Collyer volunteered to be an apprentice judge in the vegetable section. This arose from the difficult position judges faced at the last show, and it had been resolved that committee members had a duty to loyally support the decisions of the judges. Later in September 1931, they resolved that the committee and judges reserved the right to withhold any award if they considered the exhibit was not of sufficient merit and the judge's decisions would always be final.

There were more meetings held with professional judges in January 1932 to gauge their support for training apprentice judges, the best way to do this and if apprentices would help them in judging classes. The professionals approved of this as there were few of them in the country and with little probability of the number increasing. Apprentice judges could be called upon to judge at any time if there was a shortage of professional judges, the professionals agreed to each take on two apprentices attached to their section when judging and undertook to train them. They also agreed that neither professionals nor amateurs could judge in any section in which they were exhibiting.

In 1932 they received letters from members requesting to act as apprentice judges including Mrs Jack Couldrey and Mrs Colquhoun of Nakuru. They decided to give preference to apprentice judges in each of their home districts but others would be welcome. They would ensure that there were not too many apprentice judges and that the professional judges did not object.

In July 1934 Ms Bessie Lovibond wrote proposals that a sub-committee be formed from the various districts to select judges for the shows. She proposed that judges be notified several days in advance. The Committee agreed to her proposals. They would meet the chief steward a few days before the show and after going over the classes, assign the judges. The Hon Secretary also suggested that sub-committee members should remain at the shows until the judging was completed and that judges chosen must notify the sub-committee in writing of their unavailability if that arose.

This practice would go on for a few years but would prove to be unsatisfactory. Early in 1936, Ms Collyer said informing judges at the last minute of what they would be judging had proved unsatisfactory. She proposed that judges should meet a few days before each show and decide exactly what they would be required to judge. Miss Lovibond supported her proposal and the committee approved this change.

During the Depression years, they strengthened their reach with other associations outside of the country. For the April 1933 show, they decided to ask that it be officiated by the National Rose Society and the National Dahlia Society.

The KHS received affiliation from the National Rose Society and the National Dahlia Society in 1934 and both of these societies undertook to offer passes to any members of the KHS to visit their shows while in England.

It was a timely affiliation for the roses which had some ambiguity with classes. At the Nakuru show, one exhibitor had entered the same exhibit in two different classes and had won in both of them. The Committee resolved that this should not be allowed and that judges should be warned not to give two awards to one exhibit.

Lady Muriel who had returned to Kenya described what she had seen at various shows while in England. She recommended that more attention be given to rules and that particularly with roses, they should adhere to regulations laid down by the National

Rose Society as much as possible. This was agreed to and the KHS would send a letter to the press about how rose exhibits would be judged at their shows. The National Rose Society also sent the KHS a medal to be awarded for one of the amateur classes and they decided to award it for the 12 varieties of roses, in an amateur class at the Nairobi show.

In May 1935 the KHS wrote to the RHS asking if they would send a Jubilee medal that the RHS had said they would send to all affiliated societies. The Committee planned to give the medal for "cultural merit", but the RHS wrote back in June with an indication that the medal they were minting should go to the "most successful competitor." The RHS's Jubilee medal arrived in July 1936 and Lady Muriel presented it to Mr Grahame Bell for his exhibit at the June 1935 show.

Then in 1937, the RHS wrote to say that their Council had decided not to grant more than one Banksian medal to Kenya in a year. The KHS then decided that the medal would only be awarded for the show in Nairobi but it would be open to exhibitors from all parts of Kenya. In 1938, the RHS itself decided to award the medal to Lady Muriel Jex-Blake for her most interesting collection of climbing plants. It arrived duly inscribed, and was handed to her.

Around this time, Mrs F Chater Jack (Emily May Sutton) of Mount Elgon Nurseries at Kitale informed the President that she had sent flowers to the Secretary of the RHS. She had airmailed bulbs of *Gloriosa virescens*, *Rothschildiana Lutea*, *Crinum ammochoroides*, *Haemanthus multiflorus*, *Gladiolus quartinianus*, and *Moraea carsonii*. She wrote that the postage was heavy, at Shs99 and asked if the KHS would contribute to the expense. After some discussion, the Committee undertook to pay all the postage as it had not been possible to send any other contribution of plants to Chelsea, during the Coronation Year for King George VI and his wife Queen Elizabeth.

Seeds of Charity, Garden Meetings and the Cenotaph

Lady Muriel was back as the Chair of the Committee in November 1925 when they decided to move the date of the show back by ten days to take place on 31 December. This would accommodate the members whose gardens had been affected by the late rains that year. It was also considered as a good opportunity to draw guests from up-country Kenya who would be in Nairobi for the race meeting and polo. Excitement about

the show was so much that they considered adding a marquee for the day. The President undertook to find out whether the aide-de-camp (ADC) to the Governor would be a judge as he was a keen gardener. They also sought contingents of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides to assist with the show.

The cost of printing number cards, as well as writing paper with the KHS letterhead for the shows, was becoming an issue and they explored whether they could have these pre-printed in England in future. Fortunately, a typewriter that Mrs Bampfylde, one of their members, had promised was finally delivered to the Society and it proved to be quite useful. Ms Bennett also offered to purchase stationery and other paper that the Society required when she travelled to England in the middle of 1926. They also sanctioned the use of rubber stamps for the President and Hon Secretary to sign show certificates.

The Committee members also approved for the Society to hold an auction of flowers after the show if the exhibitors wished it. Lady Muriel also proposed that members be asked to exhibit their roses showing six inches of stem, something she had observed at rose shows in England and which was a great improvement. This was agreed to and specimen boxes were arranged by Messrs Shaw and Hunter, to be shown to members at the upcoming show. The members at the AGM in January 1926 then approved that both the old and new methods would be permitted at future shows.

In terms of trade exhibits, they agreed to proposals by Mr Reginald Randall that exhibitors should be asked to pay a deposit of 10% on orders they placed, and not on their sales as was the previous case. This would take effect at future shows and exhibitors would also be asked to find their own accommodation during shows.

The show took place on Thursday, 31 December. And while the exhibits were good, considering the drought, members felt that it was not as good as most of their previous shows. In her comments, Lady Muriel mentioned her visit to shows in England, and she said that while Kenya did not have a show like Chelsea, their show was comparable to the amateur shows held under the auspices of the Horticultural Society in Vincent Square. She said that except for the Sir Jeremiah Coleman orchids, the delphiniums and sweet peas, the Kenyan Society's shows were much better.

Lady Muriel hoped the Society would get a garden this year, and a hall sometime in the

future. Their guest, Governor Edward Grigg said he was ready to help the Society and would be sympathetic if they required land for a garden or a hall building.

Financially it was a success as it more than paid its expenses, but takings at the door showed that fewer members of the public had attended. This may have been due to there being other attractions ongoing on New Year's Eve and which may have taken people out of town. They collected Shs87 as entry fees, while some of the expenses were Shs100 for the hire of the hall and Shs26 for labour on the day of the show. They started planning for the next show and hoped to stage a fruit show when the visiting East African Governors were in Nairobi and would all be invited to attend it.

Miss Collyer suggested that the Society should start a prize fund to be funded through donations and sale of the plants and at the next meeting in January 1926, all the members voted for it with only one dissenter. She also suggested that they hold a garden party and combine it with a plant sale sometime in April, and **ask** all those interested to sow seeds and make cuttings to be sold on the occasion for the benefit of the Prize Fund.

It was later decided that the proceeds of such a sale be kept separately from the funds of the Society and be devoted entirely to awarding prizes at shows. A sub-committee that comprised Lady Muriel, Miss Collyer and the Hon Secretary then allocated the sum of Shs797.50 to the prize fund for the June show. To promote the sale of plants at Chiromo on 28 April, an advertisement was placed in the East African Standard and announcements also appeared on the film screen at The Theatre Royal and at the Lyric.

Led by Miss Collyer, members took up many roles. Mrs Campbell agreed to organize the tea, Major Steele undertook to arrange car parking and collect the Shs2 charge. Other members volunteered to round up plants or cakes from their friends. Mrs Monckton proposed that plants should be grouped according to their prices, such as with tables of Shs1 and Shs2 and this was unanimously approved. It was also agreed that 20 tables would be required.

It was a success and the final tally presented on 6 June 1927 showed Shs474 had been collected from entrance money, auction of flowers and vegetables and other fees. Expenses were Shs374 and sales of plants showed a profit of Shs1,265.70. Lady Muriel thanked Lady McMillan, Mrs Kinnra and the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides for their

work to make the sale a success.

A member Mr Galt also wrote in June 1927 suggesting that "horticultural mutual improvement meetings" open to all members to come and discuss plants and flowers of interest should be held monthly. They could also discuss difficulties with cultivation or horticulture. Ms. Collyer proposed that they be social in nature and that they should be held in different gardens each month, with tea given. Both proposals were accepted and it was decided to hold them on the first Sunday of every month from 4pm.

Lady Muriel offered to host the first garden meeting on 3rd July at her house at Kyuna on the Kabete - Masara Road. A small advertisement ran in The Standard inviting members and their friends to bring flowers of interest and any horticultural difficulties for discussion.

Starting in July, these monthly meetings proved to be successful for those who attended. But the attendance was low among the members. To correct this, Mr Randall had suggested that each meeting should feature one of the professional gardeners who would give a lecture on a subject that the Committee chose, and to have the other professionals also speak at future meetings. Another suggestion was to hold such events every other month or quarterly.

Mrs Dyer offered to host the September meeting in her garden and Lady Muriel offered to host the following one. However, the drought persisted late in the year, and the President asked to postpone the meeting at her house till after November.

The following year Miss Collyer proposed that they ask some of the professionals at Scott Agricultural Laboratories to give lectures at the horticultural meetings. She also proposed that the horticultural meetings should only be held in the months with favourable weather and not when gardeners were busy with the dry weather. On this, she was supported by Capt Giffard.

Native Funds and the Cenotaph

In April 1926, Lady Grigg, the Governor's wife, wrote and asked the Society to assist at a fete at Government House on 30th April. This came a few weeks after the ADC at Government House confirmed that he had received his invitation from the Society and

informed Governor and Lady Grigg.

The Committee deliberated on Lady Grigg's fete at its next meeting in May. They picked judges for the show and proposed Mr George Minshall for the rose & carnations classes, Mr. Randall for the fruit section, Miss Collyer for the vegetables, and Miss Whiten for the children's collection. Other judges were Mrs Langridge, Mr Mountford, and Mr Sprunt.

But it was not clear if the money raised at the fete was to be devoted to purely European or Native purposes and they decided that the President should ask Major Sutton to get further details. Mr. Mayer's proposal that the funds raised be used only for the advantage of Europeans was not seconded.

The matter of beneficiaries came up again at the next meeting. Mrs Mayer proposed that the funds raised at the KHS fete and the Chief Welfare fete be devoted entirely to European and native needs. However, Ms Willis proposed an amendment that the words "and native" be deleted, which Mrs Mayer seconded.

The President said that the alternative was that the funds would be handed to the general fund for allocation as the Committee saw fit, but the vote was defeated four to two.

The State fete in August yielded £100 for the Lady Grigg Fund. With this show, the KHS got some favourable coverage¹³ and a newspaper article described the enthusiasm of Kenyan gardeners that was shown in the care and forethought that they must have expended in their preparations and brought refreshment and beauty to the show. It noted that the Society offered gold, silver, and bronze medals for grouped displays of flowers, fruits and vegetables at the show which was held after a drought of two months which was usually fatal for flowers.

It praised the pure white Barberton Daisies cultivated by Mr Durham, and lavished attention on the selection from Mr Mitchell's garden in Kinangop which was as fresh as from an English garden. Other highlights were lovely large Primroses, a few choice Daffodils and bunches of fragrant Violets. Also striking were some colourful Anemone

¹³ East African Standard August 6, 1927

flowers, some nice Hollyhocks to look upon, nice Zinnias, a brave show by Chrysanthemums, and very good Geraniums for the beginning of August.

In 1927, the Society wrote to the Colonial Secretary calling attention to the untidy state of the area around the Cenotaph in Nairobi and asking permission for the Society to undertake its care.

The Town Clerk responded saying that he would be handing over the care of the Cenotaph plot to the members. The Society's plans for the care of the Cenotaph¹⁴ would involve the addition of a concrete edge, a footpath, the planting of Kikuyu grass when the rains were on, and a small hedge of Christ-thorn plants.

They received offers to help care for the Cenotaph from the Boy Scouts and it was agreed that they could take charge of the Cenotaph. The total cost was estimated at £5 a year. On Armistice Day, a wreath was laid at the Cenotaph on behalf of the Society and they planned to seek donations to support its care.

The Society held its fourth AGM on Valentine's Day in 1927 at the Norfolk Hotel. Lady Muriel gave her update on the success of the year and congratulated the Society for staying solvent in its fourth year and ending with a substantial cash balance. She noted that there was a decline in the number of members from 224 to 198 which may have been due to members going on leave and omitting to pay their subscriptions.

Two shows had been held in 1926, with the one in June having 249 entries, but the quality was not that good. However, she said, the December one, with 291 entries saw tremendously improved quality.

Lady Muriel also paid tribute to Mrs Dobbs, a generous supporter of the Society, who had passed away. At the meeting, Miss Collyer proposed that the Society have another sale of plants in April to augment the Society funds and that Lady McMillan be asked to grant the use of Chiromo Farm. They also agreed with Mr Grahame Bell's proposal that the exhibits be sold at the show and the funds collected to support the Cenotaph fund.

At the meeting, members were presented with the accounts audited by Messrs Gill &

¹⁴ East African Standard February 19, 1927

Johnson. Mrs Hailey proposed “that the accounts as presented be approved and passed” - the first time this had happened.

Members then discussed the budget for the year, with Miss Collyer suggesting that an allocation of 25% for the equipment account was excessive. But the Hon Secretary replied that it was necessary to replace broken tables. This would prove to be the case as the Society would later have several incidents of tables being damaged when they were being transported to and from the hall for a show. They approved that the movements must always have a supervisor and also ordered two T-squares for marking off the tables at show time.

However, after a few months the Boy Scouts gave up the care of the Cenotaph grounds and fresh arrangements had to be made. Mr Ford kindly undertook to keep the ground watered and weeded. By June 1928, the Society decided that it was time to ask the Municipality to take care of the Cenotaph again, and the Town Clerk had expressed willingness to do so.

Shows, Auditors and Royalty

The date of Monday 4 January 1926 was also unique in the governance structure of the Society. A Committee meeting took place at 10:30am followed by the general meeting of the Society at 11:30am at the Norfolk. It was attended by 16 members and came a few days after their fourth show.

Before the beginning of 1925, Lady Muriel had proposed to put the Society’s accounts in order and get a clear balance sheet for members to review at the AGM. Messrs Gill & Johnson had offered to act as honorary auditors of the Society and after this was approved by the Committee. Miss Bennett, the Hon Secretary, had taken the accounts of the Society to the audit firm.

Lady Muriel also proposed that the Society invested in 30 tables of its own. This would save the show committees a great deal of anxiety and extra work going around town borrowing tables while preparing halls for shows. She also suggested that the tables should be obtained from the Reformatory in Kabete instead of sourcing them from Indian firms. The quotations they had from European shops were far beyond the financial means of the Society.

Kabete Reformatory undertook to provide 20 tables for the Society according to the specification given, for Shs28.50 each, or with top boards, long wood or slats at Shs32.50. It was decided that the Reformatory would make one table for the members of the Committee to judge the workmanship before starting on the remaining 19.

In the coming months, the tables would turn out to be more expensive than originally estimated and this was due to the larger hinges and stronger timber used. However, the sub-Committee determined that the extra cost of approximately shs35 per table would be well spent as it would save on constant repairs in the future.

The third AGM, held at the Norfolk Hotel, was earlier than in past years as the Committee had decided that it was better for the financial year of the Society to start in January rather than in July. Lady Muriel said that members were reluctant to pay subscriptions in the middle of the year. They had begun the transition to this by allowing the subscriptions for the previous year, which comprised 219 adult members and 31 juniors, to run for 18 months.

To get subscriptions paid more regularly, the AGM approved at the request of the President that banker's orders be sent out to members, and that any member paying Shs100 would become a Life Member of the Society. Banker's orders would give a bank the authority to pay the subscriptions of their customers when they fell due. The members also approved the proposal to obtain 30 new tables and they thanked Mr Edgley for allowing the committee to use the Reading Room of the Norfolk Hotel for their meetings.

They were also updated on the offer of Messrs Gill & Johnson to act as honorary auditors. Too little time had passed for them to produce a balance sheet, but the Hon Secretary told the meeting that the accounts showed a credit balance of Shs877.21 in the current account. In addition, Shs2,000 had been placed in a fixed deposit in January 1925, the interest of which would be paid, the following week. Later, another Shs2,000 was placed in a second fixed deposit at the bank in July 1925.

Afterwards, the Hon Mrs Bampfylde, Mrs G Wiley, Mrs Anley, Mrs W C Mitchell, Mrs Langridge, Mr E W Ford, Capt Giffard, Mrs Carnelly and Mr Price were re-elected to the Committee. New members elected were Miss Stollard, Ms Bessie Lovibond, Mr and Mrs

Dobbs, Col Durham and Major Steele, while Messrs Randall, Mountford and Langridge would now act as professional advisors to the Committee and Miss Bennett would act as Secretary.

Major Steele said he was a newcomer in the country and that there were a lot of trees and shrubs in the City Park that he was not familiar with. He asked that the KHS make efforts to get all the trees in the park labeled with their proper names. This was considered a good suggestion that would add greatly to the interest of visitors. The President promised to follow up with the Municipal Council on this.

The Forestry Department was constantly being sent seeds that they had no use for so the Head of the Department and Chief Conservator of Forests, Harold Gardner, wanted to pass them on to the KHS to experiment with. The Committee accepted this and Captain Giffard offered to sow the seeds and prepare a report on their results later.

In April 1928, the Society received a letter from Walter Davidson who represented Messrs Edward Webb seed firm requesting the Society to support them by introducing their seeds to Kenya. The Hon Secretary was asked to write to him and explain how other firms of seedsmen had given to support the Society, i.e., sponsoring cups to get their seeds known to members.

Later in the year, Captain Giffard received communication from Messrs Allwood, the great carnation growers, who were taking an interest in Kenya. He hoped they would be able to offer a cup in the carnation class. There was good carnation seed obtained in Kenya and Mr George Minshall also said he planned to take up carnation growing especially the production of seed.

More seeds came in 1929. The George Carter firm wrote that they could not locate the conditions which they had attached to the winning of a cup they had provided to the shows. They would let the Committee decide this and offered another Challenge cup to the Society if it would undertake to encourage its members to buy their seeds. The Hon Secretary was asked to write to the firm saying that they could not ask members to buy seeds from a firm that had no office and which did not advertise in the country.

The Society received a letter in April 1929 from a Canadian firm, J M Stranger, asking members of the Society to send them seeds and plants from Kenya in exchange for

ones from Canada. As they had not sent a list of their available Canadian plants, the Hon Secretary was asked to write to the firm to provide this list which the KHS would then share with its members.

Miss Collyer offered to form a nursery garden and raise seedlings for the KHS. She undertook to provide the ground services if the Society would provide funds for the labourers. The decision was left to a larger committee.

Too Many Shows in the Country?

But there was pressure brewing in Nairobi. In April 1928, Mr A C Tannahill, President of the Nairobi Chamber of Commerce, sent¹⁵ a letter to the Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Kenya. He stated that commercial firms could not afford the heavy expense of preparing exhibits for big shows at frequent intervals. He proposed that shows should only be staged every 2 or 3 years until the population in the Kenya Colony increased. These would be big, combined shows staged by four corporations with separate clientele, ie, an agricultural show, race meeting, shops and entertainment/theatre who would come together and induce large groups of people to attend and visit all the shows.

Colonel Turner of the Agricultural & Horticultural Society responded that they had shows about every nine months, with those in Eldoret and Nakuru being agricultural ones at which purely local business firms had thought it worthwhile to exhibit. But he agreed with Mr Tannahill that the Society should coordinate with other groups and support what had come to be an entertainment week in Nairobi that coincided with the New Year celebrations. He wrote that he hoped the Chamber of Commerce would pass a resolution to support an agricultural show in January which would bring a new crowd from other districts to visit Nairobi.

The KHS staged shows in 1928 that would be a turning point. The one held in June 1925 cost Shs313.50 to stage, including the cost of the hall hire at Shs100 and Shs63 for the transport of tables and marquees, and shs26 for sandwich helpers, while prize money was shs44.50. The takings from the show included Shs146 from entry fees, Shs252 from gate money, and Shs110 from the auction of flowers, and it yielded a

¹⁵ East African Standard, 28 April 1928

surplus after expenses of Shs211.50.

The show held on 17 December took in Shs316 comprising Shs133.50 of entry fees and Shs227.50 as gate money. Expenses included shs44.50 for prizes in the junior section and Shs117.50 in the vegetable section, for a total outlay of Shs426. The President said that compared to the takings, expenditure was too high and it was decided to reduce expenses for future shows. Her assessment of the year and the shows was also that the Society had been extravagant. She said no other Society spoilt its members to the extent of draping their tables and stands for their exhibitors. She hoped they would be more economical with future shows.

The East African Standard reported on the December flower show and also published¹⁶ a full list of the winners. It described the transformation of the Memorial Hall, a sedate place where weighty matters of state are discussed, into a beautiful place where flowers of every kind grown in Kenya were to be seen. Its large attendance, despite the small number of entries, showed how popular exhibitions of Kenya horticulture comprising blooms of all kinds, tastefully arranged on black-covered benches, exhibited alongside vegetables and drawings and paintings by children. It was distinctly reminiscent of flower shows in England.

The Show was toured by Lady Barth, the wife of the acting Governor of Kenya, Sir Jacob William Barth. Among the judges was Leonard Sutton of the famous English seed firm, Sutton & Sons, who was on a tour of Kenya and who had agreed to talk to exhibitors about his expertise in horticulture.

The best rose was exhibited by Mrs Cartwright who brought her roses from Naivasha and among the surprises of the show was a production of alpine flowers, thunbergia from Meru Forest, impatiens from Mau Forest, perfect specimens of Edelweiss, some unusual gloxinias, and an exhibit of crotalaria which were only found in the Kedong Valley.

Winners of the KHS challenge cups included H Grahame Bell for the largest number of marks, and for the largest total of marks in the flower section, while Miss Poland won the Miss Olive Collyer Challenge Cup for the highest marks in the vegetable section. In

¹⁶ East African Standard, 22 December 1928

the junior section, ten-year-old Betty Bumpus won the Mrs W G Evans miniature cup for the highest marks, while the European School Nairobi won the W C Mitchell Challenge cup for the school winning the highest number of marks. Hawke House won the KHS's miniature cup for the house at the European School with the highest marks while Miss Collyer won the Mrs Grahame Bell Challenge cup for the most artistically arranged exhibit.

They also made arrangements for the auction of flowers after the show. Lady Muriel recognized the hard work that had been put in by exhibitors in staging work for them to have a good show even with the lower quality of exhibits caused by the drought. She asked members to support the sale of plants as the funds collected were spent on prizes, and unless a good sum was realized, good prizes could not be bought.

During this period, the Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Kenya (A&HSK) was going through a similar period as the KHS. Its balance sheet for 1927 showed that it had an excess of income over expenses of Shs12,381.87 with the Eastern Africa Agricultural Show greatly contributing to its profits. But in the previous year, 1926, income had greatly reduced by Shs14,700 due to them not holding a show in Nairobi. They had only 219 members who were paying subscriptions, a decline from 245 the previous year, and had received a government grant of Sh10,000 towards their building fund.

The A&HSK had an overdraft at the bank of Shs31,100.73 which had reduced from Shs 42,715.81 at the beginning of the year. During the year they wiped out a deficit of the Eldoret and Nakuru shows leaving Nairobi to shoulder the burden of the Society.

One bright spot for the A&HSK was that, during the year, the Prince of Wales who was visiting Eastern Africa had granted the A&HSK the privilege of using the prefix "Royal" in their name. He also honoured them by consenting to become their patron¹⁷.

Royal Visit and Show 1928

In 1928, the Society also participated in a special representative East African Agricultural show that had been arranged to demonstrate the production and potential of the Colony during a Royal visit.

¹⁷ East African Standard, March 1, 1930.

This was held during a tour of the Colonies¹⁸ by Edward, the Prince of Wales who, accompanied by his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, arrived on a ship at Mombasa on 28 September. They then took the train to Nairobi and arrived on 1 October.

The Prince did not open the show. This was done by the Governor¹⁹, Sir Edward Grigg, who said that the Prince wanted his East Africa holiday to be as informal as possible.

The show had exhibits of commercial and agricultural produce from across the region. Both the Princes did attend later, along with a horse race meeting, in which they rode in several races.

It was a display of the developments and progress made in various districts of the Colony. Exhibitors set out to show the royal visitors the great agricultural potential of the lands of Kenya and its people. It also featured exhibitors from Tanganyika and was the first show in which the East African Agricultural Research Institute at Amani had taken part. All 1,400 members of the local native Councils-who were in Nairobi as guests of the Government for four days attended. There was a surprising dash of rain to break the drought that week.

The KHS organised the flower section, staging exhibits of flowers, fruits and vegetables. One notable exhibit was a rock plant from Lady McMillan's garden. "The rock was from the Swiss mountains and the Edelweiss had been grown for the first time on the Equator.

The Prince of Wales laid a wreath at the Cenotaph to mark Kenya's Armistice Day and later travelled to Uganda while the Duke went south on a hunting trip.

The Prince went on to become King Edward VIII, and later, when he abdicated his Crown in 1936, the Duke of Windsor. But when he toured Kenya, he was heir to the throne of England and local newspapers, extensively covered the bouts of illness of his father, King George V.

¹⁸ Annual Report of the Colonies, Kenya, 1928

¹⁹ East African Standard, 6 October 1928.

At the general meeting in January 1929, the President addressed the 23 members about the drought that had persisted the previous year and which had caused great difficulty and disappointment to gardeners. Rainfall was below average and crops including coffee and maize failed in many districts. Wheat was affected by rust after rains and in some districts, locusts destroyed maize and wheat. The locusts also caused damage to the orchards in the Mua Hills which removed them from participating and exhibiting in the fruit show in early 1929.

The drought made it doubtful that there was much fruit in the country and they decided to write to fruit growers around the country and ask them what their entries might be. The results received from fruit growers, were as expected, not encouraging, and the show set for 18 February was cancelled, and a notice announcing this was placed in the Standard.

Lady Muriel said that gardeners were naturally optimists and, despite their failures in 1928, their gardening was a past-time of never-ending interest and they were ready to do better in the new year.

The expenditure during 1928 was heavy and there was no surplus. The President said the Society should aim at getting a good reserve which would earn them income to enable them to begin work on an experimental garden with a paid gardener.

Empire Day:

For Empire Day in 1929 the Committee decided that, instead of taking part in the Boy Scouts Jamboree, the Society would place a cut-flower stall at the Empire Day Fete. They also agreed to lend KHS tables to the organizers of the fete as Mrs Wade, wife of the then-District Commissioner in East Africa, Sir Armigel Wade, had undertaken to guarantee payment for any damage to the tables.

Later, for the final show in 1929, set for December, they decided to use three tarpaulins instead of two. They also decided not to use sandwich boys but to instead increase the number of posters and distribute them to the outskirts of town. This was because sandwich boys needed too much supervision.

The show took place on 30 December at the Memorial Hall and featured entries in 122

classes. In planning, they resolved to only allow people wearing exhibitor badges access the hall the day before the hall was opened to the public at noon. They also resolved to ask exhibitors to be more careful not to spill water and be mindful not to damage their neighbours' exhibits during preparation. Also, there would be an auction at 5.30pm at the end of the show, but exhibitors could privately sell plants during the show and mark them as sold but remain on exhibit till after the presentation of cups.

The auction raised Shs70.70 and the show made shs283.50 in gate money and entry fees of shs92.50 making a total of shs446.70. After expenses, including prizes of Shs129, the show made a profit of shs125.70.

The December 1930 show was advertised in the Standard and also on screen at the Empire at a cost of Shs20. It netted a profit of Shs57.28. The President later said that it had shown the beauty of the rain and new plants had made it an interesting show which delighted the members.

Junior Members, Schools, Society Cups and Tables

At a meeting early in 1927, Lady Muriel lamented that the junior members were not participating in the Society despite the incentives given, and junior membership had dropped almost to nil²⁰. This she attributed to students participating in organized sports which did not leave much time for gardening.

Mr William C Mitchell had given a cup for competitions by schools, but as yet no schools had competed for it. Lady Muriel said that if schools did not want to encourage botany, she would ask Mr Mitchell to offer the cup to another category. Nevertheless, the Society vowed to leave the junior membership branch in place for another year.

In March 1927, the Committee allocated a £5 prize for competition among houses from European schools. This was in addition to the existing prizes of the W C Mitchell Cup to the school which got the highest marks at the show, and the W G Evans Miniature Cup to the child getting the most marks.

²⁰ East African Standard February 19, 1927

The new cup would allow the winning house to retain the cup until the next show. However, the cup would only be contested if a significant number of entries were confirmed six weeks before the shows. Each house would submit a minimum of two and a maximum of six exhibits of the unaided work of the scholars. These would be for the best pot plant, best collection of wildflowers, brushwork, drawings or painting of wildflowers, and best collection of cut flowers.

They also added a class of essays on a horticultural subject that would be decided by the KHS committee. Entries would be sent one week before the show. Soon after that, the East African Standard consented to present prizes of shs10 and shs5 for the children's essay in the junior section. The title set for the first essay to be judged at the show in December was "Given a small plot of land, what would you plant in it and how would you do it?"

In June 1927, Mr T Wells, acting headmaster of the European School, wrote to apologize for the poor entries from scholars and promised that these would improve at the next show.

True to their word, the children's section improved tremendously in 1928. Though there were fewer members, they were more alive and energetic. Lady Muriel attributed this to the impetus given by the European School, Nairobi under Captain Nicholson, and the competition between the schoolhouses.

Later in May, they set a fee of 50 cents for every child to enter each class in the junior section. But the following month, Captain Nicholson, who was headmaster between 1925 and 1937, offered to send an annual contribution every month of shs40 for children at the European School instead of each child being called upon to pay the entry fee. The Committee accepted this offer as it was much easier than collecting 50 cents from each child. During his tenure, Nicholson shaped many aspects of the school including its uniform, badge and name which became the Prince of Wales School in 1931.²¹

After they decided to present a miniature cup to the Prince of Wales/European school for competition at the KHS show it was decided that children from schools should only

²¹ Old Cambrian Society History: <http://www.oldcambrians.com/History.html>

be admitted between 1pm and 3pm at flower shows, and if they decided to view the show before or after this time, they should pay 50 cents like any private child. The Hon Secretary was also asked to confirm if the principals of senior boy's schools and senior girl's schools considered it advisable for their scholars to exhibit at flower shows.

But a few months later, the Committee met in November 1931 and resolved to abolish children's classes from all Nairobi shows. The objective was to cut down on the class list and economize on space as good exhibits from full members were suffering from lack of sufficient space. The removal of the junior section was passed with 4 dissents and was put forward to the members at the AGM in February 1932, where it elicited a great deal of discussion.

The President brought up the lack of participation and interest in the junior sections in shows as she said students were too busy with other matters at school. The junior section was allocated a large space at shows and at times required an extra marquee. Their participation required much effort by teachers and also that the Society provide some other entertainment at the show.

The members then endorsed the decision to discontinue the junior section. They did hold out an olive branch with the possibility of having a junior section feature on a show about Wildflowers if it was held in a larger space.

But a few months later, in June 1932, the Principal of the Girl's Secondary School asked if they could use the Society's inter-house cup for a competition at the school that included a horticultural exhibition. The Society agreed to this as long as there was always a horticultural angle. But they also decided that the W C Mitchell Challenge Inter-Schools Cup, which the school had held for six months should be returned to the safe custody of the bank as soon as the show was over.

Society Cups

Right after the first show, the Secretary said that members who had donated cups wanted the Society to insure the cups. The Secretary was asked to make more enquiries, but after checking with the insurance company, the cost was found to be too high.

The issue of insurance resurfaced after the second show, so in July 1924, the Committee resolved that the Society would take out burglary and fire policy for all the cups that would be obtained from Messrs Tyson Bros for Shs42.

In April 1927, the Committee again took a fresh look at the burning issue of insurance of cups, this time in its planning for the next show. The Acting Hon Secretary Mrs Dyer had approached two firms, Messrs Tyson Bros and the Norwich Union, who each claimed they were the only company who would take on the insurance. The members felt that more companies should be interviewed before a decision and asked the acting Hon Secretary to also contact Messrs Ramp and The Royal Exchange.

More letters would soon come, one from Lloyds Insurance agency, then another from Gailey & Roberts Ltd, who were also agents of Lloyds, and who offered to insure the cups against All Risks, at the rate of 1%. They decided to insure the cups with this agency and instructed the Hon Secretary, to proceed with valuing the cups. When the insurance policy papers arrived in October, they were shown to the members and then placed in the Bank of India for safe deposit.

They had finally managed to deal with the thorny issue of obtaining insurance²² against all risks for the Society's challenge cups. This cost the considerable sum of Shs303.37 and was expected to increase in future years as additional cups that were extremely valuable, were presented for the competitions. Their members approved that they could continue to shoulder the bill until the cost reached £50.

That month, April 1927, new prizes donated included the Gooch Cup by Capt Kenneth T Gooch for the best bowl of roses, the Bower's cup for flowering shrubs and the Olive Collyer Cup for the exhibit gaining the highest number of marks in the vegetable class. In addition, Lady Pembroke offered a cup to denote her interest in Kenyan horticulture. Then, as she was leaving the country for England, one of their pioneer members, Mrs. Glencairn Campbell donated two perpetual challenge cups for competitions. One was for the vegetable class, and the other was a "country cup" for exhibitors living outside a 30-mile radius of Nairobi.

Members were again reminded in August 1928 that winners of cups must return them to

²² East African Standard (undated) 1927.

the Bank of India a week before the next show with a reminder that any members going home (England) should make arrangements to deposit the cups at the Bank before they left.

But with time, space became an issue with the Society's bankers. The authorities at the Bank of India began to object to constantly receiving small packages containing miniatures for them to store. They asked the Society to get a small box with a lock to put the miniatures in when storing them and the Hon Secretary asked the Reformatory to make one at a cost of Shs20.

Near the end of 1928, they also heard that customs officials were now threatening to charge duty on the exhibition vases for prizes unless they were stamped "KHS". In 1930 June, Mr Randall proposed that a new supply of miniature cups should be inscribed with the KHS logo and the name of the flower for which each miniature was given.

Later in 1928, a practice started at the December show of giving alternative prizes. These included vases being given as prizes in the flower section and seed order forms in the vegetable section. At the following AGM, members applauded this innovation. The Committee noted that offering prize money in place of certificates had not resulted in any more entries and decided to revert to offering certificates. It was also hoped that they could get more gardeners to take a keen interest in the Society with a possible Civil Service Cup that would be open to government workers only.

When he visited London in 1930, Captain Giffard purchased vases as prizes and wrote that he hoped the members would approve of his choices. These were shipped to Mombasa in November 1930 and arrived in time for the show in December 1930. In the rush to get them delivered, the Society had to pay passenger train rates to ship the box of vases from Mombasa to Nairobi. The carriage of vases cost the Society Shs90.22, which reduced the profits of the show by shs60.

At the show, Captain Giffard, who had returned from England, explained about the glass vases that he had bought for the Society. He said the cost could have been cheaper if they had taken advantage of the special rates offered by the German shipping lines. The Chairlady thanked Capt Giffard saying that the vases were a welcome change from the prizes which had been given for the last three years by the Society.

More cups were donated in 1933. The President told members at the 1934 AGM that while there had been discussions about giving money as prizes, their financial position could not afford it. She welcomed and named some of the members who had donated several new cups for competition including Mrs Galton Fenzi for a collection of blue flowers, Mrs J C Shaw's cup for carnations, and Messrs James Carter's cup for annuals grown from their seed.

When Lady Muriel visited London in 1934, she offered to buy any prizes that the Society required such as glass vases or bowls but the Committee declined as they had enough to last the rest of the year.

Then in January 1935, the Finance Sub-Committee approved that the amount for which their cups were insured be increased from £200 to £300. This came after they found that several cups the Society was using were not included in the list at Lloyds that was insured through Gailey & Roberts Ltd.

Aside from insurance, the cost of cups was also an issue. Some members who had offered cups as prizes complained about the cost of producing exact replicas. It was decided that it was not necessary to produce exact replicas and the Hon Secretary was asked to find out which donors were unprepared to continue giving miniatures and to tell them that less expensive ones could be bought. Mr Mountford told the Committee that he had won the Wimhurst Cup three times in succession and asked if he could now claim it as his. The Secretary was asked to enquire from Mrs Wimhurst if conditions had been fulfilled and if Mr Mountford could now keep the cup.

At the meeting in 1935, Captain Giffard lamented the lack of space at shows and proposed that some flowers only be shown at shows once annually such as dahlias at one show and roses at another. Miss Collyer objected saying shows were not yet big enough to cut out some classes. She suggested that a marquee be erected for vegetables and fruit at shows thus leaving more space for flowers in the main hall. She was supported by Miss Rogers, and the members approved.

The Committee in March would later reduce the vegetable section to two classes when they altered the schedule. This came after a lengthy discussion on whether the vegetable section should be scrapped.

In 1935 the Society wrote to Lawn & Alder, the firm in London from which they had been ordering cups. This came after they noted that the global price of silver had dropped and they asked if there could be a reduction in the price of miniatures ordered by the KHS as the costs had been increasing every year despite the Society trying to avoid all unnecessary expenses.

They asked that revised estimates be airtailed to Nairobi and warned that the Committee would look elsewhere for business.²³ Meanwhile, in Nairobi, Society members were asked to suggest addresses of other firms in England that would be able to provide miniature cups at lower costs. There was a complication with this, as the cups used by the Society would have to be photographed and sketched, before another firm would consider producing them, adding to the cost. It was recommended that they talk with Lawn & Alder about reducing costs.

Lawn & Adler wrote the following month stating that they found it impossible to reduce the price of miniature cups. Mr Grahame Bell suggested the name of a new firm that he would engage to produce cups at a cheaper price for the following year. He would need a sketch of the current Society cups. It was agreed that the Society would place an order with Lawn & Adler for cups for the June show and thereafter they would get someone to sketch the cups.

Society Tables

In July 1932, the committee was informed that four tables had gone missing after the flower show on 11 January. They had been delivered to the Memorial Hall for a show, but no count was taken until days later when they were removed. The Society investigated with the Reliance Transport company and checked with the Police to see if the tables turned up. Thereafter the Committee instituted a printed order form for those responsible for carting to fill out what they were moving and also decided to have badges for the helpers who were seconded to help move items in and remove them after a show.

It would take several years before the four missing tables were traced. In November 1936, the Hon Secretary reported they had been found, and that the Society now had

²³ KHS letter to Adler 27 February 1935.

69 tables.

This was a period in which, while the KHS was staging more shows, they would also receive requests for the use of its tables from other societies.

In July 1936, the Committee declined a request by the British Legion to borrow KHS tables for their fete. This was because, despite promises given to return tables in good condition, they had never done so. Also, when the Legion had use of the KHS tables at the showground, one of the tables had been used as a target for a miniature rifle range.

They made an exception in 1938 and lent the Express Transport Company their tables for use at the Government House garden party. This was because the Company was not able to get any other tables at short notice. The ADC later wrote to thank them for this.

In 1938, the Hon Secretary reported that the tables were in bad condition and in need of repairs. After some discussion, it was also decided to organize better storage for them. They were currently stored at the P.W.D shed under a corrugated iron roof that was not enclosed on the sides. Mr. Nairn had taken them to his workshop after the December 13 show and the Committee would discuss repairs with him.

The Society sought a way to effectively put a stop to renting out their tables because they would always return damaged. Col Watkins proposed that should fix a high charge for the hiring of shs2 per table to discourage future requests. The Hon Secretary was also granted discretion to deal with any request for the hiring of the Society's tables.

Limuru, Nakuru, Trans Nzoia, Lumbwa, and other district shows

Limuru Show

The contribution of the Limuru district which was an important flower-producing area was acknowledged as early as January 1926. Miss Collyer proposed that the Society should add a representative from there to the Committee and she suggested that it be Mrs Hudson Cane.

In July 1929, the Hon Secretary proposed that they host a show in Limuru in September. This was approved and a date was set for 21 September 1929. This came after Mrs Hudson Cane invited them to hold the show at the Brackenhurst Hotel, which she owned with her husband Charles Hudson Cane. For the class list, they decided to use the one that had been used at the previous show on 17 June.

But it was decided that the Limuru show would be an experiment and none of the Society cups would be competed for. However, they made it a full show with categories of flowers, fruit, vegetables, honey, and junior exhibitors represented.

Members offered cups towards the first Limuru show. These included two cups from Captain & Mrs Giffard, Mr & Mrs Delaney's cup for 12 varieties of cut flowers, the Society's miniature for the best carnation and G G Legat's miniature for the highest number of points in the carnation class. Prizes were given as Shs10 and Shs7.50 for Grades A, B, C, D and finally Grade E which would have prizes of Shs2.50 and a certificate. Miss Collyer and Mr Sprunt made contributions to the prize fund. Miss Webb had also donated along with Mr & Mrs Delaney.

The Limuru show turned out to be a success and was described as displaying the best blooms ever seen in Kenya²⁴. In her speech, Lady McMillan, who opened the show an hour after the judging, said that the Society was justified in extending its activities to rural districts and that this was the first offshoot of the Society that has produced flower and vegetable exhibits of excellent quality. The best collection of carnations was staged by Mrs C S Ayre who won the KHS miniature cup.

The Brackenhurst Hotel grounds on 300 acres, became an amusement park during the show, with a grass stretch where children and adults enjoyed a shooting range, goal-scoring patch and a clock-golf course that were all highly popular, as was a fortune teller in a tent. In years to come, it would be the social centre of Limuru.

Financially, the show was quite successful taking in Shs778.25, comprising gate money of Shs502.25, entry fees of shs131 and contributions to the prize fund of shs135. Expenses included Shs379 as the Society's prize money, show preparation and other expenses. It netted a profit of Shs112.75. The Society also earned Shs98 from the

²⁴ East African Standard September 28, 1929

auction of exhibits which was donated to the Salvation Army and the Fund for the Limuru Church.

They wrote to Mrs Hudson Cane thanking her for all she had done to help the Committee arrange the show. They also decided that the Shs55 remaining of the prize fund should be set aside to start a fund called the Nairobi Rural Districts Prize Fund and that the Society might draw sums to buy miniature cups for future shows held outside Nairobi. They set aside Shs100 to start the fund.

The following year, another show was staged at the Brackenhurst Hotel in Limuru on 20 September 1930. The KHS provided 55 tables and spent Shs100 on miniature cups for the Limuru show that had been allocated through a special prize fund created after the 1929 show.

Despite some rain showers, it was attended by over 360 people. The show had revenue of Shs599.60 including Shs373 of gate money and Shs154.50 as entry fees. Expenses included prize money of Shs440 and cartage of tables of Shs120 totaling Shs660, leaving a deficit of Shs55.40.

The President later told members at the AGM that the second Limuru show had been disappointing owing to the weather and many exhibitors being away. As a result, it had not paid for itself, something the Society took pride in seeing shows achieve.

The growing needs of the Society also saw them approve the rent of a telephone at the Hon Secretary's home. This had become quite useful and a considerable convenience for members to be able to reach her when they wished and would be inconvenient to give up. In January 1931 they also approved an increase in the annual petrol allowance for the Hon Secretary to be Shs200, due to the increased work of the Society and having to stage flower shows at Limuru.

Mrs Hudson Cane now attended meetings of the Committee representing Limuru to assist in setting the dates, and revising schedules and classes. By 1932 Limuru had a good local committee doing the bulk of the work to organize their show, and only a few from the central committee would go to assist with stewarding. Before the show on 15 October 1932, they had discussions about Limuru and decided to add three classes for Barberton daisies. But they declined a request by Mrs Cane to hold the show on a

Sunday. The Committee had also voted that all contributions from the Limuru show be donated to the League of Mercy.

The show at Limuru raised Shs626 including Shs400 in gate money, but after expenses of Shs184.50 and cash prizes of Shs596, it resulted in a balance of Shs76. The Committee then reviewed the show expenditure which was quite high. This was mainly due to prizes and they approved a proposal by Captain Giffard that, in future, the Limuru prize fund be controlled by its takings.

The date of the 1933 show which had been changed from 30 September was again brought back so as not to clash with a Girl Guide event in Nairobi. After the show, the Limuru committee agreed to pay half the cost of advertising for the show as well as contribute 10% to the Limuru prize fund.

Local organizers also wanted all classes at their shows to be open to all residents in the colony, not only the Limuru residents. This would encourage more participants and exhibitors from a distance, making the show a big event. They also proposed that their show be held on a fixed date every year, settling on the second Saturday in October, and this was approved. The accounts showed that the 1933 Limuru event raised Shs1,085.18, and after the expenditure of Shs196 and prize money of Shs368.20, ended with a profit of Shs 597.93.

Later in August 1938, Mr L T Kingsford, the Limuru Hon Secretary undertook to receive the entries for the Limuru show, which had previously been sent to the Hon Secretary at Box 27 Nairobi. The Nairobi Hon Secretary welcomed this as it would relieve her of a burden and agreed that the Limuru Secretary would take on full duties for the show. That year, more Limuru members offered prizes for classes and the local committee made additions and alterations to the schedule. Mrs Hudson Cane also offered more space including a glassed-in verandah, the racquet courts and the billiard room.

Mr Nairn sent up 61 tables for the Limuru show. However, the Hon Secretary reported that 60 were returned after the show. Mr Kingsford led a search to locate the missing table and the Committee decided in November that in such a case, a branch must be held responsible for any loss of equipment and meet the cost of replacement.

This led Mr Kingsford to write that the Limuru branch had been paying a heavy price for the transport of tables from Nairobi every year for the show and he thought that the Central fund should meet this cost. In reply, the President pointed out that until that year the Limuru show had been run from Nairobi and that was why the branch did not have its own tables. They invited Mr Kingsford as Hon Secretary to request tables for the branch if he could also secure suitable and safe housing for them. They sanctioned the purchase of these tables and Mr Kingsford undertook to get estimates from carpenters. Incidentally, the missing table did turn up in Nairobi in January 1939, so the whole matter had been due to a miscount.

Nakuru Shows and a Branch

The Agricultural & Horticultural Society (A&HSK) would again invite the KHS to take part in their show at Nakuru in November 1929 as judges and stewards. KHS members were asked to participate, and while the professional judges of the KHS were not available, Lady Muriel, Miss Lovibond and Miss Galloway undertook to act as stewards at the show.

However, the following month Miss Collyer proposed that the Society should no longer participate in running the horticultural section at the Agricultural Show as the entries were so poor. Bessie Lovibond who had acted as Chief Steward for the horticultural section at the show in Nakuru supported this, saying there was a general lack of public interest in the horticultural section at those shows. On this they were unanimous, and they decided to send a letter to the A&HSK indicating that the KHS would no longer undertake to run horticultural sections at agricultural shows owing to the small number of entries.

It was not clear if their show visit to Nakuru had made an impact, but a few months later, the Secretary received correspondence from Mrs Couldrey in Njoro asking if the KHS would stage a show at Nakuru. She said that she had widely solicited the views of people in the Nakuru district and she thought that a public meeting could be held with one or two members of the KHS. The Committee supported this effort to hold a show in Nakuru and that the President and Hon Secretary should attend a meeting, with the Society paying for their travel expenses.

The meeting arranged by Mrs Couldrey took place on 12 April in Nakuru where the KHS

President and the Hon Secretary met with 20 people and were presented with letters showing that 20 others had confirmed their support for a show.

From June 1930 on, the KHS decided to have regular shows in Nakuru and Limuru and to strengthen the viability of the shows. The Committee decided that the Society would provide all show equipment including stationery and Americani, as well as fuel for the Hon Secretary to travel to Nakuru. It would take full responsibility for financing the Nakuru show. Gate money and entry fees would be paid into a central fund. The prize money for the fruit, vegetable and junior classes would be drawn from this central fund while the proceeds from the sales of plants would go to a local Nakuru prize fund.

They agreed that Nakuru would become a branch of the KHS with a local Honorary Secretary and sub-committee to arrange a show that would take place on 12 July 1930. They also drew up a class list and several cups were offered. The President proposed that the KHS also present a cup to the Nakuru show. All members of the Nakuru sub-committee would be eligible to attend all committee meetings in Nairobi. A notice announcing such meetings would be sent by the Secretary to Nakuru every month.

Lady Muriel described Nakuru's first show in July as a credible event, going by the standards of the first Nairobi show. She said it was a branch that would be a big asset to the Society and was the only definite branch at the time.

In February 1931, the Society sanctioned a proposal by the Nakuru Sub-committee that the Nakuru KHS should apply to the Municipality of Nakuru for permission to take over care of the Arboretum in Nakuru.

The Nakuru Society made arrangements for their representative to attend the 1932 KHS AGM in Nairobi. It was agreed that KHS would offer Shs25 and the Nakuru branch would be invited to put up shs25 toward the expenses of their representative.

In 1932, the KHS threw more support towards the staging of the Nakuru show. Miss Lovibond would be a judge and Mr Randall would go as the only professional judge, Miss Shaw agreed to bring up any equipment required and Miss Galloway travelled to assist on the secretarial side.

The KHS had been corresponding with the Agricultural Society, which was now known

as the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Kenya (RA&HSK) about the use of their Nakuru ground for the show. They got approval for this on condition that they paid for insurance and with a suggestion that some donation was made to the RA&HSK if the show was a financial success. As it turned out the show was quite a success, and Bessie Lovibond reported back to the Committee on the exhibits, which were much better than the first show in Nakuru in 1930.

The local Hon Secretary, Mrs Couldrey sent in the Nakuru financial report which detailed the income of Shs369.50 comprising gate money of Shs221 and entry fees of Shs148.50. Expenses included Shs50 for travel allowance to judges, Shs35.50 for insurance of the show, Shs30 for advertising and Shs15.50 for railway transport of vases. The total expenditure was Shs131 and the show made a profit of Shs238.50 while the sale of plants realized Shs467.95 improving on the Shs249.35 from the previous occasion.

Mrs Couldrey also suggested that future Nakuru flower shows be held at the European School. The only challenge was that it would require new tables that were made at a height of 3 feet so they could be used for other purposes. A quote was obtained from Kambala Estates in Molo who would make 50 tables with two coats of black paint for Shs20 each.

The Society approved the expenditure of £50 as a loan to the Nakuru branch at a rate of 5% interest on the condition that the Nakuru committee undertake to properly store the tables for the many months they would be idle. However, the KHS declined the suggestion that the Nakuru Society could hire out the tables. In 1933, the KHS paid Shs1,000 to Kambala estates for the 50 tables for the Nakuru branch. The Committee approved Shs300 to be taken from the Nakuru branch funds as the first installment for the cost of the tables.

That year the Nakuru show, held at the European School, was a great improvement over the previous ones at the agricultural showground. Though it was a smaller show, it had a higher quality of exhibits.

In 1934, a shipment of miniature cups was ordered by the Society from the firm of Lawn & Alder in London. However, on arrival, one of the cups intended for fuchsias and sponsored by Mrs Hudson Cane was dented. A case for Limuru arrived safely, but when

the consignment for the show at Nakuru had been opened, Mrs. Couldrey reported that the case had arrived intact, but with only three, instead of four cups. The Nakuru show was delayed that year because of the severe drought. Initially, Lawn & Adler firm wrote that it had packed 5 cups and that any missing items may have been due to pilferage. It invited the Society to search further and lodge an insurance claim. However, later the Society's account was credited shs10.60 for the missing cup.

In 1935, the Nakuru Secretary asked for approval to purchase 400 yards of Americani for use at their shows. The committee authorized this purchase by Nakuru and asked for the invoice to be sent to the account in Nairobi.

But, in 1937 when Myra Wheeler came to Nairobi to collect equipment for their 17 September show, she expressed the unhappiness of her Committee that there was a show at Naivasha, a new district in formation, on 11 September, coming a week before theirs. The Hon Secretary said that the Naivasha Committee had set their show date before they became a branch of the KHS and that it was unfortunate to have two shows so near each other in adjoining districts. In future, branches would discuss the approximate date of their shows before the AGM which would allow plenty of time for adjustments to be made.

The show that year was held for the first time in the township of Nakuru, at the Nakuru Hotel. Lady Muriel considered it a great improvement, with much more space for staging and an excellent quality of exhibits. Mr Galt, Mrs Armstrong and Dr Jex Blake & Lady Muriel attended as judges. The KHS also presented two new cups; the C T Soames Challenge for bulbous rooted flowers and the Phillipott Burnier Challenge for roses.

Building on this in 1938, they invited the Duchess of Gloucester to visit the flower show and present the cups. As such, they hoped to get special entries for the Nakuru show. Judges for the show that year were Lady Muriel, Dr Jex Blake, Mr Sharpe and Mr Cooper of Elburgon who had a diploma in horticulture at Reading. While the Duchess did not attend, Lady Muriel reported that the exhibits had been excellent, with many new names among the exhibitors and she thought the rockery plant collection was outstanding.

From 1938, Nakuru started having a sale of plants at shows and this had quite a successful beginning and Lady Muriel said that it meant that Nakuru would be able to

give more and better prizes at its shows. The Nakuru flower show on 16 September raised Shs200 as gate money, Shs123.50 as entry fees and Shs326 from the sale of plants. Expenses included Shs330.25 for miniature cups, Shs152.50 for cash prizes, and Shs84.60 for engraving cups. The show had a surplus of income over expenditure of Shs785.70, almost doubling its account balance to shs1,598.60.

Trans Nzoia Society

In August 1928, Mrs F Chater Jack (Emily May Sutton) of Kitale wrote to the Committee proposing that the KHS form a branch at Kitale, a town located in the northwest of Kenya, about 250 miles from Nairobi. She was the daughter of Leonard Sutton and she and her husband had become experts on what could be grown in Trans Nzoia²⁵. The committee unanimously agreed and committed to giving Kitale all the support it needed. They asked the Hon Secretary to write to Mrs Jack suggesting she call a meeting of interested people at Kitale to confirm if they wanted to form a branch or if they merely meant to be affiliated with the KHS.

Mrs Jack wrote back to confirm that the Kitale group led by her and Mrs William Hoey, had already formed a Trans Nzoia Horticultural Society (TNHS) in 1924 when they first held a show, and they were only seeking affiliation with the KHS, and she wanted to know the cost. The KHS decided this fee would be Shs20 and also offered a cup to Kitale to be competed for at their shows.

However, Mrs. Emma Louise Mayer raised the question of what affiliation meant. This came after Mrs Jack had written to ask that the KHS propose the TNHS for affiliation with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). Mrs Mayer said that it was not appropriate for Trans Nzoia members to have the same advantages as full members of the KHS. It was decided that the Hon Secretary would send four membership cards to members of the TNHS for use at KHS shows.

The Trans Nzoia Society flourished and in May 1929 they wrote to announce they would be holding their first show in September. They invited the KHS to send judges and also to advise on what class they wished the KHS cup to be awarded. The KHS suggested that the cup should go to the winner of the highest number of points at the show.

²⁵ Europeans in East Africa entry - JACK, Frederick Chater DSO, MC (Major)

The first exhibition of the TNHS was held on 6 September and was hailed as a great success²⁶ by guests. This was despite heavy rains which prevented some exhibitors from taking part and some displays from being prepared for the show.

Mr H J Galt of Government House Nairobi, one of the judges, gave a speech during the afternoon, and a telegram from the KHS was read out wishing the show success. Entrants competed in 46 classes of flowers, fruits, junior section and table decorations.

The KHS Cup for the greatest number of points at the show went to Mrs Jackson, the Leonard Sutton Cup for best Cut Flower collection went to Mrs Jack and the Major Upton Cup for the best collection of vegetables went to Mrs Tweedle. Other winners included Mrs Cunningham for the best Floral Display and Mrs Henry Morse for best Bloom in the Rose class. The judge's Special Commendation went to Mrs Jackson for her plant called "the Australian Kangaroo Paw" which also won the prize for a plant of unusual interest.

The seriousness of the TNHS members was seen further in 1932. They sent a cheque to the KHS as payment for a three-year affiliation. After their general meeting, they wrote to the KHS Committee asking that the KHS give some clarification on rulings. They wanted a ruling on some plant classes about which the visiting judges at the Kitale show had not been able to agree on or decide. In reply, the KHS asked the TNHS to provide a list of plants that the KHS would forward to their judges' committee for their next meeting.

Then later in 1932, members of the TNHS wrote to ask which standard works the KHS chose to stand by. The committee favoured using the Johnsons Dictionary or McMillan Book on Horticulture. When in 1933 they enquired, the Hon Secretary informed the committee that the McMillan book on gardening was out of print. They resolved to obtain a second-hand copy.

Members at Trans Nzoia, who also read the horticulture page in the East African Standard, wanted it to specify that the columns were written as advice for gardening conditions in Nairobi. The Committee agreed to this point, noting that some information

²⁶ East African Standard, 14 September 1929

could be misleading to beginner gardeners in other parts of the country.

Finally, they advised that their next show would be held on 24 September 1933 and extended an invitation to visitors and exhibitors in the Nairobi area.

Lumbwa & Kericho Society

One surprising feature of the depression years was how it brought new gardeners to reach out for assistance. At the beginning of 1933, the Secretary received an enquiry from Mrs Alice Dorothy Haslehurst, a farmer at Sotik, asking if she could get the support of the KHS for a stand at the East African Women's League show that she was organizing. They discussed and agreed that there were good potential growers in Sotik and Kericho, and it would be worthwhile to nurture a new small branch. They decided to offer, through Simpson & Whitelaw, a KHS miniature cup for the winner of the highest number of points at the show.

Later in the year, they reviewed the matter of a branch being started at Sotik and they wrote to Mrs Haslehurst saying that they could not start one there. This was because Sotik district was too far away for the KHS to run a branch successfully and send equipment for staging shows. They instead recommended that Sotik should start a horticultural society of its own and become affiliated with the KHS.

Then in May 1934, Mrs Haslehurst wrote that the Sotik, Kericho and Lumbwa settlers had combined and formed a horticultural society called the South Lumbwa Horticultural Society. She was now the Hon Secretary of the new society that was seeking affiliation with the KHS. The committee wrote back that they would present a challenge cup to be competed for at shows of the new Society to go to the winner of the highest number of points.

However, a year later in May 1939, they received a letter from the South Lumbwa Horticultural Society stating that it had come to an end and formed a committee to wind itself down. In its place, Kericho would have a new Society called the Kericho Horticultural Society. They wished to be affiliated with the KHS and also sent a cheque for affiliation. The KHS considered and approved that the South Lumbwa district could pass on the Challenge Cup to the Kericho Horticultural Society. Mrs Stanton, the Hon

Secretary later wrote to thank them and extended an invitation to the show they planned to hold on 18 November.

Other Branches

In September 1934 Captain Kenneth Gooch wrote to ask about starting a Nanyuki & Nyeri branch of the KHS. He visited Nairobi and explained that they hoped to hold their first show in January 1935. This was later pushed back to September and the new Nyeri-Nanyuki branch also requested to borrow some funds in June 1935 but the purpose was not clear. They were asked to state a definite sum and indicate what other assistance they needed from the KHS.

Also, in September 1934, when Olive Collyer was acting as the temporary Chairman, she received a letter from Mrs Vivian Ward at Naivasha indicating that several people in the area were anxious to start a branch of the KHS in that district and wondered what assistance they could get. The committee suggested that she call a meeting for all those interested to discuss the scheme in detail and draw a schedule of prizes if possible. The KHS offered a challenge cup and the Council suggested that Mrs Ward and other interested people might visit the upcoming show at Limuru and ideas on running a show. Later Lady Muriel offered to see Mrs Ward herself.

Mrs Henry Parker wrote to the KHS in December 1934 from Mombasa with word that a Coast Horticultural Society had been formed and enquiring about affiliation with the KHS. A few months later the KHS welcomed the new affiliate by offering the Mombasa Society a challenge cup. In turn, Mombasa also invited Capt Giffard to be a judge for their show.

Lady Muriel attended the first Nyeri-Nanyuki flower show and she reported back to the Committee that it was an exceedingly high standard. She also requested that the committee send Ms Winifred Galloway a petrol allowance as she had attended the show at the request of the Committee and this was approved. In 1936 the Society agreed to loan the Nyeri branch £40 to purchase more tables and covers.

In August 1937, Mrs Carnelly, the local Hon Secretary at Naivasha, wrote to ask about Nakuru District forming a branch of the KHS and to know what liabilities this would entail. She added that while they would gladly extend hospitality, they hoped that the

branch would not have to pay for the travel of judges and helpers, other than the provision of petrol. The Hon Secretary told the Committee that it appeared that the Naivasha committee had been led to believe that they would be paying fees to judges, something that had never happened at any KHS show. Later Mrs Carnelly was assured of this and she was satisfied that the wrong information had been corrected.

Mr Silvester then proposed and Naivasha was officially accepted as a branch of the Kenya Horticultural Society. They approved the schedule drawn by the Naivasha committee for their show on 11 September and Miss Galloway undertook to take all the equipment necessary for the show to Naivasha three days before and to show Mrs Carnelly the ropes for staging a show. The KHS also offered a cup for the highest number of points at the show and Capt Soames, Mr Harold Gardner, Miss Collyer and Miss Galloway agreed to be judges.

Society Land, Building Hall, Media and the McMillan Library

The need for the Society to have its own land to build a proposed horticultural hall gained momentum in 1927. Lady Muriel, as the President wrote to the Acting Governor who then asked the acting Commissioner of Lands to find an available plot. One was offered, but Lady Muriel considered that it was too far from the centre of the town and she was going to report this back to the Commission of Lands.

Later they were sent another offer; this time it was a plot next to the Municipal Office and it was decided that the Society should accept it. Lady Muriel undertook to write to the Governor and the Colonial Secretary, Sir Edward Denham on the matter.

However, the Lands Commissioner wrote back to say that the plot at the centre of town was not available, and instead offered the original piece that was located between Hospital Road and Chiromo Road. When the Society pressed for an alternative plot nearer town, they were told that the Government did not feel justified in giving away a valuable plot in the centre of town that could be sold for commercial purposes. After more discussions initiated by the President, the Committee decided to provisionally accept the piece of land offered by the Lands Office and to enquire what the conditions of taking it up would be.

But the members did not stop there and decided they should approach the Railway Office to ask if they could get a plot of land near the railway to erect the horticultural hall. The Hon Secretary spoke to Mr Christian (Don) Felling, General Manager of the Uganda Railway, about the possibility of obtaining a plot when the Railways vacated plots between the railway station and town. But Mr Felling replied that, when vacated, such plots automatically reverted to the Town Planning Committee and he could not assist the Society.

The Society also decided to ask the Lands Offices for grounds to hold an experimental garden. On this, the Town Clerk was certain about finding land within the municipal area, such as one near the French Mission, but the difficulty was obtaining water as the drought in 1927 and 1928 was severe.

Quotations were later received for the building of a Horticultural Hall. They were high and they now turned to explore the possibility of joining a settler scheme that was building a market house in Nairobi, possibly with a member of the Convention Association. Mr George Minshall donated a cheque for Shs200 towards the building fund of the hall.

Lady Muriel told members in January 1928 that the shows they organized had outgrown Memorial Hall and it was getting more difficult with each show to get everything in. She presented two suggestions, one of which was to obtain a site at 'Charing Cross' on which to build an agricultural hall. The other was to collect donations towards extending the Memorial Hall. But she assured the members that no decision would be made without calling a special general meeting to consider these items. The Society then sent a formal letter of application to the Lands Department regarding the Charing Cross plot.

Drought persisted during 1928 and they pushed back the show they had set for early June to 25 June. But when they later heard that the Legislative Council might still be meeting and there was a possibility that Memorial Hall would not be available, they checked with the Railway Institute about a provisional site for the show. They also asked Nairobi Club for a marquee for the show, but that was not available, so Lady Muriel offered to try and obtain one from Government House as she had done on previous occasions.

A sub-committee was formed at the request of Canon Rogers to look into enlarging the

Memorial Hall. The Trustees of Memorial Hall were away, but when they finally met in August 1928, it was agreed that an addition to Memorial Hall was a workable proposition. They tasked Major Charles Gaitskell and the Hon Secretary to find architects and get a sketch plan made that could be discussed at a later date. They would also ask members at the AGM to decide if the Society should build an addition to Memorial Hall when they had raised sufficient funds.

Mr George Minshall proposed at the 1929 general meeting that the KHS empower its committee to collect funds for the possession of a horticultural hall, with sums credited to a building fund that was separate from the general revenue of the Society. The resolution was unanimously carried.

Mrs Glencairn Campbell also wrote to the Committee with a proposal on tree planting in Nairobi and she came in to explain her idea in October 1929. She wanted to start an association called the Nairobi Roads & Gardens Beautifying Association and place it under the auspices of the KHS. Members offered plants and trees to support her but suggested she first approach the Municipal Council to get their agreement to start the association and run it under a committee other than the KHS one.

After the Nairobi Council recognized the association that had set out to beautify Nairobi's roads and waste spaces, its 45 members started by improving the islands on Sixth Avenue and a nursery was established at City Park. Mrs Graham Dawson presented six palm trees which were planted near the new library while two bowling greens were laid out next to City Park.

Lady McMillan had asked the Nairobi Council for a plot at the north end of Eliot Street to build a library as a memorial to her late husband. She also offered to plant trees on Eliot Street and gave some trees as a donation to the beautification. Later, in June 1929, the foundation stone for the McMillan Library was laid by the acting Governor, Sir Jacob William Barth.

Mr Harold Henderson²⁷, an architect had attended a meeting of the Town Planning Committee of the Municipal Council on behalf of the association where the continuation of islands on Sixth Avenue up to Torr's Hotel and New Stanley was discussed. He had

²⁷ Europeans in East Africa entry - HENDERSON, Harold Edgar

written to all firms with premises fronting these sites and they all had pressed for new islands to be made. The town planners voted 5 to 1 in favour of the construction of the islands once new parking had been made²⁸. But Mr Henderson believed no new parking was necessary as the one on Hardinge Street (today Kimathi Street) had accommodation for 250 cars and was never used by more than 50 cars.

The Memorial Hall was on the Colonists plot and ran from Sixth Avenue up to the road where the McMillan Memorial Library was being built and there was space for the erection of a second hall that was almost as large as the current hall. Members hoped that building such a hall would benefit other people and groups who also used Memorial Hall and it was possible they would subscribe to the building fund.

When built, it would be handed over to the trustees of the Memorial Hall who would undertake its upkeep. The KHS would be free to use both halls whenever they wanted and they would be the only body, other than the Legislative Council to have a prior claim on its use. The additional hall would provide room for storage of the Society's tables and an office for the permanent use by the Secretary.

The President drafted a statement that went out to every KHS member and also appeared on the horticultural page of the East African Standard newspaper in February 1930. When the matter came up at the 1930 AGM held that month at the Norfolk, Lady Muriel said the addition to Memorial Hall would be a good idea for the Society. It would be ideal for the Society to have a hall run by the Memorial Hall Trustees where they could, as long as the Society was in existence, host as many shows in a year as they wished and plant an experimental garden in front. The funds for such an undertaking would be collected separately, and the President had started the building fund while in England in 1929 and it already had £215. Lady McMillan had offered £100 and the Prince of Wales had generously offered £5²⁹.

But Lady Muriel cautioned that the continued prosperity of the Society was because they were all volunteers; no one earned a salary or honorarium. Owning a building would mean wages for a caretaker and other building expenses, and the balance at the bank would lessen, not increase.

²⁸ East African Standard (undated)

²⁹ East African Standard, 22 February 1930

The members had received the financial statements showing that their Society finances were healthy. The previous year they had earned Shs4,917.35 and spent Shs3,921.94. They also had Shs4,000 at the National Bank of India. The Hon Secretary said that the excess was Shs1,195.41 but that the expenses of the organization became heavier each year and the income was not increasing as fast, even though all the shows held in 1929 had more than cleared their expenses.

To a vote on raising a building fund to add a second large hall behind Memorial Hall, Mr E W Ford asked that this should not be a bottomless pit. Col Durham added that the estimated sum required was £5,000 and Lady Muriel agreed that this was a target sum set to avoid any disappointment.

Miss Olive Collyer who had initially opposed this resolution now supported it as being the best under the circumstances, saying that the Society would never be able to purchase a plot at the current prices. And if the Trustees built the hall on their own, they might decide to charge the Society Shs500 for a show instead of Shs100. The vote proposed by Capt Giffard then passed with two dissensions, including that of Mrs Delap who thought it was a large amount of money and it did not bring money into the country.

A sub-committee of the KHS to oversee the proposed addition to the Memorial Hall was then formed at the request of Major Gaitskell. It comprised Lady Muriel, Capt Giffard and Mrs Delaney and one of its first tasks was to interview Captain Helmuth Schwartz, a Barrister-at-Law, and come to some definite arrangements. Capt Giffard also suggested that the Society asks for contributions throughout the country. A receipt book containing numbered coupons with counterfoils was to be distributed to register donations.

When they finally met Capt Schwartz in March 1930, he said that the Memorial Hall Trustees only had a 99-year lease, so the Trustees should discuss conditions for that period with the KHS, instead of the anticipated period of perpetuity. The Trustees were agreeable to the KHS proposal with conditions such as the projected cost. The KHS could also decide to build it themselves.

However, at the AGM in 1931 Lady Muriel announced that following the Depression, the Society had decided not to start a campaign for the building fund. They asked the

Memorial Fund Trustees to give them an extension of three years if necessary. Though Kenya was a financial backwater, it felt the impact of the global slump in world trade in 1930. Coffee prices fell by half while maize dropped by 40% that year. And Nairobi was now attracting men whose farms could no longer support them.

The Hon Secretary presented the financial statement of the KHS showing that in 1930 the Society had a surplus of Shs2,168.52. But Lady Muriel said that while the KHS was solvent, they needed to continue to save year after year and grow capital to have the funds for an experimental garden, which was necessary to be the foundation of success in a new country.

At Miss Olive Collyer's suggestion in February 1931, the Committee resolved that the Society should write to the Government to ask if customs duty on horticultural implements, imported from England, could be reduced. This was supported though many members did not think much would be gained by applying. A few weeks later, when Mrs Nicholson returned from England, she presented a cheque of Shs75, which she had collected when she was in England to support the fund.

Flower show sales had been good at Limuru and Nakuru and also boosted membership. She said that the June show had been marred by excessive rain but the December show had shown the beauty of the rain and new plants had made it an interesting show which delighted the members. She said Kitale was also flourishing and it was hoped that it would soon reach branch status.

The Depression continued to have an effect on their building plans over the next few years. The President told members at the 1934 AGM that membership had not increased and the funds set aside were not enough to start a building. Meanwhile, their growing demands could not be accommodated by the Memorial Hall or with a marquee in Nairobi.

In June 1936 discussions resumed on whether there should be an extension done to Memorial Hall and if KHS funds should be used to support the scheme by the Colonist Plot Trustees. Lady Muriel later met with Major Cavendish-Bentinck who said that nothing definite had been decided. She however felt that if the building extension depended on a contribution from the KHS, it should be considered as adding space would improve the quality of the shows.

In August, and after more discussions with the Trustees of the Memorial Hall and at the Committee, it was agreed that £310 in the Society's building fund should go towards the building of an extra hall. They later agreed to increase this amount to £500 when the matter came up at the next AGM of the KHS. The Hon Treasurer Mr Mitchell then presented the half-year accounts which showed that the Society had at the bank of Shs21,660 and Shs6,207.37 in the building fund account.

They later inspected a blueprint for the hall extension that was provided by the architects, Messrs Weevil & Davies. The Committee was anxious that the building should be designed to distribute lighting evenly, have a sliding door to connect the old and the new halls, and have a storage area for tables. They also asked that the KHS office be downstairs not upstairs.

However, early in 1937, the Trustees turned down the Society's offer to contribute money towards building an extra hall. They had decided instead to extend the existing hall. Lady Muriel told the members that there was no prospect of having a bigger hall for the Nairobi shows. However, they would plan to have a permanent office in the Memorial Hall building and move the cupboards from the East Africa Women's League (EAWL) offices and other equipment stored by committee members into one place. The Hon Treasurer and Hon Secretary would be able to work at this office and also keep the books of the Society. All the KHS branches would contribute an amount not exceeding Shs40 per annum towards the rent of the office, with the remainder of the amount coming from the Central Fund.

In March 1938 the Society took possession of an office in Memorial Hall, moving their cupboard and two KHS tables and they also purchased six chairs. The rent would be Shs50 per month and they also paid Shs4 for a part-time cleaner who would sweep and dust the office. From July 1938, they held their Committee meetings at the KHS Office at Memorial Hall after many years at the Norfolk Hotel.

The President told members at the 1939 AGM, that it may have seemed extravagant, but it was an excellent meeting place and a tremendous convenience to have all the Society's equipment in one place instead of being parceled out to the houses of various committee members. She also thanked the EAWL for putting up with the Society and

having kept their cupboards for a long time. The Committee also unanimously rejected a request from the Women's Section of the British Legion to share their offices.

KHS Library

In 1930, the members declined a proposal for the Society to set up a library as it was considered premature.

This matter lay untouched till 1933 when Lady Muriel proposed a scheme to start a Society library. They would collect books on gardening and horticultural interest and these would be handed to the care of the authorities at the McMillan Library that had opened in 1931. They would be catalogued as belonging to the KHS and would be circulated to subscribers of the McMillan Library and the KHS. They allocated £25 to purchase the first installment of books and gardening periodicals.

The McMillan Library agreed to the proposal to offer books at no charge to KHS members when they presented their membership cards. The books would be housed on a special set of shelves that had been set aside for the KHS on the ground floor at the McMillan Memorial Library. The project started and Lady Muriel purchased several books for the Society library which were sent from London in August 1934.

Mrs Barton started a catalogue of all library books and a trace of books that had been out of the library for more than three months. Through this, they discovered that "Consider the Lilies", one of their first library books had gone missing. The following June, Bessie Lovibond suggested the Society procure a bookplate to make their logo more prominent and protect their books better.

Also, in November 1935 the Royal Horticultural Society opened the possibility of a section of their library being open to affiliated societies on a loan system.

In 1937, they set about ordering new periodicals. They renewed subscriptions to "My Garden" and "The Home Gardener", but discontinued the weekly periodical, "Garden Work for Amateurs". Mr Grahame Bell suggested that they order an Australian paper "The Garden Lover" and ask other publishers to send sample copies of horticultural papers from California and South Africa. They opted to buy South African Gardening

and Country Life and any other horticultural magazine published by Kirstenbosch.

They followed these with orders for 'The Living Garden' by E J Salisbury, 'Hardy Californians' by Lester Rowntree, Montagu Allwood's book on Carnations, and the revised edition of 'Common Trees & Woody Plants of Kenya Colony' issued by the Forestry Department. They also decided that the KHS should apply to the Lily Society to obtain the Lily Year Book and also ask the Dahlia Society if there was a new classification of dahlias. It turned out there was none.

Other publications ordered at the end of 1938 included My Garden, Garden Lover, Good Gardening and Gardening Illustrated.

The following year, they extended their support out of Nairobi and agreed to send some periodicals to the library at Nakuru where the librarian had offered to display them in the reading room and make them available for the use of KHS members. Mr Barton-Eckett, the chief librarian at the McMillan Memorial Library, arranged that horticultural periodicals could be sent to Nakuru along with the monthly supply of books and returned at the end of the month.

Media Exposure

In April 1928, the Society was invited by the British East African Broadcasting Company to broadcast horticultural talks once a month. The broadcasting company had been inaugurated earlier that year for the dissemination of local news, British official news, local agricultural reports, weather reports and music. However, official government reports showed support was low and there were only 165 listeners that year.³⁰

The committee responded to the Managing Director of the broadcasting company saying that they felt the Colony was hardly established enough for that kind of broadcast but the KHS would be glad to consider this opportunity in a few years.

In 1929, Andrew Sprunt of the Forest Department suggested at the AGM that the Society started a journal on horticulture. It would include useful information given by professional gardeners who he was sure would help write this. It could also include a

³⁰ Annual Report of the Colonies, Kenya, 1928

column where members could send in their queries and have them answered in the following issue.

Lady Muriel asked him to clarify the concept of an agricultural journal at the next meeting and Mr Sprunt gave an estimate of the cost of producing this, which he had obtained from a representative of the East African Standard. He had not asked for estimates from any other firm and the President, without wishing to dampen the concept, said that it was quite costly to produce and that it was unlikely every member of the Society would like a copy.

Another difficulty arose as to who the editor would be of such a journal. But Mrs Emma Louise Mayer suggested that the horticultural page in the Standard might be made use of which the Editor at the newspaper had said was still available to the KHS. Her husband was the founder of the newspaper. It was agreed that Mr Sprunt would become the Society's editor for this page at the Standard, collecting articles from different members across the country and selecting those he considered suitable for publication each week.

Mrs Mayer also suggested that the EA Standard might publish photographs of horticultural interest and at the end of the year, allow the Society to have the plates to put together a Christmas present which members could send to friends in England. This would have sufficient circulation and cover the costs of the publication.

To start publications for the horticultural page, the Hon Secretary was asked to write to the editor of the Standard asking for articles to be published every week. Members were also asked to provide their particular flower stories and Canon Rogers offered to write on roses, Capt Giffard on carnations, Mrs Ryle Shaw on potted plants and Mrs Benson on fruit growing. They later decided to put in more effort to ensure that there was an article in every weekly column.

The page began to appear regularly in the EA Standard. Early editions of the KHS Horticulture page³¹ reprinted extracts from Montagu C. Allwood's book "Carnations" with local 'cultural' notes added to suit the outdoor conditions of the colony. It included notes on propagation, cuttings and rooting with the application of these steps for a Kenyan

³¹ East African Standard, 6 July 1929

garden such as one in Kiambu. Readers were invited to write to the Horticultural Editor at the Society's P O Box 27, Nairobi.

In one issue it was striking to see the KHS promoting their Limuru Show on a full page, while in the same newspaper, the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Kenya, had placed a tiny advertisement promoting their Nakuru show on 4 & 5 December 1929.

In September 1929 Mr Sprunt, who had been acting editor of the horticultural page, said he was unable to continue editing the page owing to the pressure of his official duties and the KHS resolved to find someone else. The Hon Secretary proposed that Mr George Minshall should write two or three articles on the best methods of packing flowers when bringing them to a show. This was to encourage gardeners living a distance away to consider bringing in exhibits. The committee approved this and the EA Standard undertook to publish the articles.

After a while, it was found that members were not contributing enough articles in good time, and the Editor of the EA Standard started to have second thoughts about the page. The Secretary told the Committee that unless the effort to produce contributions was increased, the newspaper might discontinue the page which appeared not a concern for people in Nairobi.

But it turned out that people in the outlying districts did read the page and followed it with great interest. Letters would come from amateur gardeners in places like Turbo, Londiani, and Njoro. The Committee decided they should put in more effort and make the articles interesting for these readers.

The KHS became more active in February 1930, advertising plans for the Memorial Hall together with a circular asking members to send in lists of plants and flowers which grew well in their gardens. They would enrich the membership through more local knowledge if readers described the plants they grew, the altitude of their gardens, rainfall and ideal soil types and also send in some photographs. Members could also exchange plants with other gardeners on this page.

However, by March it appeared that the arrangement was not satisfactory and a horticultural article would only run monthly. They proposed to ask Mr Robert Mountford to edit it for six months and to answer all queries sent in by readers.

In one of the issues in 1929, Mountford used the page to point out simple mistakes that exhibitors should avoid at shows. He wrote that in rose classes, some of the entrants removed the guard petal or lower petals of the bloom. He advised that it was better to leave them there as the first thing a judge looked for would be the completeness of the bloom. This was written to explain to some exhibitors who thought they had a good chance at some prizes but instead found themselves eliminated.

The Society also announced its rule for complaints or objections regarding exhibits at shows. These required that complaints or objections be written and handed in by 2pm on the day of the show with a payment of Shs2.50.

The newspaper also became an avenue for feedback, some of which was quite revealing. One reader, CMS wrote to the Editor of the Standard in December 1928 about the juvenile section of the KHS show. While he was happy with the efforts of junior members including three-year-olds who picked, arranged and staged flowers without any help, he had observed children in the Hall whose elders were arranging and staging flowers for them. He asked that there should be a hard and fast rule that the children should be unaided in their efforts and that someone responsible should be in the hall to see that this fair play rule was carried out.

Mr George Minshall would also do his own advertising in the Standard promoting his 30 years of experience in nursery work in East Africa and his "Kinangop Nurseries" which grew the best dessert apples that he had propagated and grafted to grow in the highlands of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda. He would select, graft and pack them himself at a cost of Shs2 for a year-old tree and Shs3 for two-year-olds. Another active member was Mr H Grahame Bell whose Closeburn Nurseries advertised in the Standard for their 300 varieties of roses for sale.

This went on well for a few years. However, in June 1933, the East African Standard rejected printing the show class list in its entirety in the newspaper and the Hon Secretary informed the members that they would have to start making other arrangements for publishing the show schedules.

Finally, in January 1934, the Managing Director of the EA Standard wrote to advise that they could no longer act as the official organ of the KHS. From then on, all printing of

schedules and advertisements would now be paid for at the usual rates.

The Society continued to engage with the EA Standard. In early 1935 the Editor appeared to relent by offering to publish the names of cup winners at a show. This was not enough for members, and the KHS sent a letter back arguing that the full list of prize winners should be published so that gardeners in other parts of the colony who were unable to attend the shows would see a list of the prize winners in every class.

The column continued to attract interest. A local seedsman had approached Mr Grahame Bell in August 1935. He complained that an article on the horticultural page of the newspaper advised readers to purchase their seeds from home (i.e., England) rather than locally from tradesmen. They agreed to take care to avoid such comments in future.

The EA Standard was not the only publication that wanted to feature the Society and horticultural works. A monthly journal, the East African Field and Garden, approached the Society to insert a full-page advertisement at Shs80 per month and the Committee asked the Secretary to make enquiries about this publication. She asked several people, but her findings were rather harsh as she reported back that no amount of advertising would help this paper. She suggested that if members wanted to help it, they should contribute articles on gardening.

First Gardening in East Africa Book

One early foray of the Society into publishing was the publication of a list of plants commonly grown in Kenyan gardens in 1930. It was worked on by Mr Harold Durham and other experts, then typed up and sold at 50 cents a copy. The KHS also sent copies to the Secretary of the RHS and they set a goal to have a new one produced in two years.

In March 1932, the Committee decided to compile a book on gardening in Kenya and members at the 1932 AGM were appraised of the plan to produce a book. They decided that one person in each district centre such as Nairobi, Nakuru or Kitale should be asked to write an article about general gardening and on special flowers in their respective areas.

They formed a subcommittee to work on the book. The members were Mr Harold Gardner, Capt Vivian Ward, Mrs Bailey, Mr Mountford, Miss Lovibond, Lady Muriel and the Hon Secretary. They later added Miss Collyer, Mr Grahame Bell, and Mr Robert Dale of the Forest Department.

The Committee met later in the year and mapped the different districts in the country into zones according to rainfall and altitude. They sent out requests to members in the zones to send a list of plants that had been grown over the last three years. Other KHS members were also invited to draw up their questions and send them to the Secretary for compilation into a questionnaire. They also received a letter from Mr Sharpe suggesting that a more expensive book costing £1 should be produced instead of the cheaper one they envisioned at Shs5. The Committee put this matter aside as it was too early to decide before they had collected material for the book.

The Hon Secretary had consulted with Mr Barton-Eckett at the McMillan Library on how to produce the book. He suggested that they do the business themselves, and not pay for publishing. He told them not to include advertisements and also recommended some publishing firms to consider once they had a manuscript. Mr Barton-Eckett would later advise them on the number of words for each article, the size of the book, and the probable cost of the book when published.

By December 1932 they got back 33 lists of plants from gardeners in different parts of the country out of the 60 they had sent out. They set about grouping them into zones and dividing up the editing work among members. They announced a photography competition would be part of the December flower show and placed an advertisement in the EA Standard. The competition was in three sections: "photographs of the general view of a particular garden", "photographs of a growing plant" and "photographs of cut flowers"

There was no entry fee, it was open to anyone, and they could engage professional assistance. There was a requirement however that photographs of interest would be retained by the Society to be used in the book.

They decided to get some coloured plates of indigenous flowers for inclusion in the book. Later Miss Collyer offered to paint a 'Gloriosa Speciosa' while Mr Gardner undertook to give several of his flower paintings.

Perhaps prompted by the book research, a question arose after the December 1932 show whether the definition of 'indigenous' included territories other than Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda. The Committee resolved that indigenous class meant 'plants indigenous to Kenya only'. The rule was not tested during 1933 but later that year, the Committee reversed itself and found that it was a mistake to alter it from reading 'Kenya Uganda Tanganyika and Zanzibar'. It was decided to leave this until the AGM in February 1934 where the members ruled that indigenous meant 'Kenya only'.

The working title was "Gardening in East Africa" and after word got around, the President received offers from Longmans Green and Jacobson of East Africa for the publishing of the Society's book on gardening. While early on, they were leaning towards using Jacobsons, they ended up with Longmans Green.

At the March 1933 AGM at the Norfolk, Lady Muriel mentioned the book committee working to compile a comprehensive book on gardening which she hoped the members would have as a present by Christmas.

Different members of the Society wrote chapters in 1933 as did members of the Kenya and Uganda civil services. These included Mr A Walter, Director of British East African Meteorological Service, Captain Gooch, Mr V A Beckley, the Senior Agricultural Chemist, Mr H M Gardner, the Conservator of Forests and Mr H B Sharpe, a district commissioner. These were sent to Sir Arthur Hill, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew to review.

Dr Jex Blake agreed to act as editor and during his visit to London in 1934 he would send it to publishers and printers there. The goal was now to have it printed and ready for Christmas in 1934. The Chairman Lady Muriel Jex Blake was also in England that year and she obtained a loan of £230 from Captain Sidney Hubert for the publishing of the KHS book.

From London, Dr Jex Blake sent updates on his progress with paging proofs for the book, and his work on the index. He mentioned that Mrs D Andersen had offered to make a map of East Africa to form the end pages of the book and he requested that the Committee pay the £60 as approved for the coloured plates.

He also advised that Longmans would take 15% of the gross proceeds of any advertisements that they had placed in England. The Society would not earn anything from those placed in Kenya but the KHS would probably have to pay about Shs10 to Shs15 per page. But the Society decided that no more advertisements were necessary for the book after December 1934.

The book was published in 1934 by Longmans, Green & Co. and the Committee wrote to thank Dr Jex Blake and Lady Muriel who were still in London for all the hard work they had done in England to get the book "Gardening in East Africa" published. Members who had received copies were appreciative and some like Capt Gooch and Mrs Nester wrote in their thanks to the KHS for the excellent publication.

In her remarks at the 1935 AGM, Lady Muriel who had returned to Kenya said that the book had a good reception with the gardening community in England. She cited two letters, one from Sir Arthur Hill of Kew Gardens who wrote that the book would have wide appeal to horticulturalists everywhere. The other was from Sir William Smith of the Edinburgh Royal Botanical Society, who praised its production and interest to cultivators in many parts of the tropics.

She especially thanked the members of the civil service for enriching the content of the book. Later that year, members would endorse a proposal by Mr Grahame Bell and Capt Giffard that Dr Jex Blake be made an Honorary member of the Society in recognition of his work in compiling "Gardening in East Africa."

The book continued to sell well and attracted praise from all over the world, with many people requesting seeds of the wonderful plants grown in Kenya. By 1936 the Society was able to pay back the debt to Capt Sidney Hubert.

However, some members complained that bookshops in Nairobi did not keep regular stocks of the book. Mr Mitchell undertook to speak to the EA Standard bookshop. By August 1936, the President said the supply of unsold books was low, at about 40 and they would have to consider revising it before bringing out another edition.

At the AGM in March 1937, the Treasurer said all expenditure had been recovered other than a sum of Shs912.84 against which the publishers Longmans had 234 books. Dr Jex Blake also presented a report and a statement of income and expenditure for the

publication of the book at the meeting. It showed that they had sold 674 copies raising £215 and the 234 books with the publisher could increase the revenue by another £71.18. Advertising in Kenya had raised £42 towards a total of £343.16. On the expenditure side, there was the printing of 1,010 copies at £146, six colour plates at £60, binding of 1,004 copies at £48 and other expenses total £343.16. They had given away 96 copies including 26 to editors and contributors, 33 in England, 16 in Africa including six in Kenya and one to Sudan, seven to India, six to Australia, three to Ceylon and two to America.

Resilience in Depression

Finance Committee

In June 1930 Miss Collyer proposed that a separate finance committee be formed to deal with matters of the Society's finances. This was approved and the members of the special committee were Mr Grahame Bell, Mr Ford, Mr Durham and Capt Giffard along with the President and Hon Secretary.

The first task of this committee was to deal with the distribution of monies from the successful Nakuru show that took place on 12 July 1930. It was a great success with proceeds from the flower show of Shs588.75 and Shs437.50 from the sale of plants. After expenses were deducted, the balance of Shs424.23 was placed to the credit of a separate Nakuru show account.

But the finance committee does not seem to have had much to do and did not improve things. In October 1932 members decided that matters of finance should be resolved by the main Committee. They gave up on the idea of a dedicated finance committee as they reasoned that special committees could always be appointed to deal with issues as they arose.

The eleventh AGM of the KHS was held on 3 March, 1933, at the Norfolk Hotel. Lady Muriel gave an update on the achievements of the previous year, which included stellar shows at Nairobi, Nakuru and Limuru. There had also been difficulties, the number of members was lower at 170 due to the hard times they were living in, and the bank balance was not as high as expected, however overall, it was good.

The finances for the ten-year-old Society showed an excess of revenue over expenditure during the year of Shs1,333.88 for Nairobi and Shs774.38 for Nakuru. They had Shs11,000 plus interest in their fixed deposit and a building fund of Shs5,315 plus interest.

She said that, through their efforts and enthusiasm, the standard of gardening was higher and this was seen in the shows. Other districts wanted to follow the Nakuru branch and have their shows as well.

As they were planning their shows in 1933 at Limuru and Nairobi, the Society received a letter from the Secretary of the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Kenya, asking for more cooperation between the two societies. He suggested that the KHS not hold a show in December but instead combine it with an agricultural show and run the horticultural section of their RA&HSK show. The KHS replied that they were willing to operate the horticulture section of the others' show but could not give up their show on 18 December.

They had to scramble to get the show on track. Until early in December they were not sure if the Legislative Council would have finished using Memorial Hall, making it available for the show. The previous December, Memorial Hall had not been available as the Legislative Council was still sitting. So, they had staged their show at the Lyric Hall but they found the spacing to be cramped and they had difficulties moving in to stage the exhibits.

They pressed on and wrote to the Council Clerk and the Acting Governor about Memorial Hall. When they finally got the green light, members volunteered to be there for two days on Saturday and Sunday to get the venue ready for Monday.

The Finance Sub-Committee was reactivated in September 1934 following a request by Capt Giffard and after a discussion of the half-yearly accounts. The new members were Capt Giffard as the Chair, Miss Collyer, Mrs Grahame Bell, Mr Silvester, Mr Gardner and Major Brook. It was agreed that they would meet every three months or more often if necessary.

At their first meeting, they reviewed the half-yearly statement prepared by the honorary auditors. They resolved to pay Shs600 into the Post Office Savings Bank for the KHS.

They also resolved that a gift of Shs600 as honorarium be paid to the Hon Secretary and to offer a fee of Shs100 to the auditors Messrs Gill & Johnson who had also been invited to become Honorary members of the Society.

Then in January 1935, they resolved to place Shs1,200 with the Post Office Savings Bank. This would be from Shs650 of book money and Shs550 for Central Prize Fund money. They also decided that Shs700 of interest due from the Nakuru Society should be deducted each year immediately after the flower show at Nakuru as they settled with their accounts.

The following month, Captain Giffard asked if he could resign from the being Chairman of the Finance Sub-Committee as he found it impossible to attend all the meetings. He proposed that Mr Silvester take his place.

In May 1935 Mr Mitchell the Treasurer reported a sale of plants had netted £58 and they now had £1,000 in their credit. He said there was a need to find a suitable investment and the Committee left the matter to his decision.

When the Committee met again in July 1935, members including Miss Collyer in the Chair, Major Brook, Mr Grahame Bell and Capt Giffard felt that a town mortgage would be the most desirable as the money had to be invested within the Colony. But Mr Mitchell also suggested that they had an opportunity to buy Kenya Co-operative Creamery shares which he felt was a safe investment. They approved that £85 could be used to purchase these shares as they tasked other members to also enquire about a suitable town property.

The Treasurer also asked if they could transfer the KHS account from the National Bank of India to Barclays Bank. There was no objection to this. This was done the following year and members were reminded that cups should be returned to Barclays Bank before a show rather than the National Bank of India as previously.

In November 1935, the Finance Committee drew up new rules that would apply to branches of the Society. These would be put up to members at the AGM for approval.

The rules specified that membership subscriptions would be credited to a central fund and the Hon Treasurer would maintain a separate prize fund for each branch which

would be debited for all show expenses, except for any major equipment purchase such as tables. Also, the value of prizes offered at each show could not exceed the amount in the prize fund.

Each branch would be given Shs100 for a petty cash account while the Society would have a single bank account that was operated by the President and the Treasurer jointly. Finally, all revenue of the branches would be paid to the Treasurer and all expenditure would be controlled by the Finance Committee which would instruct the Treasurer.

The petty cash rule was later amended to reflect that the expenditure incurred would be reconciled when the show accounts for the branch were sent in. This came after cheques for Nakuru and Nyeri-Nanyuki had not been reconciled in time for the audit leading to both being written off so the books could balance.

This would be improved in January 1937 when the committee agreed that the balance sheet at the end of each year be printed and copies distributed to all members together with the notice of the AGM.

At the March 1937 AGM, Mr Mitchell updated members on the financial position of the Society which showed a surplus of income over expenditure of Shs748.44 in the year. He noted the increase in subscriptions which had netted Shs1,480 in 1935 and Shs1,725 in 1936 and that all expenditure had been recovered for the publication of the Society's book - Gardening in East Africa - other than a sum with the publisher. He mentioned their investment of Shs1,700 in the KCC shares which had paid a dividend of 5% and that they also had Shs17,302.42 in a fixed deposit at the Post Office Savings Bank. At the AGM members, following a nomination by Mr Mitchell, approved Mr G G Holmes to be the Assistant Hon Treasurer.

Lady Muriel wondered if they should tap into their capital to increase the prizes. There had been complaints that these were meagre. This came after the Treasurer summarized the surpluses at flower shows held in 1936. They were Nairobi Shs514.80, Nakuru Shs316.91, Limuru Shs234.57 and Nanyuki-Nyeri Shs182.57. She asked if these surpluses and the takings from plant sales would go towards increasing prizes. Mr Mitchell cautioned that surpluses were not high and were only there because it was the

dry season. He said that in another year when every class might have entries there would be no more surplus prize money.

The previous year, in early 1936 the Committee had to decide on what to do with a £50 gift left to them by the late Mr Glencairn Campbell who had mentioned his wishes to Capt Giffard. It was decided that £50 be invested, and the interest derived go to purchase a prize every year, that would be known as the Glencairn Campbell Memorial Prize that would be awarded to a class determined by the committee. Later they amended this to have it be competed for at a different branch every year.

Also, after revising schedules for the 1936 June show, Mrs Nicholson offered to donate a cup for the railway employees' cup class of six cut flowers. The wording of the class would be the same as that for the civil service cup class. As such, the civil service cup class would not be open to Railway employees.

A prosperous era for Nairobi saw the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of King George and Queen Mary. It was marked with a week of festivities in May 1935 that included the presentation of commemorative medals, processions of decorated carts, fireworks and tree planting.

A new law court and town hall were also opened as Nairobi had its first celebration since the end of the Great War.

Agricultural shows, Membership and Judging

The period was also marked by drought that had impaired gardening efforts and the President commended the members for their work to put on good shows with good exhibits which showed that amateur gardeners were learning well.

In her remarks at the 1935 AGM, Lady Muriel regretted the drop in membership that had happened in 1934, which was also a dry year. She called on all members to try and enrol at least one new member. She also asked them to work hard and make the sale of plants a success, as its primary objective was to raise money for the show prizes. In this period, the Committee had resolved to have exhibitors who sold their exhibits privately to donate 25% to the funds of the Society.

Lady Muriel would later also ask other members of the Committee to judge upcountry shows. This would relieve her of a great deal of work and the new judges would be welcomed by various branches. She had visited all the Societies' branches and judged at all shows that year except for the Sotik/Kericho one, covering 1,800 miles to visit Nakuru, Nyeri, Limuru, Trans Nzoia and Mombasa in 1935.

This came true and in 1936, the Nanyuki show was attended by the Hon Secretary, Lady Mary Boyd and Captain Vivian Ward, who all travelled and took equipment to assist there. Others planned to attend a Mombasa show. Mr Mountford and Miss Lovibond agreed to judge at the Limuru show along with Lady Muriel, while at Nyeri Miss Lovibond and Dr Jex Blake would act as Judges with Lady Muriel. Also on board was Miss Galloway who stepped in for Mrs Owen Hughes who was unwell.

The Committee also set a rate of 40 cents per mile to be paid to judges going to any KHS show and asked that the number of cars used be kept to a minimum as the expenses were charged to the branches. This was later revised to have the Central Fund pay for half the judges' travel expenses as some of the branches, which had not been able to raise branch funds, found the 40 cents per mile cost to be a heavy burden.

In August 1936, they approved a reduction of the entry fee at the Society's shows, with the President proposing that members would pay 50 cents for every entry above their four free entries and non-members would pay Shs1 per entry. They also added a novice section starting with the 1936 Nairobi show and encouraged members to persuade their friends who had gardens to compete. A novice was defined as one who had never won the first prize at any Kenya horticultural show. A Nairobi pharmacist Mr Arthur Wardle offered to present a challenge cup and replica for the highest number of points in the novice section. Mr Wardle who researched the cultivation of medicinal herbs on his farm in Nairobi was also known to drive around Nairobi in a buggy pulled by a zebra he had bought from Lord Delamere and domesticated³².

The novice section at the Nairobi shows proved to be a success even before any prizes had been offered. Lady Muriel said that many exhibits put up by novices in 1937 equalled those in the open classes and showed that there were many good gardeners that they would like to see exhibiting at shows.

³² Europeans in East Africa entry - WARDLE, Arthur Hampton

In August 1936, Miss Winfred Galloway proposed that the Society should resume holding horticultural garden parties once a month in a manner that the Rotary group held lunch meetings. They would ask various members to offer their gardens on the last Sunday of every month. Mrs J H Turner offered to host the first party on Sunday 30 August in her garden and Mrs Legat volunteered to host on 27 September. The committee also set the date of 25 October for Mrs B W Nicholson at the Prince of Wales School and 28 November with Mr & Mrs Harold Gardner at the Arboretum. There would be no meeting in December but in January 1937 they would visit Mrs Guy Hardy at Mbagathi while Mrs E M Gare would host them in February at Kibubuti Coffee Estate in Kiambu.

They later received offers from Mrs Aubrey and Miss Stollard asking if they could host meetings at their gardens in Ruiru. The Committee considered this in light of its original decision that the meetings should be in gardens within 30 miles of Nairobi and accepted these offers. They proposed that Mrs Aubrey host the 1938 January meeting and Miss Stollard the following month.

It was noted in 1937 that three cups which had been given for vegetable classes lay idle. The Committee pushed back a decision on what to do with them. Later Messrs Sutton & Sons, through their agent Shaw & Hunter, wrote to enquire if the class of vegetable grown from their seeds had been given up and if it was worthwhile to continue donating a miniature cup to Nairobi. The Committee asked Shaw & Hunter if they thought Sutton & Sons would be prepared to give seeds in place of a miniature cup. A similar decision was pending with the Campbell vegetable cup.

The committee decided in August to continue with the Sutton Cup as a prize for flowers grown with Sutton Seeds. Messrs Sutton & Sons would be asked to present seeds as the prize instead of a miniature cup. The following year Sutton Seeds increased their prizes by offering each branch of the Society Shs10.60 worth of seed for a collection of 6 varieties of flowers annually. This was in addition to the Shs15 worth of seed given to the Nairobi show twice a year. Messrs Sutton & Sons also agreed to extend the time for the purchase of their seeds up to 18 months preceding a show, instead of 12 months. Around this time Miss Collyer also proposed that her challenge cup, which she had presented for the vegetable section, should now be given to the decorative group class, and the committee agreed to this.

In 1937, there was more sharing of the role of judging at other shows. Mr Galt, Mr Sharpe, Major & Mrs Jack, Mrs Hoey, Mrs Couldrey, Capt Soames and Mrs Anderson were asked to judge the horticultural section at the agricultural show on 10 June. Miss Galloway and Bessie Lovibond undertook to travel and judge the Nanyuki show on 17 June with Dr Jex Blake and Lady Muriel. Other members including Mr A D Impey, Miss Collyer, Miss Galloway, Mr & Mrs Gillett, and Mrs Galton Fenzi volunteered to be stewards at the May show.

The cooperation with the Agricultural Society carried on in the following years. The KHS participated in a show of the RA&HSK in 1935 and used two small cups offered up by the RA&HSK to award the individual gaining the highest marks in the flower section and the other for the highest number of points in the vegetable section.

But things were not always smooth. In September 1936, Mr Smith of the RA&HSK pointed out that the KHS Limuru show, set for 3 October, was likely to clash with a race meeting in Nairobi and also interfere with the decoration of flowers at the RA&HSK ball. However, the KHS decided that their plans for the show were too far advanced and decided to stick to their original date.

However, the KHS did yield in their planning for the May 1937 show in Nairobi. They brought it forward to be earlier than usual after they learnt that the RA&HSK was having a big show in Nairobi on 11 & 12 June. They also decided to vary the novice section in the expectation that a large crowd would be at the show.

In December a meeting was held at the Nairobi showground with Mr Mervyn Hill of the RA&HSK to plan for the agricultural show of 10-12 June, 1937. He allocated the KHS two sheds which he said were sheltered from the wind. He also undertook to try and get glass windows introduced in the thatch roof to allow in more light. The two sheds would also have a thatched cover between them.

Mr Hill pushed for another concession and said that, as no prizes were given at the RA&HSK, he wanted the KHS to be in line with other sections of the show. Lady Muriel countered that they could offer one or two cups or medals and then apply to the RHS for a Banksian Medal, a Coronation Medal and others to the horticultural sections.

There was a huge surprise with the 1938 Agricultural show at Nyeri. They expected a few entries and asked for only two judges from the KHS to attend. Ms Lovibond who along with Mr Gardner travelled to do the judging duties said they found a huge show instead. She asked that the organizers be commended as it was a big show with 183 entries and every class was competed by several exhibitors. She was impressed by the climbing plants, geraniums and the vegetable classes which were all well-staged. There was also a collection of 17 varieties of fuchsias, which won the cup for the most meritorious exhibit.

At the beginning of 1939, Mr Mervyn Hill made another pitch for the KHS to have a show in conjunction with the RA&HSK show in June, instead of having their show first then staging a horticultural section at the RA&HSK one. In turn, the KHS proposed to hold a full show with its schedule, cups and prizes in conjunction with the agricultural show. They also wanted to have an extra charge for visitors to the flower show to control the number of children.

Mr Hill felt certain his Committee would agree as, after all, two of its members were also on the KHS committee. They then proceeded with the arrangements for the agricultural show that was tentatively set for June 15-17 1939. The KHS also planned to have shows at Naivasha on 24 June, Nakuru on 14 July, Limuru on 24 September, one at Nanyuki-Nyeri and another at Nairobi in December.

A sub-committee met at the showground in March to review the plans for the show. The shed allocated to the KHS had enough space for 87 tables but they only had 69 in Nairobi. Mr Kingsford, who was the representative for Limuru on the Central Committee, proposed that the new tables that were being built for Limuru could be used. He undertook to ensure they were ready in time for the June show at the showground and then they could be transported to Limuru afterwards.

It was decided also to use only one shed for the horticultural section and also, as there was a separate charge for admittance to the horticultural section, to issue complimentary tickets to all judges and officials of the show. They allotted stalls for shrubs, annuals, bulbs, verandah plants and experimental garden plants.

In planning for the June 1939 show, the committee considered having two classes for 'natives' such as the decorative bowl. This would be for houseboys of members of the KHS. But after more discussions, they decided against the proposal.

The Hon Secretary also invited Mr Van Someren, the Secretary of the Orchid Society, to have two classes of orchids - one for indigenous and one for exotics - in the June show. The Orchid Society had been formed by Mr Van Someren and the President told the 1939 AGM that orchids were fascinating plants and once gardeners started growing them, they would probably go orchid mad!

At the June show, the KHS earned Shs677.25 in gate money and entry fees of Shs67.50 while the sale of flowers, fruits and vegetables earned Shs39.50. After all expenses, there was a balance of Shs445.25.

Leadership Changes

The 1930's also saw several changes in the leadership of the Society. The 1934 AGM started on a sad note as the President relayed the news of the passing on of Mr Charles Blanke, the manager of the Norfolk Hotel. He had been a great supporter who had allowed them to use the hotel for the Society meetings and they resolved to send their condolences to the management of the hotel.

During 1934, the KHS Vice President, Mrs Emma Louise Mayer, also lost her husband Mr Rudolf Franz Mayer, founder of the E A Standard, who passed away in December and the Society sent their condolences. Lady Muriel described Mr Mayer as always ready to advise, help and support on Society matters. They also appointed Mr Mitchell to act as Honorary Treasurer.

Unfortunately, Mrs Mayer who was one of the founders of KHS and a member of the original committee passed away soon after in April 1936. She was remembered for her active work and help to the Society, which was appreciated by the President and the Committee, who resolved to send their condolences to the family.

Lady Muriel travelled to England for over six months and Miss Collyer chaired the meetings between May and November before she welcomed Lady Muriel back at the helm in December 1934.

The workload of the Society had increased and the committee authorized the Hon Secretary to obtain clerical assistance when necessary. However, they were unable to agree on having a central place to host their equipment and where clerical work could be done. Mrs Impey, Mrs Wade, Mrs Turner and Mr Harold Gardner all stepped down from the committee in 1935 and called on new members to step forward. Mid-way through 1935, Mrs Wilcocks also resigned as she found it impossible to attend the monthly meetings

One of the measures under the new secretariat came after Capt Giffard suggested that a copy of the minutes be sent to all committee members. This would keep them in touch even if they could not attend. This was agreed to and Mr Silvester offered to get the copies roneo-ed at his office.

In January 1935, Miss Bennett the Hon Secretary asked for a temporary substitute. She had worked for several years and Lady Muriel told members at the subsequent AGM that Miss Bennett needed to take a year off from routine work. Miss Bennett had asked Mrs Gillett and she had accepted the role for the year. She did this until February 1936 when she handed back to Miss Bennett. The Society gave thanks to Mrs Gillett who was proceeding on home leave from April. Mrs Bagley and Mrs Rodgers stepped down at the 1936 meeting as did Mrs Gillett who resigned from the Committee in August 1937.

A few weeks later, the meeting asked that Mr Arthur Alexander Legat, a financial advisor who had been a Branch Manager at the National Bank of India, cooperate with the Hon Treasurer with regards to investing the Society's funds that had been in fixed deposit. The Treasurer thought it could be put to better use and Mr Legat accepted.

There was a surprising turn in November 1937 when Mr W C Mitchell wrote to tender his resignation as the Hon Treasurer owing to the pressure of other work. He also expected to travel more which would not leave him much time for this duty. The Committee regretfully accepted his resignation and expressed how much they appreciated his services to the Society, especially his work in getting the books in good order. The President asked members to help in finding someone suitable to take over. The following month, Mr J Sutherland was welcomed as the new Honorary Treasurer of the Society.

Lady Muriel had planned a trip out of the Colony for part of the year 1939 starting with Europe. As such they authorized Major Brook to sign cheques with the Hon Treasurer, during her absence. Major Brook chaired the Committee meetings from March until Lady Muriel returned.

At another meeting in June 1939 the matter of an honorarium for Miss Bennett was discussed. She was asked to retire from the room while the Committee deliberated and unanimously approved that an honorarium be paid annually to her, starting with a sum of £30 for 1939 that would be paid from the Nairobi show account.

Addressing members at the 1938 AGM, Lady Muriel said that 1937 had been a year of good rains. Another highlight had been the formation of a branch at Naivasha during the year, while paid membership had increased to 228 members.

The balance sheet showing ShS28,250.63 of assets and the income statement showing Shs3,085.13 of revenue, with a surplus of Shs939.37, was circulated to members after the meeting. The Society had made a profit of Shs299.58 on the sales of their publication of "Gardening in East Africa." In addition to their fixed deposit and cash in the bank, the Society had also added to their investment in the KCC worth Shs1,700 with another 600 preference shares of the E A Power & Lighting Co Ltd worth Shs19,632 for which the auditors noted, they were yet to receive their share certificate.

Mr Sutherland's tenure did not start with a full commitment, as he was set to travel to England for six months in 1938. So, in his absence, Miss Laura Hall, who was trained in bookkeeping, consented to keep the books of the Society and help the Hon Secretary with the accounts. However, by July 1938, they extended a search for another treasurer as Mr Sutherland would be away for much longer. The only name put forward was that of Mr Henry Parker and he agreed to take up the role from Miss Hall, who had only served a few months until Mr Sutherland resumed. At the year-end speech, the President called on other committee members to help the Treasurer, particularly during the time of the Nairobi shows when the work became heavy.

In November 1938, Miss Collyer proposed that the KHS committee should apply to the General Manager of the Railways in Kenya for a reduction in freight charges for sending flowers by train. This came after she noted that vegetables were carried at a cheaper

rate while flowers were placed at another grade with a higher cost that was injurious to the flower trade. The committee agreed with her proposal that freight on flowers should be the same as that on vegetables and asked the Hon Secretary to write to the KUR&H General Manager to get this reduction. However early indications were that there was no separate class for flowers as there was no demand.

Experimental Garden

In January 1934, Captain Soames forwarded a letter from Mr W A Constable of Turnbridge Wells in England. He was inquiring about the possibility of Kenyan gardeners growing lily bulbs for the English market. The Committee decided to keep a copy of this letter for future reference.

At the 1937 general meeting, Mrs Patricia Dyer proposed that they have a scheme for experimental work in gardening. This was supported and they decided to get three or four volunteers at different altitudes who would undertake the experimental work by setting aside portions of their garden to grow seeds, plants and bulbs.

A sub-committee was formed comprising Lady Muriel, Miss Collyer, Mrs Parker, Mrs Bagley, Mr H Grahame Bell, the Hon Treasurer Mr Mitchell and the Hon Secretary, Miss Bennett. It would arrange the importation of seeds from Wisley and other botanical societies in South Africa, Ceylon, India and Australia. The expenses would be borne by the Society and an annual report would be given. Plants that did not do well in one altitude would be sent to another and new flowers would be sent to flower shows.

The scheme started well and seeds from all over the world were distributed to members in different parts of Kenya. Plants from successful seeds were then given to other members to plant in their gardens and for them to report on the success or failure. Lady Muriel praised the scheme as the Society could not afford its own experimental garden.

The KHS decided to subscribe to the Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden Society in June 1937 and pay the subscription of £2.2.0 as family members. The payment of Shs52 was paid and Kirstenbosch sent back a copy of their journal along with the acknowledgement of the subscription as well as a list of seeds which they issued free to members. As a family member, the KHS was entitled to 30 packets of seed from

Kirstenbosch and 10 from Karoo Garden and it was left to the Experimental Garden scheme Committee to select the seeds.

In May 1939, they approved a grant of £20 per year to the experimental garden scheme for the purchase of more seeds and plants. Miss Galloway updated the committee on the 19-month-old scheme in June 1939. They had now received seeds from South Africa, India, Peru and California. Of the 548 packets received, these had been distributed to 26 experimenters in different parts of Kenya and while initial results had not been good, they had identified several plants for cultivation. Also, Shs84 had been raised at a sale.

Second Society Book

In 1938 the Committee discussed the publication of a new edition of the book. Miss Olive Collyer suggested a revised edition but some members wondered if it was advisable to produce a new edition. They also questioned if there would be enough demand within the next year to justify bringing out a second book.

Lady Muriel told members at the 1938 AGM that the first edition of the gardening book had sold out and the Society had made a few pounds from the book. They were now faced with three choices; to do a handbook on gardening for amateurs in East Africa, to revise and reprint the first book with additions, or to bring out the two at the same time as separate books, which was proposed by Miss Collyer.

The members unanimously decided on the option to revise and reprint the current book as proposed by Mr Grahame Bell and seconded by Mr Silvester and Major Brook. In March a sub-committee was appointed to deal with revisions to the book starting with collecting information to amplify the present book to be passed on to the writers of the chapters. The President proposed that it should have composite pictures of flowers, though it was thought that the artist who did these pictures would require payment as it took a great deal of time.

By the end of 1938, a manuscript was already done and Dr Jex Blake sent it to Sir Arthur Hill, the Director at Kew who had promised to revise his foreword. Before it went to the printers at Longmans Green, he passed it to Mr Brian Burt, his herbarium

assistant at Kew, to check the spelling of botanical names of plants and bring them up to date.

Dr Blake then explained the financial terms of publishing the second book which had 136,000 words compared to 95,000 in the first. It had also grown from 20 to 26 chapters, one of the new ones being on gardening in Tanganyika territory. They had therefore decided to reduce the margins. Like the first book, this one would have 6 coloured plates, but now each would show 6 different varieties of flowers, put together by Joy Bally, later Joy Adamson, who was painting the plates of indigenous flowers of Kenya for a collection at the Coryndon Museum.

While the first edition had cost £230 for a print of 1,000 copies, **which** had been sold with a profit of £40, the new one would cost £250 to print 1,500 copies, and they hoped it would be ready for sale by the middle of 1939.

The Treasurer put forward a resolution that the Society borrow £250 from Barclays Bank, through a fluctuating overdraft. As security, Lady Muriel was authorized to pledge the 600 preference shares in the E A Power & Lighting Company owned by the Society, that were registered in her name. This proposal was seconded by Mr Grahame Bell and approved by the committee.

The President conveyed some good news to the Committee in March that a friend of hers, who wished to remain anonymous, had generously offered to pay for the coloured paintings of flowers of East Africa in the revised edition. The cost was £95 and the anonymous donor was giving this whole sum as a gift. They all asked the President to express their thanks and great appreciation.

After many alterations and additions, the new edition was with the printers in April 1939 with the plates of coloured pictures expected to be ready in June. Dr Jex Blake said bound copies of the book should reach Nairobi by the end of July.

Advertising for the new book was done by printing 2,000 coloured fliers that were distributed to possible buyers and booksellers. The Society also asked Dr Jex Blake to write an article on the new book that would be read out on the wireless on 28 August organized by the RA&HSK.

The Society received letters from Madras and Java that sales were going on and Dr Jex Blake hoped there would be enough money to pay off the overdraft by June 1940. But there was no news from the Longmans Green in 1940 about sales of the book as the war had taken over.

Volume II: WWII to Independence

War Impact on the Society

In 1939, as Kenya residents followed the diplomatic efforts in Europe, they prepared for attacks from Italian forces in Ethiopia or German forces in Tanganyika. Trenches were dug around Nairobi which was divided into 28 air raid precaution (ARP) sections each with its own warden. Instructors were organized by two volunteer organizations, the Red Cross and St. John Ambulance.

In May 1939 the Kenya Horticultural Society (KHS) received a request from the Red Cross authorities through Colonel Ralph Beresford Turner to take up the KHS office in the event of war. He said that they would be willing to have the KHS leave their cupboards and any equipment, also that the office would also remain in their name, while the Red Cross paid the rent. After some discussion, Mr Grahame Bell proposed they agree to this and the Hon. Secretary was directed to inform the Red Cross of this decision.

However, a few weeks later the KHS Committee deliberated and resolved that the work of the Society necessitated the office being free again. The Hon Secretary was asked to write to the Red Cross asking them to vacate the office.

On Friday, 1 September 1939, the Committee held its meeting at the KHS Office in Memorial Hall. Major Brook, who had been chairing the Society meetings since the end of March, when Lady Muriel had travelled to England, led a routine meeting as they discussed judges for an upcoming Limuru show and made changes to the schedule for the Nairobi show, altering the rose, flower, sweet pea and daisy classes. The Nairobi show was planned for December, but they did not know if Memorial Hall would be available as the Legislative Council could meet through Christmas, so the Hon Secretary gave her report on her inspection of the Masonic Lodge as an alternate venue for the show.

But elsewhere on that day, things were happening fast, and they knew it. Miss Bennett asked that the Committee should sanction the Chairman, the Hon Treasurer and herself as the Hon Secretary, to manage affairs of the KHS in case of war. There was already

an understanding that immediately after war was declared, the KHS office would be taken over by the Red Cross.

As it turned out that day, Germany invaded Poland and once the news reached Nairobi, the KHS handed over the office to the Red Cross. The rest of the Committee heard about the office change when Miss Bennett met the Chairman Major Brook and the Hon Treasurer Henry Parker three weeks later, on September 22.

A letter was sent to the Memorial Hall about the occupancy and rent arrangement with the Red Cross and they also proceeded with insurance of the tables which Messrs. Gailey & Roberts had agreed to in June. The district secretaries would be asked to see that their tables were safely stored, and should they be requisitioned by the military, they were asked to obtain proper receipts and forward them to the Hon Treasurer at Box 27 Nairobi. Also, the 55 new tables for Limuru which had been ordered from the Native Industrial Training Depot in Kabete would now be handed over to Mr Nairn who was already in charge of the 65 tables of Nairobi.

Even before the outbreak of war, the Council had anticipated that the usual activities of the Society would be suspended and had asked that the Hon Treasurer ensure that the Society's cups were safely kept at the bank. They now decided not to call all cups from the branches but if any of those officials wished to, they could hand them over to Barclays Bank in Nairobi. They also discontinued sending KHS periodicals from the McMillan Library to Nakuru and put off a decision on ordering new periodicals.

The Committee did not meet again until January 1940 at the Norfolk Hotel where Lady Muriel was back in the Chair. She thanked the Committee and Major Brook who had acted in her absence. She also announced that Miss Bennett was retiring from the Hon Secretary role and they would need a replacement, possibly Miss Galloway who had been proposed by Olive Collyer and the committee unanimously approved this. They also voted that Major Brook, who lived near the Treasurer, be able to sign cheques as an alternate to the President.

Lady Muriel asked if they should continue with their normal activities as the Royal Horticultural Society was doing so in England. She said the drought had interfered with shows in 1939, causing some cancellations but that with normal weather conditions,

shows should be held. The Limuru branch of the KHS had managed to hold a sale of plants in October 1939 that raised Shs488.50 which was donated to the Red Cross.

Mr Grahame Bell then proposed that since people were busy with extra duties in the war, meetings should only be held every other month. The President agreed but said that they should remain open to meeting as and when necessary, and a sub-committee could handle any matter needing immediate attention.

They set 16 February 1940 as the date of the Society AGM. No dates were set for shows in 1940 but they hoped to have a plant sale in April and a flower show in June. Mr Arthur Impey reported that many men in the Limuru district had been called up into war service, and with their wives doing extra work in their shambas, the Limuru branch had decided not to have a flower show. They still hoped to have another plant sale later in the year.

At the AGM, Lady Muriel spoke of the tough 1939 in which there had only been two shows, one in Nairobi and another in Nanyuki. The Limuru show had been stopped by the war, while the drought caused not only the Nakuru and Naivasha shows to be cancelled, but also garden meetings in the latter part of the year. She moved that members thank and pay an honorarium to Miss Catherine Bennett who had retired from being their Hon Secretary owing to the extra work she had on her coffee shamba. Miss Bennett had been the Hon Secretary since 1925 and had only relinquished her duties when she had travelled out of the country.

A few weeks later a plant sale in April 1940 raised £60. The President suggested that £30 be handed over to war charities and be divided among the War Welfare Fund, Red Cross & St John's Ambulance and the British Legion Canteen. But when they discussed this further, Mrs Phillips said the Legion Canteen was well-supplied with funds and Mr Gillett suggested that a canteen that served African troops was more in need of money. It was run by ToCH, an international Christian movement. They unanimously agreed that the £30 would go to the War Welfare Fund to be divided as £10 to the Red Cross & St John's Ambulance Fund, £10 to the ToCH canteen and the final £10 would be sent home to the War Welfare Fund in England.

In October they reviewed the plans to have a show in December 1940 and members had mixed views on this. Mr Silvester thought it would be good to have a show and was

supported by Mrs Phillips, Mrs Park and Miss Shaw. Also supporting this was Mrs Paige who said that many soldiers in the country were interested in flowers and would like to see what would grow here.

But Mrs Armstrong and Mrs Galton Fenzi felt that people were too busy with other things to be able to help. Mrs Parker said she was concentrating on growing vegetables and would not be able to exhibit flowers. Mrs Owen Hughes was not opposed to having a show but would be too busy running her farm to help, while Mr Grahame Bell was not in favour of holding shows.

Discussions were held as to whether they should hold a small show with a sale of plants with all gate and tea money going to the war funds as proposed by Miss Collyer. No prizes would be given, only a cup and certificate for first, second and third.

As a sign of the times, it was suggested to re-introduce vegetable classes in the schedule. This was because many people were now growing vegetables. A sub-committee was formed that would meet in Kyuna to revise the schedule and the President would write to the Colonial Secretary and find out if Memorial Hall, used by the Legislative Council, would be available on 16 December 1940 which they thought was the most suitable date.

Another issue they faced as gardeners were the restrictions on water consumption that was placed in September 1940 at a time of drought and increased military presence. Ultimately the show was pushed back and then did not happen, entirely that year.

When the Committee met in February 1941, the consensus was that shows should be given up for the time being as members were too busy with other work. The President then suggested that the yearly subscription be lowered but members reasoned that it should remain at Shs10 to be available for the Society after the war. After all, any money made at the sale of plants was going to the war funds.

With no flower shows in Nairobi in the year 1940, the next annual meeting held in February 1941 was a brief matter. The President reported there was no news on the sales of the second edition of "Gardening in East Africa" and she proposed that all committee members who were willing to continue to serve to be re-elected en-bloc.

During the year, Hon Mrs J R B Armstrong, Mr Arthur Kirby and Mrs Bargman all resigned as they had left the country.

They left open the possibility of having a sale of plants and a flower show later that year, but at a more central place than Kyuna, perhaps at City Park. The Hon Treasurer presented the financial report which showed an income of Shs2,506.26 and a surplus of Shs1,136.81. Notably, the overdraft at the bank that had been created to finance the publication of the book, was down from Shs3,055, the previous year to Shs728. She thanked the Norfolk Hotel, East African Standard, the auditors and the Committee for all their work.

They faced another financial burden at the time which was the payment of the dividend on the Society's 600 preference shares in the E A Power & Lighting Co. The shares were held in the name of Barclays Nominees and with the cost of transfer of the payment to London, they took a loss of Shs13.50 per annum. But members felt it was best to leave the matter of transferring the shares till after the war.

Also, it turned out, the Red Cross used the office for about a year, and then vacated it early in 1941, but without notifying the KHS. It was then sub-let to Major Eaton. When the members heard this, the Secretary was asked to go and assert that the Society should have first rights to the office after the war and to also ask Major Eaton about having access to the cupboards.

But the Hall official was adamant that letting the office was out of the KHS hands though he did agree they might have it later on. The KHS then wrote to the Colonist Plot Trustees Office in March 1941 expressing their interest in retaking the office after the war. They also asked Major Eaton to let them know beforehand when he was likely to vacate.

As the Red Cross had removed six KHS chairs, Miss Bennett proposed that three tables the Society had at the McMillan Library be moved there. There were also six tables at a store in Naivasha that were incurring rent of Shs5 per month and they resolved to see if they could be given to a school or have them transferred to Miss Collyer who would store them at Kabete.

Major Eaton vacated the office sometime in April 1941 and the Society was told they had first claim to the empty room. The Committee agreed with the President that they should take it back and asked the Hon Secretary to obtain the keys.

They set out to have a plant sale on 5 April 1941. Miss Bessie Lovibond and Mrs Parker went to see Mr Harold Gardner at the Forestry Department to obtain suitable plants for a sale, while the Hon Secretary went to see Mrs Hill at Scott Agricultural Laboratories. No committee member would undertake to provide the tea, but Miss Collyer offered Mrs Williams a car for the transport of plants if petrol was provided. The April 1941 sale yielded £85 and the committee approved that the funds be donated to the War Welfare Fund with a request that they are allocated to the Red Cross Fund.

They turned to whether they should hold a flower show in June. Opinions were divided and the President suggested that they send postcards to all former exhibitors and possible new ones asking their opinion on holding a show and what date would suit them for a show at City Park on a Sunday.

However, there were no more meetings in 1941 and they next convened back at the Norfolk Hotel in February 1942, where the President suggested that no notices asking for subscriptions be sent to members. Bessie Lovibond thought that more members would be ready to pay Shs5 than Shs10 but Mr Parker pointed out that members had established orders at their banks to pay Shs10 and for those that had paid, it would create more confusion. It was decided that postcards be sent to members pointing out that subscriptions had been lowered to Shs5 but that it would be welcomed if they would pay Shs10.

At the 1942 AGM at the Norfolk, Lady Muriel thanked the members for turning up in good numbers. During the war years, the Norfolk Hotel was generally packed to capacity and a good time was had by all³³. She said that there was no review for the year as there had been no activities except for the plant sale in April. She regretted that it had not been possible to hold more flower shows but mentioned that various "Victory Shows" of vegetables had been held at the homes of some members and these had been quite successful.

³³ Nairobi's Norfolk Hotel (the first hundred years) – by Jan Hemsing

She told members that, while the reports were vague, 50 copies of Gardening in East Africa, without dust covers, had arrived in Nairobi and been sold immediately. She also noted that the Nakuru branch was alive and had held their AGM, re-elected their committees, and planned a sale of plants.

The Hon Treasurer Mr Parker read the financial report and noted that the 1941 overdraft of £36 had been written off and they now had a credit balance of £86. He considered the expense of getting a balance sheet done to be unjustified but had the statements of accounts added to the minutes. Also because of a shortage of paper, it was decided that the minutes would be recorded but not circularized. The committee approved £50 to go to the Post Office Savings Bank. Later in December, they would transfer another £150 to this savings account.

For the year 1942, the only possible activity was to have a plant sale, if the authorities would allow it. This would be in April at City Park where members would arrange stalls and tea. Mrs Parker had proposed that they have a herb stall as there were about 30 different varieties.

The plant sale in April 1942 netted Shs2,519 to be handed over to the war effort. Miss Bennett said some participants, who were interested in plants, found that they had been sold before the show even opened. This was due to travel logistics and the layout of the pavilion at City Park. Some stallholders did not arrive in time and there was no one to attend to potential buyers who arrived early. To fix this, she put forward a proposal seconded by Mrs. Phillips, that no plants should be sold before the advertised time. It was also resolved to keep members of the public out until the advertised time of opening.

A final sum of £126 was handed to the Hon Treasurer and he forwarded it to the 'Sailors Week' Fund to be earmarked for merchant navy and minesweepers.

Miss Collyer then suggested that they start a calendar by collecting old photos of different Kenyan gardens. They would then sell copies and donate proceeds to the war funds. This was later adopted and members were asked to send in photos for the calendar.

Initially, there were not enough garden photos and the members were also asked to submit photographs of trees in the wild. For the calendar, they wanted the photos produced in sepia. The East African Standard had given an estimate of Shs1 each for a thousand copies of size 7.5 x 5 inches. However, it took a while for the Paper Controller to decide how much paper would be allowed for calendars that year.

But in a short time, the calendar proved to be a hit and all 1,000 copies were sold by the end of October. In the absence of the President, Mr Silvester and the Hon Secretary ordered 500 more. By the end of the year, £80 had been raised and this was handed to the Red Cross & St. John's Ambulance Fund.

In May 1942 Miss Bennett reported that all the Society's black material and Americani had been stolen from their cupboard at Memorial Hall. The room had been handed over to the Information Office a year earlier. But without their permission, someone unlocked the cupboard, removed the contents and placed the cupboard out in the passageway. Three chairs were also missing and the KHS decided to lend the big empty cupboard for the Red Cross to use.

Ms. Bennett said this was a great loss to the Society as the black sateen had been brought from the home country and cost a great deal. The Council asked her to find out from the Treasurer the exact cost of the items before sending in a claim to the Information Office. But this effort was in vain and by December, Mr Silvester said that nothing more would be heard from the Information Office about the lost materials.

Addressing the 1943 AGM in February at the Norfolk Hotel, Lady Muriel said the purpose of the meeting was to keep the Society alive as there was not much to report. She updated members on the plant sale, the calendar fundraising and the losses in the previous year. Regarding the loss of Americani and black material, there was no hope of recovering this so it was written off.

She had earlier updated the Committee on 2,000 copies of Gardening in East Africa that had been printed in London in June 1941. However, the dust covers and all but 54 sets of illustrations were burnt by enemy action. The book was not insured as the publishers had not advised on this. 900 copies remained in flat sheets, and these were now being bound and sold without illustrations at Shs10 in England and Shs12 in Kenya. She reported that £144 was received from Longman Green and £29 from local sales.

The Treasurer reported the cash position was still satisfactory and the Society accounts were adopted. 74 members had paid their subscriptions and it was decided to ask the rest to only subscribe what amounts they were prepared to give.

The members gathered the following February at the Norfolk for the 1944 meeting, but the Hon Treasurer was not able to attend. In his absence, Mr Silvester read an update of the accounts. The Society had donated £110.18 to the RAF Benevolent Fund as the proceeds from the sale of plants at City Park in April. It had also given £80 to the Red Cross Funds from the sales of the 1943 KHS calendar.

The President hoped the Committee members would stand again and all those present agreed to do so. She hoped it would rain soon and asked members to take special photos of their gardens and send them in by May to be included in the calendar.

However, reproductions done by the E A Standard were not satisfactory and she said that if they did not promise to do better work, they might have to print the calendar in South Africa. Later they showed reproductions of their calendar to Mr Anderson at the E A Standard, but he said they would not be able to do such work until they were able to get ink from Britain and an expert printer, both of which were lacking in the country.

They set a sale of plants for the last Saturday of April 1944, after the expected rains. So far there had been a lack of water and members were not able to sow their annuals in boxes.

The February 1945 AGM held at the Norfolk Hotel was virtually the same as the one for the year before and the President said her comments for the previous meeting should stand.

The Hon Treasurer gave an update on the finances which he termed as satisfactory for the year past. They had Shs1,130.39 in the bank and had made donations of shs1,176.50 to the Red Cross from sales of the 1944 calendar and Shs2,455.95 to the British Legion from a sale of plants, which had been the largest ever.

The calendar featured flower photographs from Capt Tanner, Mr Carroll and Dr Perowski. Dr Carmen had sent these to the Crown Colonist who had done beautiful

half-tone plates at half the nominal cost. These had then been shipped through the Colonial Office bag and had arrived at no cost.

Also, at the 1945 annual meeting, Lady Muriel proposed that Miss Olive Collyer be made a Life Member of the Society. Members were mystified as to how Miss Collyer, who had been an originator of the Horticultural Society in Kenya, had not already been accorded this status. The sixteen attendees at the meeting approved her unanimously and tasked the Secretary to write to Miss Collyer confirming the decision.

The President expressed her thanks to all members who had paid their subscriptions and she hoped that all members would remain on the committee. Mr Henry Parker the Hon Treasurer, who had expressed a wish to resign, offered to stay on until someone else, perhaps Mr Sutherland, who was at the Coast would take over the work. Later in August, Mr Parker officially resigned and handed over the Hon Treasurer duties to Mr Sutherland who was approved for the position and given the power to sign cheques with the President. These instructions replaced Mr Parker and Major Brook.

With the war waning, Lady Muriel expressed a wish that activities would resume and suggested a plant sale on 21 April and said she had a thousand well-rooted plants ready. She also cautioned that with the resumption of shows there would be higher expenses with the Society having to replace its equipment and produce a new book.

The April sale of flowers raised £120 which they handed over to the Fund for Prisoners in the Far East. The President also got the members to approve Capt. Giffard's wish to send Shs500 to the African section of the British Legion. But unfortunately, no other show happened in the year.

Across the world, the first half of the year saw signs of the end of the war with Allied advances, and the surrender of Germany in April and Japan in August 1945.

At 8am on 8 May 1945, guns were fired in Nairobi to signal the end of the war and this was followed by a procession of hundreds of cars on Delamere Avenue.

A few months later after Japan's surrender, guns were fired again at Government House on 16 August. Then 5,000 troops marched across Nairobi, and after an inter-denominational church service, a VJ Day Parade was held on Delamere Avenue.

The KHS had their next meeting on 31 August 1945. This was two days before World War II was officially considered over, but it was not a surprise as Germany had surrendered at the end of April. They set a date of 17 December to have a smaller show with fewer classes as six years of war had reduced garden stocks.

Rebuilding after the War

But even with the war over, it was not easy to get started right away. They sought places to buy black-out material at reduced prices but these were not available by November, with the Colonial Office refusing to extend a permit for importation. They considered buying some from Nairobi residents but that was rejected.

The decision about a show hung in the air with consideration to postpone it due to the late rains. It was then pushed back from December to run in January 1946 but was ultimately cancelled. Lady Muriel supported this as it would have been a poor show.

The 1946 AGM held at the Norfolk Hotel was virtually the same as the one for the year before and Lady Muriel again said her comments for the previous meeting should stand. She was grateful that during the year, Nakuru had done its own election and show.

With the war over, some members made plans to visit England or move on with their lives. Miss Galloway and her potential replacement as Hon Secretary, Mrs Armstrong, both planned to travel to England. Miss Bennett was asked to take up the post but she was too busy running her two farms. Eventually, Miss Vallings who would be the Hon Secretary's tenant while she was away agreed to have her name proposed. The Committee agreed on the condition that she became a member of the Society. Mrs Parker sent in her resignation, while Mr Van Scharrel also resigned due to ill health.

To join the Committee, Mr Fisher of Ngong was proposed as well as Mrs Kent, Dr Scott, Mrs Mallet and Mr Campbell. Mrs Mallet's name was proposed for the post of Hon Secretary.

The new Committee met in April to plan a plant sale on 11 May. This was amid a lack of rain and water. The City Park venue was not considered ideal and they decided to have the show at Kyuna. Tea would be organized by Mrs Lathbury and Mrs Paige. Exhibitors

of shrubs would be Lady Muriel, Miss Lovibond, Hon Mrs Armstrong and Mrs Dyer. Mrs Owen Hughes and Mrs Kent would exhibit bulbs, Mr and Mrs Impey would stage seedlings, and Mr Sharpe would stage succulents along with Mr Bally if he was still in the country. Miss Ryle Shaw and Mrs Phillips would also help.

The show went ahead in June 1946 with a reduced number of classes, following six years of war. There were enough entries to have a show despite the shortage of rain. Although there were some good exhibits from Mr Grahame Bell, it was hard to fill the hall.

For the show material, Mr Block of Bullows & Ray helped them obtain white twill material at Shs2 per yard at the Bazaar and black sateen at Shs3 per yard. The final cost of £30 was considered a wise decision compared to getting material from home which would require further costs of shipping and duty.

The show took in £35 at the gate and cost £40 in expenses. The plant sale was quite successful and raised £143 and the committee decided to use some of the funds on equipment for shows and local materials. They checked with Gailey and Roberts on the insurance of the cups, and later in October 1947, authorized the Hon Secretary to spend up to £12 for a challenge cup for the Eldoret Horticultural Society. The one chosen would come from Lawn and Adler, with a plinth and engravings and cost £10.5.6d.

They set about planning to resume shows and discussed setting the dates. Miss Bennett said it was now time to propose tentative dates as gardeners had more leisure time and would definitely plant and prepare for shows if they knew when these would take place. While this had been difficult to pinpoint in recent years, the committee agreed that approximate dates could be June and December and a notice be sent to members.

In October 1947 the matter of admitting "natives" to flower shows was discussed. It was decided that members' gardeners could visit shows with their employers. They would be charged 50cents for a single entry and with no re-entrance.

By September, members felt confident enough to restore the pre-war number of classes for the next show that was set for 16 December 1946. The show did not take place

however as the early rains failed miserably and there were too few entries. It was suggested to change the date and have it earlier, but it was not possible to arrange the communication to members and organize helpers who would devote three days of their time.

During the war, Mr Mitchell had stored the Society's tables for 7 years at the Messrs G North & Sons godown. But with new stocks now coming into the country, G North needed the space. The show tables had been examined and eight were still slightly usable and could be used when the branches started again. Ten were impossible to repair and Lady Muriel offered to buy these if someone could value their wood.

They checked with Express Transport but found the storage cost was prohibitive, so Lady Muriel offered to host them at her home in Kyuna at no charge which would help the Society's finances. Capt Giffard suggested that the tables be covered for fire and theft insurance as they were in an outside store on Lady Muriel's farm.

Making Improvements and restarting Garden Meetings

After the show of 18 August 1947, they saw that it was time to make some improvements.

Major Brook suggested that members would like to have miniature cups again and the Secretary was asked to enquire about their costs. They noted the show had not been well advertised and that there was a need to put up posters around town and have a banner hung up, which Mr Delap committed to doing with the next show.

They also decided that not all exhibitors needed the same amount of space and they would have a show steward to keep the space clear and ensure that exhibitors did not encroach on their neighbours' space while setting up their flowers and vases.

Miss Bennett pointed out that the Hon Secretary should have a petrol allowance for running around to prepare flower shows. She had been given an allowance when she was the Secretary and felt it should be continued. However, the Treasurer said the entrance fees for the August show had not covered their expenses. Members voted that Shs400 from the sale of plants be transferred to the show account to be used for prize money.

Later in December, they agreed to a proposal by Mr Fisher that Shs40 be given to the Hon Secretary for past expenses with an allowance of Shs15 monthly for petrol with an extra allowance at the time of shows. This was seconded by Mr Grahame Bell and passed unanimously.

One of the proposals was to resume monthly garden meetings for members and their friends. Mr Hugh Alan Delap³⁴ invited members to his Kayata garden in Donyo Sabuk in May 1947 with Mrs Hughes to follow in June. The Secretary sent out invitations to members and was asked to arrange articles in the EA Standard about growing roses, carnations, and lilies.

They sought to hire a bus to visit Mr Delap's garden but the Kenya Bus Service did not go out of the municipality, while hiring a native bus was out of the question as it would have cost £50 for the 108-mile round trip. As such members were asked to give lifts to others who were going. The meeting was a great success and enjoyed by all who attended. However, Mrs Hughes asked to postpone the June meeting at her garden.

In October, members suggested postponing garden meetings until after the long rains. This was also a time when it was difficult to get labour in the gardens and petrol was being rationed. But Mr Delap said it was a poor show to abandon garden meetings. He suggested that instead, they could have an annual meeting in the Arboretum. The Committee then decided that garden meetings should be held when possible, even once a quarter and that a notice be put in the bulletin asking people to offer to show their gardens. Mr James Rammel, the Senior Assistant Conservator of Forests agreed to have a meeting at the Arboretum but asked that this would take place after the rains had begun.

Eventually, garden meetings resumed in 1948 with Mr Delap again hosting the members in May at Donyo Sabuk to a successful meeting where guests were served a cold lunch and tea. In June, Mr Brown of the Forestry Department escorted a party around the Arboretum, and later in July, Major Murphy invited them to tea at his lovely garden in Kikuyu.

³⁴ Europeans in East Africa entry - DELAP, Hugh Alan Kingsmill

The following year, the Committee decided to draw up a list of known gardens where they aimed to have a show. Mrs Owen Hughes offered for 19 June and then at Lady Muriel's on 10 July, with Mrs K A Brown to be asked about August and Mrs Pirie or Mrs Kingsford for September. Major Sharpe also reminded members that his garden was open at all times for members of the KHS to visit and they decided to put a notice on the horticulture page about this.

Agricultural Society yields Horticultural Name

As the Society got back on track after the war, the Agricultural & Horticultural Society wrote to invite the KHS to participate in a "Country Comes to Town" exhibition in January 1948. They formed a subcommittee with the Hon Mrs Armstrong, Sir Geoffrey Northcote, Mr Hugh Alan Delap, the Chairman and the Hon Secretary to work on a scheme for the exhibit.

They were allocated a stand of 3 x 15 feet for the Country exhibition. This was opposite the entrance gate and several members promised to bring flowers, fruits and vegetables. As the date got closer, more would be asked to assist with exhibits and in arranging the stall.

Ultimately, the Country show, held on a wasteland opposite the District Commissioner's office in Nairobi, was not a great success. After it was over, they also found that nineteen yards of black material they obtained for their stand had been stolen.

Also, taking part in the Country show disrupted their plans to have a show at Memorial Hall in January as it would be too close to the New Year when other events were taking place.

In June 1948 they received a letter from the RA&HSK asking them to nominate judges and stewards for their show in Nakuru in October. They passed this to Lady Viola Conduitt of the Rift Valley branch of the KHS and she was able to make satisfactory arrangements.

The KHS branch in Nakuru had held its own during the war, having annual meetings and shows. This was despite facing difficulties of administration. Lady Viola Conduitt had written to the KHS in 1948 saying that while they had held their AGM, she had been

unable to tell the meeting how many members they had as she did not have a statement of the branch's finances from the KHS Treasurer in Nairobi. Thereafter, the Treasurer sent it along with half the subscription received.

The Agricultural Society would find more success in Nakuru in 1948 where their show attracted 44 exhibits. This good reception saw them expand the following year and they had 69 exhibitors and acquired additional land for the trade section. Nakuru became the main showground, such that they even considered boycotting shows in Nairobi.

Later, before their June 1948 flower show, Mr Delap suggested that the KHS approach the RA&HSK to ask them to delete "Horticulture" from their title as it was confusing. Lady Muriel undertook to have a personal talk with Major Mulligan, the President of the RA&HSK on the matter.

These efforts seem to yield fruit as in August, the Council of the RA&HSK wrote to confirm that they had decided to drop the word "Horticulture" from their designation. The RA&HSK then held a special meeting on 22 October, 1948, where they resolved that to avoid confusion with the Kenya Horticultural Society, they would delete the words 'and Horticultural' from the Society's name. They referred the matter to Lord Chamberlain, and in February 1949, the RA&HSK wrote to the KHS to confirm that the King's assent had been received on the name change.

Memorial Hall after the War

Nairobi was demilitarized in 1946 and requisitioned civilian accommodation was released. Offices had changed hands a few times during the war and Lady Muriel would later lament that they had neglected to inspect their belongings or find out who was in charge of the office.

The Government had taken most of the offices in Memorial Hall and their old office was now being used by the Accounts Department of the Board of Agriculture. But the KHS was not alone in their suffering as the Arts and Crafts Society, the East African Women's League and the British Legion had all faced some displacement.

They decided to get an office to use while they held a show. They first approached the British Legion but then managed to get one from the South African Trade Commission for three days.

Mr J Sutherland took over as the Treasurer in September 1946 and was introduced to the members of the committee. The President updated him on their balances which were Shs4,407 in the bank, Shs6,000 in the Post Office Savings Bank and shares of Shs7,000 in Kenya Co-Op Creameries, and Shs27,000 in East African Power & Lighting Co.

He later confirmed these numbers to members at the AGM at the Memorial Hall in February 1947 where he told them that the costs in the previous year had been great because of the loss of black material and Americani they had to replace which had been stolen from their office during the war.

In 1947 they regained their office, No 9A at Memorial Hall. The Committee resumed meeting there from June and decided to meet on the first Friday of each month with the understanding that if they did not receive an agenda, there would be no meeting.

Members were slow in coming back to use the reclaimed office and Mrs Armstrong suggested that it be mentioned in the schedule that the office was open for use a week or so before a show for certain hours. Later this was amended in October 1947 to have the office open for one hour every Friday from 10.30 to 11.30am.

In 1948, members were asked to volunteer to run the office. The office was often unoccupied and staff of the British Legion complained that they constantly had queries about the KHS. They now asked that a notice of office hours be put on the door of Room 9A. Several members stepped forward and there were enough volunteers that they could open the office open for an hour every morning except on Saturday.

The return to their space at Memorial Hall was not without hitches. When both the KHS and the Art and Crafts Society held their shows, it became difficult to have the hall accessible to use on Sunday morning as it was now used by a Christian Science Society though there was no formal agreement. It was not clear who to approach about the matter as two of the original trustees for the Memorial Hall had died, leaving only Mr Cavendish-Bentinck. While they considered asking the Christian Science group to hold

their services in the vestibule of Memorial Hall so flower shows could be prepared, the Secretary said this was not possible as the furniture that the Church required could not fit in the vestibule.

The KHS decided, with the Arts & Crafts Society, to present a joint protest letter in October 1947 to the hall trustee and enquire if some arrangement could be made for the two Societies to have the Memorial Hall on a Sunday to prepare for their shows and exhibitions. They finally met Mr Cavendish-Bentinck in January 1948 and he promised to check on what could be done about the use of the hall on Sundays.

The Government also was still using nine rooms at Memorial Hall, which meant that the Kennel Club and the Arts & Craft Societies could not get office space. Sir Geoffrey Northcote suggested approaching the member for Nairobi North, Sir Alfred Vincent, while at the same time the Arts & Crafts societies could send a letter to the press on this problem.

Later in 1948, when the Arts & Crafts Society asked if they could use the KHS office for a committee meeting on the first Wednesday of each month, the members decided that this was agreeable at a charge of £5 per annum.

Then in January 1948, the KHS agreed to host the Arbor Society in their offices following a request from Mrs Fane to store their cupboard with letters and files as that group had not been able to find any office accommodation. Most committee members agreed. The Hon Treasurer thought the Arbor Society should pay half the rent of the office while Mr Delap thought it should be a third. Mrs Fane later wrote to thank the Society for the offer and to say that the Arbor Society would pay a third of the rent. The Committee then set this at £10 per year as the rent of the office was £30.

This arrangement went on well for a few months but in July, Mrs Fane wrote to ask to reduce the Arbor Society's share of the rent from £10 to £5 as the room was rarely used and there was no space for another desk. At the same time, Mrs Grinsted approached them on behalf of the Over-Seas League with a request to use the KHS office on certain days of the week as an office and a meeting place for their members. They also offered to help with the office rent and take messages for the KHS when they occupied the room.

The KHS members deliberated and approved the Over-Seas League to use the office on payment of £10 per year. They also offered the use of the KHS desk but refused the League's request to share the KHS postbox as this would cause complications. Ms Terry then conferred with her London headquarters. She said the League proposed to occupy the office for three days a week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. They also requested the use of the Society's typewriter.

The Over-Seas League later went on to set up a new office in June 1950 at Room 33 Stanley House and wrote to thank the KHS for their hospitality.

This came at a time when the office rent was expected to go up as The Colonists Plot Trustees had also written to say that they would increase all office rents by 25% from July 1948 owing to increased overheads. The Plot Trustees also insisted that a proper letterbox be fitted to the office door. The Christian Scientist Society moved out and put up their own building where they hosted services from November 1948.

Sir Geoffrey Northcote received a letter from a sub-committee of the Kenya Cultural Centre who enquired whether the KHS would be interested in having a share of the proposed new building for the centre. It was agreed that Mrs Montgomery of the Kenya Cultural Centre would attend a meeting of the committee to inform them of their proposals. The committee agreed to allow the Girl Guides to occupy the office on Friday afternoon.

Lady Muriel later met Mr Frost of the British Council who explained the plans for the future. He said that the proposed Cultural Centre would be open to all races and in due course, members were warned that the KHS would have to come into line and allow membership on a non-racial basis.

But towards the end of 1949, they noticed that the KHS had been omitted from the schedule of constituent members in the charter of the Kenya Cultural Centre. They wrote to the KCC and applied for membership while pointing out that Sir Geoffrey Northcote, who had passed away in July 1948, had been a prominent representative of the KHS.

A few weeks later they received a reply from the Cultural Centre, now termed the Kenya Institute accepting the KHS as a constituent member and requesting that they nominate

one representative. They invited Lady Northcote to represent the Society on the organization of the Kenya Institute and she agreed.

The 1950 AGM was also attended by Col Abney, Vice President of the Dahlia Society of America, who gave a short talk, and by a representative of the East African Standard.

In August 1950 when the Arts & Crafts Society asked to use the KHS office for two mornings a week and to store some furniture, they deliberated on this request which would entail leaving pictures in the office for several weeks after their shows, and they agreed to the request until the end of the year by which time they hoped that the Arts & Crafts Society would have found other office accommodation.

While finding office accommodation was still difficult, the increased membership of the KHS meant they needed sole use of their office and they planned to approach Major Cavendish-Bentinck, who was no longer at the Hall, to seek larger offices. After all, they had given up their original office during the war.

By 1952 they asked the legal advisor Mr Jack Couldrey to ascertain who was responsible for the administration of the Memorial Hall building. He said he would check to see if Memorial Hall was being run by the terms of the Trust and would ask to inspect their balance sheet and accounts.

The uncertainty about the office space in 1952 led the KHS to consider other venues. They were approached by the Kenya Cultural Centre in March 1952 to inform them of their intention to build an exhibition hall and offices after the theatre was complete. The theatre was expected to open on 17 July and the KCC asked each constituent member to state their requirements for office accommodation by the beginning of May. The rent would be charged on a commercial basis.

The members agreed unanimously that rent payable by the KHS and the Nairobi KHS must not exceed £40 per year, while they required one or two offices of 15 x 20 ft. They asked the Hon Secretary to communicate these to the KCC.

At this time, the KHS was also searching for a site for the Lady Muriel memorial garden. The committee was not sure if they would be able to afford an office at the Cultural Centre, and had actually ruled it out, but they still entertained the possibility of having a

memorial plaque in the cultural centre.

KHS Library at the McMillan and the Nairobi District

After the second world war, the British Colonial Government sought to develop libraries for Africans. A report by Elspeth Huxley, who was the daughter of Eleanor Grant, was published in 1946 that had been commissioned by the Governors of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika to investigate book production and library facilities in East Africa.³⁵

During the war, the KHS Library, which was started in 1931 at the McMillan Library had stopped ordering periodicals. They reorganised after the war and set about rebuilding with a plan to house books in the new wing of the McMillan Library.

In 1948 they subscribed to the Rose Society's publication for Shs21 per year. That year, the executors of the estate of Mrs Christian Robertson Burgmann bequeathed books valued at £17.16 to the Society and these were dispatched by sea from South Africa with the KHS to pay expenses.

They renewed the subscription for the Royal Horticultural Society journals in 1951 and tried to get the different districts to subscribe for additional issues. Mr Marwood from Trans Nzoia said his District was affiliated and already received the journal. They also considered getting either George Nicholson's Dictionary of Gardening or L H Bailey's Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture. Dr Jex Blake, who owned a copy of the former book wrote to them in March 1952 and recommended that they not purchase it, and they agreed and decided to order Bailey's Encyclopedia instead. They also ordered 24 copies of the RHS's Horticultural Show Handbook and later received a complete RHS handbook and colour chart that was presented by Mrs D R Tweedie.

In 1952 Mrs Hale, the Hon Secretary for the KHS Nairobi District made a suggestion from her committee that the KHS library be moved from the McMillan Library to the KHS offices and housed on a suitable bookcase and this was agreed upon.

³⁵ Development of Libraries in Kenya and Their Role in Economic Development; Joseph B. Ojiambo and Judy S. Kasalu, 2015

The acting Nairobi Hon Secretary Mrs Mary Yonge then transferred the KHS library to the KHS Office where she catalogued all books and instituted a card index system. Half the cost of the cupboard would be borne by the KHS and half by the Nairobi District. However, Mrs Yonge resigned soon after from her acting position as the Librarian as she was proceeding home on leave in early 1953.

Despite the Emergency in Kenya in 1953, the library managed to get books and magazines from England, South Africa and Australia. By 1954 they had not received Bailey's Encyclopedia for the library. Mr Barton-Eckett had refrained from ordering the book for the Society as he decided the price would be too high. They then enquired through the East African Standard, but by mid-July 1955 they set aside any decision to purchase it. They had more donations from members and the Shell Company of East Africa donated a copy of their book with fine illustrations of Flowers of the Countryside.

In 1959 it was proposed to return the library to the McMillan Library as part of the reference section. This was occasioned by odd days that the Secretary came to open the office and its availability to members. They were considering an office reorganization and were searching for a small storeroom in the building, whose rent would be shared between the main Society and the Nairobi branch.

But with the revised KHS constitution in 1961, the Council realized that the library of horticultural books, which had largely been put together by purchase and donations of members in Nairobi, was regarded by the Nairobi District as its property.

They had listed this privilege in the rules of the constitution and expected that the Nairobi district would circulate its updated catalogue to all districts. But while it had always been understood that any member of the Society could borrow books by applying to the Hon Secretary of Nairobi District, Mr George Classen told the committee that the library was not well known.

The KHS Council decided to publicise the library in a new booklet they were planning to print in 1961. They would ask members who were leaving the country to consider donating any books on horticulture to the Society's library, rather than selling them for paltry sums.

In May 1961 the Council asked the Nairobi District to hand over the library to the main

Society and that subsequent acquisitions would be deemed the property of the Society. In reply, the Nairobi District agreed to make the library available to all members and that any books obtained in future would belong to the Society, and not any particular District.

One of the recommendations of the Huxley Report was to establish an East African Literature Bureau and this happened in 1948. Another was to establish large central libraries in each of the three countries. In 1962, the McMillan Library was taken over by the Nairobi City Council and for the first time became open to all Kenyans, regardless of race.

Outreach on New Media

A flower show held in August 1947 drew a rather poor article in the East African Standard. Following this, the KHS members decided to appoint someone, preferably a well-informed gardener who was not a member of the committee, to write about the shows. This would be a short account of the show the day after and a full account the following Friday.

Then as the Society got back into business after the war, Sir Geoffrey Northcote made arrangements in June 1947 with Cable & Wireless for a monthly series of broadcasts on horticultural subjects. The company would pay two guineas each time members appeared on the talks. It was hoped that they would discover some hidden talents among the Society members and he, along with Harold Gardner and the Hon Secretary, would plan and edit the scripts.

The first gardening broadcast went out on Wednesday 6 August 1947 featuring Mr Fisher and these went on well, with the fees paid donated to the Book fund of the KHS. A few months later the Editor offered to reprint 200 copies of the monthly broadcast and the KHS accepted this as a way to share the broadcasts with members who were not able to listen in to the talks.

Around June 1947, the Society received a letter asking if Field, Farm & Garden Journal could be their official organ, but the President was concerned that it might cause difficulties with the East African Standard. A meeting was set with Rennie Stevenson, editor of the Journal.

The Director of Agriculture also asked KHS members to produce a series of articles on horticulture and fruit growing for publication in the EA Agricultural Journal. They decided to circulate a request among members to undertake these articles. They also asked the Hon Secretary to enquire if the editor of the Journal would pay for these articles, but got a reply that it was not their practice to pay for contributions to the journal.

They later considered having a quarterly newsletter of their own and Mrs Armstrong suggested that the broadcast talks be printed there. A sub-committee was tasked to review material but there was little interest in attending their meetings as others went away on leave and it was left to Mr Fisher as the editor with only Mr Brook to assist.

They decided to produce a 4-page newsletter instead of the originally planned 8 pages. The bulletin would be free for members and extra copies handed out at flower shows. They wanted the name of the office bearers published in the bulletin and probably an abridged version of the show schedules. While there was discussion of having the Wednesday broadcasts published in the Friday bulletin, several members asked if there would be some payment for the publication and the Secretary was asked to check with Mr Hill of the 'Kenya Weekly News' whether there would be any remuneration.

The first versions of the bulletin were favourably received at the end of 1947 and many members liked the "notes and queries" section. They wanted the number of photographs increased and Major Brooks' suggestion that the next issue should have 8 pages was unanimously approved. In the February 1948 issue, they appealed to keen gardeners to attend the AGM on 12 March. Mr Hugh Delap also asked the editor not to alter or make any additions to the notes without his permission or to add a footnote to say an alteration had been made.

This went on for a few more months with Mr Fisher doing the editing and the Hon Secretary helping him with typing. He was assisted by a sub-committee comprising Major Brook as the Chair, Mr Gardner and Mrs Phillips.

In preparing for a show in June 1948 show, they invited representatives from the East African Standard, News Review, Sunday Post, Kenya Weekly News and also from Field, Farm and Garden to attend from 11am on 14 June and be shown around by Mr Delap. Notices were placed in these papers and on the board at the Railway station,

with posters distributed around shops and hotels in Nairobi. More posters would be sent to the Kiambu Club, Outspan Hotel in Nyeri, Bell Inn in Naivasha, Thika and Ruiru.

Despite these efforts, the President said that the show was poor and not up to their usual standard. The Hon Treasurer reported that the show realised Shs1,150 at the gate, and this was after Capt Giffard and Mr Robeson had returned their prize monies amounting to Shs19. They had spent Shs417 on prizes, Shs26 on tips and Shs194 on advertising.

Lady Muriel suggested that the schedule was inadequate and proposed the formation of a show sub-committee. The members elected were Mr Gardner, Mr Delap, Mr Fisher, Miss Lovibond and herself. They also proposed to invite Mr Grahame Bell whose advice was invaluable and decided that in future, press representatives visiting the show would be shown around in a way to not interfere with the judges. They would also be handed copies of the prize list. They came up with a revised schedule and sought quotations for printing from the E A Standard and other journals. They also ordered 1,000 exhibitor cards from the E A Standard at a cost of Shs127.50

Mr Claude Birkbeck Anderson, the editor of the East African Field and Garden tried to reach out to the Society again in 1948, this time through the East African Standard proposing to be the official organ of the Society. The Committee considered it a mistake to give up their bulletin; as this journal was monthly, it would not help them in advertising their shows. Nothing more was heard from Mr Anderson and the matter was dropped.

In October 1948, Mr Fisher reported that he was unable to continue editing the bulletin. In the opinion of Mr Fisher and Major Brooks, there was insufficient interest in the bulletin to warrant the cost of production, which was £24 per annum. Major Brooks gave examples of questions received but that no member of the committee provided an answer to. After more discussions, a proposal was put forward by Major Sharpe, and it was decided that publication of the bulletin would cease. The only dissenter was Mr Delap.

It was resolved that, in place of the bulletin, the Society would take a page in "Field, Farm and Garden". It would contain notes of general interest, short articles on horticultural subjects, questions and answers and extracts from magazines. Members

who were not subscribers would be able to buy a copy from the KHS office.

Mrs Phillips consented to act as editor as long as she was not responsible for writing the articles and Mr Walker undertook to write the first article on experimental plants. The first page was set to run in the 15 November issue and future articles of approximately 1,000 words would be required every month. They also resolved that no extracts from other publications would be used unless quoted with due acknowledgement.

The President would later lament about the demise of the bulletin at the 1949 AGM, saying members were shy about putting pen to paper and had refused to answer queries or send in notes. She commiserated with Mr Fisher about the lack of support and called on members to support the "Horticulture Notes" page in "Field, Farm and Garden" as well as the broadcasts by writing scripts of 1000 words on gardening and sending them to the Hon Secretary.

Some of the broadcasts set for 1949 were by Mrs Carmichael in May before she left for England, then Mrs Copley in June, and Col Collison in July with Major Hardboard asked to give a talk in August, in place of Mr Kingsford. Eventually, Mr Hugh Delap did the broadcast on 6 July in place of Col Collison who resigned from the Committee that month, owing to ill health. Also, Mr Delap and Mrs Barradell (Josephine Rigby) sent in scripts for August and September and they approached Major Hardboard to do one for October.

Major Sharpe later took over the broadcast talk for October and Mrs Flowerdew arranged to write a script for November based on her visit to England earlier in the year, while Lady Muriel would do the talk in December 1949 on 'showing'. They also planned talks for 1950 with Harold Gardner on 'avenues & hedges' in January and Mrs Hardy on 'drought resistant plants'.

When the KHS Main Council met near the end of 1949, they made suggestions to encourage up-country members and societies to contribute scripts to the monthly KHS broadcast talks. They offered to arrange for these to be typed and read. Col Moysey promised to approach his members in Trans Nzoia to produce suitable scripts.

They reviewed the best way to advertise flower shows and set a timetable for preliminary advertising. They would have a notice under the Standard clock, a notice in

the Kenya Weekly News, a notice in Field Farm and Garden and an announcement on the wireless. Major Sharpe would also add a note in his broadcasts. They also decided to make slides for two cinemas in the fortnight preceding a show and to post these on the Railway station notice board the week before and the day of the show.

For the show in June 1950, Mr Blowers was tasked to put up a banner across Delamere Avenue the morning of the show. However, it was not erected and he later said his employee had forgotten to do this. The show had quite a few visitors and took in Shs1,355 at the door. The number of members was much reduced since Mr Blowers failed to erect the banner.

They received a letter from Mr Peter Greensmith on behalf of the municipality that permission would not be granted in future to put the banner across Delamere Avenue, but that they could put it between two electric light stands near Memorial Hall. They decided to store the banner at Memorial Hall and have an agile member of the show committee put it up.

in 1951 they resolved that authors of a broadcast should receive the Shs42 paid for scripts by Messrs Cable & Wireless. Also, the readers of a script, other than the author would receive Shs10 from the Society. They also resolved to ensure that simple names of plants be used on the broadcast wherever possible. This was after a complaint forwarded by members in Rift Valley through Mrs Grant, that too many Latin names were used in the broadcasts.

There were major changes in media outreach in 1953 starting with the Kenya Weekly News saying they could no longer afford the space to publish the Society's broadcasts. Mr Mervyn Hill, their Editor thought the scripts were too long and that 10 minutes was sufficient time to talk on any horticultural subject. He also thought they were repetitive, but to which the Committee felt was natural with gardening advice. The length of the broadcasts, set at 15 minutes was the time required by Cable & Wireless.

Meanwhile, the E A Farm & Garden asked to publish the broadcast and were willing to provide 1,000 pull-offs free. The KHS also considered new items such as printing an illustrated booklet on Kenya flowers and shrubs, while Mr Marwood, the Trans Nzoia Treasurer proposed they print Christmas cards for the Society. But dropping out of favour were the coloured posters. This was after they had inquired about these from the

Kenya Arts & Crafts Society and the Hon Secretary reported that unless districts took great care and collected posters after each show, they were an expensive way of advertising. They also required societies to purchase enough posters to make the price reasonable, but many districts were not in a position to do this at the time.

At the end of 1953, Cable & Wireless informed the KHS that they intended to suspend the monthly broadcasts. They felt that they needed a change after a long run. Also due to the emergency duty of a member of the E A Field Farm & Garden team, some pull-offs had not been available to members in the year.

Years later, KHS sought better publicity and after "Field and Farm" adopted them, the President told the 1958 AGM that it should become their official organ. She said it would be a waste not to exploit this opportunity and invited any member to be a correspondent for the Society.

However, the offer by Field and Farm to give space for reports on gardening activities and monthly branch notes was not taken up well. The following year, the President asked that all district committees appoint a correspondent who would help with publicity.

Third Society Book

Discussions about producing a third edition of the Society's gardening book were at the centre of the 1947 AGM where Lady Muriel as President addressed the 30 members who had gathered at the Norfolk Hotel. She expressed exasperation that the membership she had led for 25 years had hesitated to put money down for the publication of the previous two editions of the Society book which had both paid off.

The previous year, she had told members at the 1946 AGM that book sales had resulted in a profit of £120 for the Society despite enemy action. Now, she said she and Dr Jex Blake were tired of carrying the financial burden.

This time members were enthusiastic and agreed that a third edition should be brought out, and it was expected that Dr Jex Blake would agree to continue as editor. Suggestions now came forward for improving the book. Mrs Parker wanted a chapter on herbs, while Mrs Armstrong and Miss Catherine Bennett wanted to remove chapters on

weather and soil erosion respectively, as there were many publications on those subjects. The President called for more suggestions along with more coloured plates.

Dr Jex Blake explained that for the first edition, done in 1934, the Society had needed £230 to start printing at Longmans Green, but the Society had only lent £60. He had then borrowed the money for it in England, and it ended with a profit of £50 to the Society. With the second in 1938 which would have cost £630, the Society was only willing to advance £400 which would have meant 6 plates in the book, fewer than the intended 10, but a friend in London had produced a cheque for £100 and the extra 4 plates were included. This book had again resulted in a profit for the Society.

He presented his plan for the third edition that would cost about £1,690, a considerable increase since 1945. Longmans Green required an initial £1,100 to go ahead and start publishing the book, which would have 412 pages with 20 colour plates 9" x 6" portraying about 100 Kenya wildflowers. They already had orders for 1,000 copies from booksellers in Nairobi. Printing 3,000 copies, with an extra 1,000, with colour plates would cost £3,600.

He had approached Mr Silvester as a member of the Finance Committee who had then consulted with Mr Humphrey Slade for legal advice. They decided that incurring such a large sum should be voted on at an AGM of the Society's members.

Dr Jex Blake proposed that the KHS draw £1,100, of which £200 would be a gift of the plates, and the amount would be refunded as soon as the book sold.

He thought it would make another profit but some members took a different view on this. Mrs Dyer wondered if they should do a smaller copy without colour plates at a lower cost, while Capt Giffard opposed the book proposal as their capital, amounting to Shs28,059 should be used to run the Society and pay for items like office rent, the hire of a secretary and storage of equipment. He felt they needed to grow membership and publicise the Society, but that funds for the book should be raised outside. Dr Scott, who said there was great demand for the book in Tanganyika, felt that the Society could do a book as well as support an office at Memorial Hall. He proposed lending the required £1,100 to Dr Jex Blake and was supported by the Rev Dr Gillett and Sir Geoffrey Northcote.

Dr Scott said that there were only two educational sources of information on wildflowers in the country; the KHS book and the Coryndon Museum. He added that the pictures were also popular with young children

Finally, it was decided that this matter would not be voted on at the AGM and they set a special meeting in a month to decide on the third edition. There was great anticipation and Lady Viola Conduitt also wrote to the KHS in 1947 enquiring about the publication of the third edition of *Gardening in East Africa* and suggesting that the KHS should contribute a specified amount, with the balance to be raised by subscriptions.

The special meeting on 21 March 1947, held at the Memorial Hall had 34 attendees. It had one resolution, which was the proposal by Sir Geoffrey Northcote, that the Society should borrow £1,100 (equivalent to Shs22,000) from Barclays Bank against the security of the Society's investments in the Kenya Co-operative Creamery and the East African Power & Lighting Co, to produce the third edition of *Gardening in East Africa*. These shares had a value of Shs27,132 at the end of 1946.

He mentioned that sales had already been assured by the editors and his motion was seconded by Dr Scott who said that the book was a great advertisement for the Society.

Capt Giffard opposed the book on grounds of finance and proposed a counter-resolution, seconded by Mr Silvester, that the Society should not use any of its funds for the publication of the book.

When the matter was put to a vote, Sir Geoffrey's motion received 41 votes including proxies and 12 against including proxies. Capt Giffard then said there was no point putting his motion forward to a vote and the meeting ended.

A few weeks later in April, Lady Muriel offered to take up the loan at 3% with the bank on behalf of the Society. This came after she had repaid her mortgage and Sir Geoffrey Northcote accepted the offer. It was agreed that Mr Fisher, the Hon Treasurer, would visit the bank manager to set up the arrangements that empowered Lady Muriel to do this. The loan taken by the President for the book's publication was at a low-interest rate and would go on to benefit the Society by £22 a year.

Dr Jex Blake worked on the proofs for the book for several months. He started from the second edition, cutting out three chapters and adding two others from notes on gardening at sea level and high altitudes. He had aimed to have 20 large colour plates and this edition took three years to be completed, unlike the six months of the previous edition. In February 1948, he told members that the book would not be published before the end of the year. He described the book printers as being much more hampered, frustrated and obstructed than during the war.

Mrs Joy Bally, later Mrs Joy Adamson, a first-class painter had given the Society 18 paintings for reproduction in the book. Her work had been exhibited by the Royal Horticultural Society and she would later receive the Grenfell Gold Medal from the Royal Horticultural Society for her botanical work painting the flora of the Kenya colony.

In September 1949, Dr Jex Blake wrote to the Treasurer explaining that Longmans Green, the publisher, now estimated that it would cost £4,600 and that he had offered to put down another £1,500. He added that on the advice of Mr Richards of CMS Bookshop, he had appointed himself the sole distributing agent for East Africa and arranged to avail the book to Nairobi booksellers for Shs25 for them to sell at Shs30.

This came after he had discussed the price with Longmans, which they said should be in the two or three Guineas class, before they agreed on Shs30 for East Africa. After deducting Shs1 for postage and Shs3 for Longmans, this would leave a profit of Shs2 on each copy for East Africa. Copies sold elsewhere would be sold at a loss but would only be a few hundred copies and all profits on the sale of the 5,000 copies would go to the KHS and he was about to receive the first 3,000 copies

Mr Fisher reminded them they had approved £1,100, of which £200 was a gift and the remainder to be paid back when the book sold. He thanked Dr Jex Blake for generously making himself liable for such a large sum as it could be some years before he could reimburse himself from the sales of the book. This was in addition to the heavy work of producing the book. He recommended that the £200 be donated to the Book Fund with the amount debited from the sale of plants. This was agreed to unanimously.

The books arrived in Mombasa in February 1950 and the President told members at the March 1950 AGM, that distribution of the 3,000 copies throughout the Colony would

commence soon. That month, the Trans Nzoia Horticultural Society asked to buy 30 copies of Gardening in East Africa as soon as they arrived in Kenya.

At the March 1951 AGM, Dr Jex Blake explained all the work he had made towards this third edition of the book. His objectives had been to have as complete a book as possible, to have as many colour plates as possible and finally, to keep the price as low as possible. He said the financing had been satisfactory, the reviews were good, and sales of the book were proceeding steadily.

Also speaking at the meeting, the Hon Treasurer said that with the publication of the third edition of Gardening in East Africa, the book fund was closed. In 4 years, it had raised £261 in donations, £200 from the sale of plants and £62 from broadcast fees, totaling £524. Of this amount, £507 had been handed over to Dr Jex Blake with fund expenses being £7. Also, the advance by their late President Lady Muriel, who had passed away in February 1951, of £1,100 to print the book was repaid and the guarantee was cancelled.

Following this, the Council approved an honorarium to be paid to Mrs Adamson of £50 in appreciation for her illustrations in Gardening in East Africa. They also resolved to have Dr Jex Blake and Lady Northcote made Patrons of the Society. Dr Jex Blake accepted on the condition that he would not undertake the work of the President or be put on any of the committees.

In 1953, Dr Jex Blake updated members on the sales of the books. Of the 5,000 that had been printed, 4,100 had been sold with 2,800 in Kenya, 400 in Uganda and 120 in Tanganyika. The Society had sent 60 free copies to writers of chapters and reviewers. He said that having only 800 copies remaining unsold after three years was good evidence of the excellence of the book which was a first-rate advertisement of the skill of East African gardeners and good publicity for Kenya. He had expected the 5,000 copies to last for eight to ten years and now the Society as owners of the book should consider what to do about a fourth edition.

The final copies sold out in early 1955 and Dr Jex Blake reported to the AGM that when all had been done, the balance sheet showed a profit of £23.6.0. The book was now out of print, and no reprint was possible. Colonel Collinson suggested that this balance

should go to the Lady Muriel Memorial Garden Fund but Dr Jex Blake thought it should go to the New Book Fund and the Council agreed with the latter suggestion.

Executive changes after the War as Pioneers Depart

There were a few leadership changes after the war as travel resumed. Lady Muriel left for the coast to start a holiday in September 1947 and expected to be away from the country for a few months after. It was agreed that Capt Giffard would take over the Chair and Major Brook and Sir Geoffrey Northcote offered to assist.

In 1947, Mr Robert Mountford who had been one of the most important members of the Society left for home, due to ill health. Members suggested that the Society should give him something as he had been helpful for many years. Some sent £10 and when Mr Mountford received this, he wrote back his thanks.

In January 1948, Capt Giffard wrote to tender his resignation as Vice President of the Society. Members were unwilling to accept this and asked him to reconsider his decision. Capt Giffard was known for playing prominent parts at shows and prize-giving. He replied a few weeks later saying he appreciated that they wished he would continue in office but that he had no time to be of any practical use to the Society.

At the 1948 annual meeting, Major Brook then read the report in the absence of Lady Muriel and he mentioned the resignations of Capt Giffard, Lady McMillan and Mrs Vivian Ward during the year. He also noted that Mr Parker who had been their long-time Honorary Treasurer had passed away in September 1947 and he extended their condolences to Mrs Parker.

The committee for 1948 was unchanged except for Hon Mrs J R B Armstrong who expected to be out of the country for a year and did not stand for re-election.

A few weeks later, in April 1948, Miss Winifred Mary Galloway resigned at short notice to go home to look after a sick relative. They sought someone to take her place and Mr Clive Watts was asked to take on the Secretaryship. In the interim Mrs Davidson agreed to temporarily carry the work of the secretary of the Society. But as she lived 16 miles from Nairobi, they agreed to pay an honorarium of £1 per week and a petrol allowance to her.

Sir Geoffrey Northcote suggested that a farewell gift be sent to Miss Galloway in appreciation and commemoration of her work and they decided to have Mrs Kent select and purchase a painting at the next Arts & Crafts Exhibition.

At first, they settled on a pastel by Mrs Hutchins chosen by Mrs Dyer at a cost of Shs140. However, the Committee members were not satisfied with the choice and decided to contribute to another picture, with the amount left to individuals. One member wrote a cheque on the spot for £2.2.0. Later when the donations stood at Shs155, Mrs Montgomery suggested that a picture being painted by Mrs Vincent might be a suitable gift and the President went to call on Mrs Vincent.

With the final contribution amount standing at Shs252 in October, they decided to purchase two oil paintings from Mrs Vincent and send them to Miss Galloway. Each painting cost £6 and they were shown to other members to approve. Also on display was the pastel by Mrs Hutchins that they had purchased in June.

Lady Muriel was back as the Chair when in August 1948 she announced the unfortunate news of the passing of Sir Geoffrey Northcote who had provided invaluable help and assistance in the Society's affairs and she gave a brief account of his life and work. Members would later remember his work to help amend the KHS rules and start up the monthly broadcasts on gardening. She mentioned that she had sent a cable to Lady Northcote and members stood for a minute of silence.

In the coming years, the KHS would invite Lady Northcote to join the board of the Kenya Institute as their representative. Lady Northcote and her son Maxwell would later present the Society with a beautiful cup in his memory in 1954. This became KHS Colony Cup and was awarded for "The Best Exhibit in the Show".

They elected members to serve on the Central Committee in 1948 under Lady Muriel as President. Vice presidents were Miss Olive Collyer, Miss Bessie Lovibond, Major Sharpe, Major Brook, Mr Grahame Bell and Mr Harold Gardner. The Hon Treasurer was Mr Fisher and the Hon Secretary was Miss Galloway.

The Nairobi District Committee members were Mrs Montgomery, Mrs Kent, Mrs Phillips, Mrs Paige, Miss Ryle Shaw, Mrs Carmichael, Mr Hugh Delap, Mr W Mitchell, Major Murphy and Mr J H Walker.

Also proposed for election to the Council were Lady Viola Conduitt and Hon Mrs Eleanor Lillian Grant for Nakuru, Mr Lawrence for Nyanza, Mrs L H Barradell and Mr Hugh Delap for Naivasha, Mrs Hale and Mrs Traill for Uasin Gishu, Mr Thomas Jackson for Trans Nzoia and finally Mrs Crisp and Mrs A C Hoey for Mombasa. There was no nominee for Aberdare, but later Mr Arthur Grimshaw Lomax was unanimously elected to represent the Thomson Falls area of Aberdare District. Major Sharpe wrote in August to nominate Lady Mary Boyd as the second representative for Aberdare District. Unfortunately, Mr Arthur Grimshaw Lomax, a farmer in Rongai passed away in February 1948 in Nakuru.

Major Brook wrote to Captain Lawrence at Fort Ternan asking him to serve while Mr Jackson declined to serve for business reasons and proposed Mr Churcher as a possible candidate.

Later apologies were received from Mrs A C Hoey indicating that she would be unable to serve, while Mr W C Mitchell resigned from the Committee as he was unable to attend any meetings on Fridays. A report was later received from the Rift Valley Branch noting the difficult year with heavy rains and everyone working on their farms.

Also, in 1948, the Committee received letters of resignation from two long-time and influential members, Miss Bessie Lovibond and Mr Hugh Delap and these were accepted with the deepest regret. Mr Delap resigned due to pressure from other work and Miss Montgomery also resigned from the Committee in December as she felt that being a large exhibitor at shows, she could not assist sufficiently. A few weeks later, Mrs Paige resigned owing to ill health and absence from the colony while Mrs Carmichael also resigned as she expected to be away from Kenya. The President noted that Mrs Paige had been an invaluable member who had served the committee for 18 years.

There was a sad start to 1949 with the death on 4 January of Miss Olive Collyer. The President gave a brief account of her life and work saying that more than anyone, Miss

Collyer was largely responsible for the formation of the Kenya Horticultural Society, and the meeting stood in a minute of silence.

Members had agreed to leave the election of deputy president to replace the late Sir Geoffrey Northcote until the AGM, but in February 1949, they approached Mr Harold Gardner to see if he would be willing to step in.

At the meeting, the President also announced the passing of Mr Robert Mountford. He was another member who had been helpful for many years when they were all amateurs and ignorant of "show craft". Later, in an election race between Major Sharpe and Mr Gardner, Major Sharpe was elected Vice President by a majority vote.

New members proposed to the committee included Miss Daphne Jex-Blake, daughter of Lady Muriel, who was proposed by Mrs Phillips and Mrs Flowerdew, seconded by Mr G Bell. Others were Col Collisson, Mrs Hardy and Mrs Carol McCrae. Mrs Phillips left the country later that year for treatment in South Africa and Mr Fisher asked that the Committee write her a letter to wish her a speedy recovery.

The 1950 general meeting also saw the resignation of both Mr Fisher, the Hon Treasurer and Mrs Davidson as the Hon Secretary and Lady Muriel led the members in giving their hearty thanks for the time, trouble and energy they had devoted to the Society.

Passing of Lady Muriel

At a committee meeting in April 1950, Major Brook proposed that Lady Muriel Jex Blake be made an honorary life member. This was seconded by Mr Harold Gardner and approved with acclamation. The Society was dormant for most of the year as members were preoccupied with other matters.

Lady Muriel Jex Blake passed away on 13 February 1951. At the Society's AGM a month later Major Sharpe, as acting President, asked members to stand for a minute's silence in tribute to her work.

He mentioned how it was impossible to assess all that she had done for the KHS. Lady Muriel had founded and chaired the Kenya Horticultural Society for 28 years, steering and nurturing its leadership. They had written a letter of sympathy to Dr Jex Blake and Miss Jex Blake and sent a wreath from all KHS members to her funeral.

Members remembered her as the mainstay of the Society and a lover of all flowers, from the showy to the insignificant. Mr Gardner paid tribute to Lady Muriel on behalf of the Nairobi District and letters of sympathy were received from all districts as well as the Dar-es-Salaam Horticultural Society. Earlier, in 1948, the Royal Horticultural Society had awarded Lady Muriel Jex Blake the Silver Veitch Memorial Medal for distinguished service to horticulture.

The KHS decided to have a memorial to Lady Muriel in the form of a garden in a suitable place in Nairobi to commemorate her great service to horticulture in Kenya. She had beautified her garden and given away plants freely to anyone who could benefit from them. After considering several sites, a small dell on the right-hand side of Whitehouse Road going down the hill where trees and plants would be planted was thought the most suitable. Major Sharpe said he had approached the East African Railways and Harbours who owned the land and they were willing to hand it back to the Land Office for this purpose.

They appointed a "Lady Muriel Jex-Blake Memorial" committee to oversee these plans. Members included Major Sharpe, Mrs Grant as his Deputy along with Mr Gardner, Mrs Phillips, Miss Lovibond and Mr Fisher, along with Col Collisson and Mrs Carol McCrae as the Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary respectively, and they also co-opted Major A Murphy into the Committee.

They set out to find a simple garden, not too large that would be a suitable permanent memorial. The Society pledged £250 and also invited subscriptions from the many members who had been inspired by Lady Muriel's generosity and enthusiasm.

An erroneous notice on the site of the memorial appeared in the Standard on 25 April 1951 that was not authorized by the Committee. Major Sharpe went to speak to Mr Claude Anderson at the EA Standard and tell him that all Society notices must come from the President, Hon Secretary, Treasurer, or member of the executive committee, and none of them had owned up to placing it.

While members at the AGM seemed to have chosen the dell in Whitehouse Road, Major Sharpe said this was not final. He said that neither Dr Jex Blake nor Miss Jex-Blake was in favour of other proposed sites at the Cathedral or the Cultural Center. The family favoured the Dell, but Mr Gardner suggested another alternative site on a piece of land belonging to the Government, in front of the Coryndon Memorial Museum. He said this available site was centrally located, had some nice native trees, and would be under the eye of the museum.

Col Collison reported that the Cathedral authorities were willing to help and care for the garden, while the Municipality authorities did not consider that the land would ever be disturbed when the road was widened. The Committee decided to visit the Dell to assess its suitability for car parking and accommodation of a caretaker.

Mr Harold Gardner thought that the City Council should take over the upkeep of the garden, which had been suggested by Miss Bennett, with the KHS making an annual contribution towards expenses. He suggested that the appeal sent out for funding should mention the various sites and that a final decision be left until it was known what sum of money had been collected. The Memorial Committee then voted by 5 votes to 3 to drop the Cultural Centre from the appeal as it was not considered suitable. They also agreed to the President's suggestion that a permanent memorial, such as a birdbath in stone suitably inscribed, be included in the plan.

Donations started to come in, and by the following June, they had received 108 contributions amounting to £266. The majority were sent without comment, while a few offered to donate more if the Dell site was chosen. Lady McMillan sent Shs500 and Hon C E Kitchener sent Shs400. Governor and Mrs Mitchell also sent in a donation and expressed approval of the form of the memorial.

When the Hon Secretary went to see the Mayor, Norman Harris, he told her that a block of flats was to be erected on the spare land at the Coryndon Memorial Museum and that it was not available. Nevertheless, the Mayor had assured that the City authorities would take a keen interest in helping the upkeep of the garden.

Major Murphy suggested that they consider the Arboretum, an excellent site for the garden, but this also turned out to be impossible. The Hon Secretary met with Mr Ralph

Ronald Waterer who had been appointed the Conservator of Forests in March 1951 and who, while he was sympathetic to the Memorial Garden scheme, felt that there were more suitable sites elsewhere.

Mr Fisher proposed and was seconded by Mrs Hale that the discussions about all the available sites and their merits be put to members at the AGM in October and that a final decision is postponed until the AGM.

By September 1951, they had £620 available comprising £250 pledged by the Society and £370 from members who had sent in 141 donations ranging between Shs5 and Shs500. Different members had written in support of the different sites at the Cathedral, the Dell and the Museum. They also offered plants and shrubs for the memorial garden.

At that point, the Cathedral was the most favoured site. It was centrally located and well-known in the Colony. Lady Muriel had been a regular attendant and generous supporter. The site would also closely complement an already existing memorial garden of a member of the Arbor Society and much of the material required for the construction of the garden was already available on the spot. Also, no trees would have to be cut or barbed wire used to complete the design for a small garden or paved courtyard enclosed by a long wall with a wrought iron gate, seats and a birdbath.

In addition, members like Miss Bessie Lovibond and Miss Shaw already oversaw the care of the Cathedral grounds. But the Hon Treasurer cautioned that, whatever site was chosen, the amount subscribed would probably all go to the construction of a memorial, with a little left over for upkeep.

But when the memorial group met again in December 1951, Major Sharpe, the President, was mystified as to how the site of the meeting was still a subject. He had been on holiday when the committee had last met in September, and which had been chaired by Major A Murphy. His view was that the Dell was the only matter that the meeting should have been reviewing. He did not put the matter to a vote as Dr Jex Blake was present.

Major Sharpe sought advice from Mr Jack Couldrey, the Honorary Legal Advisor, on an interpretation of the minutes of the Society's AGM and his view was that the Memorial Committee was only to consider details of a garden at the Dell. But it was pointed out

that other sites had been discussed after the first committee meeting that was held after the AGM. He agreed and said that it was time to put a halt and to have a decision made between the Arboretum, City Park, the Cathedral and the Dell. The KHS plot at the Mitchell Park showground was considered quite unsuitable.

Mr Gardner opined that the two sites at the Cathedral were on the road reserve and they had been advised against them owing to possible re-alignment of the road. It was also pointed out that the garden should not be situated in the Cathedral precincts because it would not be entirely sectarian.

The Dell was considered to be noisy but was probably less so than the Cathedral. It had a 99-year lease at a peppercorn rent, which they could pay outright, and the Lands Department had agreed to move the plot near the murrumbidgee road so any realignments of Whitehouse Road would not interfere with the Garden. When the President mentioned having the City Council take over the upkeep of the garden, Mr Peter Greensmith the Parks Superintendent at the City Council advised that the Society retain ownership and ask the Council to maintain the garden. For this, they would probably ask for a yearly contribution.

Mr Greensmith was then asked to give his opinion on the various sites. He said that the City Council plans for the Cathedral roads were nebulous and the tenure uncertain. With regards to City Park, he said while he was happy to help, the garden would have to be set up in a new and uncultivated part of the park. On the Arboretum he was not able to say what land would be available there and to this, the Hon Secretary added that Mr Ralph Waterer had said he had no power to alienate the Arboretum. Finally, he said the Dell had charming natural features and its tenure would be secure, though the soil was not as good.

After some discussion, it was proposed by Mrs Grant and seconded by Mrs Phillips, that the Cathedral site be abandoned and this was passed by 5 votes to 3. They unanimously agreed that the final decision be left to the AGM and that the Hon Secretary would write to the Conservator of Forests and the City Council as to whether suitable sites were available while the President would ask the Mayor if the Council would take over care of the memorial garden.

When the Committee next met in March 1952, it was to review the sites and to see if there were any other permanent sites they could obtain on terms as favourable as the "Dell" on Whitehouse Road. The Conservator of Forests had written back to say that no length of tenure could be guaranteed at the Arboretum, while no reply had been received from the City Park Superintendent.

Major Sharpe had met with the Mayor who had invited him and the Hon Secretary to attend a meeting of the City Parks and Gardening Committee. The Mayor favoured the Dell, which he described as a charming and quiet retreat. He was however opposed to the site at City Park as he could not give security of tenure for this and was also worried that even considering such a garden would immediately open the Park up for other bodies to make similar demands.

A few hours later, when Major Sharpe met the City Parks Committee and pitched his proposal again, the reception was much better. They unanimously agreed that the City Authorities would take over the garden when it was completed and be responsible for its running maintenance and also pledged £50 per annum to the running maintenance of the garden. The Mayor then asked the KHS to leave space in their gardening scheme for the parking of up to a dozen cars.

Major Sharpe then took the news back to the Society where the Committee discussed and agreed to put forward a resolution to the AGM as follows: "That in view of the facts, after inquiries from the Conservator of Forests and City Parks Authorities, and that neither the Arboretum nor City Park are suitable, and that no other site is suitable nor available, the Memorial Garden Committee recommends that the Dell in Whitehouse Road shall be accepted for the Lady Muriel Jex-Blake Memorial Garden."

This was passed by a 5 to 1 vote and the meeting also decided to put a recommendation to the AGM that £100 of the amount subscribed be put into a fund for any repairs which might be required. Later in May 1952, the City authorities agreed that no major alteration would be made to the garden without first consulting the KHS.

They then sought a survey of the plot, hoping to get it done for free but that was impossible as surveyors had a great deal of work in Nairobi. It was instead done by Mr Charles Albert Hime, a District Surveyor in the Lands Department, who was the husband of one of the Society's members, at a reasonable fee. He worked quickly, put

in permanent beacons of concrete and completed all the formalities at the Land office in time for government approval.

The Memorial Committee reviewed Major Sharpe's plan for the garden layout which would include a little waterfall. Fencing posts were bought and Messrs Montague Owen offered to make and pay a contribution to the price of the wrought iron gates which cost £25. They also studied a design of a Memorial plaque that Joy Adamson had offered to do that would be carved in stone near the waterfall. The site was hard rock and the Railways had offered to blast this at cost. By the time of the 1954 AGM, they had a reliable mason, the City Authority had installed water and one M'Kamba gardener had been engaged.

The Department of Lands required two trustees as a requirement of vesting of the land that had been donated by the E A Railways and Harbours. Mr Jack Couldrey drew up a trust deed and Major Sharpe, Mrs McCrae the Hon Secretary were confirmed as Trustees at the AGM. The following year, Mr Couldrey was asked to order a seal for the Trust Deed that was estimated to cost £10.

The President told a Council meeting in September 1955 that the Garden was more or less complete and that the City Council would take it over in 1956. They had decided to await the return of Mr Peter Greensmith before deciding on the official opening date of the garden and the subsequent handing over to the City Council. An anonymous guarantor had offered to meet any deficit on the expenses for the Lady Muriel Jex Blake Memorial Garden in October 1956 and the Council asked the President to write a letter of thanks to the guarantor.

The Memorial Garden was presented by Lady Mary Baring, wife of the Governor to the Mayor of Nairobi, Mr Israel Somen on 26 March 1957 who received it for safekeeping by the City.

Growing member numbers after the War

At the 1948 annual meeting, the Treasurer, Mr Fisher presented copies of the balance sheet and explained that income from subscriptions had not been sufficient to meet their current expenses. The deficit had been made up by their savings in former years and profit from the sale of plants and he called on members to each try and get at least one

new member to grow their numbers. The number of members was 160, and while it was a 50% increase since the end of the war, he also called for more new, young and energetic people in the Society.

He recounted the difficulties holding shows between 1944 and 1947 as the rains were inadequate, leading to postponements. But in 1947 the rains had been exceptionally heavy and shows were postponed, but he did note that the April plant sale had been a success raising £200.

As part of the measures to increase the Society's activities in 1948 which Major Sharpe considered to be parochial and confined to the district of Nairobi. He had put forward several measures in a memo that the President read to the committee.

Major Sharpe said the present mode of attaining membership was cumbersome and proposed that branches be supplied with receipt books and membership badges so new members could be accepted on the spot. This KHS Council agreed to send badges and books to the branches.

They also agreed that, whenever possible, a new member could be introduced by an existing member, instead of accepting that anyone who paid the Shs10 subscription could join the Society. Branch members' names and subscriptions would then be sent to Nairobi with the branch still being entitled to half the subscriptions of members in their area.

Similarly, Major Murphy suggested that sales of plants should take place in other parts of the country. The President said this was a matter for the branches to decide, like Nakuru who had already organized plant sales.

As a solution, they also decided that as the Nairobi District committee met on the first Friday of each month, the KHS would meet on the second Friday. It was hoped this would enable more members to be present. Also, members of the committee expressed their willingness to accommodate upcountry members on such visits and for Council meetings.

The first meeting of the Central Committee on a colony-wide basis took place on 14 December 1948 at the KHS office in Memorial Hall to discuss the progress of the

branches and to pool information and suggestions. It was chaired by Lady Muriel and present were Major Sharpe, the Deputy President, Mrs L H Barradell (Nakuru and Naivasha), Mrs Hale (Uasin Gishu), Lady Mary Boyd (Aberdare), Mrs Phillips, Mrs Kent, Bessie Lovibond, Mrs Carmichael, Miss Ryle Shaw, Mr H Grahame Bell, Major Murphy, and Mr Hugh Delap. Also present were Mr Fisher, Hon Treasurer and Mrs Davidson, the Hon Secretary.

Absent were Mrs Traill (Uasin Gishu) and both the Hon Mrs Grant and Lady Viola Conduitt from Nakuru who had sent apologies.

They received updates from around the country and agreed branches could collect their own show equipment. Major Sharpe said Aberdare district was forming a central branch with three district branches under it and hoped to have three shows a year, one in each district. It was suggested that the Trans Nzoia branch amalgamate with the Eldoret Horticultural Society. Mrs Hale would discuss with Eldoret whether they would be willing to join with the Kitale area while Mr Delap would check if Sotik district wanted to form a branch. Trans Nzoia then wrote requesting affiliation to the KHS in January 1949 and sent the annual fee of Shs21.

After the war, they had sought to re-establish a branch in Naivasha and the first person they approached was Mrs Williams, but she said she could not undertake to start a branch and they next turned to Mrs Bunny. She also wrote to say that she was too busy to form a branch in her district and she suggested other keen gardeners that the KHS should write to. They instead decided to write to the Secretary of the Sports Club and ask if there were any chance of forming a branch in connection with the club.

At the meeting at the Norfolk Hotel on 4 March 1949, the President saluted the members for their work in 1948 which she termed a year of achievement and with the KHS back on its feet despite some difficulties. They had 224 paid subscriptions of which 72 were new members. She saluted the revival of different branches around the country, noting that Mombasa had held a show in July at which she and Dr Jex Blake had judged. Thompson Falls also held its first show in September under some difficult conditions. Later in the year, it amalgamated with the old Nyeri and Nanyuki branches to create the Aberdare branch.

Nakuru had a successful plant sale in June that brought in Shs300 and also participated in the horticultural section of a big agricultural show in October. Eldoret had also held a show attended by some KHS members. Also, societies in Trans Nzoia, Sotik, and Kericho were all making steps to revive.

In reading the financial report, the Hon Treasurer asked that the Aberdare branch be allowed to hold its funds and have a bank account. He pointed out that branches were entitled to 50% of the amount collected as subscriptions as well as monies from the sale of plants in the branch area and these should be credited to ensure sound financing. The Rift Valley branch had also asked to be self-accounting.

Aberdare branch owed Shs842 to the estate of the late Mr Arthur Lomax and the Treasurer said that they had asked the headquarters to assist with this. The meeting resolved that branches should be self-accounting and move to become financially independent. However, KHS would assist the Aberdare branch to pay a certain amount of the debt that would be determined by the executive committee.

That committee would also be charged with deciding if Nairobi should have a separate branch to deal with local matters like flower shows. Major Sharpe had proposed this reorganization. The Aberdare branch also proposed an amendment to the KHS constitution to give members from outside Nairobi more representation on the central committee.

The Treasurer spoke of the growing cost of activities such as the office rent which had increased by 25%, while that of the Hall where they held the flower shows had trebled. He mentioned that the figure of cash at the bank of Shs18,183.67 may have looked large, but half of it was allocated for specific purposes with the sum of Shs5,038 subscribed to the publication of the third edition of Gardening in East Africa.

He cautioned that the lack of funds restricted activities that they could undertake and as they did not wish to increase the annual subscription, he encouraged every member to go out and try and recruit a new member. This would lead to more participants at flower shows which could be held more frequently.

The Lomax debt was settled in 1949 from the sale of plants by the Aberdare branch. This netted £47 that was used to buy three cups for delphiniums in the name of Mr

Lomax. The heir to the Lomax estate also gave a cup to the Aberdare branch and they also supported a proposal by Mr Harold Gardner that the KHS also donate a cup to the Aberdare branch which would be purchased and inscribed by local silversmiths.

They also reviewed the matter of refunding 50% of branch subscriptions from 1948 and subsequent years. In the case of Aberdare, it would not exceed Shs450. A cheque for half the amount would be forwarded to the Hon Treasurer for the Aberdare Branch, Mr J Reaveley, who was also the Manager of Barclays Bank at Thompson Falls.

The Kericho Horticultural Society had been dormant during the war years until it was re-formed early in 1949 and requested affiliation with the KHS. In June 1950 its officials asked the KHS to send two judges to be present at their show in September but as none was available, they provided a list of judges nearer Kericho, two of who would be able to help.

The Sotik Horticultural Society also wrote in February 1950 to advise the KHS that they had recently re-formed their Society and requested details of affiliation. They again wrote in April 1951 indicating that they wished Sotik to be a district of the Society. The KHS wrote back inviting them to the Society and saying it was preferable to invite judges from the KHS list rather than have, as they had suggested, local judges working under one KHS judge.

While the KHS agreed to put a notice in the press about the postponement of the December 1948 show, the Council resolved that when a show was advertised for a certain date, it should go ahead whatever the cancellations. Also, due to the repeated lateness of the short rains, they would push the show back to early January.

The flower show, which was postponed to January 1949, was not well received. The President accepted full responsibility for the faulty organization and suggested that in the future a sub-committee ought to be appointed. Also, they would issue written instructions to individuals about their tasks before and after the show. They also decided that names of exhibitors be written on labels in block letters to be easily read by visitors.

The Treasurer reported that the postponed show had cost approximately Shs468 and the combined cost of the two shows, without advertising, laundry and transport for the

January one, was Shs1,341. A considerable sum went to hire of the hall which cost £5 per day, Saturday and Sunday included. On the credit side, the programs had netted Shs1,332 while entry fees of Shs89 at the gate, left them with a balance of Shs80. They also noticed that while 60 circulars had been sent out to fruit growers, only one, Mr Ireland of Nakuru, had entered in the fruit class. Mr Delap suggested that Monday was not a suitable day for hosting flower shows and they decided to put this forward to the AGM to discuss.

The committee would again revisit the issue of which day to hold a show when Princess de Mahe asked if it was possible to hold the June show on a day other than a Monday. But it was agreed that Monday was the best day as the Memorial Hall was available free of charge on Sunday for preparation, and Monday was the most convenient day for Mr Grahame Bell to arrange his decorative group.

For the next show in 1949, they discontinued the practice of issuing tickets and replaced it with the sale of programs. The show was advertised as "Admissions Shs1.50 including programme" and the papers would be printed with advertisements to defray the cost of production. The Hon Secretary was asked to approach firms like Simpson & Whitelaw and Garden & Plants to see if they would be willing to take up advertising.

One of the ways of expanding the reach of the shows was to open up to professionals. In April 1951, Mrs. Grant the Deputy President, said many people in the colony who augmented their income by selling horticultural products were not professional gardeners. They then modified the definition for the Society's purposes to read "one who normally makes his living from nursery gardening or who advertises horticultural products" They also would write to the Royal Horticultural Society with this ruling.

The question of professional gardeners was again discussed and if there would be professional classes at the open shows. They agreed to defer the question to districts of having open, amateur and novice classes at their shows and have this fully discussed at the AGM.

For the novice and amateur classes, in March 1952 they resolved that districts could classify shows into three categories. These were open classes, open to all and sundry. There was also an amateur class open to amateurs, defined as one who did not make more than £60 from the sale of produce in the class in question. There was also a

novice class open to those who had not won the first prize at any previous KHS show. While some districts were not agreeable to all the rulings, it was agreed that each district could make its own rulings on the classes and that these should be clearly stated on show schedules.

New Rules for the Society

After the war, there was a discussion about doing a revision of the Constitution of the KHS. They wrote to the Royal Horticultural Society in England for their advice on how to revise their constitution and come up with new rules for the Society. The RHS replied by sending several schedules of shows from their different branches in England, but none of these included a constitution.

They also agreed to bring on new novelties to shows like classes for sprays, and best flower in a show and to clarify show rules for the interpretation of foliage, seedlings and furnishing.

In February 1948, Sir Geoffrey Northcote, who had obtained the Rules and Constitution of the Rose Society, thought it might be possible to draft new rules for the KHS. He suggested there be a Council that would include the executive committee and a member from each branch and each affiliated Society in the country and members of the executive committee be elected every year at the annual general meeting. Mrs Armstrong suggested there be a show committee.

Sir Geoffrey Northcote suggested the rules be put before the upcoming AGM for approval. He prepared a draft of the proposed new rules and constitution and after the committee, chaired by Major Brook approved them, Sir Geoffrey Northcote presented the rules to members at the AGM in March 1948 at the New Stanley Hotel. They included the objects of the Society, the privileges of membership, roles of office-bearers, committees, subscription costs, mode of convening meetings, the junior branch and how to change the rules. The members approved the rules that were proposed by Sir Geoffrey Northcote and seconded by Major Brook.

However, a smaller group met a year later and agreed that a standing committee for Nairobi District should be allowed under the Society's rules. The KHS would consist of local horticultural societies, with a Central Committee to direct its affairs. The Central

Committee would have members representing each district, with the Chairman and Secretary in Nairobi, but it would hold meetings in alternate districts and that subscriptions from each district would pay for the headquarters expenses.

There would also be a separate Nairobi committee represented by a Nairobi flower show committee. Major Sharpe supported this saying, that, while it was important to get more up-country members on the Central Committee, no one would agree to travel long distances to attend such a meeting if it was mostly to discuss the matter of Nairobi and its district.

They also agreed that Vice Presidents were honorary titles conferred on individuals and did not require re-election every year and following a proposal by Mr Harold Gardner, they agreed to form a sub-committee comprising The President, Major Sharpe, the Hon Secretary, Mrs Phillips, the Hon Treasurer and Mr Gardner, to simplify and amend the constitution and rules of the KHS.

When the Committee met in May 1949, they amended rules so that the executive Council would include no more than two members of each district Council area to represent their interests. The districts were Nakuru, Nyanza including the Kisumu municipal area, Naivasha, Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia and Aberdares.

They also created a standing committee for Nairobi and the two committees would meet at the KHS office in Nairobi in alternate months, with the Nairobi Committee having the leeway to meet at any other time.

They set a fee of Shs100 for a life membership and branches would be entitled to half the subscriptions paid in their area. Life members would be issued with appropriate metal badges and Miss Jex Blake was asked to enquire about design and costs. Lady Muriel later approached His Excellency the Governor Sir Philip Mitchell and Lady McMillan to be patrons of the KHS and they both agreed.

At a meeting in 1949, the Central Committee discussed the merits of having branches as opposed to affiliates. Major Sharpe pushed for societies to become branches of the KHS to make it stronger and they would benefit from more materials, seed and plant imports. He said there was also more prestige and it was possible that with the visit of

the Duke of Gloucester and the celebration of Nairobi's 50th anniversary, they might become a "royal" Society.

But the societies represented by Lt Col Moysey, President of Trans Nzoia Society and Mrs Trail from the Eldoret Society were not impressed by these advances. Their main objection was that a branch had to submit 50% of its subscriptions to the parent Society. Mr Grahame Bell proposed and Mrs Trail seconded that this contribution should be lowered to 25% of all subscriptions. After the meeting approved this, Lt. Col Moysey and Mrs Trail agreed to take the recommendation, that they should change to branches, back to their committees at Trans Nzoia and Eldoret.

Branches and affiliated societies were invited to send in suggestions for a new edition of the booklet on rules of judging. A draft would be sent to the branches for comments before its publication and Dr Jex Blake offered to assist with the editing before the rules were presented to the AGM for approval.

The draft rules were ready for the 1950 AGM, but no reviews or comments had been received on the copies that were sent to branches and up-country districts. It was therefore decided to hold a special general meeting in mid-1950 to approve the rules.

Earlier, they had written to the RHS for an accurate definition of seedlings, and if they would accept a seedling name proposed by the KHS. The RHS replied in January 1949 to say that they would accept a seedling named in Kenya³⁶. They also answered the query on the definition of a seedling, with examples and a suggestion that there was no need to put a time limit on the duration of seedling status. The KHS Committee haggled over the definition of a seedling in line with the RHS recommendation not to put a time limit on a definition of a seedling. In the end, they agreed that no seedling or plant that had won a prize should be exhibited at a second show in the same district.

The central committee also agreed that the branches should be held responsible for their own insurance premiums for their cups and the Hon Secretary was asked to send a list of cups to the Nakuru branch in February 1950 asking them to make arrangements with Gailey & Roberts.

³⁶ Committee Meeting Minutes, 21 January 1949

With the rules amended in 1949 on life membership, Governor Sir Philip Mitchell verbally agreed to become a Patron in July and Lady McMillan later agreed to become a Patroness.

This was followed by planning for a flower show on 9 January 1950 that would take place at Government House. They had been allocated several spaces including the old drawing room, dining room, billiards room, courtyard, verandahs and the grounds. The flower show at Government House raised Shs992 at the gate and expenditure totaled Shs1,156. The Treasurer explained that the increase in expenditure was mainly due to higher transport charges and the additional advertising in newspapers and the cinema and the committee accepted the fact that most shows must be run at a loss especially when prize money is taken from general funds.

When members convened for the 1950 AGM at the Norfolk Hotel in March 1950, the Treasurer noted that the membership had fallen to 215 from 228 in 1948. He noted that costs had continued to rise during the year, and with receipts low, the Society was dependent on past savings. He said it was obvious membership must be increased or the subscription rate doubled.

Members debated this and agreed that no increase in subscriptions should be considered. They also noted that the income from subscriptions at the branches would reduce to 25%, from the current 50%, which Lady Muriel noted was substantial but the balance sheet showed the KHS was still quite stable. The assets of the Society were now Shs70,187.24 She said that both the Aberdare and Rift Valley branches were now self-accounting with no demands on headquarters for funds.

A few weeks later in April 1950, the new Hon Treasurer Colonel Collison and the new Hon Secretary Mrs McCrae reported that several new members had joined the Society from both Nairobi and upcountry. The question of admitting members of other races also came up at that meeting but after considerable discussion, including whether to advertise for more members was proposed, it was decided to leave the matter over until there was more space available for the flower show.

Also, the question of a husband and wife being included in one subscription was brought up by the Hon Secretary for Nairobi at the executive committee but it was agreed that the number of members was small and that each member must pay.

New Nairobi District, Affiliations, Judging Rules and wooing Mombasa

A special meeting took place in January 1950 to draft and pass a new constitution and rules for the Society that was now 28 years old. Chairing the meeting at the New Stanley Hotel, Lady Muriel said it was her wish, as the person largely responsible for the growth of the Kenya Horticultural Society, that it became a colony-wide affair. As such, money they invested should go to a central fund to help districts, buy equipment and pay for printing and stationery, while funds raised in individual districts would be their own property.

At the meeting, LtCol Moysey and Major Sharpe both withdrew resolutions from the Trans Nzoia Society and Aberdare branch, respectively that had been held over from the 1950 AGM. The meeting adopted the amended draft resolution which would become operational on 15 August 1950. They also resolved that a Nairobi District be formed in the next two months and that once it was established, it would be entitled to proceeds from the sale of plants held in the district.

At the meeting, Dr Jex Blake also explained how he had drawn up the Rules of Judging that had been published in 1927 and which were based on the direction and suggestions to judges from the Royal Horticultural Society. He had changed some sequences and arranged different sections under their headings.

After agreeing that districts would have latitude in the wording of their schedules and suggestions to stewards, they resolved to adopt the 'Rules for Judging' and thanked Dr Jex Blake for his work. He said it was now fit for printing and they sought to obtain tenders to print the new books of the constitution and rules of judging.

The new Nairobi District was formed at the June 1950 meeting under the new constitution to come into force on 15th August³⁷. On 14 August 1950 at the New Stanley Hotel, on a resolution by Colonel Collison, the amount of £490 from the sale of plants was transferred to the Nairobi District, and the account closed on the books of the Society. It was also agreed that all equipment for flower shows be the property of the Nairobi District of the KHS. The President pointed out that the KHS had already

³⁷ Committee Meeting Minutes, 13 June 1950

presented a cup to each district and this was amended to read that the Nairobi district would retain cups presented for competition at flower shows in Nairobi.

Copies of the minutes of the 13 June 1950 meeting would be sent to all committee and Council members and the Presidents and Secretaries of Districts. This was after a great expense had been incurred in the discussions and they decided that all members would receive a copy of the new constitution and rules of judging, and if they wished to read the minutes, they could get them from the District Secretaries. The new book would also be available to non-members at a price of Shs2.

By this resolution, and the new constitution approved on 13 June 1950, the Trans Nzoia and the Uasin Gishu Horticultural societies also joined the KHS as new members effective from 1 January 1951.

Major Sharpe, who was acting as President following the passing of Lady Muriel, told members at the AGM in March 1951 that the Society now had 635 members with the two new districts of Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia accounting for 149 of these. He hoped that other districts would join and that Naivasha and Limuru, who were once KHS members, would be resuscitated. It was later proposed that the AGM be held in a different district every year.

The recovery of the Naivasha Committee was hampered by the loss of their show tables during the war. Its officials insisted that they had sent off tables to the Gilgil canteen or the Kabete canteen on express instructions of KHS Headquarters, but as the tables were not with the other Society tables in Nairobi, they were presumed to have been burned in a fire at the Gilgil Canteen.

As such Naivasha felt strongly that the headquarters should assist in raising money to pay for new tables, which would be an expensive affair. The Nairobi Committee, who had been the custodians of the original KHS equipment, offered £15 towards new tables for Naivasha and the Executive Committee agreed to offer another £15. The Hon Secretary was asked to write to the Naivasha Secretary with the news and to send a letter to all districts and urge them to insure their tables.

At the 1951 AGM, the Treasurer read his report and mentioned the impact that the new constitution and the formation of the Nairobi District in September 1950 would have on

the Society. They had transferred the sum of £490 to the Nairobi District as a net amount raised by plant sales held in Nairobi over the years, along with equipment worth £90 and these had now been removed from the balance sheet. He termed the total of £600 as a fairly generous christening present for the Nairobi District which would now 'paddle on its own' while bearing a share of some headquarters expenses such as rent of the office.

He said that, what was likely to have been the last plant sale organized by the Council had raised £200, a record amount, except for 1948 and that as the Treasurer he would no longer receive subscriptions from Nairobi District except for the 25% collection.

Also, at the AGM Major Sharpe proposed that a small executive committee be formed of not more than four members who would work with the executive officers of the KHS. He recommended its members be the Hon Mrs E L Grant the Deputy President, Mrs Phillips, Mrs W Hale and Major A Murphy and this resolution was passed unanimously.

A few months later, Mrs Grant led the Council in paying tribute to Lady Viola Conduitt, a long-time member of the KHS and President of the Rift Valley District who had passed away in July 1951. A wreath had been sent to her funeral with a letter to Major Conduitt and a subscription list had been opened to a Lady Viola Conduitt Memorial Cup, with the KHS donating £2.2.0 towards this fund.

In 1951, the Moshi Garden Club which had staged a successful show wrote to enquire about terms of affiliation. The KHS rules had no mention of affiliation and they decided to leave this to the next AGM. They also wrote to Jack Couldrey asking whether it would be legal for the Moshi Garden Club to become a district of the Kenya Horticultural Society. He had consented to act as legal advisor to the Society and had in turn been nominated to become an honorary member.

Following his advice, the Council met in March 1952 where Mrs Rebecca Fane proposed they have a future amendment to their rules so that horticultural societies in all three East African territories could become districts of the KHS. They wrote to Moshi Garden Club explaining the legal opinion that they were not yet eligible to become a district of the KHS as there were currently no provisions for affiliation. Nevertheless, the KHS remained pleased to help Moshi at any time with advice about shows.

In December 1951, the Executive Committee considered the matter of the 25% subscription to the central fund and agreed with a proposal by their Chairman Major Sharpe, that the new districts of Sotik, Limuru, Molo and Mombasa should not pay the 25% for the year. They would instead start the payments from 1 January 1952. They also adopted a suggestion by the Chairman that all districts be recommended to appoint honorary treasurers.

The KHS was also an attractive partner for merger considerations. Mrs Rebecca Fane of the Arbor Society was invited to attend a general meeting of the KHS in Nakuru in 1951 where she proposed that the KHS and KAS could combine to help beautify smaller townships of the Colony. They agreed that the Hon Secretaries of the two societies would write letters to the relevant authorities offering cooperation in the development of the townships concerned.

A Kenya Orchid Group was later formed and Dr Piers got in touch with the KHS in 1953 about liaising with them. He would assist with indigenous orchids while Mr Brian Perkins of the City Park would assist with exotic orchids.

Then in September 1955 at a Council meeting, it was suggested that the Kenya Arbor Society be incorporated into the KHS but it was decided that this was not possible. At the same meeting, it was mentioned that the Kenya Orchid Group wished to be affiliated with the KHS and they then sought legal advice from Mr Jack Couldrey.

Dr Piers, President of the Orchid Group presented his proposal to KHS members at their 1956 AGM asking if the Orchid Group could come into the Society on the same footing as a District. This would entail Shs2.50 of each members' subscription going to the main Society. As this was not allowed in the Constitution, it was referred to the Council which met and ratified the inclusion of the Kenya Orchid Group to the KHS. The terms would be as a District of the Society, with financial terms that the Orchid Group had proposed for a share of each members subscription.

They tried to broaden their activities with a floral display at the City Council in November 1957. Mr Brian Challis, the deputy president, and the Hon Secretary enquired if the City Council would allow the Society to stage its next floral display at the Concert Hall along with a flower sale on the terrace in February 1958. For this, they would offer £30 for the hire of the hall. They got no reply but when they were granted an audience with the

Mayor in January 1958, Mr Challis was told that the City Council could not let the Society hire the hall for less than £250 for 5 days. This was impossible so the Society scrambled to find an alternative, settling on the County Hall that was hired at £8 per day. They would hold their display at Memorial Hall in March and then follow up with the sale of special plants in the entrance hall.

Mombasa District

Mombasa had a Society that was formed in 1934. In June 1951, the Mombasa Horticultural Society wrote to say that they wished to become a District of the KHS and this was accepted.

Mr. Huggan was asked to travel and judge at Mombasa at the last minute as Dr Jex Blake and Major Sharpe were unable. He accepted, but as Mrs Morson felt that it was too much to expect him to pay his railway fare, Mombasa District offered to refund half the fare.

Mombasa was one of the more active groups over the years, and in 1960 they held a demonstration at Mazeras Nurseries in March and opened its headquarters in April. These were followed up with more activities in the year including a film show, flower show, and sale of plants.

Unfortunately, members at Mombasa did not feel that they got enough money's worth for their 25% fee and the Society was not able to help them with judges at their shows. Recognizing this issue, the KHS members at the 1960 AGM then voted to allow judges to claim travelling expenses such as petrol or train fares. But sadly in 1961, President Grant announced that the Mombasa had decided at their AGM to leave the KHS and revert to being the "Mombasa and Coast Horticultural Society". She admitted it was true that they had not been able to get judges to give their time and bear the expense of attending Mombasa shows. She regretted the loss of Mombasa to the colony-wide KHS and hoped that the Coast members might have been proud of their affiliation. In a 1961 Kenya Gazette notice on 13 June, Mr D J Coward, Registrar of Societies degazetted the Royal Kenya Horticultural Society Coast branch, which had ceased to exist.

Then later in March 1959, the Orchid Group advised that they no longer wished to be affiliated with the KHS but would continue to support their shows.

Meanwhile, not much had been heard from Moshi, but a decade later the newly-formed Mwadui Gardening Club in Tanganyika wrote in May 1962 asking to become a district of the Royal KHS. They wrote back suggesting that, given the distance involved, it was better to become an affiliate of the Society and pay a nominal fee of Shs 20 yearly. They were sent a schedule of the Nairobi and Nakuru shows together with a copy of the new handbook and a list of the panel of judges.

Rules and Learner Judges

In 1956 Dr Jex Blake and Mr Harold Gardner finished revising the Society's Rules for Judges and the Constitution to bring them up to date. The Council thanked them and sought quotations for the printing of 2,000 copies of the new booklet so all members would receive a free copy.

That year a decision was made to only revisit the issue of a Judges Travelling Fund after finalizing the expenses of publishing the new 'Rules' and the fourth edition of 'Gardening in East Africa'.

In 1958, President Grant proposed that the Society hold a Judges' Conference. At the time districts relied on volunteer judges and these were amateurs, few of whom had judged in other countries and who were unused to the vagaries of horticultural practices. There was also a panel of learner judges, some of whom graduated every year but whose status needed to be dealt with.

In her travels to many KHS shows over the years, Mrs Grant had met many competent local judges who were not on the KHS list and she proposed that all districts put forward names of anyone in their area to be included on the KHS list. Also, in the interest of good judging, the executive committee had recommended that districts should use KHS judges at their shows and preferably not those from their own districts.

She said the country needed a uniform system to enable judges to go from district to district and different altitudes and this necessitated each district having a specific system of point judging that judges coming in could acquaint themselves with before a show.

She proposed a meeting of accredited judges be held at the earliest possible date to overhaul the present system of judging, particularly points judging, also to consider initiating local values to be considered by each district and consider the status of learner judges and provide facilities for them to become accredited judges.

However, her proposal to have a Judges' Conference did not gain support in 1959 and the President lamented that they would run into difficulties one day over the lack of a points system and there would be no accredited judges to call on.

The Council looked into the matter at the end of 1959 and adopted a proposal to have a Judges Travelling fund. It would be maintained by the Treasurer of the main Society and any judge who wished, could apply to the Treasurer for assistance to visit shows outside his own district. Mr John Armitage of Nakuru proposed that each district pay an extra fifty-cent capitation fee to the judges travelling fund and this was also adopted. Members at the 1960 AGM then voted on a procedure for judges to claim travelling expenses such as petrol or train fares.

This came after it was emphasized how essential it was that learners judge shows away from their districts. The Council agreed that judges should go around after judging and explain points to learner judges as it was not possible to do this during judging. They had also decided that the names of learner judges who had completed six shows and qualified as judges should then come before a panel of experienced judges before they were confirmed as judges.

As they entered the 1960s, the Society noted that learner judges were not coming forward, and there was a concern that failure by headquarters to supply judges on request would lead to districts appointing unaccredited judges with disastrous effects on the standards of judging and the detriment of shows.

They drew up a list of all shows and asked all district secretaries to invite learner judges to come forward and also that when secretaries were inviting judges for shows they should ask one or two learner judges to come. The Secretaries would also send a list of names and addresses of learner judges and their cards with dates of shows which they had officiated.

In May 1961, President Grant again asked the Council to finalize the urgent matter of upgrading learner judges at the next Nairobi show on 19 June. They approved a report on the selection and qualification of judges and learner judges by Mr Huggan. It stated that district committees could select candidates to be potential judges who had both won at least three first-place prizes in Grade Super A or A classes and been a show secretary or steward at four shows. Professional growers and exhibitors would also qualify.

Learner judges would be people in districts who had information on all classes of flowers, roses, potted plants, floral arrangements, vegetables, fruits, or general horticulture. District judges would issue cards to learner judges who applied and with the procedure to qualify as an accredited judge of the Society. They would then be required to attend a minimum of five shows to gain experience, two in their district, two away from their district and one in Nairobi where they would be assisted by pairs of judges.

The sixth show in Nairobi would be considered an examination where the candidates would be taken around by two judges who would observe, but not interfere, as the candidates judged and gave comments on exhibits. To avoid confusion during the judging of shows, the examination would be done on the afternoon of the first day of a show. After that, the name of successful candidates would be sent to all districts for their inclusion in the list of accredited judges.

The first panel of judges at the Nairobi show in June would be the President, Mrs E L Grant, Mrs Carol McCrae and Mr Brian Perkins. Mr Armitage also asked that Judges take learners around after the show had opened to explain their views and decisions more carefully. The Council also decided to include the colony-wide rose show at Nakuru as part of the learner judge's training and to have a separate panel of judges for each occasion. It was also agreed that travel expenses for learner judges should be paid by the districts concerned, at their discretion.

In May 1962 they asked Rev Philbrick to become a member of the judges' panel. He was an accredited judge in the United Kingdom and had considerable experience. A few months later, in November, Mr Robert Adams was nominated as a learner judge to the Council. In the coming years, more were nominated to the judging panel with Mr Harold

Gardner and Mr Peter Greensmith appointed to the examining panel of judges in July 1965, with Mr Jack Wright elected in December 1965.

No district had responded with the names of judges and learner judges. The Secretary was asked to inform districts that no further nominations for election to judges would be entertained for 1966 after the closing of the next AGM which was set for 22 March 1966.

The problems with judging carried on into 1967 when Trans Nzoia reported difficulties in obtaining judges for their district shows. The Council again resolved to send all judges a list of shows and their dates in different districts from 1968 and to also ask district secretaries to encourage their members to become learner judges. They also asked the secretaries to advise learner judges in their districts that the examination for learner judges would take place at the June 1968 flower show in Nairobi. One final Council decision was to agree to the request from Kitale, to pay the petrol expenses for judges visiting that district.

Colony Wide Show 1960 and 1961

One of the wishes that President Grant had expressed at the 1959 AGM did gain traction. This was to plan for a Colony Wide Rose Show. Mrs Everett proposed that this would be organised by the Rift Valley District and take place at Nakuru, under the aegis of the main Society. Rift Valley would pay for two-thirds of the show expenses while the main Society would meet one-third.

Lady Baring, who was departing from the Colony, had ordered a cup for the roses and this was now in the country and had been placed at Rift Valley. The President, with the endorsement of the Council, had also invited Lady Renison to be an honorary Vice President of the Society for the duration of Sir Patrick Renison's term of office as Governor.

The President expressed the need for extensive publicity for the Show and asked the Rift Valley District to put together a Rose Show committee. Entrance fees would be Shs2 for non-members and the general public, while members who showed their membership cards would pay Shs1 only.

It turned out that Rift Valley did not intend to seek any contribution for the cost of a banda at Nakuru. It instead asked for a guarantee of £50 from the main Council in case of a loss. It also proposed for 10% of the net profit of the show goes to the main Society.

Speaking at the March 1960 AGM, the President asked the Society to vote for adequate sums and help with personal services at the Colony Wide Rose Show that would be part of the Royal Agricultural Society of Kenya Country show set for 10 & 11 June. The schedule had been designed to suit all rose growers and there was great interest in staging exhibits from the districts of Molo, Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu and the Rift Valley.

The Rift Valley Branch spent £250 to extend their banda at the showground. The National Rose Society expressed their willingness to cooperate and send both a silver and bronze medal.

The show staged as an experiment, was a success and the highlight of 1960 according to President Grant. It attracted good publicity and a crowd far wider than those who usually attended Royal Kenya Horticultural Society shows.

Though the first show had received some criticism about bad lighting and overcrowding, they set about planning to hold another one in Nakuru on 9 & 10 June 1961. This time they proposed a less ambitious schedule but still one that offered ample opportunities for all rose growers.

As such Mrs Everett reported that her Rift Valley Committee would not ask the main Society for additional funds to expand the building at the Nakuru showground, but would reduce the number of entries so that they could be adequately accommodated in the space available. She said rose judges had been difficult to find but she hoped to enlist the services of more qualified people to judge.

Experimental Plans, Seed Scheme and Quarantine Restrictions

Aside from the difficulties with offices from 1947, restrictions remained on the importation of bulbs and herbaceous plants. It was difficult to get seeds imported into the country and seedlings became expensive as germination was bad.

Members of the KHS sought permission to import seeds of rare plants and herbaceous plants through the Controller who issued seed permits. Major Brook and Mr Fisher went to call on Mr Fox at the Scott Agricultural Laboratories and enquire if it was possible to reserve a plot of land as a quarantine nursery where dahlias and bulbs could be grown and tested by the Agriculture Department before distribution.

But Mr Fox was ill and out of the office, and the plant pathologist they met said no permission could be given for the import of plants into the country. Later, Sir Geoffrey Northcote told members that he expected that the Amani research station was going to be transferred from Tanganyika to Kenya the following year with a quarantine station.

But plans for the transfer of Amani dragged on longer and members were anxious to have a quarantine centre in the country. The Society was already receiving seed requests from different parts of the world which were difficult to deal with as no one was collecting indigenous seeds. They had a letter from Batumi in the Caucasus asking for indigenous plants and Mr Hugh Delap, who was dealing with a request from Russia, also undertook to respond to another letter from India.

In January 1948, they approached the Director of Agriculture to ask if there was any objection to the Society starting its own quarantine centre. One of their members, Mr Fisher promised a piece of land at Ngong for this. But they were informed that, as there was already a proposal to set up a quarantine station under the East African Agricultural and Forestry Research Organization, there was no purpose of the Society setting one up.

The members felt that as small importers, they would not benefit even when the government relaxed restrictions on the importation of herbaceous plants. They felt it was more satisfactory for East Africa to have its own horticultural quarantine station and wrote to the Member for Agriculture to enquire what progress had been made toward setting up the East Africa Research and Quarantine station since January.

Meanwhile, Mr J Walker led the revival of the experimental plant scheme that had lapsed during the war years. He said they had a large number of trees ready for distribution, despite the unfavourable weather and lack of water. He agreed to supply the Hon Secretary with a list of the trees, many of the seeds which had come from Amani and the Forest Department. A lot of scraps had been left around Nairobi after the

war, and when they had a problem getting containers for the seedlings, it was suggested that they go to the old military dump outside Nairobi where they would find many types of food tins and banana pots as well as old battery containers from garages.

The tree seedling scheme was opened to members of the KHS and the rest were distributed at the annual sale of plants. A list of trees would be included in the KHS page in *Field Farm and Garden* the following month. Later, the President also suggested that they put a notice asking for volunteers to start experimental plant stations at high altitudes as most of the ones they had been mostly from low altitude areas.

They received a response from Dr Richard Henry Le Pelley at the end of 1948, who said that the arrangements they had recently made to allow the importation of many species of garden plants would be helpful to horticulturalists and gardeners.

He urged the members not to be pessimistic. But he also mentioned that, while the central quarantine station would not be ready in the near future, it was not likely to be of use in terms of garden plants as it would be chiefly devoted to crop plants “of economic importance” and he doubted that they would have space in the quarantine facilities for the volumes of garden plant importations that had been requested.

The KHS members were dissatisfied with the answer from Dr Le Pelley and decided to go ahead and inaugurate a small quarantine station on the portion of land Mr Fisher had offered. They would then approach the Department of Agriculture for permission to start a KHS quarantine station.

Mr Hugh Delap offered to write an informative article in *Field Farm & Garden* to dispel the ignorance of regulations for importing plants and bulbs. He said he would go to the Agriculture Department and get adequate data. It was suggested that importation in bulk may simplify matters and Mrs Carmichael offered to act as the KHS agent and distributor when she moved to new premises in 1949.

Dr Le Pelley returned to his office after a few months away, but when the Hon Secretary managed to meet and interview him in early 1949 it was quite clear that the Government would not sanction the setting up of a KHS quarantine station. They then discussed

how to assist members to import bulbs and herbaceous plants. It seemed that only dahlias, begonia, arum lily and nicotiana species were debarred from importation into Kenya. They agreed that the KHS would write to Simpson & Whitelaw about importing plants in bulk for local distribution to members and the general public.

In February 1949 Simpson & Whitelaw were willing to cooperate and wanted to get an idea of the quantities of plants to be imported. Mrs Phillips said that the firm had also agreed to be financially responsible for plants and bulbs imported by them, and not as originally indicated, debit the Society for any items left unsold.

They asked members at the AGM to share their plant requests. But by July 1949 only two orders had been received, one for Gladioli bulbs that the firm was handling and another large order from Mrs Goths of Nakuru. Because of a lack of orders, they abandoned the plan to import in bulk through Simpson & Whitelaw and informed Mrs Goths of the decision.

Messrs L C Van de Ven, a Dutch bulb grower also approached the KHS in April 1949 to say their local agent, Gardens & Plants, would be able to arrange importation. The Hon Secretary was asked to write to the Department of Agriculture to verify this. But the following month Mr Fox at the Scott Agricultural Laboratories wrote to say they had not yet finalized arrangements for the importation of bulbs from Holland.

Later in May 1949, Mr Fisher wrote to enquire if the KHS could join the South African Botanical Society at Kirstenbosch as an ordinary member for Shs20 per annum. If this was agreed they would put together a seed catalogue and distribute it to interested members. Some seeds from Kirstenbosch were later allotted to members.

Unfortunately, when Mr Walker resigned from the Committee in mid-1949, the organization of the experimental seeds collapsed again. Major Brook then offered to grow any available seeds.

After the meeting in February 1950, the Trans Nzoia Horticultural Society members wrote offering to collect wildflowers. Mrs Yonge volunteered to receive and forward seeds to growers. She arranged that seeds, either named or the plant fully described, could be left with her husband at the Head Office of the Agricultural Department.

Lady Muriel also stressed how important it was for volunteers to collect seeds of various wildflowers which were in great demand in England, Ireland and India. Major Sharpe suggested that a list with the main requirement should be sent to the branches. And in September 1951 Mr Grahame Bell sent the Secretary some seeds that were required by the Tobago botanical gardens and these were forwarded on by air.

It was a concern to members that Government officials were not being considerate and still destroying plants without giving owners notice. Nevertheless, they continued to engage with the Government and in June 1951, they sent a cheque to the Agriculture Department for £25 to help with research on an insect pest called *Orthesia*. They also followed up with Dr Bernard Keen at the East African Agriculture & Forestry Research Organization (EAAFRO) to get his assistance and see about obtaining a quarantine station. Dr Keen was supportive of their idea and said he would press for quarantine stations in all three territories of East Africa, but he was doubtful of success.

They wrote to Dr Keen a year later, this time to express the dissatisfaction of the KHS Council with regulations on the importation of plants into the Colony and to request a meeting with the Principal of the EAAFRO. He was not available to meet them but his office informed them that there were indeed plans for building an inter-territorial quarantine station. Also, that while the work of quarantine would be carried out by the EAAFRO at Muguga, the policy governing the import of plants into the Colony would be decided by the Department of Agriculture.

In 1952, they contributed Shs500 to the Government towards Jacaranda bug research. The Trans Nzoia District later wrote to the Council in 1953 to ask the KHS as the parent Society to push the government to make it easier to import plants and bulbs into Kenya from England and South Africa. They suggested that they ask the RHS in England to arrange for these exports.

Finally, in July 1954 Dr Le Pelley the senior entomologist of the Scott Agricultural Laboratories wrote to the Society with some good news. He confirmed that, subject to satisfactory arrangements, it would be possible to import Dahlia, Chrysanthemums, Begonia and Arum Lily through the Central East African Quarantine Station at Muguga. He asked the Society to appoint not more than two importers per plant to avoid duplication, to consolidate orders, and then to distribute them after the quarantine period.

They reached out to the professional nurserymen, attached copies of Dr Le Pelley's letter and enquired which plants they would be willing to import and appreciating that this was for the public good. They selected Grahame Bell and Murogosi Nurseries of Turbo for Dahlias, while to import Chrysanthemums would be Colonel A J Elliott (Kiambu), Kinja Nurseries (Kinangop) and Little Shuru Nurseries (Njoro). For Arum Lilies and Begonias, they selected Gardens and Glenswara nurseries (Gilgil) respectively. Mrs Saunders forwarded the names to the Department of Agriculture in October 1954.

The importers would then distribute the plants to their customers having grown and increased them in their nurseries, but this would only be after it would have been established at Muguga that the plants were free from diseases by growing them there for a necessary period.

They asked that Muguga advise them when the plants were ready so that they could inform members of the public, and this the government would do by a press notice. They also planned to have the Society's members visit Muguga and have these coincide with a "garden meeting" of the Nairobi district and they would also invite members throughout the colony to visit Muguga.

In 1955 Members received their invitation to visit the EAAFRO at Muguga on the first Saturday in November. Over 60 members managed to attend, where they were welcomed by the new director Dr E W Russell who had arrived from England after Dr Keen had retired the previous December. The visit to the EAAFRO³⁸ was a success and featured a floral display and the staff there showed them around afterwards. Also, in 1957 Simpson & Whitelaw asked the Society to approve them as importers of Begonias and this was granted.

Fourth Society Book

At the 1953 AGM, Dr Jex Blake outlined four ideas as to what the KHS could do as their next publication. They could do a fourth book or as Longmans had suggested, photographs could be taken of all pages out of which replicas of the third book be

³⁸ The facilities at Muguga are today known as KETRI and KARI.

printed. They could also re-edit and do a fourth edition without colour plates, produced by a new editor. He said that producing 5,000 copies could cost about £6,000 and while the previous three editions contained his ideas, a new editor given a free hand, might have different ideas on producing a better book for the Society. But members at the 1953 meeting suggested that no action be taken that year.

The Council then agreed in September 1955 that the Society must start collecting funds for a new edition of Gardening in East Africa or a similar publication. They appointed a sub-committee of Major Sharpe, Mrs Hale as the Hon Secretary and Mrs Carol McCrae.

The issue of printing a book made it onto the agenda of the 1956 AGM at the Norfolk Hotel. Also to be considered was whether to do a revised form of the third edition, whether to have it illustrated with colour plates and finally the cost which, going by the production cost of 5,000 copies of the third edition, a similar run would cost £7,000.

The President, Major Sharpe said that there was a great need for this fourth book and that Nairobi District had agreed to lend £1,000 while the Society had £1,300 invested that could be used. Dr Jex Blake again offered to act as Editor, but said that the £7,000 would have to be raised before publication. Also, Mrs Joy Adamson had generously offered to make colour illustrations and the President said that her paintings had greatly enhanced previous editions.

After more discussion, they unanimously resolved that the Society proceed and publish the fourth edition and that it would retail at not less than Shs42. The Council then appointed Mr Fisher to act as Honorary Treasurer for the book, with Mrs Hale as the Hon. Secretary for the Book Fund. The Council also resolved to ask the Royal Horticultural Society for a gift of a refundable loan towards the book fund and to send an appeal to KHS members.

Dr Jex Blake passed the Treasurer details of the arrangement with the printers. They were using a new firm that had a reputation for excellent work and the new book would have a table at the end of the book with details on the growth and pruning of shrubs and trees.

Dr Jex Blake donated Shs2,000 to pay for a coloured plate in the new edition. He also recommended that the selling price of the book be Shs35. At the 1957 AGM members

resolved by 19 votes to 14 that the book should sell at Shs35. This was against the proposal of the book committee that was in favour of Shs40.

The progress to publish the new book faced a few setbacks. Mr Fisher resigned as Treasurer of the book fund and at an emergency meeting in June 1957, Mr O Nesbitt volunteered to take over the work. They wrote to Mr Fisher to thank him for his past help and to ask him to hand over the books to Mr Nesbitt.

While they had not anticipated needing funds from the Society until August or September 1957, it appeared they would be required sooner. Meanwhile, Dr Jex Blake fell seriously ill. His daughter, Mrs R. Mason generously offered to cover the required amount of £2,000 for three months until the Society could make the funds available.

Unfortunately, Dr Jex Blake passed away on 16 August 1957. Mrs Grant, the President, eulogized him as a man who had done so much for horticulture in Kenya and the Society. He had been a Patron of the Society and an honorary life member who had taken a great interest in the Society. He had offered invaluable help and before his death, had completed editing the fourth Gardening book. Council members stood in silence in his memory and that of Lady McMillan another patron who had also passed away in September 1957.

Mr Nesbitt was introduced at a Council meeting at the KHS Banda in September 1957 where the issue of the price of the book was again discussed, following the AGM's vote to set the price at shs35.

However, Mr Nesbitt reported that in order for the book to be sold at Shs35, bookstores had to buy it at Shs30 and pay Shs1 for postage. This meant there was only a few shillings profit per book and booksellers would not be prepared to take large stocks of the book for such a small margin. Only 216 had been ordered and he said that if the margins were greater, Nairobi booksellers alone would order 500 or 1,000 copies. He also felt that if stocks of the book were held in Nairobi, it would be more attractive as they could draw on them as they were required.

He also cautioned that the executors of Dr Jex Blakes' estate may ask to be refunded the £1,948 they had paid to date and there was another £3,000 due. He suggested that

the book be sold at Shs40 in Kenya and that the extra Shs5 would not upset the public, but would satisfy the booksellers. The book was selling at Shs45 in England.

The Council then resolved that the price should be Shs40 and they authorized Mr Nesbitt to negotiate with Nairobi booksellers. They also moved that no reviews of the book be published in the local press until it was in bookstores. Mrs Phillips offered to ask her husband if they could store copies of the book until they were required for sale.

They appointed Bookshop Ltd as the sole distributor of the book. However, as the firm could not undertake storage of the books, they were stored at "Kyuna" home of the late Dr Jex Blake under the eye of a manager. Mr Challis and Mr Nesbitt would also check on the storage conditions and see that the books were insured.

They came up with a quadruple invoice system for the books, in which the purchaser would get two copies, the bookshop one, and the Hon Treasurer one copy. In Kenya, the bookseller was to pay Shs31 per copy to the Society. In England, Longmans Green had the sole profit from the book sold at Shs45 each. This was to recover costs of printing the book which at that stage was £4,552 of which £2,454 was to Longmans and £2,098 to Jarrolds.

It also happened that Jarrolds had been allowed to use some of the plates, but the credit offered of £150 was not considered enough. Towards these costs, Dr Jex Blake had paid forward £2,948 leaving a balance to be paid of £1,484.

More funding problems would be caused by the Forestry Department which had used certain plates for a new tree book. But even though Mrs Carol McCrae sent the bill several times, this had not been paid and Edward Honore at the Forestry Department said they had no money to pay the bill of £202.

Still, they had managed to secure an order for 500 prints of plates, 250 for Mrs Mason and 250 for the Education Department. However, the plates were the copyright of Joy Adamson who had not been asked for her permission to print extra copies. Mrs Adamson also complained that the printers had spoiled two of her pictures each worth £10. After checking if the pictures had been insured while on loan to the Society, they wrote a cheque of £20 for the two spoilt pictures to Mrs Adamson.

Mrs Carol McCrae wrote to Mrs Adamson expressing the Society's thanks for the loan of her beautiful pictures and Mr Nesbitt was asked to send her a free copy of the book.

They also proposed that Mrs Adamson be made an honorary life member in recognition of her great help in producing the fourth edition of the book to which she had lent her lovely plates. They also agreed that all proposals from districts to appoint honorary life members must be approved by the executive council.

They also endorsed their plan to present a free copy of the book to all contributors. However, there had been a delay in Longmans sending the books to Kenya.

At the 1958 AGM, Mr Nesbitt told members that 656 copies had been distributed to booksellers and 24 issued free of charge to contributors and the press. They owed the publishers £4,070, while booksellers owed them £475 and they had £319 in the bank. He estimated that they would have to sell 2,700 copies before all loans and creditors could be paid. He said the cost of delivering the book to Nairobi was Shs20 so the Society was making a profit of approximately Shs9 per copy.

Later during the election of the Committees for the year, Major Sharpe proposed that the time had come to disband the Book Committee. Mr Nesbitt agreed and said, with the help of Mr Challis, he could carry on alone.

In June 1958 the Forestry Department was still promising to pay the sum of £202 as their share of the costs for using the plates. Also, they were unable to raise money to pay the publishers and it was not easy to ascertain distribution costs as the Bookshop had changed hands. Major Murphy proposed that the Nairobi District pay the deficit but other members felt Nairobi had already been extremely generous in lending money. They agreed that Mrs Grant would go and see Mrs Adamson and explain that they would pay for the copyright when the book had been sold.

Mr Nesbitt reported in October 1958 that Mrs Mason, Mr McTurk and the Society's Rift Valley and Nairobi Districts had given the KHS interest-free loans. The executive committee agreed that these would be repaid when funds become available. Also, in October the Council met to discuss Mrs Adamson's claim on the Society for sale of the copyrights on her plates that were used in the fourth edition. They discovered that the £150 paid by Jarrolds for the copyright of the plates included those belonging to the

Museum and Mrs Adamson. They had their lawyer send what they considered a fair offer to Mrs Adamson of 13/23rds of £150 being the portion for her as the remaining plates were not her property.

However, Mrs Adamson refused to accept their offer and asked for £10 for each of the thirteen plates under discussion. The committee agreed to meet her claim for £130 as a full and final settlement and directed that half the amount be paid immediately with the remainder to be paid when funds were available from the sale of the book.

Longmans Green had also sent an invoice for their storage of the type, and Council members expressed surprise at the invoice received and directed Mr Nesbitt who was attending the meeting for this matter to ask Longmans to destroy the type.

They considered other ways of raising funds. The Council wanted the two damaged plates to be examined and, if found suitable, get quotations from England for making Christmas cards. However, this decision was put off after they discovered that the Society might still be liable for copyright even though the plates were damaged.

At the end of 1959, Mr Nesbitt gave another update to the Council. 327 books had been sold in 1959, they had paid the balance of the debt to Mrs Adamson and the estate of Dr Jex Blake had been paid £500. They still owed the estate Shs24,966, the Nairobi Branch was owed Shs24,000 and the Rift Valley Branch Shs1,000. They had £80 in the bank and were owed £60 by sellers.

Then at the 1960 AGM, after Mr Nesbit gave an update on the book, Mr Harold Gardner suggested that the building fund, which had about £300, be used to pay off the debt on the book. He took the view that the amount was too small for its original purpose to erect a building for the Society's headquarters. But Mrs Joyce said this was not a good time to sell the shares which constituted the building fund and the meeting agreed that the shares be deferred to a more opportune time. They also applauded Mrs Mason, Dr Jex Blake's daughter for declaring that the amount owed to the estate was free of interest.

President Grant told members at the 1961 AGM that the Society's founders, led by Lady Muriel, Olive Collyer and Catherine Bennett had two dreams; to have a large exhibition hall built as the property of the Society on the back of Memorial Hall and to have an

experimental garden. While these had not come to happen, she believed that Lady Muriel would understand the proposal they were now requesting to put money from the Building fund towards settling the debt for the publication of the Society's book.

Mrs Merttens, the Treasurer read her report in which income exceeded expenditure by £102. She expressed concern that subscriptions were below the numbers of 1959, but that Rift Valley and Nanyuki subscriptions were not included in the accounts. She added that Rift Valley had since sent Shs202.50.

She said that there were no projects on the horizon. She questioned if the Society was justified in retaining its investments, while the amount due to the estate of Dr Jex Blake for the publishing of the book was still outstanding. 1,687 copies had been sold and profit at the end of 1960 was £830. The liabilities were the estate of Dr Jex Blake for £1,248, the Nairobi Branch £1,200, and the Rift Valley Branch £50.

Earlier in 1961, they paid the trustees another £400. Mrs Merttens pointed out that they carried investments at cost on their books and they would fetch much less if sold. She said the only investment they could realize without a loss was their investment in the Kenya Building Society and she recommended that they withdraw £500 in this deposit and pay it over to the trustees.

The Council agreed to reduce the debt and endorsed realizing £500 from the Society's holding with the Kenya Building Society as soon as possible and for this amount to be paid to the estate of the late Dr Jex Blake. In a dissenting view, Mr Nesbitt said that if sales of the books were maintained in 1961, they would be able to pay off the debt by the end of 1961. He said that the Society's investments, other than the Building Society, should remain intact as this was not an opportune time to sell shares.

That year they withdrew funds from their savings at the Kenya Building Society and made payments of £400 and £500 to the estate of Dr Jex Blake, with the approval of the members.

By the end of 1961, the book was selling slowly and only 130 copies sold that year, taking the total to 1,817. They decided to include a paragraph about the book inside the Society handbook and constitution they were printing to gain more publicity for the book.

They considered engaging Mr J Couldrey, the Hon Legal Advisor, to collect money still owed by booksellers, notably Twiga Bookshop in Moshi.

In 1962, after 87 copies of the book were sold, they had no more stock in Nairobi. Then after receiving 200 more copies from London the following year members at the AGM discussed ways of increasing sales of the book. The Council wanted all bookshops, particularly the East African Standard shop, to stock copies and display them prominently during the show week.

Part of the reason that the book was not selling was that the new copies were stored by Mrs Rhodes of "The Bookshop". She did not charge them anything for this but neither did she do much to push sales of the books. Mr Gardner then proposed and the Council agreed that Mrs Mason should take 50 copies and try to sell them herself.

And with the sale of 132 copies of the book in 1963, the liabilities to the estate of the late Dr Jex Blake and Mr J McTurk were cleared, leaving only £500 to the KHS building fund and £1,200 to Nairobi District. The Rift Valley District had decided to donate their loan of £50 to the Society in July 1963. The Society now would use the proceeds of sales to ship the remaining copies from London.

Chelsea 1955, and The Society turns Royal

Since the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society had dropped "Horticulture" from their name in 1948, Lady Muriel undertook to write to the Royal Horticultural Society to enquire if the KHS would be eligible to use the name "Royal Horticultural Society of Kenya".

England's King George VI passed away in February 1952 while his heir Princess Elizabeth and her husband Prince Philip were on holiday in Kenya.

The Society's AGM on 28 March at the Norfolk Hotel began with a salute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and a prayer for her long reign. Major Sharpe said that members had a special and affectionate link for her as she became queen when she was happy and enjoying our country. They unanimously approved a motion on this and sent it to Governor Mitchell, to forward this resolution.

The Society's new President, Major Sharpe, wrote to the Governor, Sir Phillip Mitchell, to ask if the Queen would grant the prefix "Royal" to the Kenya Horticultural Society. The Governor saw no reason why not but advised them to wait till later in the year. Also, in 1952, they received an exception from the Societies Ordinance which meant it was not necessary to file annual returns with the Registrar of Societies.

They set about ordering badges for Life Members from the Children's Special Service Mission (CSSM) in London who quoted Shs3 for each badge. They reviewed two samples sent from the CSSM and selected the green shield with gold Gloriosa lily to be the life member badges. But the actual delivery would be held up for a few years while the Society awaited word on whether their name would change.

At this time, the KHS were members of the Royal Horticultural Society. This entitled them to six free tickets at the Chelsea Flower Show, seeds from Wisley annually and a copy of the RHS monthly bulletin. They were also members of the Rose, Dahlia and Carnation societies in England and the Royal Botanical Society of South Africa from whom they obtained seeds and publications. They ordered booklets on the rules of judging from the Rose and Carnation societies in 1953 as well as the new set of rules being compiled by the RHS.

The KHS also ordered Bronze Medals from the RHS and these were distributed to all district secretaries for presentation to outstanding exhibitors at their shows. In 1953, Bronze medals were awarded to Mr M Davis for bulbous rooted plants at the Molo show, Mr Sprunt for his trade exhibit at the Rift Valley show and to Mr and Mrs Sharp at the Nairobi show in January.

They pursued the matter of the Royal name the following year and wrote to ask Sir Evelyn Baring, the new Governor, to forward the Society's petition to her Majesty the Queen. And going by previous instances, they also invited Governor and Lady Mary Baring to do the Society the honour of becoming Patrons. The Barings' acceptance of Patronage was relayed to the members at the March 1953 AGM at Stag's Head Hotel in Nakuru.

1953 had begun with some further good news as Major Sharpe was awarded the decoration of a Commander of the British Empire by the Queen in her New Year Honours. Members congratulated him at the AGM and they also observed a minute of

silence in memory of the late beloved Queen Mother, Mary of Teck, who had passed away a few days earlier.

But it started to look like it would be a disruptive year as many members were not able to attend the AGM because of the Emergency in Kenya and this also caused a few departures from the country.

Some members traveled home for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth on 2 June and the KHS Secretary furnished them with letters of introduction to the Secretaries of the Royal Horticultural Society and the Rose, Carnation and Dahlia Societies to which the KHS was affiliated.

The Governor was still not certain if the time was ripe to approach Buckingham Palace or, given the Emergency in Kenya, to leave it until later. The Society also hoped to take the matter up in 1954 and would do this after the Queen had returned to England from a long trip to Caribbean and Pacific Commonwealth nations.

In March 1953, the Royal Agricultural Society of Kenya (RASK) asked the KHS to arrange and send four consignments of indigenous flowers to decorate the Kenya stall at the Blackpool Exhibition which would run for four days. Mrs Grant felt that as it was a commercial show, more interest would be found in displaying a fine collection of English flowers that could be grown in Kenya throughout the year rather than indigenous Kenyan flowers which might not travel well.

When Major Sharpe checked with Lt Col Allen of the RASK, they agreed that it was not feasible to send indigenous flowers and tasked 'Margaret Drummond' the florist to arrange to send a consignment of chrysanthemums to Blackpool. Also, there were the carnations from Mrs Saunders of Trans Nzoia used by a florist to make a bouquet that was handed to the Queen Mother when she visited the Rhodesian Exhibition. These early experiments probably encouraged the KHS to do more shows overseas.

In March 1955, Mrs Hugh Hardy wrote to say that she had sent in an entry for a Kenya exhibit at the RHS show and that she and Mrs Kitchener Morson would stage the exhibit. She requested financial help with air freight so that Mrs Morson could take the plants and flowers when she flew home. Members at the AGM agreed that this was an excellent idea and they referred the matter of financial help to the Council.

Dr Jex Blake contributed £5 to the freight charges and when the Council heard this, they thanked him and decided that the KHS would contribute £15, making for a total of £20 towards the freight expenses. Plans were made for suitable flowers to be sent to Messrs Grahame Bell where they would be selected and packed. Mrs Hale undertook to find helpers for this work.

Mrs Hardy later wrote to explain her preparations for receiving the KHS flowers to exhibit at the RHS show at Chelsea. The indigenous flowers, Gloriosa lilies, yellow succulent stapelia and helichrysum, sent to the RHS flower show had travelled well. Mrs McCrae, the Hon Secretary visited the exhibit in July 1955 and praised Mrs Hugh Hardy, Mrs Kitchener Morson and Mr Gerald Huggan for the fine, artistic display.

Her Majesty the Queen, who was attending the Chelsea Flower Show for the first time since her elevation, visited the Kenyan exhibit and showed great interest in it. The Queen accompanied by her uncle Sir David Bowes-Lyon who was President of the RHS expressed delight with Kenyan flowers at the show. Afterwards, Mrs Hardy and Mrs Morson were invited to the RHS's Press luncheon, where Sir David Bowes-Lyon told the guests that the one exhibit they must not miss was the Kenya one as he praised the magnificent effort of the gardeners in spite of the emergency situation in Kenya.

When the Council received this news in September, Major Sharpe proposed that the Council send congratulations and thanks to Mrs Morson, Mrs Hardy and Mr Huggan for arranging the exhibit and Mr Grahame Bell, Mrs Hale and all the helpers in Kenya who had collected and packed the flowers and plants. He noted that much had been learnt for any similar exhibits in future.

They decided to find a good photograph of the exhibit and frame it for the office and to ask Mrs Morson for a short description of the work of staging the exhibit.

In 1955 they invited Lady Mary Baring to grace their AGM, this time at Government House on the morning of 17 March. She presented silver medals of the Royal Horticultural Society's affiliated societies to Dr Jex Blake, Miss Bessie Lovibond, Mr Grahame Bell, Miss Catherine Bennett and Major Sharpe. The Society presented Lady Baring with a copy of their new Gardening in East Africa book that was inscribed by its editor Dr Jex Blake.

Major Sharpe noted the recovery efforts made during the year 1954 noting that gardeners had not done too badly amid the troubles and worry in the country. He added that gardening was a tonic that would not be taken down by war, rebellion or an emergency.

That month, the Council also dealt with a delicate matter. This was to anticipate that, in the event that the Queen consented to grant her Royal Patronage to the Society, she would become its sole Patron. The Hon Secretary was asked to write to all the patrons who at the time were Sir Evelyn Baring, Lady Mary Baring, Sir Philip Mitchell, Lady McMillan, Dr Jex Blake and Lady Northcote.

The criteria set for the Queen's patronage and royal status were eminence, long-standing, secure financial position and devotion to national, charitable or scientific objectives.

There is little doubt that exhibiting at Chelsea may have paid immediate dividends. The KHS was found to fulfil the above criteria with its activities that included holding shows in the colony and in London. The KHS founded in 1923, was in a secure financial position and was devoted to the scientific objective of horticulture with activities similar to the RHS. It had also published four editions of the Gardening Book. The Society was also responsible for the care of the garden at the Queen's Lodge at Sagana and the KHS President had given the Queen a tour when she had visited Kenya. Government records credited Major Sharpe with designing and planting the garden at Sagana.³⁹

The 1956 AGM held in March at the Norfolk began with the good news that the Queen had consented⁴⁰ to become the patron of the Kenya Horticultural Society. The President thanked all the former patrons of the Society for their help and support and for standing down from this office to allow Her Majesty to be the sole patron.

Also, at the next AGM, the President presented Mr Huggan with two books on behalf of the Society to thank him for his work with the KHS exhibit at Chelsea.

³⁹ KHS file at the National Archives, Nairobi, Kenya.

⁴⁰ KHS general meeting minutes, 27 March 1956

A letter of thanks was sent to the Queen through the Private Secretary and they later wrote to enquire from Buckingham Palace whether the KHS came within the category of Societies able to use the prefix "Royal." A confirmation letter was received in July 1956, and the President informed the executive committee that Her Majesty the Queen had graciously granted the Society permission to call itself the "The Royal Kenya Horticultural Society".

They had already arranged for the purchase of 200 badges for life members, a process that they had started in 1952 but immediately a new design embodying the letter "R" was chosen and they notified the suppliers of this. Mrs Brian Allen suggested that they also decorate the Royal Box at Mitchell Park, but it was resolved that the City Parks should do this as they had ample supplies of material and beautiful decorations

After all was done, Mrs Hugh Hardy had to pay £5.14s.2d. in customs duty above what was granted by the Society towards expenses. However, the KHS Council considered that several members had also paid out of pocket towards the exhibit and they regretted that it was not possible to refund this enhanced sum to Mrs Hardy.

During HRH Princess Margaret's visit to Kenya in 1956, Ms Joan Hotblack had decorated Government House and a special arrangement of indigenous flowers was put in the Princess's room with a card showing they had come from members of the KHS all over the colony. They also placed a copy of "Gardening in East Africa" as a gift.

In September 1957 The Director of Agriculture Mr Roger Swynnerton wrote to ask if it was possible to have the Society organize a commercial exhibit at Chelsea, but they declined to undertake this.

A few months later, some flowers from Kenya were displayed at the BOAC stand of the Chelsea Show but that drew a letter of disappointment from Mrs F S Dunn. Mr Challis, the Deputy President later interviewed the BOAC manager and Margaret Drummond who would be at the Chelsea Show was assured that future displays would be carefully supervised. There was no direct RKHS overseas activity in 1958, but Mr Challis was assured by BOAC that their display at Chelsea would be carefully supervised.

Later in 1958, the Society asked Government House whether a bowl of decorative flowers, probably a collection of epidendrums, could be put in the room of Her Majesty

the Queen Mother during her Royal tour of Kenya. During her visit the Queen Mother was to open Nairobi Airport on 8 March 1958 but she did not make the trip as her flight from Australia was diverted due to plane trouble⁴¹. So Embakasi Airport was opened by the Governor of Kenya, Sir Evelyn Baring.

When the Queen Mother finally made her trip in February 1959, the Society sent orchids and Barberton daisies to form part of the bouquet presented to her when she attended a dinner in her honour at the Club. The Orchid Society staged an exhibit at Chelsea that year.

A few years later, in 1962, the Society sent an arrangement of wonderful blooms arranged by Mr Harold Gardner to the Commonwealth Institute in London. The Institute requested flowers from Kenya, so the KHS and the Kenya Orchid Society put together orchids and flowers that were ferried by BOAC to London. They were also used to prepare a bouquet that was presented to Queen Elizabeth at the official opening of the Institute. Others were used to decorate rooms at the event and as the Queen toured the new venue, she carried her bouquet and many pictures were taken that appeared in the British press.⁴² The operation was deemed an unqualified success and the Council resolved to meet the costs of sending the flowers and to request photographs of the arrival and arrangements of the flowers at the Institute.

Emergency years and Impact

1952 was a good year for the Society. The President said they were now nearing 1000 members with 100 life members. Flower shows had been staged at Nairobi, Nyeri, Nakuru, Kitale, Eldoret, Molo, Kericho, Nanyuki and Thomson's Falls with improved showmanship. During the year Molo formed a new district, Sotik had joined the Society and Mombasa was considering this. Trans Nzoia and Eldoret societies would now function as branches.

But 1953 looked like it would be a disruptive year following the State of Emergency that was declared by the British Government in Kenya the previous October. There were a few departures at the beginning of the year. Mrs Grant, the Deputy President who lived

⁴¹ Queen Mother leaves Australia <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9WF-qVIycc>

⁴² KHS file at the National Archives, Nairobi, Kenya

in the Rift Valley, resigned owing to the Emergency and at the AGM a few weeks later, Major A Murphy was elected as Deputy President.

Colonel P L Collisson resigned as Hon Treasurer as his health was failing and Major Sharpe proffered the Society's thanks for all his hard work for the Society. They then asked Lady Rhodes to act as Hon Treasurer.

Mrs McCrae also decided to go home on indefinite leave and she was replaced by Mrs Swynnerton. Also retiring that month was Mrs Yonge, the Nairobi Secretary and Mrs Hale, a committee member, who would both be travelling home.

The AGM was set for Nakuru, at the Stag's Head Hotel on 27 March 1953. They would use the drawing room of the hotel, and have a Council meeting in the morning and possibly another in the afternoon.

The fighting between the British soldiers and the Mau Mau was mainly in the areas of Central Kenya and the districts of Kiambu, Nyeri, Fort Hall (Murang'a) and Embu around Central Kenya. This also meant disruption of social and business activities. As such, Aberdare and Naivasha districts were not able to hold shows from 1953 due to the Emergency and they closed down temporarily.

Aberdare comprised three branches of Nyeri, Nanyuki and Thompson's Falls. The Thompson's Falls branch was not as affected as the other two and managed to host two shows in 1955. Thompson's Falls officials approached the KHS in July 1955 and asked if they would consider splitting the Aberdare district into three separate districts.

Nyeri and Nanyuki were not keen to separate and asked Major Sharpe, the President of the KHS to arbitrate but he felt they ought to amicably discuss the proposition first and then only ask him to arbitrate when difficulties arose. Eventually, when they agreed to the split, the Council now helped deal with the issue of dividing the cups that had belonged to the district.

Meanwhile, the executive committee had to make several requests to Naivasha for their funds in 1957. Eventually, the Naivasha branch sent in their funds to headquarters and the KHS Council decided to hold the funds in a suspense account until the branch started again.

The Treasurer told members that the main source of income for the Society was now the 25% of annual subscriptions from the various districts. He cautioned that it would no longer be possible to increase the Society's general fund or add to its investments and that other sources of annual revenue would have to be sought.

Also, to meet liabilities in the building fund and the Lady Muriel Memorial Fund, it would be necessary to make inroads into the Society's investments, reducing its revenue from dividends, which was a pity.

However, after discussion members still voted that subscriptions should not be increased. They suggested that when conditions were more favourable in the Colony, a plant sale would be held - perhaps at Mitchell Park to raise funds for the head office expenses so that capital need not be used to meet recurring expenditure.

Trans Nzoia District wrote in March 1953 resolving that members pay Shs1 entry for all shows, and abolish the concession of free entries at all shows. The President told the Council that while the KHS Constitution indicated that Districts may manage their own shows, members at the AGM had resolved that all districts of the KHS should allow members of any district four free entries at shows. He said that Trans Nzoia should allow the districts to discuss this resolution before altering their existing arrangement. That said, Trans Nzoia could arrange their own charges as long as these were stated on the schedules and clearly advertised.

The 1954 AGM was back in Nairobi at the Norfolk Hotel, and began with a moment of silence in memory of Major W B Brook, a Vice President of the Society, who had passed away. He had been an ardent member of many years and a letter of condolence and a wreath had been sent to Mrs Brook from the KHS and the Nairobi District.

Besides the emergency, 1953 was a tough year because of the drought. There were no shows in Aberdare and the Rift Valley because of the Emergency while shows in Eldoret were put out of action by drought conditions.

Major Sharpe told members that the Central area was going through distressing times, and he himself lived far from Nairobi in an Emergency district. Fortunately, other

members had gardens close to Nairobi and spending time in them was a useful antidote for shattered nerves.

The period was marked by few meetings and shows. Noticeably, as during the War, the attendance at meetings became largely a ladies' affair. Membership was still above 1000 although they did not have full details from Aberdare and Naivasha and he said that the Society had received little income from districts or information about when they would be received.

The tough times continued and as they did not have enough resources to open a trust fund account, it was decided to liquidate some securities into cash. This was due to the Society's decision to donate shs5,000 to the Lady Muriel Memorial Fund and an honorarium of £50 to Mrs Adamson. They resolved to close the Post Office Savings Bank account and place the proceeds in the current account at Barclays Bank. The Nairobi District offered to contribute £75 towards the £250 donated by the KHS to the Lady Muriel Memorial fund.

It was still not possible to host a colony-wide plant sale and it was proposed that the Society organize a floral academy like the ones held in England. The Orchid Society would stage an exhibit and commercial firms would be invited to stage flowers, plants and gardening tools. Members selected to organize a Floral Academy were Mrs Montgomery, Mrs Ruben, Miss Ryle Shaw, Mrs Hale, Mrs Sanders and Mrs McCrae.

After more discussions, they voted 14 to 12 to raise the subscription rate to Shs15. This would be endorsed at a special general meeting. However, the Council that met the same afternoon of 30 March 1954, right after the AGM, shot down the proposal to raise the subscription rate by a vote of 7 to 3.

The Emergency had resulted in subscriptions falling off in the Aberdare and Naivasha districts. The President suggested that they be asked to pay by banker's order while Major Murphy proposed that, in the event of a life member moving from his or her district, that person would remain a member of the Society. They would also write to district treasurers reminding them to insure their cups, tables and equipment, and to also add 50 cents to upcountry cheques.

They also voted to open a special bank account for the Lady Muriel Memorial Garden Fund, place the proceeds from the savings account into the Society's current account at Barclays, and also to apply the £75 pledged by the Nairobi District towards the £250 subscribed by the Society.

In the year 1954, things were better, with flower shows continuing, and Major Sharpe was able to attend most of them. He told members at the 1955 AGM that Kitale had outstanding roses, Thompson's Falls had good fuchsias, Molo was a small show with wonderful bulbous rooted flowers, Limuru had some unbelievably fine daffodils while Eldoret had a high standard of everything and clockwork efficiency. The Council that met after the AGM approved the awarding of the RHS Silver medal to Miss Catherine Bennett and Miss Bessie Lovibond.

With their limited funding, they continued their outreach. In 1954 the Appeal Secretary for the new European Hospital (Nairobi Hospital today) had written asking the Society to donate funds to buy flowering trees and shrubs and give them to the hospital. It was felt that the Society was not in a position to give financial help, but members were asked to give plants and trees of the kind requested. Later Limuru and Lower Kabete would send flowers twice a week to decorate the entrance of the hospital⁴³ for three months each, and other districts in Nairobi were asked to chip in, as well as to give help, advice and plants to the hospital for their gardens.

The tough times continued in the latter years of the emergency. In 1956 they deferred producing Christmas cards as there were many calls on the Society's funds that year. Mrs Irwin of Trans Nzoia District whose line drawings of wildflowers were printed in the E A Field, Farm & Garden offered to do a series of illustrations for a calendar but the Council decided that a calendar was not possible and asked her to submit a design for a Christmas Card.

In March 1956, a Council meeting rescinded an earlier Council resolution from March 1954 and resolved that in future, districts of the Society should keep their proportion of Life Members subscriptions.

⁴³ The Nairobi Hospital was built in 1954

They also sought to have the Chief Customs Officer waive customs duty on the Society badges, but without success. The final price was Shs4.25 which they found acceptable.

Despite the challenges they still felt there was no room for commercial firms to advertise and in July 1956 they declined a request from Edward Robson who wanted to advertise insecticides at the Nairobi flower shows.

After the Aberdare split in 1956, the President told the Council he hoped that Naivasha, Sotik and Kericho would start up again as there were many enthusiastic gardeners in those districts. Mrs Powis suggested that Hon Secretaries in these districts be asked to send reports of their activities to be included in the President's Report if no representative would be present at the AGM.

The 1957 AGM in March at the Norfolk began with kind words about Mr Grahame Bell, Vice President of the Society for many years, who passed away in early 1957. He was remembered by the President for being a staunch and loyal supporter of the Society and his work for horticulture had been of great and lasting value for Kenya. He had brought many wonderful flowers and plants into the colony for gardeners.

The President told the AGM in 1957 that the Society now had 1,113 members which was satisfactory but that they needed more young members to take an interest. Different districts presented their report for the year past. Mrs Bastard, Secretary of Mount Kenya (Nanyuki) reported that the district had revived after the difficult years of the emergency and they had staged a small flower show in August. Limuru and Rift Valley had both planned shows, but had to cancel them due to weather, while Nairobi with 486 members held two flower shows and sales of plants.

At the 1957 AGM the Hon Mrs Eleanor Lillian Grant was elected as President, taking over from Major Sharpe. The Deputy was Mr Brian Challis taking over from Major Murphy, while Mr Fisher also tendered his resignation as Hon Treasurer.

The auditor's report was not ready in time for the March 1957 AGM meeting. Lady Rhodes said her report would only be on the bank balance of Shs5,019. She said that, as Gill & Johnson were extremely busy, Mrs Graham who was a qualified accountant should be asked to undertake the auditing of the Society's books and be paid £5. This was proposed by Mr Fisher and seconded by Mrs Peter Johnson.

They would also host the next Council meeting at the Show Banda on 18 October 1957 where they would also pass the accounts. This had not been done at the AGM. It was felt unnecessary and expensive to call a special general meeting to approve the accounts. Another economizing measure was to limit the number of copies of the balance sheet to be sent to each district.

President Grant later described 1957, her first year as President, as one of encouragement. She said not a single show had been cancelled. This was a good record of the efforts by District Presidents and Secretaries, to put up shows of high quality and great interest. There had also been an encouraging number of new exhibitors and the novice classes were busier than ever. She mentioned that big shows put a strain on organisers and nearly all ended in a financial loss, but that shows must be held, as it was the object of the Society to create and increase interest in horticulture throughout Kenya. Horticulture meant gardening, shows were educative, and a great source of joy for the public.

During the year, floral displays had gained popularity in the districts following the lead of Nairobi and had attracted flowers as gifts from Eldoret, Nanyuki, Molo, Nyeri, Nakuru and Ol Joro Orok, creating a link between town and country.

She lamented that 1957 had seen the death of many of their esteemed supporters, at a level not seen since the Society had started in 1923. These included Lady McMillan, their patron of many years, Mrs Percival and Mr Robin McCrae, also of Dr Jex Blake. However, they must all rejoice that the horticultural world had gained possession of copies of *Gardening in East Africa* in his memory. The members stood in memory of these names read. Mr Peter Bally, who had been in Kenya since 1930, was leaving his post of the Coryndon Museum for reasons of health to move to a Botanical Garden in the south of France.

In 1958, floral arrangement classes started in June under instruction by Mrs Stephens of Margaret Drummond Limited and she hoped to increase lectures to cover the whole colony. Mrs Joy Fleming also wrote from Johannesburg offering to give lectures and classes on formal arrangements when she visited Nairobi.

The March 1958 AGM was an evening affair at the Norfolk Hotel and President, Mrs Grant, said that this break from the past custom was purposely done to combine the meeting with the Nairobi Floral Display and to give as many upcountry members as possible a chance to experience the beauty of the scene and to enjoy an evening while having serious discussions, arguments and gossip about horticulture.

There was no discussion of the financial report at the 1958 AGM as Mrs Merttens had only just received the balance sheet. She mentioned that unfortunately in the year 1957 expenses exceeded income by Shs1,318.45 and this was mainly because of the cost of printing the Constitution of over £100. There was also £41 which was the cost of a 1956 Florida Display. She mentioned that without those two items, costs were comparable to the previous period, while subscriptions were about 8% above those of 1956.

The AGM resulted in a Floral Arrangement Club being started in September 1958. Later the Club indicated that they wished to become a branch of the Society. As this would involve a change of the constitution of the Society, they were asked to apply formally. This was done in January 1959 and they were accepted in principle. It was then decided that the 1959 AGM, to be held on 20 March would be asked to approve amendments to the Society's constitution, changing para. 2 to read "horticulture and allied arts" and para. 8 to read "shall consist of all Districts and specialized units wishing to belong to it." The new club would then be allowed to take over one section of floral displays that the Society organized. They also proposed to hold a Rose Show in June 1959 which would include members from upcountry.

President Grant hoped that the Floral Arrangement branch would become a much-desired revenue earner for the Society as they could lay out displays in conjunction with other social events such as dog shows and gymkhanas during the seasons when full-blown flower shows would not be practical. Also, floral displays appealed to a wider range of participants than flower shows and would be a popular link between town and country interests.

Floral arrangements became a popular activity all over the colony and it was considered of mutual benefit to have them as an integral part of the Society under the horticulture umbrella. The floral displays brought a profit of Shs3,475 and were largely responsible for income exceeding expenses by shs5,017 in the financial report of the Society for 1958, improving on the loss the previous year of shs1,318.

There was also a refund of income tax of Shs732 after the Society had pursued the matter with authorities. They had been granted a full exemption on tax deducted from dividends for the past few years.

On the balance sheet, the credit was Shs7,943. The president told the AGM that they had put Shs7,000 in a savings deposit at the Kenya Building Society where it would earn 5% while they decided on a final investment. She recommended that they purchase seven Kenya Building Society £50 shares as it was unsound to have too much money remaining in their current account.

In January 1958 Mrs Carol McCrae stepped down as Hon Secretary but she also offered to stay on the committee. Mrs Powis took over as an interim role but Mrs Carol McCrae proposed that Mrs Hale take over the role formally as Mrs Powis was going on overseas leave.

And at the end of 1958, Mrs Merttens returned from leave to take over the position of Hon Treasurer again while Mrs Hale who was leaving the country, tendered her resignation as Hon Secretary. She was replaced by Mrs Grahame Bell in a temporary role. In June 1959 they offered Mrs Betten to take up the role.

Also, at the 1959 AGM, Mrs Grahame Bell stepped down as Hon Secretary. She continued for a while until Mrs Betten was confirmed as Hon Secretary in December 1959.

KHS Office and the Mitchell Park Banda

In April 1951, they asked Mrs Grant to plan a banda (shed) for the KHS with the Royal Agricultural Society after the realignment of the railway serving the Kabete showground had made it imperative to find a new site for shows.

KHS members met for a mid-year progress report in October 1951 at the conference room of the RASK at Nakuru. A banda had been set up at Nakuru for RKHS by the RASK. Mr J S Adams, Hadley Farm Nurseries, Kinja Nurseries, Colonel Butt and Mr Sanders had all donated flowers and Mr Grahame Bell had sent Mr Wood up to decorate it with plants and flowers.

Colonel Collisson was advised by Mr R A Hammond that the KHS should apply for a plot of land at the Mitchell Park showground in Nairobi. This was a time when the KHS faced uncertainty around their office at Memorial Hall which made them consider other venues to use.

The Park site was an accidental discovery by Sir Philip Mitchell, who used to ride to the open ground in the forest near Dagoretti corner. He then became instrumental in securing land for the RASK. This later came to include the adjoining fields where the Polo club and Kennel club sit today. Mitchell Park was where Nairobi had its first major agricultural show in 14 years in June 1952, which Sir Philip Mitchell opened just before he retired as Governor of Kenya.

The Treasurer told the Executive Committee that other societies were already building at Mitchell Park and that something would have to be done about the KHS Banda. It was a year of heavy expenditure with large donations having been paid out. The Treasurer suggested that £100 of the £300 in the building fund could be spent on the banda. Mr Hackett of Blakett Saw Mills had suggested that a cheap effective building could be made of second-class planks with large shingles outside and he would be able to arrange for timber from Timsales. Major and Mrs Robin McCrae were asked to look into the prices of materials.

President Grant thought that the RASK should give them a banda for free or at a low price if it was not used for trade purposes. They agreed that the KHS could spend a maximum of £15 and that the Kenya Arbor Society would probably contribute another £10 to the expense of a banda.

The RASK offered to erect the banda for the KHS at the showground for Shs100. The Secretary said that the site was an excellent one near the Secretary's office and under some trees.

When the banda was ready they sent a circular to nurserymen in the colony asking them to help decorate it. Several wrote back offering a vase of flowers or a pot plant. In December 1951, Mr Wood decorated the Banda with beautiful plants and flowers from Closeburn and they sent him a copy of Gardening in East Africa as a gift of thanks.

The members also resolved that they would sell their booklet there and also take up new subscriptions. They also considered doing gardening talks there. Mr Grahame Bell asked the Coffee Board of Kenya to provide coffee in the KHS Banda. This was not possible but the KFA whose stand was next door to the KHS would provide soft drinks, tea and coffee.

In preparing the banda for the June 1952 show, the KHS was greatly helped by Mrs Yonge, the Hon Treasurer for Nairobi. Also, Mr Greensmith and Mr Grahame Bell offered plants while nurserymen had been asked to send in their catalogues, and helpers had been requested through the district secretaries. The Kenya Arbor Society would share the banda and put up an exhibit.

The Treasurer, Colonel Collisson said that there was a surplus in the account of £1,380 but two large commitments were pending - £250 to the Lady Muriel Memorial Fund and £100 for the banda plot at Mitchell Park. He suggested that the building fund which had Shs6,331 or £316 accumulated over 14 years could be used to pay for the banda.

Mrs Brian Allen suggested that they should decorate the Royal Box at Mitchell Park, but they resolved that the City Parks should do this as they had ample supplies of material and beautiful decorations.

The president went to see Col Allen in 1954 to enquire about rent for the KHS plot at Mitchell Park. He wanted to find out if they would be required to pay £5 for a stand at the Nakuru show and £5 for rent at Mitchell Park.

The situation was dicey and this necessitated Major Sharpe calling an emergency meeting of the executive committee in January 1955. He explained that the RASK had sent a letter asking KHS to confirm by 31 January if they wished to lease the plot at the show in September 1955. He further sought a meeting with Mr Watts Williams, President of the RASK or Colonel Allen to see what arrangements could be made for rent. Mr Gardner proposed that Nairobi district could pay half if it was not possible to get the plot for free, but that his district would not agree to pay additional costs of a plot or stand at Nakuru when the show was held there.

They resolved that unless other educational and philanthropic organizations paid comparable rents for their stands, the KHS would abandon the plot and remove their banda, unless they could sell it to a new tenant.

Things were not improving at Memorial Hall. In 1955 they sought a meeting with Mr Cavendish-Bentinck to ask for a larger and better office for the Society. Memorial Hall, through a letter from Miss Gilliland, had offered an upstairs office but this was considered unsuitable for the Nairobi District who hosted shows and they held out for a downstairs room to become available. The President would meet Mr Cavendish-Bentinck and also suggest that a full complement of trustees be appointed to manage the hall.

In 1956, the RASK reclaimed the KHS plot at Mitchell Park so they could put up a larger building. They allocated the KHS another plot behind the High Commission, and diagonally opposite the old plot. A ten-year lease was signed at a rental of Shs200 per annum. Major Murphy said the old banda would be removed but that he doubted if any material could be used again. The Council agreed that £100 could be spent on a banda at the new site and Major Murphy offered to undertake the building of the new banda.

Later that year Mr Grahame Bell offered to combine his plot with the KHS and host it on an enlarged plot at Mitchell Park. To enhance their exhibit for the September RASK show they also planned a garden irrigation model made by Mr Paul Crompton with Mr Greensmith lending his cutting box to benefit many new gardeners. They would also host the next Council meeting at the KHS banda on 30 September during the RASK Show at Mitchell Park.

Deputy President Major Murphy was building the banda. They added more items. Paul Crompton did stonework and fixed the water pump, while Mrs Crompton arranged a water garden at the banda during a show. She was assisted by Mrs Saunders with planting and flowers, some of which were donated by Mrs Baradell, while Mrs Dunn had helped with transportation.

They would purchase four nesting chairs for the banda and tasked Mrs Carol McCrae with sourcing plants for the garden and a new signboard with an arrow pointing to the banda.

They would put the banda in their books as a capital expenditure item that would depreciate by 10%. They had taken temporary insurance from Smith McCrae & Johnson, and when they agreed to insure the banda for £150, they left the policy with the same firm.

In November 1957, they settled on £20 as an annual quota for expenses for their garden at Mitchell Park, with another £10 for the upkeep of the plot. After that, Mr and Mrs Classen took on the care of the banda while Mr Huggan outlined plans for improving the site. They approved £30 for this work.

A sub-committee was formed to look after the banda and a notice was sent to members requesting plants to be donated along with other requirements. Mrs Crompton continued working on the banda in 1959 and in June they granted £40 to be paid to cover transport and other expenses.

In 1958 the Memorial Hall offered them a new room in the building at an increased rent of Shs200 per month. The room had been sourced by Mrs Montgomery. Mr Gardner hoped to negotiate a reduced rent with Sir Ferdinand Cavendish-Bentinck. They also resolved that the Hon Secretary should retain the post box key and collect mail as had been done in the past and insure the typewriter.

The typewriter was now ancient and it was decided to request funds from the Glencairn-Campbell bequest, which had been intended for equipment, to buy a new typewriter. Mrs Flowerdew made enquiries to find the best typewriter and in August they approved the purchase of a Remington typewriter for £35.

Meanwhile, the Society fell behind in their rent for the office at Memorial Hall between 1957 and 1959. They finally cleared the arrears with a payment of Shs1,687.50 in December 1959 and Mrs Merttens, the Hon Treasurer, confirmed that they were now up to date.

Going into 1960, the KHS became serious about solidifying the Banda site at Mitchell Park. They had been offered a banda with more space but members at the 1961 AGM considered the space they had to be adequate.

A banda sub-committee was formed of Mrs Crompton, Mrs Hughes, Mrs Classen, Mrs Morson, Mr Sutherst and Mr Hazeldine. Closeburn Nurseries were tasked with watering and upkeep of the grass.

Mrs Crompton remained in charge of the banda till 1962 when she asked Mr Merryweather to take over. The Council looked at his ideas and allocated a sum of Shs200 on the understanding that he should approach a member of the Council if he had to undertake more expenditure.

However, at the end of the year, the Council was dissatisfied with the condition of the banda which they found unsuitable. Mr Challis said that Mr Merryweather had failed to keep the banda in an attractive condition for the show. They wrote to Mr Merryweather, thanking him for his services, and asking him to refund any balance of the Shs200 advanced to him.

Mrs Mason said that she had inspected an attractive but much smaller site near the Muthaiga Club tent. It had a higher rent of Shs600 but she felt that it could be reduced to Shs300 and resolved to approach Mr Fernandez, Secretary of the RASK about this. They also decided to set up a working committee, with representatives of Nairobi and Limuru Districts led by Mrs Mason, and also co-opt a member who was an experienced landscape gardener to assist. Mrs Hardy said that the Floral Arrangement Club would supply floral arrangements and Mrs Brice offered to bring an experienced gardener once a week to supervise watering.

In 1963, they moved to the new site that was more central. They put up a smaller building, paved the floor, and laid out a rock garden all at a low cost. Mrs Agar suggested that the Society hold a flower show at Mitchell Park during the Royal Show set for 1963, but when the Council met in May 1963, they found that this was impractical. The site lacked suitable accommodation and it was difficult to bring in fresh flowers during the four days under the existing stringent traffic arrangements. In any case, members would be preoccupied with attending the Royal Show.

But take part in the Royal Show they did. They made improvements, with Mr Richard Wilson painting the backdrop, Mr Hammond improving the grass and Mr Crompton installing water. They used the new site to further their activities, signing up 11 new members and selling 4 copies of Gardening in East Africa.

Later Mrs Classen suggested they release cash tied up in the old banda by dismantling it and using items like the wire netting to improve the new banda or selling others on auction. Mrs Mason offered to take charge of the banda for the 1964 show.

Constitutional changes 1959-61

Speaking at the 1959 AGM, President Grant called on members to be more active in the Society as officers and contribute dynamic ideas to stimulate the districts. She wanted to see a colony-wide flower show or at least a rose show, to be a national spectacle like a Kenyan Chelsea.

They proposed a resolution to create the Floral Arrangements Districts Unit and which could also lead to other “specialized units” such as rose societies and succulents, and the vote was referred to the Council.

It was agreed that the Society’s Constitution should be amended. Mrs Grant formed a sub-committee in March 1959 of Mr Brian Challis, Mr Huggan and the legal advisor Mr Jack Couldrey to review the constitution and to later, if necessary, call for a special general meeting to pass the amendments.

During the year, members sent in their suggestions on amending the constitution to make it work correctly and identify sections that were unworkable. Mr Challis collated these suggestions to be presented at a special meeting. Some of the recommendations were that the Royal Kenya Horticultural Society would consist of district branches and such specialized branches who wished to be associated with the Society, and which the Council considered eligible.

District branches would consist of life members, honorary members and annual members. Each district would have a committee consisting of a Chairman, Honorary Secretary/Treasurer and not more than nine members who would submit an annual report of their activities with a statement of account to headquarters by the 15 January each year.

The Society’s Council would comprise the President, Deputy President and ex-officio members of all committees. They would meet twice annually instead of quarterly. The

Treasurer would deal with the financial affairs of the Society except for major matters on which they would be instructed by the Council. Also, there would be an Executive Council consisting of members of the Society and three other members elected by the Council that would meet quarterly.

Also, to firm up their finances, any member who had not paid subscriptions by 30 June would cease to be a member of the Society, and only resume on payment of the full subscription. They would also allow junior members instead of junior branches and honorary life members would be elected at the AGM.

Mr Challis recommended that one copy of the proposed changes to the constitution be sent out with the minutes to each district and any questions could be referred to him at his P O Box 541 Nairobi address. It was also pointed out that any change of the Constitution would have to be notified to Buckingham Palace (because of the Royal title) as well as to the Registrar of Societies.

Addressing members at the 1960 AGM at the Norfolk, President Grant, who lived at Gikammeh Farm in Njoro, called on members "to elect a younger, more knowledgeable and more dynamic President preferably someone living near Nairobi" for the Society. Such a person would share the burden of work with officeholders and create stronger links between the headquarters and the branches.

She said membership had grown by 100 to 1,327 and they now had 10 districts from each of which two representatives would be elected to join the Council. By the constitution, the Council would also have the officers of the Society, past presidents and past vice presidents, but she asked that members should also consider the recommendations in the new constitution.

She said she wanted to give members more for their money, more facilities when attending shows overseas, more benefits, such as seeds from affiliated societies, more public relations with important people visiting Kenya, more library facilities, and more of a feeling that they were a united body working in the interest of horticulture throughout Kenya as their constitution stated.

She also congratulated Mr Peter Greensmith who had become an associate of honour of the Royal Horticultural Society and thanked him for his services. She asked members

to remember Miss Bessie Lovibond, a founder member who had died in April 1959. She also expressed sympathy to Mrs Joyce whose husband, Major Frank Joyce had tragically passed away in Kericho only four days after Mrs Joyce had attended their last AGM in Nairobi.

With the Hon Mrs Grant reiterating her desire not to stand for re-election as President, some nominations were put forward, but different ladies and gentlemen who had been proposed declined on various grounds. Mr George Classen, who was one of them, said that the office of the President was one of honour that required someone of status and experience and that it should not be the subject of an election at an AGM where few members were present. He felt it should be a colony-wide vote by postal ballot through the branches and that this should be embodied in the new constitution on the election of the president. While he was willing to assist the President as her Deputy, he requested President Grant to carry on for a further period until the new constitution came into force and a fresh ballot was held.

A special meeting was held at the Norfolk Hotel in March 1960 to review the Constitution where Mr Challis addressed the 31 members present on the suggestions he had received for incorporation.

Mr Harold Gardner felt that district branches should be autonomous units and form a federation that would be represented at the main Society. Each district would be free to arrange its activities and fix its rates of subscriptions, while the main Society would be a coordinating body, which he felt was its proper function.

Major Hallows agreed with Mr Gardner and said that districts had difficulty arranging their annual general meeting to be held in time for a report to be submitted to the main Society.

Mr Jack Couldrey, who was on leave and not able to attend the meeting, was tasked to scrutinize these suggestions and put them into a final amended draft. This new constitution, after being accepted by all members, would then be printed and would supersede their current constitution.

Mr Challis again reminded them to be careful to comply with legal technicalities so that their status as a "Royal Society" would not be impaired. George Classen pointed out

that the Society's constitution omitted any proof that it had any rights to its "Royal" title and did not mention that Her Majesty the Queen was their Patron. He proposed that the letters authorising the Society to be "Royal" be added to the new constitution when it was printed while Major Hallows proposed that an account of the founding of the Society also be printed in the new constitution. These proposals were all endorsed.

Mr George Classen, who was now the Deputy President, presented a draft of the new rules at the Council meeting in December 1960. He explained that they had been achieved with legal advice from Mr Croft Wilcock after he discovered that the Society's honorary legal advisor, Mr Jack Couldrey had unexpectedly gone to England for several months. President Grant had approved that advice is sought from Mr Wilcock as any delay would have affected the production of a draft.

The Constitution comprised five sets of rules, numbered as sections A to E and the Council considered the rules, paragraph by paragraph, and it was agreed that they would be incorporated in a final draft to be laid before the AGM in 1961.

President Grant opened the 1961 AGM with her appreciation of the long history of the Society and the hard work that Messrs Classen and Croft Wilcock had done to draft the constitution. She asked members to consider the draft constitution that these two gentlemen had laboriously produced.

Membership had risen to 1,341 in 1960 which she said was a terrible year in terms of climate, but that all ten branches had carried out activities with success and financial profit. Notable was Mombasa which had held a demonstration at Mazeras Nurseries in March and opened its headquarters in April, followed by a film show, flower show and sale of plants in the year. Molo had a tree planting and a plant sale at the Molo Theatre Garden. She again asked branch secretaries to keep the headquarters apprised of their schedules to avoid clashes of dates.

Members at the 1961 AGM meeting reviewed and debated the draft constitution that had been circulated to all districts in December 1960. Mr George Classen explained that their objective was not to change the relationship between the districts and the main Society. It was to harmonize the Society that had received worldwide recognition and to bind the districts together in a harmonious whole which would not lose its stature, while at the same time allowing districts full autonomy in their areas. Another of the key

resolutions was that the Society would consist of Districts while specialized activities would be termed as branches.

Major Hallows, Chairman of the Trans Nzoia District, objected to the clause which stated that the Council, as the governing body of the Society would control all funds of the Society and give directives to Districts about private funds. In reply, he was assured that it was not the intention of the Society to have any say regarding funds or arrangements of shows or other activities in the districts unless they were not being carried out in accordance with the accepted rules of the Society. Once assured, he said that the Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu districts would pass the constitution and suggested that the next AGM be held in Trans Nzoia, adding that his district would offer hospitality to any member who was able to attend

Mrs Grant agreed to continue as President until the constitution was effected through a postal ballot. But Mrs Mertens who expected to spend a considerable amount of time in the UK in 1961 and 1962, stepped down as the Hon Treasurer. Mr George Classen continued as Deputy President and Mrs G A Classen as Hon Secretary.

The Council later granted Mr Classen the power to sign cheques with Mrs Grant, as they were without a Hon Treasurer. However, Mr Classen would later confess that he had been a “very bad treasurer” who, with the limited time he could offer, had only managed to pay immediate bills and deal with cheques from the districts.

He wrote to all Nairobi members for volunteers to take on the posts of Hon Treasurer and Hon Secretary and received seven replies. Mrs Brice had offered herself for the Hon Secretary and Mr Smith who was retired from his own business was willing to be Hon Treasurer and Mr Classen was asked by the Council to interview him.

However, Mr Smith declined the offer, saying that it needed someone else with knowledge of accounting, which he did not have. Mr Challis also declined, on medical advice, to become Hon Treasurer and it was proposed that they appoint an Asian bookkeeper Mr Vadnagra for £10 from 1962. He had agreed to write up their 1961 books for £5.

The first Council meeting held under the new constitution took place in May 1961 at Stags Heads Hotel Nakuru, and President Grant welcomed the attendees who represented all districts except Uasin Gishu.

The first item was a proposal that the Society cease being a member of the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden Society. This would free up individual branches to apply for membership and be entitled to their own quota of seeds. This would be three packets per district annually, as opposed to the current situation where only three packets of seeds were available to the whole Society.

The Council then resolved to print copies of the 1961 Constitution in a booklet that contained a short history of the Society and prominently display the fact that Her Majesty the Queen was their Patron. It would also include a preface by Lady Muriel, the new rules as agreed at the 1961 AGM as well as an extra section on the appointment of show judges.

They decided to invite firms dealing in horticultural products and accessories to insert advertisements in the booklet to reduce printing costs. They would also include a list of societies to which the RKHS was affiliated and benefits that were available to members.

To deal with all these matters they appointed a sub-committee, to arrange the printing and publishing. Mr George Classen was unanimously elected as the Chairman, and other members were Mr Harold Gardner, Mr J Hodson, and Mr Brian Perkins. Mr Classen was authorized to draw on the Society's funds for printing and to inform members of the sub-committee of quotations he received. This would avoid the necessity of having a special meeting.

Mr Classen later reported that he had a quote from Boyds of Nairobi for 4,000 copies at Shs4,500 and who also advised that a full-page advertisement was worth Shs150. They decided to ask the districts to source quotations for a handbook that would be approximately 48 pages with half-page advertisements to get more people to advertise. They hoped to have it ready in time for the March 1962 AGM.

To increase publicity for the Society, which the Council felt was needed to attract new members, they decided to print a handout that would be distributed on appropriate occasions such as plant sales and flower shows. It would contain details of the Society,

addresses of its district secretaries and privileges of membership such as free passes to flower shows in Kenya and the United Kingdom.

Every member of the Society was entitled to a free copy of the Constitution. They decided to print 3,000 copies of the handbook incorporating the new constitution at Nakuru Press. The draft was sent to the printers at Nakuru in March 1962. The cost would be Shs2,600, and with advertisers having contributed Shs820, they set out to find the balance. They agreed not to sell any shares as at present they were worth 75% below par. Mr Classen advised that there was Shs800 in the Kenya Building Fund, and the balance of Shs980 would come from their cash at the bank that had Shs2,000. The meeting authorized him to draw these funds.

In 1961, the Society awarded RKHS medals to the City Park display and to Mr Brian Perkins for Orchids and Saintpaulia in June. They also awarded medals to Mr N Sutherst for a double gerbera and to Sai Nurseries for a rose exhibit at Limuru.

However, in 1962 the Society faced an unusual case with Sai Nurseries. The Hon Legal Adviser advised that a partner of Sai Nurseries, Dr D R Sharma, who had been convicted of theft, should no longer be allowed to be a member of the Society.

The Hon Legal Adviser was asked for advice on how to word a letter to Dr Sharma. They tried to take action against Sai Nurseries through the courts but vowed that if their appeal failed, they could take action against the firm under their Constitution. When the Council met in November 1962, it resolved that Dr Sharma should cease to be a member of the Society and that his subscription of Shs100 be returned to him. The Hon Secretary then wrote him a letter quoting item 4 on page 4 of their 1961 Constitution.

President Daphne Mason Enters

For the election of President in 1962, requests for nomination were circulated to all districts, and three districts had nominated Mrs Daphne Mason (daughter of Lady Muriel and Dr Jex Blake) but no nominations were received from the other six. It was agreed that it was not necessary to have a postal ballot and Mrs Daphne Mason should be deemed to be elected and she was welcomed to the Council by the outgoing President, Mrs Grant.

The Council then set the date for the AGM to take place on Friday 23 March 1962 followed by a Council meeting. At the request of Major Hallows, notices were sent to Council members as well as to district secretaries.

However, despite three weeks' notice being given by the Hon Secretary, and the meeting being publicized at the Nairobi District annual meeting, the AGM at the Norfolk had to be deferred owing to a lack of quorum. Only six members came to the meeting and nine apologies were received.

Mr Classen, as Deputy Chairman, wrote to protest to all district chairmen. This was to have been the last meeting presided over by Mrs Grant who was departing after many years of service to the Society and her final speech would have been a milestone. He surmised that the lack of support could only be regarded as an act of discourtesy to Mrs Grant who had travelled all the way from Njoro for the occasion.

But Mrs Grant was able to address members when the AGM took place a few weeks later in April 1962 as she bade farewell after five years of leadership and welcomed Mrs Daphne Mason as the new President. She cited the Rose Show at Nakuru, the new Constitution, the supply of accredited judges and membership now at 1,341 as achievements of her tenure. Later she mourned the passing of Mrs Frank Joyce who was one of the earliest members of the Society and had developed one of the most inspiring gardens in the country.

Eleanor Grant sold part of her farm to her neighbour and part to eight African staff who had been with her for a long time. She left Kenya in July 1965 with another neighbour Dorothy Powell to settle on an orange grove in the Algarve region of Portugal⁴⁴.

A few months before Kenya's transition to self-rule and later full independence, President Mason hosted the 1963 AGM in the garden at her residence on Jex Blake Road in Kyuna Estate.

There she recounted their achievements after what had been a difficult year. Good shows had been held at Kitale, Limuru and Nanyuki with Nairobi and Aberdare holding two each, but Molo had not been able to because of bad weather. Rift Valley had also

⁴⁴ Elspeth Huxley, a biography by C. S. Nichols.

held another successful rose show during the Nakuru Country show in June of a high standard and enjoyed by the diverse audience drawn to the show that was held in conjunction with the RASK.

Unfortunately, Uasin District members had decided to close the District in 1962. President Mason said while circumstances may cause a district not to be able to continue in its current form, she would have wished that it would go into abeyance or amalgamate itself with a neighbouring district, to soften the blow that was a total extinction. She asked that any other districts experiencing difficulties should report them to the Council so that they could receive help.

Mr Harold Gardner was presented with a Life Membership badge and another was set aside for Hon Mrs E L Grant who was absent.

Later when the Council met, they discussed the unexpected closing of the Uasin Gishu District and the manner it was shut down without notification or reference to the Council. Mrs Brice reported that she had written to Mrs Duncan, Hon Secretary at Uasin Gishu, to ask how the District proposed to dispose of its assets. They had agreed that, after meeting all commitments, any remaining cash balance was to be paid to the main Society's account for safekeeping until the district was revived.

Rift Valley asked if they could use their surplus funds to purchase a smallholding in a settlement scheme. This was for the benefit of a deserving gardener who was about to retire from service and the land would be vested in the Society. However, the Chairman said, and the Council agreed, that it would be impractical for the Society to purchase holdings for gardeners. This was because ownership must be vested in the occupier and in the event of their death, disposing of it would be complicated as it would mean dispossessing relatives. The Council suggested that if any district had surplus funds they should use them to help other districts that were not so fortunate or to write off the £50 owed by the Book fund.

One of the last victims of the emergency in Kenya affected the Society. A vacancy arose in the Vice President position following the death of Miss Ryle Shaw who died after an attack by the Mau Mau at her Muthaiga house in August 1963. The Council ratified the appointment of Mr Jacques and Mrs Howard to be elected as Vice Presidents.

The Society had rented an office at Memorial Hall for many years but continued to meet at different locations. The Council held its May 1963 meeting at the Board of Agriculture office at Marshall's Building on Coronation Avenue. However, soon after this Mr Jacques of the Nairobi District discovered that the Memorial Hall had suddenly been sold off.

He then set out to search for offices and managed to secure Room 15 at Corner House on Hardinge Street. He explained these developments to the Council when they met at the new office on 6 December 1963. This was the week of Kenya's independence.

Volume III: Independence to Millennium

Kenya attained independence on 12 December 1963 and the Royal Kenya Horticultural Society donated flowers that were sent to London for a big Uhuru (independence) celebration cocktail party at the Commonwealth Centre. The collection was drawn from the Nairobi, Aberdare, Limuru and Trans Nzoia districts. For these efforts, they received a letter from the new High Commissioner of Kenya, Mr Josephat Karanja expressing his thanks. He said that the embassy staff of Kenya House in London appreciated the gift which had arrived safely, and that a country that could produce such an array of beauty was bound for success.

Back in Nairobi, with the loss of Memorial Hall, the Society sub-let space from Messrs Jackson & Hill for Shs180 per month. This was an increase on the Shs55 per month they had been paying, and the Council ratified the extra office expense. The bulk of the Society's equipment was stored by Mrs Mason at her house.

President Mason hosted the 1964 AGM in March at her Kyuna Estate residence, serving tea in her beautiful garden. This was a few weeks after the country's independence which she said was a turning point for Kenya and also for the Society. She told members that in future she expected there would be a great deal of consolidation and retrenchment.

In reading reports sent in from the different districts, she mentioned that Nanyuki and Nyeri were planning to amalgamate as almost all members had left Nyeri. She said that as people left the country and areas were bought up for resettlement, their membership would inevitably drop unless they could attract African members and adjust their outlook from being a social group of gardeners.

She suggested that they make the expert knowledge they had accumulated available to more people and mentioned that they had been approached by the Agricultural Department for advice on flowers and vegetables for export.

They were not the only Society that was anticipating changes after Kenya's independence. Members of the Nakuru district of the RASK were urged to seek new members even if it meant waiving membership fees and co-opting Africans onto its committees. This was a bit peculiar as its boundaries conformed to European electoral constituencies and excluded purely African areas.

At the meeting, when it was suggested that Africans should be encouraged to join, Mr George Classen confirmed that Nairobi District already had two African members. President Mason said she had tried to get some members during the Royal Show and some had shown interest but were reluctant to hand over the Shs10 for membership. They approved a proposal that Mr Lawrence Sagini, the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, be offered an honorary membership.

A few weeks later, at the Council meeting in June 1964, Mr Jacques pleaded that the subscription of Shs10 per member per annum was insufficient to run the Nairobi District. However, Council members led by Lady Blundell for Rift Valley said that there was no need for districts to raise their subscriptions and that no district could do this without the authority of the Council. But they agreed that, when necessary, Nairobi had the permission to raise this to no more than Shs20.

In the first year after Kenya's independence, President Mason said she was pleased with the Society's resilience. It was alive and well with shows, plant sales and garden meetings that were successful and enjoyable. She said while some district numbers were lower, they were not as low as when the Society had started, and when things were much more difficult.

She cited activities at different branches such as Trans Nzoia, which, had managed a flower show, rose show and a plant sale despite the tragic death of their Chairman Mr Bernard Vivian Marwood who died at Endebess in May 1964.

Nanyuki had a successful flower show and they hoped Nyeri, which had reduced its numbers would soon amalgamate with Nanyuki. Aberdare District which hoped to keep going had donated some of its cups to Kitale while Molo which had decided it could not continue, had donated equipment and two cups to Rift Valley. Mrs Mason hoped Molo members would also join Rift Valley.

The Naivasha District had closed down and the Council decided that a cup that had been presented to them by Mrs Barradell could be presented to Pembroke House School. They also considered that other schools might be interested and decided to write to Manor House, Greensteds and Limuru Girls schools, and to also ask Minister Sagini for the names of African schools that might be interested in the cup for school gardens.

School competitions continued in 1965 with Pembroke again winning for the best school garden at a show that was judged by Mr and Mrs Classen. President Mason said the standard of gardening was remarkably high and she called on members from all districts to propose schools at which they could arrange similar competitions and the Society would offer a cup to encourage more young people in their love for gardening.

Limuru, which did not hold a flower show in 1964 owing to the weather, was undecided on whether they should join up with Nairobi which had held a successful year staging two flower shows at Gloucester Hall, a sale of plants, garden meetings and a stand at the Royal Show at Mitchell (now Jamhuri) Park.

Other changes came soon after. Lady Blundell asked at the March 1965 AGM if the Society had been requested to drop the prefix "Royal" from their name. The President said that no such request had been sent and they decided to leave this over for consideration by the Council.

What transpired was not clear but when the Council met in July 1965, they resolved on a proposal by Mr George Classen, and seconded by Mr Harold Gardner, to change paragraph⁴⁵ 1 of their constitution to read that; "The Name of the Society is the Kenya Horticultural Society". By the end of the year, the British High Commissioner wrote saying that Her Majesty the Queen had consented to the Society's change of name.

This was followed in April 1966, with Mr D J Coward, the Registrar of Societies, gazetting the change of names of several societies. These included the Royal Kenya Horticultural Society Trans Nzoia branch to the Kenya Horticultural Society Trans Nzoia branch, the Rift Valley branch in June, and followed in September by the Mount Kenya (Nanyuki) branch.

⁴⁵ Council meeting minutes, 12 July 1965.

The changes President Mason had predicted, continued to appear in the next few months within the Society. Mr George Classen read the financial report at the 1965 AGM, as Mr Challis was out of the country recuperating, which showed that the Society had assets of Shs42,346, including Shs6,331.51 in the building fund that Mr Challis recommended be transferred to the general fund. This was because the amount was unlikely to grow and they were not likely to commence building their own hall. In July 1965, the Treasurer removed the Society's money from the Kenya Building Society and deposited it at Savings & Loan Society on a fixed deposit.

With the loss of the office space at Memorial Hall, the Council continued to meet at Corner House. They were visited by a delegation from Limuru of Mrs Hardy, Mrs Kingsford and Mrs McLennan in July 1965 who came to explain their views on the possible closing of the Limuru branch and amalgamation with Nairobi. However, as they were not unanimous in their view, President Mason asked that they carry on for a further year before making a final decision.

Also, at the meeting, they received a letter from the Chairman at Molo announcing the closure of their branch, and another announcing the amalgamation of the Nyeri and Nanyuki branches.

The Council also resolved to do a physical inventory of the furniture of the Society, something that had not been done for a while. This would be led by the Hon Secretary and Mr Jacques, the Hon Secretary for Nairobi District. They also wrote to all districts asking for up-to-date lists of all their members. This was done along with a request to branch chairmen to forward names for nomination for the election of the president, which was due to take place in October 1965.

Towards the end of the year, the replies showed waning interest upcountry in the activities of the Society. The defunct Eldoret branch was yet to submit its funds to the main Society's account and by December, the Council had not received any replies on nominations for president and vice presidents. The only names presented were Mrs Daphne Mason for President and Mr Peter Greensmith as Vice President, with both of these nominated by the Nairobi District. The two were then duly elected at the AGM in March 1966 where Mr F S Dunn was elected as an Honorary member and Lt. Com C H Coldham was appointed as Hon Treasurer, replacing Mr Challis who had resigned.

In December 1965, the Council approved that the Society take up new premises at Room 15 in Baring Arcade and that the Treasurer could pay one-third of the office rent, with the Nairobi District paying the remaining two-thirds. They asked Mr Jacques and the Hon Secretary to clear out old volumes at the library and resolved that the present bookcase and cupboard be disposed of and the Secretary purchase a new suitable bookcase and cupboard that would not cost more than Shs600.

With the resignation of Mr Challis, the Council sought a volunteer from among the Nairobi members, but in the meantime, they authorized Mr Arnold Renney to sign cheques on behalf of the Society. Mr Renney took over as Hon Secretary sometime in 1965. Mr Classen had volunteered to act as Hon Treasurer and he presented the Treasurer's report at the 1966 AGM.

He said the Hon Treasurers' job was to see that the Society does no wrong, but that he had not succeeded as subscription income had dropped from Shs2,565 in 1964 to only Shs1,415. He reassured members that this did not mean that membership had dropped by 50%, but that Aberdare, Nanyuki and Nyeri/Nanyuki had not paid their subventions to the Society in time. Limuru had paid promptly, while Nairobi paid Shs194, and Trans Nzoia had sent theirs in February 1966 and these had not been reflected in the income which he believed was still quite satisfactory.

The Society had Shs17,116 in the bank and he advised that, after paying the Nairobi District on behalf of the book fund and other creditors, the remainder would go to a deposit account at First Permanent Building Society where it could earn 5%. He would also work with Mr Renney to obtain income tax refunds owed to the Society having received none in 1965.

Taxes also had a toll on their investments in 1966. The preference shares in the East African Power & Lighting Company owned by the Society were held in London by a Barclays Bank nominee company. During the war years, the transfer of dividend payments to London incurred a loss of Shs13.50 pa so it had been decided to leave the matter of transferring the shares until after the war.

The Secretary explained that Kenya Exchange Control authorities had intimated that since the shares had been held in London since 1945, if they were sold, the Society

would not be obliged to remit the money to Kenya. But the view of Barclays Bank was that the Society would have to pay income tax in the United Kingdom.

There was also some good news later that year. They had an increase in their investment of £50 as a bonus share of East African Power Co that had been issued in 1962 but was not recorded on their balance sheet until 1966.

In December 1966 they received Shs563 as a tax refund. Meanwhile, they still had another claim of Shs325.69 for 1963 and would continue to pursue a refund for 1965 once they got dividend vouchers from the United Kingdom.

Wrapping up the Fourth Edition

Even as they finalized the library arrangements, the Society still had to deal with the accounts of the fourth edition of Gardening in East Africa which the Society had published in 1957, then disbanded the book committee the following year. Mr Nesbitt of Longmans Green was absent in March 1965 so Mrs Dunn read the Treasurer's Report that stated 196 copies were available in London and that another 2,500 copies were needed. But it was mentioned at the AGM that there had been a fire and some unbound copies had been destroyed.

Longmans Green had reported that they had £608 to the Society's credit, but the Longmans office in Nairobi was not clear if these were printed copies for binding. Mr Merryweather wondered if Longmans Green in London really had any more books and Mr Renney volunteered to visit Longmans Green while on leave in the UK to ascertain the correct position.

When the Council met a few weeks later in July 1965, they were presented with two letters from Longmans Green. One was on the pricing of a further issue of Gardening in East Africa. The other confirmed that all the remaining unbound copies of the book had been destroyed in a fire. They wrote to say that they now held a credit to the Society of Shs16,300 comprising Shs13,745 as insurance on the books destroyed and the previous balance of Shs2,555.

At the March 1965 AGM, President Mason said that no accounts had been received from Mr Nesbitt in several years and they resolved that Mr Nesbitt be asked to forward

published accounts on the book fund. But by December, Mr Nesbitt had still not replied with figures they had requested on copies destroyed by fire and supplies by Longmans Green. The Council asked the Secretary to write again to Mr Nesbitt and also directed Mr Nesbitt to pay £600 out of the book fund bank account to the Hon Treasurer, Nairobi District, an amount that was half of the loan due to Nairobi District

As they also considered whether a new edition would have to be done, the Society asked that the remaining copies be sent to Kenya to sell and Longmans Green dispatched 172 copies to Mrs Rhodes at The Bookshop.

Mr Classen told members at the 1966 AGM that the book fund had overpaid its dues and the excess amount of Shs4,079.80 would be used to pay the Nairobi District and reduce the £1,200 that it was owed.

The following year President Mason reported that not all plates had been destroyed in the fire and that she had asked Longmans Green about a possible increase in the amount paid as compensation for the loss of unbound books. The members also resolved to immediately increase the price of Gardening in East Africa to Shs50 per copy.

Eventually Longmans Green agreed to add a further sum of £422 bringing the insurance compensation for the loss of copies of the book to £1,022. The President later told members that the increased insurance compensation had nearly squared off the accounts of the books. In December 1967 the Council voted to pay the Nairobi District Shs3,254.70 out of the second installment of the insurance money to clear the loan from Nairobi to the book fund.

President Mason then brought a close to the matter of more publications, saying that the fourth edition of the book was now practically finished. The first issue had come out in 1934 and had done a lot to help many thousands of gardeners and over thirty years it had served a useful purpose at a time when there were few other books. She said that there were now many excellent gardening books on the market and that the need for a further edition was not a pressing matter.

But Mr Nesbitt had still not prepared accounts of the book fund for inspection by the Council. The President undertook to visit him and she managed to meet with him in

December 1967. From this meeting, the Society received Shs5,000 from Mr Nesbitt and a further Shs1,000 that was outstanding from various bookshops that he had endeavoured to collect.

Members at the 1968 AGM congratulated President Mason for the outcome of her protracted negotiations with Mr Nesbitt, The Bookshop and Longmans Green. These had taken almost three years, but Mr Classen said it was gratifying that in the end, the Society had not suffered any financial loss.

Other reasons why it was impractical to produce **the** fifth edition was the expense of printing and also because there was **no one** prepared to undertake such an enormous task. The Council in 1968 anticipated that the book would acquire considerable second-hand value and they proposed that all district secretaries should appeal to their members to donate their unwanted copies back to the Society. They agreed that it **would be** a pity if departing members sold them in bundles of old books for a few shillings.

The Society also saw an unexpected windfall in 1970 as the book fund received Shs1,294.75 from booksellers from sales of the fourth edition of Gardening in East Africa.

Revival of Districts after Independence

There were moves to revive some of the other Districts. Mrs Sinclair of Trans Nzoia spoke of plans for building a new banda at the ASK showground at Kitale and the Council resolved in June 1966 that £150 would be paid to Trans Nzoia for the building of the banda when the Eldoret funds had been received by the main Society as this would be enough to cover the grant.

In December, the remaining members of the Society in Eldoret wrote to say they were now trying to resuscitate the district. They would have their own committee but would participate with Kitale in respect of shows and this news was well received by the Council.

The following year Nanyuki-Nyeri showed good growth increasing its membership numbers from 32 to 51 by the end of 1967. The District had a good flower show in June at Nyeri and another at Nanyuki in August followed by a plant sale. They also put out a call for other districts to donate any surplus cups that they might have for presentation to the ASK Nanyuki.

The revival of different districts now started to create some confusion. In June 1968, Lady Blundell who represented Rift Valley on the Council lamented that the Kitale Show had again been held on the same date as the Rift Valley show which was always held on the same dates as the Nakuru show of the ASK. It was agreed that this was unfortunate and they decided to return to an old practice of asking all the districts to send in their proposed dates for their years' activities to the Hon Secretary so that all districts could be informed. The Council approved a payment of £50 to assist the Rift Valley District with the expense of re-roofing the banda at Nakuru.

1968 also brought news that another new district, Kilifi/Malindi, had been formed. The Hon Secretary was asked to write and wish them success and she would later request other districts to donate any surplus cups to Kilifi/Malindi. This became a clarion call, and all districts were asked to secure and donate cups no longer in use to other expanding districts.

Arising from this request, they received a surprise from the Kericho district that had closed down many years before, but which sent some lovely cups and a small cheque, as they transferred Shs370.65 to the main Society. Three cups from Mrs Wilson of Kericho were handed to the Kilifi/Malindi District and to local schools.

Kilifi/Malindi was ably chaired by Mr Bob Hammond and got off to a quick start, holding two garden meetings and a show of slides. They planned a flower show for 1969 and Nanyuki-Nyeri kindly donated two cups to them. Unfortunately, the beginning of the Kilifi/Malindi district came at a terrible time as the area was hit harder than others by the prevailing drought in the country. President Mason told members that even the coconut palms were starting to die of drought. Still, the members soldiered on with their gardens at Malindi where they held several garden meetings and a sale of plants. By 1972 they had 45 members and had held successful garden meetings and a sale of plants.

Other Districts also did well in this period and members at the 1968 AGM were told about activities at Rift Valley, which had 20 new members and Kitale. President Mason asked them to take advantage of the improved roads to bring their ingenuity to the show at Jamhuri Park.

The Nairobi show event was now well attended, and with the gifts from members, they would now have more permanent plants, with which they could show overseas visitors what Kenya could do in the way of flowers and growing things around the country, not only in Nairobi and Limuru. At the suggestion of Mrs Everett of Rift Valley, Council resolved to write to all districts asking them to take turns, rotating for morning and afternoon, doing duty during the show. Rift Valley members would staff the banda on Thursday, while Nanyuki said it would do the duty on the Wednesday of the show.

The following year, Lt Com Coldham described the finances of the Society as being in a healthy state with increased membership and presumably subventions. The Society also purchased Shs7,723.50 of East African Breweries ordinary shares and repaid the Nairobi District the balance of the outstanding book fund loan, and still ended with a surplus of income over expenditure of Shs1,658.55 for 1968.

The Nairobi flower show held at University College, Nairobi in December 1968 was not as well attended as it deserved, according to President Mason. The long and heavy rains may have been a factor, but the 97 entries were impressive.

The show did have the honour of being opened by Hon Tom Mboya, Kenya's young Minister for Economic Planning and Development who gave a most complimentary and charming speech. He thanked the Society for their work to raise the standard of gardening and which had led to many beautiful plants in public gardens in Nairobi and other towns.

Tom Mboya lived at Convent Drive with his growing family. He added new rooms to the house and was proud of the well-tended tropical garden. But a few months later, he was shot and killed on 5 July 1969 as he left a pharmacy in Nairobi. The next day, his body was driven to his home where his casket was laid in state on the wide lawn, with an array of yellow hibiscus and red and white bougainvillea as thousands of mourners

queued to pass the coffin.⁴⁶ He was buried a few days later at Rusinga Island, in Lake Victoria.

Mboya's tragic death caused them to cancel the Nairobi show. 1969 was also a wet year and this disrupted some planned activities, including another show in Nairobi the following January, which they had to postpone as there were not enough flowers.

International Shows in the 1960's and 1970's

Districts also continued to engage with overseas societies. Late in 1963, the Society received an invitation from the show committee of the International Flower Exhibition at Haifa, Israel. They were anxious to have Kenya among their exhibitors of local and foreign flowers at the show during the Passover season, providing indigenous exhibits and they offered to pay for the transport of flowers. They also agreed to stage the exhibit if the KHS made an effort to enter. The Secretary then wrote to all districts for help with Red Hot Pokers, Saintpaulias and succulent flowers.

She also wrote to ask the Orchid Society to cooperate in the venture. At Mrs Grant's suggestion, they decided to publicize their participation after Christmas when they would send out circulars with pamphlets obtained from the Israeli Consul.

The Society put on a floral exhibition at Haifa Flower Show during Easter in 1964 and won the cup for the African Pavilion. It was hoped that the cup would be presented by the Israeli Ambassador to the Society in May 1964 but this was pushed back to take place at the Nairobi Show on 22 June.

In May 1966, the Society dispatched cases of flowers to the UK to decorate Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the 900th anniversary of parliament in London. The flowers were contributed by members from Nairobi, Rift Valley and Limuru and with some orchids from Mombasa. They arrived well and in beautiful condition and were one of the outstanding overseas collections.

Then 1965 saw the first visit by the Gardening Club of America that was arranged by Tony Irwin and the Society entertained its members when they visited Nairobi. This

⁴⁶ Tom Mboya, The Man Kenya Wanted to Forget by David Goldsworthy.

continued in 1967 and President Mason explained that the American club made a world trip to coincide with cherry blossom time in Japan. Unfortunately, this meant that when they passed Nairobi it was the worst time for flowers. But members were able to come together and help with displays and the Limuru District had assisted by hosting them as they visited Mrs Morson's Garden and Colonel Elliot's nurseries. They later went on to the Mount Kenya Safari Club at Nanyuki and the Nanyuki District entertained them at various beautiful gardens.

Commander Coldham who had taken over the Hon Treasurer role told members in 1967 that the Society was still affiliated, and paying fees, to the Royal Horticultural Society, the Dahlia Society, the Rose Society and the Botanical Society of South Africa.

Representatives of the Ohara School in Japan also visited Nairobi and gave demonstrations of Ikebana flower arrangements to members and friends of the KHS, Railway Club and EAWL. The visit was sponsored by the Japanese Government under a cultural exchange program.

They continued to have overseas participation and in 1968 a Kenya exhibit won a gold medal at the Chelsea Flower Show and aroused many favourable comments for the collection which included contributions from many members at Limuru, Thika, Molo, Mau Narok and Mombasa. The arrangements had been organized by Mr Addington of Limuru and had been jointly staged by both Messrs Rochford's Limited and the EAWL in London.

But afterwards, as they discussed the show, the President lamented that the collection of contributions was not well-organized and some districts and members such as at Nyeri-Nanyuki who had flowers available were unable to contribute.

The Council then resolved to pass the Society's official congratulations to Mr Addington. They also invited him to become a member of the Society and offered to waive his subscription for the current year and allowed him to choose which district to join. They hoped he would continue as an ordinary member in the future.

In 1969 President Mason wrote to the Ethiopian Horticultural Society, advising them on the Society's activities. She received a reply, a volume of documents showing that the Ethiopian Society was active and forceful in horticulture.

She asked if the Ethiopian Society would be prepared to stage an exhibition at the next Nairobi show. The KHS also sent a cordial invitation to any members of the Ethiopian Society to visit the show and with an offer to extend accommodation to any visiting members. However, there was no response from the Society in Addis Ababa.

But at Christmas in 1969 they entertained members from the Horticultural Society of Morocco. They also made contacts in Zambia with the possibility of sending flowers down for a big agricultural show in August 1970 where the Kenya Government was proposing to take a stand.

The KHS also participated in a Kenya stand at the Royal Agricultural Society of England's show at Stoneleigh in England in July 1969. This was the first time that any foreign country had been asked to have a stand at an English Royal Show. President Mason who attended the show later described the striking flowers as magnificent, and worthy of the honour, that had been arranged by the ladies of the Solihull Flower Club.

The KHS later sent a lovely collection of flowers and foliage in June to the Solihull Flower Club to support the National Association of Floral Arrangement Societies on the occasion of the 750th anniversary of the Solihull Parish Church.

They continued their overseas ventures into the new decade and contributed flowers to the Kenya commercial growers' stand that won a bronze medal at the Chelsea show. They also became regulars at the Haifa International Flower show over Easter. They had again been invited to exhibit in April 1970 where they won a prize, but unfortunately, they did not receive photographs to show to members in Nairobi. In 1971, the dry weather in Kenya forced them to decline an invitation to take part at Haifa over Easter.

Meanwhile, the Limuru District organized an exhibit for the Harrogate show which was one of the largest flower shows in England and won another medal.

In 1971, they considered whether the Society could stage another exhibit at the Chelsea Flower show. This came after the members of the Solihull Flower Arranging Club had made a generous offer to stage an exhibit in the name of the Society. Mrs Hardy, speaking for Limuru said her District supported staging an exhibit at Chelsea.

There was a postal strike in the UK and President Mason contacted the RHS in London to check on how things were going and what expenses would have to be paid by the Society if they chose to exhibit. She also undertook to contact BOAC airline to ask if they would freight flowers free of charge.

They drew up a provisional list of flowers suitable for Chelsea and also enquired from the Orchid Society through its President, Col Wilcock, to obtain a supply of orchids for Chelsea. Various members had been contacted and confirmed that they would have sufficient flowers available, despite the dry spell.

They formed a subcommittee of Mrs Mason, Mr Renney, Mr Greensmith, Mr Gardner and Mrs Grumbley to deal with the arrangements for the flower show. £50 was authorized for the expense of the Solihull Club members staging the exhibit. Mrs Cameron offered to draw up a list of flowers being prepared and give details of their habitat so that labels could be made.

The Society won a Silver Flora medal for their participation at the Chelsea Flower show and this made President Mason proud and happy. They also received congratulations and enquiries about Kenya plants from Singapore and Hamburg. Three photographs from the show were obtained and were put up in the Society's Nairobi office.

Mr Classen had approached commercial flower growers through the Export Promotion Council and offered the KHS banda for use during an Organization of African Unity's (OAU) All Africa Trade Fair in February 1972. The Society were ready to stage the exhibits for them. But they got no response and he told the Council no other country exhibits would require the Society's banda at the Show.

But all was not well with the shows. As the Council considered whether to stage an exhibit at Chelsea in 1973 the Society's new President Tom Grumbley told them that while the judges at Chelsea had described the flowers from Kenya as superb, their arrangement at the show had been deplorable. Mrs Grumbley then suggested that planning for such a show must be done in Nairobi by people who know how plants grow in nature and not by floral arrangers in England. They agreed to take part in the Chelsea show in May 1973 and have a special committee chaired by Mrs Grumbley to plan the

staging and decide on the plants included. Committee members were Mr John Wright, Mrs Cameron of Limuru and Mrs Nash of the Floral Arrangement Club.

They met frequently and selected the Summerhill Flower Arrangement Club. But when they wrote to the Club to enquire if they would be willing to follow a laid down plan from Nairobi this suggestion was rejected. A second club at Enfield in Middlesex was more receptive and agreed to stage the Society's exhibit following their plans.

Mrs Grumbley was then authorized to negotiate with them and offered to reimburse their expenses up to £150. This was later increased to £200 in England and they requested any KHS members who might be on leave in the UK in May to volunteer to assist in staffing the Society's Chelsea stand.

Mrs Nash proposed that they set up a mock exhibit at Mrs Harries farm on Thika Road on 31 March for members of the Council to view and praise or criticize. Mr Grumbley also said that Mr Dennison of the British Caledonian airline had agreed to transfer the flower boxes to the UK free of charge. One condition was that if 24 boxes were required it may be necessary to fly them in two batches. Brooke Bond of Croydon in London had agreed to transport one load of flowers from Gatwick to Chelsea.

This matter would have an impact much later on at the show in May 1973 as Mrs Grumbley later told the Council that the second consignment of flowers had arrived too late in London on Tuesday instead of Sunday. As a result, the Society stand was judged on the first consignment only. The stand had attracted great interest but had been overcrowded because it had only been partially completed. But even so, it had been awarded a Silver Flora Medal.

This matter was disappointing as the delay had been due to inefficiency at the Nairobi airport where the second consignment of boxes had been placed in cold storage, instead of being loaded into an aircraft.

The President expressed his thanks to Mrs Grumbley, Mrs Nash and the ladies of the Enfield Floral Arrangement Club as well as John Wright, Bobs Harries Ltd, Brooke Bond in England and British Caledonian Airways for the assistance they had given. They approved the payment of expenses of £72 and Shs 690 to Mrs Grumbley and Shs300 to

Mrs Nash. But they deferred a decision on participating in the 1974 Chelsea Flower show.

Near the end of 1973, their remaining investment was East African Breweries shares on which they would receive a bonus issue of 69 shares in December plus a dividend. President Grumbley gave his opinion that they should consider selling some of the Breweries shares and invest in coffee.

The Council decided that they would have a smaller stand at the 1974 Chelsea show, concentrating on Heliconia, Strelitzia and similar exotic flowers. Mrs Grumbley again agreed to chair the Chelsea Committee and received approval to spend up to £200 on the stand. They still had not received their Silver Flora medal from the previous year so the Secretary was asked to make enquiries and to also contact the RHS for an application form for a stand.

It turned out to be impossible to make arrangements, owing to Mrs Grumbley's illness. The Chairman explained this to members at the 1974 AGM where they also displayed the Silver Medal and Certificate from the RHS Chelsea show as well as the certificate and medal from the Haifa show.

In reviewing their plans for future shows, one of the criticisms had been the quality of staging the Society's last two stands at Chelsea. The Council discussed whether to engage professionals to stage the exhibits. They agreed their main aim was to display Kenya and exotic flowers, not the pursuit of medals. Also, Bobs Harries Ltd which had done a great deal of work in supplying flowers and assisting in their packing and dispatch was no longer in a position to assist the Society.

Meeting in August 1974, the Council decided that finances permitting, they would show at Chelsea in 1975. And for this, they would employ professionals with a limited variety of exotic materials in a mass display.

However, a few weeks later, they dropped plans to exhibit at Chelsea in 1975 as it was too time-consuming and expensive.

KHS Banda

By the mid-1960's, the banda at Jamhuri Park started to pose a perpetual problem. While it got a stream of visitors at the Nairobi show, and they signed new members for Nairobi and other districts, they did not have enough volunteers to run the stand during the show. President Mason hoped more members would sign up to help. Limuru members also voiced this concern at their AGM and she hoped they could offer practical assistance and ideas to Nairobi. The stand continued to draw attention from the public and there were queries as to why they did not put up more ambitious horticultural displays.

Then towards the end of 1966, the Agricultural Society of Kenya (ASK), which had also dropped "Royal" from its name, made a proposal to the Society about the banda. They asked that the KHS move to a larger plot in Jamhuri Park and offered to put up £250-300 to build a new banda. In exchange, the KHS would commit to holding a flower show during the ASK's Nairobi show.

The Council resolved that they had to deal with the question of maintenance of a banda before making a decision. They formed a subcommittee chaired by Mrs Mason, with Mr George Classen, Mr Peter Greensmith and Mr Renney.

President Mason told members at the 1967 AGM about the ASK's wish to have a good floral and horticultural exhibit at the shows and that they were offering the KHS a large stand, behind the Muthaiga Club stand and proposing to build a pavilion, free of charge. This would allow the KHS to charge a small entry fee for any show or display and cover the increased rent. The Nairobi District was keen on the proposal, but President Mason felt that this should be a venture supported by all districts with members doing more as the stand and show would require more efforts to run as ASK shows ran from Wednesday to Sunday.

The KHS agreed to stage a flower show at the ASK show in September or October and to make their plans depending on the success, or otherwise of this show. The ASK voted only £250 for the KHS at their development meeting in 1967 and this necessitated the KHS to make plans for a smaller banda.

The show was quite successful, which was mainly thanks to the efforts of Mrs Mason and a few other members, especially Mr Magius who had assisted in preparing the garden at the new banda. He built a rock garden and kept it going for several months and Mr Peter Greensmith had provided two large lorry loads of rocks. The Society's display had won the District Exhibit prize and Mr Jacques, on behalf of Nairobi, said the district would pay the main Society any surplus of gate receipts of the flower show after the expenses had been finalized.

The ASK seemed pleased with the show and the Society. They offered to reduce the rent of the banda to Shs400 per annum. The rent would remain at this rate until the show had a better financial return. They also undertook to renew the rain gutter and repair the floor of the banda and maintain it for the current year

At the end of the year, the Nairobi District paid Shs546 as the surplus from the show and this helped the Society record an excess of income over expenditure of Shs268 reversing the debit figure from the previous year of Shs172 for 1966.

The period also saw the tentative beginnings to establish a Kenya botanical garden. The ASK had formed a committee with membership from the Forest Department, City Parks, the East African Herbarium, the University and the KHS. They had approached different organizations to raise funds and Sir George Taylor Director of Kew had promised assistance. President Mason told members that the ASK proposed to make 22 acres of their unused land at Jamhuri Park available for this. The ground had been chosen as it was outside the city development limits but still close enough to the city to attract visitors, including students.

But by the end of 1968, the state of the roof and the floor of the banda was still unsatisfactory. A KHS special Jamhuri Park sub-committee of Mrs Mason, George Classen and Arnold Renney went to negotiate with the ASK regarding repairs to the roof and the floor and to ask the ASK to tarmac the road outside the banda. The dust from the constant traffic on this road was detrimental to the success of the Society's flower shows.

The Banda in the 1970's

Over half the grant money remained unspent in 1970 and the ASK had still not cemented the floor and done other repairs. The Council resolved to carry out the remainder of the work themselves, including putting a makuti roof over the present one. They sought quotations from suitably qualified Africans who would work under the direct supervision of the Society.

In 1972 they decided to replace the roof of the banda, and allocated £500 for this and to build new walls in breeze blocks. The Council made this investment as the floral display during the Agricultural show attracted much interest from visitors, both local and from overseas. But the banda had become dark and dusty and the Nairobi District expressed concern at the leaky roof of the banda which was also ill-ventilated

As such, they had decided to redesign the roof and walls with more permanent materials and they emphasized that it needed to be reconstructed before the show at the end of September 1972. But this was not to be the case.

Mr Classen showed some sketches of his ideas to rebuild the roof in a more economical way that would give more light and reduce the afternoon heat. He also proposed to replace the bamboo and papyrus walls with concrete blocks. The Council asked that he and Mr. Greensmith show the plans to an architect who would then submit them to the City Council and ASK.

This would still cost £500 which the Society did not have. The Society had shares of Kenya Co-Op Creameries, East African Breweries and East African Power and they agreed they could sell sufficient shares to realize the sum of £750, of which £250 would go towards the reconstruction of the banda. The President would also write to all districts asking them to make contributions.

But when Mr Classen got the plans back from Triad, the architects, and put them out to tender, the lowest figure they received was £2,500. This was too high and even after he approached other contractors about a new roof the figure was £1,500. Individual members of the Council were also asked to approach contractors they knew and obtain quotes for a new banda. They would then see if they would make an appeal to members to increase their contributions. Both the main Society and Nairobi were willing to increase their share.

Eventually, the Banda was largely completed in 1973. This was done at a contract price of Shs20,673. Mr Greensmith told the Council that the small deficit would increase with a further £350 to complete the building of the walls with stone blocks. They appealed to members and districts for contributions towards the building fund, but the initial response to the appeal was poor. The Chairman told members at the 1974 meeting that out of a target of Shs8,000, just 26 members had donated a total of Shs2,310. They did run a collection at the meeting and another Shs543 was raised.

With the banda largely completed by June 1974, Mr Jacques on behalf of the Nairobi District advised the Council that he wished the main Society to take over the running of the flower show during the Nairobi show from 1975.

Enter Chairman Grumbley

Daphne Marian Mason passed away on 7 December 1971 at the premature age of 41. Mr George Classen as the KHS deputy president sent an announcement to all district chairmen and vice presidents, writing that he would take up the duty of conducting the Society's affairs. The Council had not met in nearly a year, which was contrary to their constitution and he called for them to have an early AGM, rather than wait for the usual time of March or April, and he offered to host the Council at his residence in Langata.

In the period, they appear to have lost their office as when they last met in March 1971 it was at President Mason's house and the next meeting at was Classen's house in February 1972. They paid rent of Shs1,200 in 1970 and 1971 but Nairobi meetings were increasingly held at the boardroom of Brooke Bond Liebig Kenya at Stanbank House and the office of Gill & Johnson on Ring Road in Westlands. Mr Jacques said the office lease was up for renewal and the rent would be increased considerably and the Council agreed to increase the main Society's contribution to Shs150 per month when the rent increase took place.

With the passing of Mrs Mason, Mr Classen said that the priority would be the selection of a new president, not an election. This was probably due to the time of getting ballots out. He said that, as deputy, he was privileged by the position, but would not be aspiring for a higher post owing to his many other commitments.

Mrs Daphne Mason had led the Society since 1962, and with both her parents, Dr Arthur and Lady Muriel Jex-Blake who had been founder members of the Society, had been devoted to it virtually throughout her life. Members all expressed sympathy to her family and appreciation for her services and Mrs Mason was especially remembered for her energy and ability to organize functions, leading the Society to participate in overseas shows and exhibitions, all of which gained awards. Through her efforts, the Society had become known in many different parts of the world.

For the new president to replace Mrs Mason, Uasin Gishu proposed Mr Classen who regretfully declined. He instead put forward Mr Tom Grumbley's name. Limuru proposed Sir Michael Blundell, while Nairobi proposed Mr R D M Mason who Mr Classen also recommended be made an Honorary life member given his past service.

All the nominations were subject to obtaining a formal agreement from the persons being proposed. In subsequent days, of the four proposed, Sir Michael Blundell, Mr Mason, and the Deputy President all declined to stand for election. This left Lawrence Arthur Stafford Grumbley better known as Tom, a former pilot and later tea estate manager at Brooke Bond, who accepted the invitation, as the sole candidate. As such, the 1972 AGM was held at the residence of Mr and Mrs Grumbley on Girls School Road in Tigoni on 26 March 1972.

Right away, there was a new financial crisis to deal with. Earlier that year at a Council meeting, Mr Classen had proposed that the Treasurer, Commander Coldham, and the Hon Secretary consult with stockbrokers about how to invest the Society's large cash balance of Shs57,926.

But the cash turned out to have a twist. It stemmed from a Kenya Government announcement that it would buy all shares of the E A Power & Lighting Company that were on the London register. That was where the Society had always held its 600 preference shares and 250 ordinary shares in the name of the bank's nominees.

When a credit of Shs51,315 appeared on the Society's bank statement, it was assumed that this was the purchase price paid by the government for the shares. However, there was no credit slip to match this and the Commander Coldham had made several trips to the bank before he was able to obtain the elusive paper. But the slip produced was in

the name of the Kenya Horticultural Exporters, which was a different company, and by this time, they had already reinvested Shs40,815 in further shares.

Cmdr Coldham narrated this to members at the AGM in March 1972 and concluded by saying that he had persuaded the bank to purchase these new shares from the Society and to reverse the incorrect credit of Shs51,315.15 and leave the Society with no loss. He also confirmed that their E A Power shares were still intact, in the name of the bank nominees, and were now on the Nairobi register.

He described the year as good with Society's finances in a healthy state, even though the E A Power shares meant that the accounts did not give a true picture of the Society's finances. Expenses had exceeded income by Shs1,366 and that was largely due to the Chelsea Show expenses, that had totaled Shs2,267, but which had resulted in a Silver Flora Medal which made the expense worth the effort. The Nairobi show had made a surplus of Shs208.75 and they had also received a bonus issue of 115 shares of E A Breweries in December 1971. But he also advised that they defer the planned expenditure of £500 on the renovation of their banda at Jamhuri Park.

Leading his first Council meeting in July 1972, President Grumbley called for a more frequent review of the Society's investments to avoid losses, as had been sustained by the drop in the value of East African Power shares.

Commander Coldham sent a letter of resignation as Treasurer in December 1972 due to the pressure of other work. President Grumbley said he could not present any figures on their finances until they got a new treasurer. Mr Gould, the Nairobi District Treasurer, offered to take the position of Hon Treasurer if no one else could be found.

Mr Roberts had been approached to take up the position of Treasurer but had still not yet decided when the Secretary presented the draft accounts for the year 1972 in February 1973. They showed that the Society had lost Shs10,578.45 on the sale of E.A. Power shares. The KCC shares had still not been sold but they expected to incur a loss of Shs975.50 and realise Shs725.50.

Regarding their finances, the Secretary said that the £750 earmarked for the Jamhuri Park banda was in the hands of the brokers. The Society also set aside £500 as a contribution for the book 'Flora of Upland Kenya'. This came after President Grumbley

had told the Council about a manuscript for the book done by Dr Andrew Agnew that he felt would be of value not only to botanists but also to gardeners and horticulturalists. The Council had then approved £500 from a sale of their investments to go to this publication.

They had Shs23,835.75 in the bank and expected that after deducting Shs10,000 for the printing of 'Flora of Upland Kenya', Shs1,000 for repayment of dividends, Shs4,000 for the Chelsea Show committee and Shs5,000 for the banda that would leave approximately Shs4,000 in hand.

President 'Resigns'

President Grumbley opened the 1973 annual meeting with a shocking announcement that it would be his last meeting as President.

But all was not gloomy as he said he was not leaving the Society after all. He explained that they could no longer use the title 'President', and members would have to decide on a new name. After a lively discussion, they resolved to use the title 'Chairman' and to similarly amend the titles of Vice-President and Deputy-President.

He recounted reports from the different branches most of which were trying to maintain membership in the face of the changing expatriate population patterns. He suggested that they try and get more local people, an emerging middle-class that was interested in education, culture and leisure, to become new members for the Society to continue to operate at satisfactory levels,

He lamented that the response had been poor to a request for members who were willing to open their gardens to tourists. He said this would spur interest and profitable contacts with gardeners overseas. Mr Mayhew suggested that embassies be contacted to see if they could support flower shows and other horticultural activities as happened in Ethiopia.

Lady Blundell proposed that they start a school for gardeners. Members supported this but for the shortage of funds. Mrs Gillett suggested that university and college tutors lecturing in agriculture be invited with their students to visit the flower shows.

Mr Gould later took up the position of the Hon Treasurer as Mr Roberts was still not in a position by September 1973 and they made arrangements with the bank to change the cheque signatories. But he did not take it up in a full-time role, and the following year, the Chairman said they were still looking for an Honorary Treasurer and invited any members to volunteer. Later in 1974, the Hon Secretary Arnold Renney started to double up as the Treasurer and went on to present the accounts at the 1975 general meeting.

In August 1974, Mr Grumbley raised the matter of Society's subscription rates. He said they had not been raised from Shs10 since the Society's incorporation in 1923. The Council had some discussion and resolved to increase the rates from 1 January 1975. They would be Shs20 for a single membership, Shs30 for double membership and Shs200 for life membership.

He clarified at the next Council meeting that raising or lowering subscriptions was a matter for individual districts. As such the Council was recommending that districts increase annual subscriptions. However, as life membership was set in the constitution, districts could not increase this.

Mr Grumbley told the Council in November 1974 that his term would expire in 1975 and that they should seek a new Chairman who would be installed at the AGM. Mr Jacques also announced that he would resign as Secretary of Nairobi District in the coming year. He had been their Secretary for 19 years and in his final year had overseen a plant sale, flower shows and garden meetings, in addition to the renovation of the showground pavilion.

The Council requested district secretaries to make nominations and send them to the Hon Secretary by 15 January 1975. They also sought a Vice-Chairmen to strengthen the Council.

Reluctant Chairman in the late 1970s

Later at the AGM, Mr Grumbley told the members that his three-year term was up. George Classen proposed Mr Grumbley to continue as Chairman, and he accepted but reminded the members that it was possible he would be unable to complete the full term

as he was due to retire from Brooke Bond Liebig Kenya. Nevertheless, he was re-elected with acclamation at the AGM and went on to serve through the next year.

But in March 1976 Mr Grumbley advised the Council that, with his movements being uncertain for the next few months, districts and the Council should consider recommending a new chairman for the 1976 AGM. The Deputy Chairman, Mr Classen agreed to act as Chairman in his absence during the year

The news was shared at the AGM at Mr Grumbley's residence where he again suggested that a change of Chairman would be beneficial to the Society and that districts should start thinking of possible candidates for 1977. Classen and the members applauded Mr Grumbley for the work he had done in his two years and the way he had travelled around the country, visiting districts and making them all feel a part of one united Society.

Mr Grumbley expressed his regret at the poor attendance of Council meetings and that they had not met in more than six months. One of the reasons for this may have been caused by communication difficulties as letters addressed to the secretary were being returned and he was unaware of district activities. He then asked all district secretaries to direct communication to Arnold Renney, Hon Secretary, Kenya Horticultural Society, at a new box number of P O Box 30029 Nairobi and copied to him at P O Box 10 Limuru.

The message was sent to all the district secretaries in 1976. These were:

Mrs D Powell P O Box 40027 Nairobi,

Mrs D Walker P O Box 172 Limuru,

Mrs Mayer P O Box 539 Kitale for Trans Nzoia,

Mrs M North Lewis P O Box 190 Eldoret for Uasin Gishu,

Mrs V Lee P O Box 10 Nakuru for Rift Valley,

Mrs Donnelly of P O Box 420 Malindi

Mrs Pam Grattan, Chairman of Nanyuki/Nyeri 'Osirua' P. O Timau

In January 1976, Chairman Grumbley tabled a form to help in preparing the annual report and which he hoped would be acceptable to all the districts, He asked if they would be completed and sent to the secretary as soon as possible after the year-end.

Chairman Grumbley continued to lament the lack of district representation at the Council meetings and said it was necessary to co-opt new and active members to the Council, something he would bring up at the AGM. Their meetings were mostly attended by Nairobi and Limuru district members.

He proposed to encourage more members from the districts to attend the Council meetings by holding the meeting on a weekend, supplemented by a garden meeting and possibly a sundowner party. Members could offer the hospitality of their Nairobi homes and assist with the cost of petrol. The Council agreed that petrol costs for those who attended Council meetings should be reimbursed by their districts, while the Council would meet the costs of lunch.

In July 1977 he proposed that younger people be brought into the Council who were not necessarily officials of districts. This would require an amendment to the constitution, but it would strengthen the Council. He proposed that Mr Barry Cameron from Limuru, while Mrs Truran proposed Mrs Eleanor Thomson and it was agreed both would be invited to join the Council, which they did in 1978.

Because of the low attendance they also proposed to have only one Council meeting a year, when all districts would make a special effort to attend, perhaps in July.

On the Society's finances in 1977, Mr Arnold Renney reported to the Council that they had overdrawn the Society's account by Shs533 but that he had banked Shs1,000 to keep it in credit. At the time, the main activity was the sale of cards which was going well. There was an issue of spoilt cards with PrintPak and they settled an invoice to the firm for Shs9,541.

Things rebounded a few months later and by February 1978, the Treasurer reported that the Society's finances were sound again, with Shs8,200 in the bank. There were outstanding debts of Shs6,200 and the only creditor was the Hon Secretary who had paid Shs1,000 into the bank to keep it in credit and also paid Shs300 to have the Jamhuri Park stand connected by East African Power & Lighting.

The Limuru Road premises of Closeburn Nurseries of Mr Patel and Mr Harries hosted the 1978 AGM where Chairman Grumbley told members he had managed to visit all districts in 1977 except for Nyeri-Nanyuki. The meeting also applauded an honorary life

membership that the Council had conferred on Mr George Classen for his outstanding service to the Society. In turn, Mr Classen, credited his wife Mrs Jean Classen, a keen gardener who also served as Hon Secretary of the Main Society.

When it came to the election of the Chairman, Tom Grumbley again said that it was time to step down in favour of "new blood", but as there were no nominations from any of the districts, Mr Classen proposed that Mr Grumbley continued as Chairman. However, Mr Arnold Renney who had acted as both Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer requested to be relieved of his duties as Hon Treasurer and he hoped a new volunteer would come forward.

Revival of Districts in the 1970's

At Eldoret, the Uasin Gishu district was recreated in 1971 after being dormant for several years. It was reported to have 35 members enrolled and had plans for activities in 1972.

Chairman Grumbley visited the Kilifi/Malindi branch in 1972 and commended their garden achievements and activities that were being led by Jack Brown, Audrey Symons and their committee.

In 1972, Council deliberated on the Mombasa District that had broken away from the Society as its members found they derived no benefit and they decided to make a fresh approach to see if the Mombasa Horticultural Society was still there and to invite them to join once again. They would offer the privilege of Royal Horticultural Society including passes to visit the Chelsea show.

The Chairman travelled with Mrs Grumbley to different districts in 1973 passing Eldoret, and Nakuru as well as returning to Malindi/Kilifi. He made contact with several gardeners at Mombasa, but the Mombasa Horticultural Society refused to rejoin the main Society in 1974. The Mombasa Committee wished to retain its identity and the Society decided to not pursue them further.

Nyeri-Nanyuki District also fell off the radar in 1973 with no news received from them and the Chairman was not able to visit them. But the following year, the Society

managed to re-establish contact with Nyeri-Nanyuki which now had Mrs Pam Gratton as Chairman and Mrs Minns as Secretary.

The Rift Valley District held successful shows in 1972 though keeping members continued to be a problem. This was because there were people on short-term contracts in the area. That year, they had 80 members, which was a considerable improvement.

Mr Armitage reported on the success of flower shows at Nakuru but said it was worrying that younger people, particularly newcomers to Nakuru and the Rift Valley, were not being attracted to the Society. He felt there should be more garden meetings and more publicity in the press and they agreed to draw up a poster with the names and addresses of the districts.

The Nairobi District proposed to send notices of its meetings and invitations to Nairobi garden meetings to all upcountry members. Mr Grumbley also suggested that the Society circulate a list to the districts of people who were ready to give talks on horticultural matters. He felt districts would always be ready to accommodate them and if need be pay for their petrol.

The Council sought to support upcountry districts by sending lists of guest speakers and names of members who were willing to give talks and slide shows to the Districts. They also agreed to defray the expenses of visiting speakers from Nairobi. They would offset Shs150 for visitors to Nakuru, Shs200 to Nanyuki, Shs300 to Eldoret and Shs500 to Malindi while speakers from other places would be paid pro-rata.

Uasin Gishu asked for a speaker to visit them and Mr Greensmith was to contact Mrs Sylva Mather. Later Jan Gillett visited and gave a talk, Peter Britton was a guest speaker at Malindi while Limuru had an interesting talk by Dr Hugh Lamprey who was the head of Desert Reclamation at UNESCO and he invited them to visit his headquarters at Kulal.

In the coming years, the Chairman reported that all branches outside Nairobi were also experiencing problems of maintaining membership. He emphasized a need to get younger people onto the committees who could bring new ideas and life.

Within the Nairobi District itself, discussions began in September 1973 at the Council on the wisdom of splitting Nairobi into smaller branches. This was initially left to the Nairobi Committee to decide and at their annual meeting at the home of Mr & Mrs Classen in March 1974, it was felt that the branch, with 400 members, was too large for close communication between members in planning activities like garden meetings. The splitting of the Nairobi district was completed in 1977.

The year 1974 was a dry one that was tough for gardeners. No report was received on activities in Trans Nzoia and the Council got word that the district had decided they could no longer operate independently and had decided to wind up. The year before, membership at the branch had dropped resulting in a decrease in revenue. The Council requested the district to donate its cups to the Society and to dispose of the district funds itself.

But after Chairman Grumbley reached out, the district was briefly reconstituted with Mrs Breech as the Chairman. But the revival proved futile, and at the end of 1976, a letter was received that the Trans Nzoia District would be wound up due to a lack of members. It was hoped that the remaining members would join up with Uasin Gishu, which was going strong thanks to the efforts of Mrs North-Lewis as Chairman/Secretary and Mrs Lloyd as Treasurer.

The Council advised all districts to revalue all their cups to ensure they were adequately covered by insurance. It was also agreed that the cups from Trans Nzoia would be forwarded to the Secretary for reissue. When Rift Valley requested cups for class awards, Mr Renney suggested that some of the ones he had received from Trans Nzoia could be given to Rift Valley.

But up in the northern Rift Valley things were different, and in July 1980, Mr. Grumbley told the Council that the Uasin Gishu district was in a state of suspension. It had not been dissolved and they hoped it would be reactivated once a new Chairman was appointed.

Later in the year, Mrs Taylor called a meeting to get things going in the town that was growing with a lot of new people in the service industry, but it was poorly attended and she felt there was insufficient enthusiasm to justify reactivating that district.

Kilifi-Malindi 1975-85

In reviewing the different districts in 1976, Chairman Grumbley commended Kilifi-Malindi which had an active year of visits and functions and put out newsletters full of interest and information. He said that he would rate it as the District giving the best value if one took into account the difficult gardening conditions that they had to contend with.

Districts also sometimes donated surplus cash to charities. But Kilifi/Malindi had come up with a new approach where spare cash was applied to supplying subsidized horticultural produce such as fertilizer and chemicals to members and better prizes for competitions. The Chairman supported this and recommended it to other branches.

The branch was chaired by Mrs Barbara Simpson. The Hon Secretary/Treasurer Mrs Anne Donnelly attended a Council meeting and the AGM in March 1975 at Chairman Grumbley's Tigoni residence. Peter Greensmith also travelled to Malindi to judge the district's flower show.

Later, Mrs Anne Donnelly and Mrs M Creighton attended a Council meeting at Nairobi Club in July 1977 where they asked for some cups for a Kilifi/Malindi show in October. They were promised that three cups would be found and they also ordered 600 of the 800 greeting cards that the Society was trying to sell.

Barbara Simpson stepped down in 1978 as the Chairman of Kilifi-Malindi. This came after she felt she could not continue following the death of her husband Sandy. During her tenure, membership of the district had grown from 52 in 1974 to 113 in 1979. She was replaced by Mrs Morgan Granville.

Malindi expressed an interest in seeing the Royal Horticultural Society journals. They were advised to subscribe to the RHS and receive their own copies regularly, but in the meantime, back issues would be sent from the Nairobi office

The district had several garden meetings, a visit to Kasima Farm, and a walk in the Sokoke forest. In coming years, they would keep members connected with activities including marine walks, bird walks, dhow sails and plant sales that thrived in years of drought. It was integrated into the social life of the coast thanks to the enthusiasm and

imagination of Anne Donnelly, the Secretary/Treasurer, Adrienne Richardson, the Chairman, and their members. They later added visits to the Arabuko Sokoke forest and Bamburi Nature Trail with Dr Haller for members and visitors.

Office Space and the Museum

The Society had moved to Baring Arcade after independence and remained there for over a decade. Then in February 1978, they got word that the rent would be greatly increased. The Council agreed that an office was a necessity but given the expense, members of the Council and Nairobi district were requested to consider alternative office accommodation

Mr J B Gillett wrote from the Herbarium offering them office accommodation at the National Museum and Mr George Classen was asked to pursue this with Mr Richard Leakey who was the administrative director at the Museum. It was also hoped that with new office accommodation at the Museum, the Society would be able to amalgamate its library with that of the museum and avail more selections to its members. The Orchid Society was also looking for new office accommodation and was willing to share offices with the Society.

The move to the Museum depended on the Game Department vacating its premises, and as this was uncertain, they continued to look at other accommodation including at the Devon Hotel and the Kenyatta International Conference Centre that had been opened in downtown Nairobi in 1973. However, they dropped the Conference Centre due to the cost.

Going into 1979 Mrs Streets offered to let part of her office accommodation, also in Baring Arcade to the KHS. The Council authorized Mr Classen to negotiate while the main Society agreed to increase its contribution to 25% of the gross rent. This would also enable the library to be open during office hours every day and looked after by a receptionist there.

The late Mr Fisher bequeathed his entire library of horticultural books to the Society in 1978. Some were old but valuable and the Council agreed that they could sell some and purchase new books with the proceeds. Mr Classen received the Fisher collection which had about 200 books and produced a list of the up-to-date books to retain and the

collector's items to sell and then obtain newer books. This was done over the next few months with assistance from Mrs K Challis and Miss P Allen.

Mr Classen said he would try to transfer the Nairobi District library to the main Society. Nairobi District would continue to operate the library while the main Society would insure the library books. The valuation of the library was completed by Mrs Challis in 1979. They also received two books from Mr Leslie; "Gardening in East Africa" and Greenway's "Trees and Shrubs". As they no longer received a publication from the Dahlia Society, they recommended that they cease their affiliation.

The management of Baring Arcade offered to renew the KHS lease at a new rate of Sh1,100 per month. The Council met at the Nairobi Club to consider their alternatives. A company called Afrodite had premises in the same building and were interested in exchanging spaces with the Society and Mrs Donnelly proposed they consider renting space from the KSPCA in a house which they had recently inherited.

There was still no progress by November and Nairobi District advised the landlord that the district would extend the lease at the enhanced rate. Arising out of discussions at the March 1980 AGM on the rent increase, Mrs P Allen advised that she had a hut in her garden that she could avail to the Society to use as an office and Mr Rapley, the new Chairman for Limuru, also said that Mayfair hotel might have vacant office accommodation.

There was a glimmer of good news when they visited the Museum and the deputy director, Mr Isa Aggundey agreed in principle that the Society be allotted accommodation in the museum complex. They hoped this would be available in March 1981. But even as their lease was about to end, they ordered a renovated electric duplicating machine from Gestetner whose cost was shared by the main Society and Nairobi district, who contributed Shs3,360 of the Shs8,400 cost.

After the Chairman Tom Grumbley confirmed that the Society would definitely be obtaining premises at the Museum in the entomological department, Mrs Gaye Aikman told the Council that the Nairobi District had handed in a notice to relinquish its lease of the office at Baring Arcade at the end of February 1981. While the new space would be smaller, Mrs Aikman got permission to store the Society's furniture in the space.

Ahead of the move, which they were negotiating with Dr Leakey, they were temporarily housed at a Westlands flat that was made available by Mr Colin Watson. Aside from replacing the expensive offices of the main Society and Nairobi district, the move to the museum would also resolve the headache of parking in Nairobi. Nairobi District had purchased some new gardening books and it was proposed that the Society consider amalgamating its library with those of the Museum and the Natural History Society.

But there was great demand for space at the Museum and when Mr Leakey, director of the Museum, traveled to the US later in 1981, this pushed back their plans. As such, they were not able to resolve the move until early in 1982. Mr Grumbley said they now had a satisfactory home, an ideal office at a low rental, with other societies as neighbours, and they began to use the new offices for Council meetings around November 1982. The rent would be Shs100 per month and they agreed, as with the previous space, to have Nairobi District pay 75% and the main Society 25%. The headquarters would also pay 25% of the cost of furniture for the new office up to a maximum of Shs10,000 and they later obtained tables and chairs, fitted cupboards and bookcases.

The Council proposed to make Mr Richard Leakey an honorary member and they also decided to assist in the renovation of succulent boxes at the entrance to the Paleontological Institute, and this work was done by Mrs Aikman and Mr John Wright

Later, a group of societies came together as a Museum Working Party to work on horticultural and other problems around their new homes. One of the first tasks was to label the trees and shrubs in the museum area and they later contributed to renovating ornamental beds. They later participated in the remounting of botanical paintings by Joy Adamson on exhibit in the museum. Some of her other paintings are at State House.

Dr Leakey was accepted as an honorary life member at the AGM in March 1982. Others were Mr J Gillett who was also nominated by the Council, Mr L T (Tiny) Kingsford and Mrs Joan Grumbley who were both nominated by Limuru Districts.

They also agreed to invite Mr Wachira to become a member of the Council. At this time, in February 1982, the Council had no African members.

The KHS agreed to advise the museum on the types of plants to be purchased and in October 1985 Gaye Aikman told the Council that a local businessman, Mr Manu Chandaria, had offered to donate 50 bougainvillea plants to the Museum. The bougainvillea were planted on the museum grounds at the end of 1985 and the group proceeded to collect other indigenous plants to grow in the museum gardens.

The Society remained at the National Museum building, with its library, and held its Council meetings there for a decade. It also became involved in tree planting at Nairobi Hospital to enhance their grounds. This came after Mrs Thompson suggested that they donate trees and these were then planted and thrived in 1986 even before the rains.

But towards the end of 1992, as they assisted in the establishment of the late Peter Greensmith's Wasaa home as a conservation centre, which included discussions with museum officials, they started to hear rumours that the museum would ask all societies to vacate their offices at the Museum.

As such the Council agreed that, even though the offices at the National Museum were closer and more convenient for members, they should move their headquarters to Mr Greensmith's house as soon as it was practically possible. They hoped to use the garden for the AGM's and plant demonstrations.

They had discussions with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the new owners of Wasaa, and waited to see what alterations would be made to Greensmith's home before deciding on space that the Council could take up.

But in 1995, when the IUCN offices were officially opened at Wasaa, the Council decided that this would not be practical to use Wasaa for their meetings or to keep their stationery and files there. They would only use the grounds for the AGM and some Nairobi district events.

Demise of the KHS Banda 1975-80

The condition of the banda had been going down and in 1974, the garden was in a poor condition and Mr Peter Greensmith asked Mrs L K Savage to attend to it. This she did well, paying monthly visits to the banda and, working together with Greensmith, they

stripped the garden down and restarted it from scratch to fill it with new plants that Mr Greensmith requested members to donate

They formed a committee to work with Mr Jacques on the 1974 show with Mrs Savage, Mr Gould, Mrs Truran and Mrs Powell. Mr George Classen said that more money would be needed to paint and complete a store at the Banda which had cost a total of Shs3,778. It was agreed that Council would donate another Shs2,000 and the Nairobi District Shs3,000 to the banda. With the completion of the showground pavilion, the Society planned to use it for future functions such as the annual sale of plants

But this was a huge task and Mrs Savage and Mr Greensmith indicated at the end of 1975 that they would no longer be able to continue looking after the banda garden. Mr Hopkins was asked to take over the care. In an unfortunate turn, as they discussed preparation for new shows in 1975, plants worth about £100 were stolen from the banda before the opening of the Nairobi ASK show. They decided to raise this matter with the ASK as they also considered how to replace the roof

In 1976 the value of the banda was £900 and Mr Renney, the Treasurer cautioned that more maintenance would have to be carried out the following year. Mr Classen later told the Council that a new roof for the banda would cost between Shs4,000 and Shs5,000. Council was willing to contribute Shs 3,000 and Nairobi district was asked to contribute Shs 2,000

The Council discussed how to get other districts to join Nairobi and Limuru during the Nairobi agricultural show at the end of September each year. It was agreed that each district could bring one carload of plants with which to stage an exhibit of about 5ft x 3ft. They would be expected to follow a theme set by Nairobi and Limuru districts and the Floral Arrangement Club would also be invited to exhibit.

The 1977 show was a success and considered one of the best for years. They had smaller exhibits in the space and these came from different districts of Nanyuki/Nyeri, Rift Valley and Limuru as well as three from Nairobi. Nairobi Central won a cup and a special mention was made of Mrs Mary Ridley's superb and well-documented display of bougainvillea. Mrs Truran suggested there should be one special exhibit every year and they decided to ask Mr Peter Greensmith to put up a display of Bromeliads for the 1978 show.

But in 1979 the banda would again need sundry repairs before the Nairobi ASK show. The Council voted the sum of Shs4,000 to renovate the banda, but it was felt that the banda was becoming a real liability and a policy on it should be discussed at the next Council meeting.

They also approved a centre-island layout proposal with the word “Nyayo” spelt out, which had been proposed by Mrs Truran, on an inclined plane at the entrance. Nyayo (Swahili for footsteps) was the slogan championed by Kenya’s new President Daniel arap Moi to show that he would continue the work of his predecessor, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. The 1979 show would be a Harambee (collaborative) effort between Nairobi and Limuru, as it was felt that the burden on the Nairobi district of organizing the show every year was becoming too onerous. The Council voted Shs1,000 to go towards organizing the exhibit at the show and they managed to put on a fine exhibit.

Chairman Grumbley told the Council that maintaining the banda for one show a year was proving far too expensive. In 1979 they had spent Shs8,175 and Mr Classen reported that the Nairobi District was not in favour of continuing to stage an exhibit for a seven-day show and that the Society would not be able to stage an exhibit in 1980.

The Council asked the Chairman to contact Mrs Vyyvan of the ASK regarding the possibility of selling the banda for £2,500 or renting it for the period of the Nairobi ASK show. They also decided to obtain a valuation from Mr Postlethwaite.

Addressing members at the AGM in Nairobi, Chairman Grumbley explained the heavy burden the Society incurred for a building that they made little use of. The show in 1980 was planned to run for 10 days and this would be a great strain on those who stage and man the exhibit.

They now looked at selling the Banda, negotiating with the Post Office Savings Bank who made an offer of Shs170,000 for the purchase of the banda. This was against a valuation of Shs251,300. Council asked Mr Grumbley to see if the bank would increase the offer. Alternatively, the bank might rent the banda for the duration of the Show. Mr Renney advised that the Society might be liable for capital gains tax if the banda was sold.

In the end, the banda was sold to the Post Office Savings Bank for Shs 185,000 in 1980, putting the Society's finances in a healthy position. The Treasurer told the Council that there was a possible liability of capital gains of Shs72,000 and the Council agreed to place Shs100,000 in a short-term deposit as soon as possible. By November they had £5,000 on deposit with National Industrial Credit and £3,000 in their current account and they resolved to place £7,500 on short-term deposit when the fixed deposit matured.

Mr Grumbley told members that the banda had been sold as it was increasingly difficult to stage and man shows and the banda, which was seldom used, was turning into a white elephant. The sale of the banda exceeded its written-down value by Shs169,885 and the treasurer told the members at the 1981 AGM that the surplus for the year was Shs165,321.

The Jamhuri Park banda was deleted from the balance sheet and their main asset was cash that included Shs175,000 at National Industrial Credit. There was also the consideration for the possible liability for capital gains tax. Shs75,000 was placed on 7-day call deposit, with the remainder on a 3-month fixed deposit, in anticipation of the capital gains tax.

Early in 1982, Hon Treasurer Arnold Renney started negotiations with the Income Tax Department to reduce the Capital gains tax figure from the original estimate. In June, he reported to the Council that the demand for capital gains on the sale of the Banda had been settled at Shs54,981.

In the same vein, the Rift Valley district also gave up their banda at the ASK Nakuru showground. The district had an active membership of 100 and it moved to hold its flower show at the premises of a local motor company. Mrs Barbie Nightingale requested any district with surplus cups to donate them to Rift Valley for the children's section, and Mr Renney offered one from Trans Nzoia.

Film origins – 1970 to 1992 (new media)

In 1970 when members discussed a pictorial record of gardens and flowers, President Mason enquired about the cost of a 16mm film on Gardens & Flowers of Kenya. She found that the cost was in the region of £3,000, while the cost of preparing slides had

varying quotes from £50 to £100. Council decided that the cost of a 16mm film was beyond their resources but they would consider a set of good slides, perhaps with some taped commentary. Slides were also easier to copy, transport and show so that more people could own a set.

Slides were also within the Society's financial limits. Having discarded the film idea, they set about doing the slides. Districts were asked to ask their members forward any slides which they considered suitable, either as donations or to be copied. A committee would then edit the slides and prepare a suitable collection for the Council to approve. However, early in 1972, the Council deferred making a film or slide presentation due to the prohibitive costs.

Later as part of their outreach to attract new membership, the Council considered how the Society could assist Egerton College students who were studying a 3-year diploma courses in landscape gardening. Egerton, located near Nakuru, had been founded as a farm school in 1939 by Lord Maurice Egerton. In 1950, it had been upgraded to an agricultural college. Egerton's ancestors had owned Tatton Park in England, which was a popular site for gardening events.

After the meeting, Mr Pratasik who was in charge of horticultural courses at Egerton visited the Chairman. Mr Peter Greensmith offered to show students his nurseries and examples of his landscape work and the Chairman offered to show slides and films which the Society had received from the RHS. The slides were shown at different branches.

In 1977 the Society became a member of the British Council Film Library, which was located across from the Norfolk Hotel. This enabled all six districts to borrow films from the library, which, with a good projector and competent projectionist would mean they would not incur a costly loss from damage to the films. This offered some useful purpose while the slide idea was shelved.

In January 1980, district secretaries were again asked to inform their members that the Society intended to build up a slide library and if possible, also supply the RHS with an adequate set of slides depicting Kenyan gardens and indigenous trees. No slides had been offered since the request to districts made in November 1974 and the Chairman

said it was important to have the slide library created before large well-established gardens were broken up with many indigenous plants lost.

Mr Barry Cameron who had been tasked with collecting slides, received a few from members including Tom Grumbley, George Classen and John Wright. Kodak in Nairobi did reproductions of slides and they estimated that 500 would be required to set up a library and the KHS approved Shs3,000 be allocated for the slide library.

By the end of 1982, Mr Cameron was able to put together two sets of 150 slides each - for the Society and the RHS. This came after they had experienced problems duplicating slides and some had to be returned to Kodak owing to poor definition of colour. He suggested that in future, slides may have to be sent to London for duplicating.

The slide program went dormant till 1987 when the Council picked it up again and decided that a slide library would be a good investment. Mrs Gaye Aikman was asked to draw up a budget that included the cost of a projector and reimbursements to members for slides they had sent in.

She reported that an Agfa auto slide projector would cost Shs9,000 plus Shs1,000 for a screen. The Council agreed that Nairobi District would meet half the cost but that all districts would be able to use the projector and screen on request. Members would also be reimbursed Shs10 per slide donated to the Society. The projector was bought and the main Society contributed Shs4,500. Mr Cameron passed over all his slides to the Nairobi District.

Mrs Gray agreed to buy video tapes on behalf of the Society in the UK starting with a video on "Garden Design" and she was later reimbursed. Also, Miller Gault, the RHS judge, donated a tape of the Chelsea Flower show that proved to be quite popular. But it went missing a few years later so the Rift Valley district offered to tape the BBC coverage of the 1987 Chelsea show and share it.

The Council gave funds to Mrs Gaye Aikman to prepare the slide library in 1989 and she spent many hours collecting and cataloguing slides into sets. A duplicate set of indigenous flower slides was to be presented to the Royal Horticultural Society's slide library at Wisley.

In 1989, Mrs Aikman also sorted them by districts and the Council agreed that the set sent to the RHS would comprise slides from Mt. Kenya and its environs. Later, when they decided to include exotics in the slide collection, Mrs Aikman offered to hand over the compiling of sets for districts to Mrs Anne Birnie who would continue this with assistance from Mrs Lisa Campbell.

The slide library was finalized in 1992 with an index of 180 slides for the districts and another set that lecturers could choose from. The collection was kept at the Museum office and looked after by Nairobi District along with the book and video library.

Christmas Cards 1975 to 1987

Christmas cards were set aside for two decades until March 1975 when Chairman Grumbley proposed that the Society print cards for Christmas in 1975. He showed them a selection of flower paintings by Mrs Sandy Cameron of Limuru, and the Council agreed to go for the highest quality possible. He offered to contact the printing firm used by Brooke Bond in England as their separation plates would be superior to anything that could be printed in Kenya. He estimated this cost at £150 and the Council, after selecting three paintings, authorized Mr Grumbley to start negotiating for 12,000 Christmas greeting cards, with no dates on them. The plan was for the separation to be done in England, while printing would be done at Kericho by Brooke Bond, at a competitive price.

The colour separations arrived in Kenya by June 1975 and Brooke Bond Liebig at Kericho undertook to complete the printing by 30 June. The cost of the separations was £230 and the printing would cost £445 including envelopes and wrappers. The cost of each card would be Shs1.10 and they planned to pack cards into sets of six for sale at Shs9. They would also send one pack to each district for advertising, with others to the British High Commission and other embassies. Peter Greensmith advised that once the consignment was received from the printers it should be insured and George Classen undertook to do this as well as take up the accounting arrangements including payment of the printing firm in England.

By October, 12,000 cards had been purchased with 9,300 ordered at Limuru and 2,700 by Nairobi which was the largest branch with over 400 members. But sales in other

districts were below expectations and the secretary wrote to Kitale and Malindi urging them to push sales. The cards were being printed at Kericho, which despite having a large European population, did not have a district of the Society and looked unlikely to come to life again.

By January 1976 receipts from the cards at Shs11,695 had almost covered the cost of cards - Shs12,846 - with more districts yet to remit cash to the Treasurer. Of the 12,000 cards, 10,000 were sold in 1975 and the balance was carried over for sale in 1976. The Council proposed giving Mrs Cameron a book token for Shs200 in appreciation for allowing the Society to use her paintings on the cards.

The following year the Council decided to continue printing cards to keep the Society in the public's mind. They resolved to omit the word "Greetings" from the cards and to feature exotic colouring and plants in future issues.

For 1978, they set out to print 20,000 cards with a bouquet design of colourful local flowers with a French fold and have them ready by mid-July. The cards would retail at Shs1.50 and purchases of more than 500 cards would receive a discount of 25 cents for each card sold. Districts would keep 25% of their profit margin.

The cards included another painting by Mrs Cameron and the Council voted to give her an honorarium of Shs350. They were done by PrintPak who had them ready in July and they agreed to present a bottle of whiskey each to Messrs Graham, Ellis and Borland at Christmas.

They ordered another set of greeting cards in 1981 and received 14,796 of these from Brooke Bond. In addition, they commissioned a new coloured aerogramme form with a painting by Mrs Sandy Cameron. Income tax rules meant that they could only sell the cards to members, and Sandy, who seemed to have become their unofficial artist, was granted a Shs300 honorarium in the form of a book token.

The Chairman told members that the printing of the cards was a considerable outlay and he asked that districts promote the sale of the attractive cards. But a few months later, the Council determined that printing aerogramme letters was too expensive to be a viable prospect and they decided to drop the scheme in June 1982

Printfast Kenya made 6000 Gloriosa cards in 1984 which were sold over the next few years.

When they decided to print more cards in 1985, Mrs Cameron did three paintings, but they were not accepted. The Hon Treasurer recommended that they sell off the balance of the 1981 greeting cards before printing new ones.

They later decided to ask the Elsa Trust if they could use three of the late Joy Adamson's tree pictures.

Joy Adamson's body had been found on 3 January 1980 in Shaba Reserve in Northern Kenya. While it was initially believed she had been killed by a lion, a former worker of hers was charged with her murder and convicted the following year.

Mrs Anne Birnie produced a set of greeting cards from three paintings done by Joy Adamson. Hugh Borland made the colour separations free of charge for which they granted him a Shs1,000 honorarium. The Adamson cards sold well. The Gloriosa motif was also used on stationery and was available to any district to use similarly.

In 1986, Kenya postal authorities also issued a new set of stamp designs in a project initiated by Mr Grumbley. They used paintings by Rena Fennessy which featured Nandi Flame, Mugumo, Acacia Thorn Tree, and Borassus Palm, indigenous trees in the country. They hoped to do more of the series in future years.

1980's Districts: Mombasa, Limuru and Nyeri/Nanyuki

Mombasa 1989-95

There was no apparent interaction with Mombasa for more than a decade. Then soon after he became Chairman, Mr Barry Cameron made a visit to Mombasa in 1988 and met several members of the Mombasa Horticultural Society.

As he told his members later, he had always been troubled that a major center of the country did not have an affiliation with the KHS. Mombasa had a horticultural society

that was formed in 1934 and became affiliated with the KHS in 1950. But they had broken away in 1960 over the objection to remitting the district subvention.

After 29 years of the rift, he had opened communication with their treasurer Mr Huth and was warmly received. He later met with Mr Shah, the Vice-Chairman and Mr Dick Sparrow the Hon Secretary.

Cameron said the outlook was encouraging and the Mombasa Horticultural Society (MHS) was now ready to call an extraordinary general meeting and discuss affiliation and reciprocation with the KHS. The Council agreed in September 1988 that having Mombasa as a district, which conferred enjoyment of all district facilities, was preferable to merely being affiliated.

But by April 1989, there was still no word from Mombasa and Mrs Gaye Aikman said she had heard it was unlikely Mombasa would accept the invitation. Mr John Wright suggested that the KHS should open its own district in Mombasa, but this proposal was set aside.

Unfortunately, Mr Huth passed away in September 1989, and there was no more progress in bringing the two societies together that year, and for a few more after.

Then in July 1993, Mr Cameron wrote again to the Secretary of the Mombasa Horticultural Society about forging new links, but no reply was received. He asked the Council what to do and Mr Ian Robertson of the Malindi/Kilifi offered to seek out the Chairman of the Mombasa Society whose members had exhibited at the KHS Malindi flower show.

Then in 1994, Mrs Jean Elms, Chairperson of the MHS, called Mr Cameron on the matter of their joining the KHS. She said she was eager for the Mombasa Horticultural Society to join the KHS and would speak to her fellow members. While a decision was still undecided, Mr Robertson said he would ensure that invitations were sent to the MHS for their members to continue to participate at Malindi/Kilifi district functions in the interim.

However, when she checked Mrs Elms said that members of the MHS had little enthusiasm for a horticultural society of any sort. After that, Chairman Cameron along

with Ian Robertson and John Wright met with Mrs Elms at the Malindi flower show where they explained the process for rejoining the KHS. She then promised to put the proposal to her members at their May 1995 AGM.

Finally, the members of the Mombasa Horticultural Society voted to become a branch of the Kenya Horticultural Society. Mrs Elms was welcomed to the Council in July 1995 by the Chairman. Mombasa had asked for more time to come up with a name for their branch as they continued to use the MHS name and Elms explained that this was to avoid having to change the name on their bank accounts. The Council agreed that they could do this in the interim with a rubber stamp which would add "A District of the Kenya Horticultural Society" on their stationery.

While Mombasa showed revival and engagement, other districts went through different times in the 1980s and 1990s.

Nyeri-Nanyuki 1985-92 to Mt. Kenya

There was not much activity from Nyeri/Nanyuki in the 1980s. In 1985 it had only 20 members and covered a large area which meant it was difficult to keep going. Still, they managed to put on a stand at the ASK show in Nanyuki. That year Mrs Kay Wilson, one of Kenya's finest gardeners and who was a great supporter of the district, passed away

Mrs Pam Grattan attended a Council meeting in April 1987 and confirmed the membership numbers but that the District had no Treasurer or Secretary and she had no one to hand over the chairmanship which she had been trying to do for a considerable time. They were also trying to obtain a banda at the ASK Nanyuki ground and pledged that the district would be more active.

Nyeri-Nanyuki saw a revival in 1990 under the leadership of Mrs Jane Tatham-Warter. There was more horticultural interest in the district and the number of members increased from 18 to 38.

Things improved in 1992 as they held their AGM, a successful flower show in July and also organized a trip to Chogoria in September. Unfortunately, Mrs Tatham-Warter

resigned due to the ill health of her husband. She remained on the committee, and Mrs McKeand and Mrs Murray operated as joint chairmen.

In 1992, Mrs McKeand told the Council that the district wished to change its name to the more appropriate "Mt Kenya District," and this they did by the end of the year.

Limuru District: 1985-92 with Plans for Thika

In the early 1980s Limuru remained one of the most active districts. In 1982 their members arranged visits to Goldsmith Seeds who were commercial growers and Mrs Mayers' garden at Kedong.

In March 1985 Mrs Gaye Aikman, Chairman of Nairobi, made the Council aware that they now needed permission from the District Officer or District Commissioner to hold a meeting of more than ten persons. At the time, Nairobi was the largest and most active district of the Society with 596 members and several meetings and activities which were well attended.

In months to come, this law was to cause some challenges. A meeting in Limuru had to be cancelled as they could not obtain permission. Limuru was losing members due to people leaving the district so they started a membership drive.

Mrs Aikman continued to pursue blanket permission for the Society meetings until finally, in early 1986, they obtained "blanket approval" from the Office of the President that permitted Nairobi District to hold meetings.

In 1988 Professor Lucas told the Council that they were having difficulties running the Limuru district. Many members were elderly and unable to take on active roles. Mrs McCartney said that district activities should be trimmed so that it would at least be "ticking over." The Chairman said that it was suffering from a lack of younger members to take over from the older ones and that it would be a pity if the district was to lapse having been run successfully for many years. Professor Lucas resigned a few weeks later and Mrs Sue Deverell was appointed to the post.

With that, the district turned a new leaf and Limuru showed signs of revival and also showed steps in wooing African members. Mrs Sue Deverell told the 1990 AGM that her

district had 50 members, half of whom were active. They also had their Diamond Jubilee (60th anniversary) flower show with over 80 entries that included a class for commercial growers where there was a marvelous display of cymbidium orchids grown by Mrs Edith Matiba of Kenya Nurseries and a good small entry of roses by Mrs Jane Kibinge of Fairview Flowers/Flora.

But it continued to struggle and it looked like it was about to close down. The AGM was poorly attended but later 30 members attended a "Living Garden" lecture at Cecilia Cege's Echuka Farm after which there was a discussion about the future of the district and a special general meeting was set for 16 May. There Ms Dee Raymer was elected Chairman and ten members volunteered to stand for a committee and six were elected.

When Ms Dee Raymer became Chairman in 1992, she breathed fresh life into the district. Over the next few months, they had workshops on lawn care and flower arranging, Japanese arrangements and orchid cultivation. Dee gave a slide talk on the use of rocks in landscaping, and members put together a Limuru district display that won cups at the Nairobi Flower show in June 1992 for "most artistically arranged" and "most meritorious exhibit." They also produced a newsletter which the Chairman called the best of all districts in style and membership climbed back up to 65.

Dee Raymer resigned at the 1993 AGM on 6 March and John Budds became the new Chairman. Ms Raymer told the Council that she knew 80 people, both KHS and non-members, who were interested in forming an Aloe and Succulent Society under the umbrella of the KHS. This would require the KHS to amend its constitution at the next AGM.

Ms Raymer went on to start a wetland project at the Carnivore Restaurant in 1994 that Nairobi district members would visit in future years. It recycled grey water from the restaurant that flowed through a series of tanks and ponds and into the beautiful gardens of the Splash Water World restaurant. Many trees had been planted in the area, and after the last pond, the water was ready for reuse.

With her departure, the Limuru district revival appeared to have been a short-lived spark as, by February 1994, it appeared that the members would dissolve the district at their upcoming AGM. Mr Barry Cameron said he would try to persuade Mrs Cege to become Chairman and promised support from Nairobi District.

But this was not to be and at their 1994 AGM on 5 March, chaired by John Budds, the members voted to close down the Limuru branch as no member would volunteer to run the District. Mr Budds said that he had taken on the role to forestall the closure. He had worked with Mrs Carol Manji and Mrs Marjorie Watts, as Treasurer and Secretary respectively, but as he lived away from the district, and faced a splintered committee, he was not able to continue as Chairman.

Members were invited to join the nearby Nairobi District, through John Wright. Nairobi agreed to absorb Limuru District Life Members who wanted to transfer their membership. Cecilia Cege was invited to join the Council in 1994 after Nobert Krazanski opted to retire.

Before the end of the year, a “closing down” luncheon was held and the district proposed that its unwanted cups could be donated to deserving schools and institutions. Nairobi also took in all Limuru District Life members in 1994.

Thika District

In 1988 it was suggested that Thika start its own district. This was because an increasing number of Nairobi members were residents of Thika. It was agreed they should get a chairman to organise themselves and Mrs Gaye Aikman agreed to provide the new Chairman with a list of members from Thika. But it turned out that Thika had only 13 members and this was not considered a viable proposal and dropped.

Then, in March 2000, David Gray asked if Limuru was now a viable district as there were several young people living there. Chairman Cameron and Mrs Sue Deverell agreed to approach residents and gauge their interest. It was recommended that the Nairobi district hold a garden meeting in Limuru and try and create interest in the Society. But not much was heard afterwards and Thika would next move to form a district in 2017.

Nairobi Garden meetings revive 1984

At a Council meeting, Tom Grumbley suggested that a gardening course be run for members. It would be called "Know your Garden". This was agreed and a subcommittee of himself, John Wright and Gaye Aikman drew up a schedule

The first course, organized by Carine Parfitt, was set for February 1984. Twenty-two members had paid their dues and more entries were invited from other members. They also offered five places to the Kenya Museum Society. It was suggested that any profit be earmarked for a specific purpose and demonstrators would be able to claim a reasonable amount of their expenses back.

The course was successful and they decided to have another one starting in 1985 that would run for about ten weeks. Course meetings were held every Thursday morning from January to April. The charge was Shs300 per person, and the target was to have 35 participants.

They exceeded this number by January with a waiting list of 17 extras. While it was a Nairobi district activity, Mrs Anderson felt that other district members should be allowed to participate and Mrs Anne Donnelly, from the Malindi district, suggested that future parts of the course could include a trip to the coast and this would be beneficial to upcountry members.

It was believed that the courses, along with other diverse activities by the district, added to the increasing membership in 1987 when Nairobi had 622 members. The Council later agreed to set aside some places for other districts at future courses as they also considered having an advanced gardening course.

Constitution and Awards

Reprinting the Constitution

The KHS Constitution was untouched for more than a decade until Mrs Doig suggested in March 1977 that it was time to update their constitution and rules. This was put to the Council while Mr Gould at Nairobi checked on copies of the old Constitution in stock.

George Classen brought back amendments to the constitution from Limuru and Nairobi while written proposals were received from Rift Valley and Malindi districts. The

proposed amendments were agreed to by the Council and they had the secretary draw up a final draft and deliver it back to the districts. They planned to print 1,000 – 1,500 copies of a new cover and pages 1 to 13. The show rules would be retained.

To offset the cost, Mr Barry Cameron was asked to seek out potential advertisers as they worked out the cost of printing and charges for advertisements. Mr Cameron reported that it would cost Shs4 per copy to print 1,000 copies and they agreed to charge Shs400 for a full-page advertisement and Shs200 for half-page ones. However, the only advertiser who showed interest was Closeburn Nurseries who sent a cheque for Shs200.

Messrs Tom Grumbley and Peter Greensmith set out to contact more advertisers and eventually four companies took full-page advertisements and three took a half-page each. But when PrintPak quoted a new rate of Shs12 each for 1,000 copies or Shs7.50 each for 2,000 copies the Council agreed that the rates would constitute too heavy a financial burden on the Society. They decided to obtain more quotations from the Nakuru Press, the Flying Doctors Services and the Catholic Mission at Nyeri.

If the cost did not reduce, they would have to consider printing it without the instructions to exhibitors or simply roneo-ing the new constitution. Mr Cameron was able to obtain new quotes with the lowest being Shs4.25 for 2,000 copies and Shs6.40 for 1,000 copies from Spot Photographers. They started printing 1,000 copies of the complete booklet and these were distributed to all districts in April 1979 and also at that years' AGM at Sir Michael Blundell's house.

This came after a year of drafts, proofs, and readings and the Chairman expressed his thanks to Mr Barry Cameron for dealing with the printers. However, given the cost of printing, they would only issue copies to officers. Members were invited to request copies to take away after the meeting.

There was no single list of Life members, and secretaries in the districts were asked to compile lists of past and present Life members in their districts and forward them to the Society to prepare a master list for accreditation. The main Society had a stock of Life Member badges available at Shs5 each.

In July 1977, the Chairman proposed that it would be appropriate to honour members who had done a lot for the Society. They decided that the term “vice-chairman” was outdated and “honorary life member” was considered instead. And with the adoption of the new constitution, the status of vice-chairman was abolished. Members at the 1979 AGM were told that there were three vice-chairmen, Mrs C R P Howard, Messrs Harold Gardner and Peter Greensmith and they were all elected as Honorary life members of the Society.

Judges 1975-80

In January 1975, the Council requested district secretaries to encourage members to come forward and take the position of learner judges to ensure a future supply of trained and experienced judges for shows.

A problem at headquarters was that it was becoming increasingly difficult to get the examining judge panel of Mrs Cartwright, Peter Greensmith and John Wright together. They decided to contact the learner judges at Nairobi to see if they could come and take their final tests at Limuru and also resolved that the number of shows that learner judges must attend before taking their final tests be reduced from six to four.

In 1978, while the Council agreed that it was the responsibility of districts to select judges for their shows, the Council agreed that they had to update the panel of judges and added Mr Tom Grumbley and Mrs Gladys Wright to the examining panel. They also asked that after judging at a show, the panel should spend 30 minutes to an hour with learner judges going over and explaining their decisions.

Finally, the Council released a list of judges and learner judges in mid-1979. The judges were Mr Armitage of Nakuru, Mrs Doig of Tigoni, Mr Peter Greensmith, Mrs Morson of Naivasha, Mr Perkins, Dr Piers, Mrs Gladys Wright of Mombasa, Mr John Wright of Naivasha, Mrs David Fielden of Kilifi, Chairman Grumbley, Mrs Truran, Mrs Molloy, Mr Cameron and Mrs A Cole.

The learner judges were Mr George & Mrs Jean Classen, Mrs May, Mrs Sinclair of Kitale, Mrs Sparrow of Eldoret, Mrs Mather, Mrs Bayer, Mrs Morgan-Grenville of Malindi, Mrs Cameron of Tigoni and Mrs Aikman.

Later to meet an urgent requirement for judges, they co-opted Mr and Mrs Classen to the judges' panel. Mr Patel, Mrs Amrit Sandhu and Mr M Wachira were approached for learner judging.

Tom Grumbley also undertook to see if UK judges visiting Kenya could judge at Society shows and also if it was possible for the Society judges or learner judges to judge at UK flower shows organized by the RHS. This came after Mr Grumbley had visited the RHS in London and Wisley and there was more cooperation in 1980 between the societies.

Then to fix an issue where some judges were not familiar with the schedules of shows they were judging, they resolved to send a circular to all judges with the Society's constitution, principles and points system. District secretaries were asked when inviting people to judge, to indicate the section of the schedule they were responsible for and give them adequate notice of shows. Also, it was proposed in 1980 that John Wright be appointed KHS Judge Coordinator.

In 1982, both Mrs Hayes and Mrs Grumbley passed their examinations and became official judges. That year more learner judge courses were held at Mrs Alam's home at Limuru and Mrs Gaye Aikman's at Karen.

Chelsea and the RHS in the 1980s

After their participation at Chelsea in 1973, there was little foreign activity or interest at the Society till 1979. They received a request from Hamburg Botanical Gardens for indigenous bougainvillea. Also, members of the Fern Society of New Zealand visited Nairobi and were hosted by Mr J B Gould.

Also, that year Chairman Grumbley was invited to judge at the Lusaka flower show. He visited with his wife and would later tell members at the AGM that he enjoyed the show which was put up with a lot more difficulty than members faced in Kenya. They did not have the same magnificent range of flowers as we had in Kenya, which was due to the skill and inspired plantsmen such as Peter Greensmith who had introduced many plants to Kenya. On Mr Grumbley's invitation, two representatives from Lusaka attended the Nairobi flower show and an amicable relationship was established between the two societies.

They also started a discussion in 1980 about whether they would stage a show at Chelsea. Mrs Cameron would be in England and offered to assist and check with the RHS for information on applications, space, closing dates as well as freight charges. Peter Greensmith offered to assist, mainly with plant material and Tom Grumbley wrote to their patron Mr Njonjo for assistance on exchange controls and other government functions.

In 1981, the subscription to the RHS had been raised to £25. This would be the first participation in a decade at the RHS Chelsea Flower show, the UK's most prestigious garden show. Mr Grumbley said they had tried many times over the years and encountered obstacles, but he was more confident with a new younger Council. They formed a sub-committee comprising Mrs Gaye Aikman, Mr and Mrs Cameron, Mrs E Thompson and John Wright and allocated a maximum of £400 to stage the exhibit. Their participation at the Chelsea show in May 1981 turned out to be great fun and quite successful. The Kenya display was both beautiful and unusual; was one of the few amateur stands, admired by thousands, and they received a Silver Gilt Medal.

Chelsea 1981 report

Mrs Gaye Aikman and Mrs Cameron later wrote letters of thanks to all the members who had donated flowers. The Chairman resolved to write his thanks to Air Mauritius, who had flown all their flowers to London free of charge, Bobs Harries Ltd, Thika and also to Mrs D Mayhew who had assisted during the show period.

Mr Barry Cameron presented an 8mm half-hour film on Chelsea. A BBC colour video that featured the Kenyan exhibition at Chelsea was also available for use with the VHS machine and members were invited to ask the Nairobi District Secretary about borrowing the film.

That year, a former Director of the RHS Gardens at Wisley, Frank Knight visited Kenya. He gave a talk to members at Eldoret, met members at Limuru and also judged at the KHS shows in Nairobi and Nakuru. The visit was a part of the effort to improve the liaison between the Kenyan Society and the RHS.

Mr Don Turner proposed the Society offered a trip to Madagascar in September or October 1981. This would be a ten-day trip for 20–30 members who would visit the plant

and bird habitats on the fascinating island. Mr Turner estimated it would cost £500–600 with two extra days in Mauritius for an extra £150–200. The Chairman said that, though expensive, it would be a unique experience to see fauna that was fast-changing and was likely to disappear in the future. The Secretary circulated his letter to the districts to advise their members of this proposed trip. Fourteen members showed serious interest and their names were forwarded to Mr Turner. Unfortunately, the numbers dwindled to an uneconomic count of five who actually paid their deposits, and the trip was cancelled because of a lack of support.

Later in the year, Flamingo Tours wrote to Mrs Gaye Aikman saying that 28 members of the New York Botanical Gardens would be visiting Nairobi in October 1981. The company asked the Society to entertain them and it was suggested that Peter Greensmith or Mrs Boswell invite them to visit their respective gardens.

The famous American photographer Seymour Linden visited Kenya in 1984. He was a succulent and cactus enthusiast in California and requested that the Society assist him during a collecting visit in Kenya. The KHS agreed to pay his petrol expenses while he would meet his own hotel expenses. Mrs Gaye Aikman and Mr Arnold Renney joined him for a large part of his visit and Mr Linden presented a slide show at Mrs Thompson's house in December 1984. It was a successful evening enjoyed by the guests and the Council voted to reimburse Mrs Thompson Shs400 towards the costs of hosting.

The liaison between the Royal Horticultural Society and the KHS continued to grow. The RHS requested the KHS to provide an article for publication in the RHS Journal and Mr Barry Cameron prepared one in November 1982 and sent it to the editor. There was also some interest from the RHS to sell the KHS greeting cards at Wisley.

They also considered participating in the Chelsea flower show in 1983, but as that would be the 60th anniversary of the KHS, the Council decided it was preferable to celebrate the occasion in Kenya and consider a Chelsea exhibit in 1984.

After the anniversary celebrations, they resumed plans to stage an exhibit in Chelsea for 1984. A budget of £750 was approved and Gaye Aikman and Mrs Cameron were asked to prepare application forms. They and the Chairman all planned to be in England during the Chelsea show and would be available to help in the staging.

However early in 1984, Mrs Aikman told the Council that to compete for a gold medal at Chelsea it was necessary to have started preparations in September of the previous year. As such, they asked the Secretary to write to the RHS advising they would not be able to participate at the upcoming Chelsea show due to the current Kenya Exchange Control regulations but would consider exhibiting in 1985.

They would also ask any visiting judges for their opinion on the value of having a Kenyan exhibit and for advice on the type and composition of such an exhibit. The RHS sent a list of judges who were interested in visiting Kenya and Mr Grumbley wrote to each of them inviting them to judge at a show in Kenya and offering an air ticket and hospitality.

One who accepted was Mr Millar Gault, who was visiting with his wife in June, and who agreed to judge at the Nairobi and Nakuru shows and also travel to several districts. Mr Gault who had often judged at the main Chelsea shows and others of the National Rose Society, was also invited to advise the KHS on staging their exhibit for future Chelsea shows.

The KHS arranged for Mr and Mrs Gault to fly to Kenya, and for the couple to travel to Malindi. However, the shows at Rift valley, Limuru and Nanyuki had to be cancelled due to the dry weather in 1984. Still, he was able to give slide shows and talks to members in the districts he visited.

Mr Gault also joined the judges at the Nairobi flower show where he recommended that the Nairobi Orchid Growers Group be awarded a Silver Veitch Memorial Medal for their excellent staging. His trip cost the Society Shs12,970.

The RHS published an article by Mr Millar Gault about his visit to Kenya in the November 1985 issue of their journal 'The Garden'. But it seems that the KHS was not able to see the article as they had not received RHS publications for several months. Instead, they wrote a letter of congratulations to the new President of the RHS, Mr Robin Herbert.

The Council also resolved that they would not exhibit at Chelsea in 1985 or in 1986. The RHS President wrote in 1985 about furthering relations between the two societies with a

promise to arrange for learner judges to attend RHS shows and judging courses in the UK. In turn, the Council asked the KHS Chairman to offer the Society's hospitality and assistance to any RHS visitors to Kenya.

Mr John Brookes, a renowned landscape architect, was travelling around Africa and visited Zimbabwe and South Africa, giving lectures on landscape design, but the Council decided not to fund a trip for him to lecture in Kenya. Later on, they worked with the Floral Arrangement Club to fund a visit by Ms Betty Anne Gael, an accredited judge from Zimbabwe to Kenya in 1987.

Mrs Gaye Aikman proposed that Mary Rich, a judge living in Zimbabwe who was both a qualified flower show and flower arrangement judge, be invited to officiate at the next flower show. It was agreed in principle that the main Society would pay for her airfare. At the time three ladies had been proposed as learner judges - Mrs Jane Mayers, Mrs Pat Dixon and Mrs Pauline Balletto.

They also wrote to other districts to enquire if they were interested in a visit from Mrs Rich. Nairobi District drew up a schedule for her to visit Malindi, Nakuru and Nanyuki. Afterwards, Mrs Rich wrote a letter of thanks to the Society. In appreciation of her judging at the KHS show in June 1987, they reimbursed her trip expenses. This was partially offset by a payment from the Kenya Floral Arrangement Club of Shs2,000 for a lecture that Mrs Rich gave their members.

There was more engagement with Zimbabwe the following year as Aloe 88 took place in Harare Zimbabwe in July 1988. Eight members expressed interest in attending and Mr Arnold Renney applied to the Kenya Exchange Control authorities for travel allowances. Ten members did make the trip to attend the Aloe 88 Congress and Chairman Grumbley said it was a great success, well-organized and extremely well-run. Kenya had the second-largest delegation and Mrs Gaye Aikman delivered a slide lecture that she had prepared on succulents indigenous to Kenya, which was well received.

Plant Sanctuaries

The KHS continued engagements with plant sanctuaries around the country. Mutomo Hill, halfway between Kibwezi and Kitui, was proposed in November 1974. In 1977 they donated Shs2,000 to go towards a rest house and a new house for the caretaker.

Chairman Grumbley also suggested that they consider negotiating with the Baringo County Council to declare the most northern island on Lake Baringo as another plant sanctuary in July 1977. But after speaking with Mr Skinner of Baringo, Mr Grumbley agreed that the island proposed was too inaccessible and that they ought to seek a better site.

Seeds 1975

At the AGM, Mr Fredenburg proposed that the Society investigate the matter of dating seed packets in Kenya. Chairman Grumbley contacted the Ministry of Commerce & Industry but the response was negative. Around June 1975, Messrs Kirchoff had also written telling him how difficult it was to control the sale of seed once it reached a retailer. After this they decided to write to the districts to recommend members buy seeds from Messrs Kirchoff direct rather than from the retailers.

Other Society Book Initiatives 1972 - 1988

With the completion of the fourth edition of the Gardening book in 1968, the Society did not end their efforts to support the sharing of knowledge about horticulture and gardening. Even as they set aside their own publication plans, the Society continued to support other publications.

In 1972, new President, Mr Tom Grumbley told the Council about a manuscript for a book called 'Flora of Upland Kenya' that Dr Andrew Agnew, late of the Nairobi University had completed. He felt it would be of value not only to botanists, but to gardeners and horticulturalists. The Oxford University Press (OUP) was ready to publish it if they were paid a subsidy of £2,500. Mr Grumbley had approached other firms and people for contributions and £1,400 had been promised. Peter Greensmith supported the proposal, saying if the book was not published, it would be a serious loss to Kenya. And with that, the meeting approved that £500 from a sale of their investments should be contributed to the publication.

Mr Grumbley told the Council that the likely cost of each book would drop from £8 to £5 as a Swedish University was ready to contribute to its publication. With this news, Limuru District pledged £65 and Nairobi District another £100 and they informed OUP

that the Society's contribution would now be £665 conditional on the Society receiving payment in the form of copies of the book.

Addressing members at the 1973 AGM, Mr Grumbley said the book would be published in the autumn of 1973 by Clarendon Press. It was a large volume and would cost not less than Shs100 and members would be able to buy copies at the trade price.

Industrial upheavals in England pushed the date back, but the book was eventually published as "Upland Kenya Wild Flowers" in 1974. The 78 members who attended the next AGM at Mr Grumbley's home in March 1974 were able to view proofs of the book which, at Shs10,000, was one of the largest expenditure items by the Society the previous year. The Council had requested OUP for 150 copies of the book for its members, which was expected to be available in early 1975. The retail price was expected to be Shs170, but the Society was being charged Shs127.50 ex-Nairobi and the Council resolved to sell it to members at Shs135 and use Shs7.50 for costs.

The KHS also assisted OUP with the launch of "Upland Kenya Wild Flowers" in April 1975. Nearly all copies ordered by members had been distributed by June 1975. Senior African staff at Mr Grumbley's office had shown a great deal of interest and bought several copies of the book and by October 1975, only three copies of the book remained with the Treasurer. The last of the books sold in December 1976 and Mr J B Gillet at the East African Herbarium ordered more copies for members.

Mr Grumbley said it had taken six years to produce which showed the difficulty of producing a work of limited interest that required financial assistance to get it off the ground.

In October 1975, Mr Grumbley told the Council that Miss Mary Archbold had written a book in Swahili on indigenous plants which the OUP was willing to publish, if they received a subsidy of Shs20,000. They discussed this and decided to have Mr Gillett look at the typescript at OUP and give the Council his opinion of the book. If satisfied, they would contribute Shs2,000 towards its publication. They later advised Miss Archbold to approach Heinemann Educational Books and E A Publishing House as alternative publishers.

In March 1977, Mrs J Molloy of Nairobi suggested they put together a gardening booklet for the benefit of new members with several specialist members contributing. This would be done by the Nairobi District and she would produce and edit it.

In 1978 Mrs Grumbley proposed that they undertake a new publishing project. They wondered whether to do a publication in colour on Kenya flowers or assist Mrs Powis publish her paintings of Kenyan flowers or to update and re-issue their Jex-Blake publication. The latter was within the Society's capabilities and they decided to pursue this. But the botanist at Longman Kenya informed them that the book was too far out of date and not suitable for reprinting.

They finally had some success the following year. In July 1979, the Council voted Shs5,000 towards the completion of "Guide to the Wildflowers of East Africa" by Sir Michael Blundell. Districts and individuals were also invited to make their own contributions, and this would cover a range of flowers with colour photographs and scripts. It was to be published by Collins in June 1981 and sell for about Shs150.

The book arrived later in 1982 and Text Book Centre offered the Society the book at Shs175 and the Council decided to order 50 copies. Early sales of this simple field guide were slow, but they sold all their copies by the end of the year. The KHS requested Sir Michael Blundell to sign copies of the book at the 60th anniversary celebrations of the Society in June 1983.

Another book they did not publish was on plants of Central Kenya. In 1985, Mr Mutwiri and Mr Gachathi wrote to the Society requesting financial assistance in printing this, but the Council decided in October that this was outside the Society's purlieu.

Then in 1986, Sir Michael Blundell asked the Society to contribute towards the cost of the second volume of his "Wild Flowers" book. At the same time, Mrs Barbara Simpson requested they assist her to publish a study on seaweeds at the Kenya Coast. The Council agreed to support Sir Michael with Shs10,000 and Shs5,000 to Mrs Simpson for the 'Guide to Kenya Seaweeds'. Individual districts were again invited to contribute to the publications from their funds. Peter Greensmith made a personal contribution of Shs5,000 to the seaweed study and the book was published at the end of 1988.

The Council also approved Mr Greensmith's suggestion in 1987 to have duplicates made of all the 'Africana' books in the Society's library at Rank Xerox who did a good job of duplicating valuable books. Mr Greensmith also donated two copies of "Tropical Plant and Gardening" to the Society.

Blundell's second edition of 'The Wildflowers of East Africa' was published late in 1987. Mr Tom Grumbley was the chief guest at the launch where he described it as a great help in identifying and understanding local wildflowers.

Writing the Society's History

In 1988, Peter Greensmith enquired at the AGM whether anyone was writing an official history of the Society. This came after his speech where he thanked Mr Tom Grumbley who had stepped down as Chairman after 16 years. They asked Mrs D Powell, the long-serving Nairobi district secretary to do this. She would be given a small honorarium of Shs2,000 and Mrs Jennifer Stitchbury would edit the script.

Mrs Powell accepted and started the work in April 1988 cataloguing historic events in the life of the Society, and touching on the leading characters. She soon found that the Society's Minute books from 1936 to the 1950s were missing. The Council then requested any districts or persons who had suitable papers concerning this blank period to forward copies to her.

But a few months later, in December 1988, Mrs Powell felt that she was unable to do the work. The Chairman then suggested that they ask Mrs Jennifer Stitchbury to undertake the project for the same remuneration.

It was a challenging project and she was expected to visit all districts to review the records and interview some members with the greatest years of membership. The new KHS Chairman Barry Cameron requested members at the 1989 general meeting to assist Mrs Stitchbury with information for the project.

But in November 1989, the project on History of the Society was deferred and Mrs Stitchbury was invited to join the sub-committee working on the next edition of 'Gardening in Kenya'.

New Kenya President, New Rules 1978

Kenya's first President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta passed away in August 1978. He had been the patron of the Agricultural Society of Kenya, among other organizations. Chairman Tom Grumbley wrote a letter of condolence on behalf of the Society while the Nairobi District sent a similar message. During the year the Society also lost Mr Edward Robson who passed away as well as Mr K Graham who had given great assistance with the printing of greeting cards

In November 1978 it was agreed that Chairman Grumbley should approach Hon Charles Njonjo, Kenya's Attorney General, requesting him to honour the Society by becoming its Patron. Njonjo communicated his formal acceptance later that month and he would later open the Nairobi District flower show in May 1979.

The 1979 AGM was held at the Ridgeways Estate home of Sir Michael Blundell on Kiambu Road in Nairobi. Hon Njonjo was expected to attend the meeting but he cancelled at the last minute. Mr Grumbley told members that membership was generally static. They had received little support from African and Asian communities and unless they were encouraged to join, the Society would not prosper. He noted the interest and support of the Asian community in the Rift Valley District and asked members to reach out to other sectors of the community during the year.

On finances in 1979, Mr Arnold Renney, the treasurer reported that they had Shs6,059 in the bank and with no debts. However, the printing of the new constitution, which was in the hands of the printers would cost Shs6,400 and that the Society would be dependent upon receipts from the sale of cards for future revenue. They had issued 14,300 cards and still had 6,500 in stock. The Chairman asked all districts to continue to sell the cards during the year as they were suitable for all occasions, not only Christmas.

A few months later, Peter Greensmith was made an Associate of Honour by the Royal Horticultural Society and they forwarded a letter of congratulation to him.

Later in November Mr George Classen said that Nairobi District had recommended that the life membership fee be increased to Shs300 and this would be recommended to members at the 1980 AGM. Also, that new life members would receive a free life

membership badge. For new Honorary Life members, Nairobi District proposed Mrs Kate Challis, Mrs Gardner and Dr Peter Bally, while Malindi proposed Mrs Barbara Simpson. Other nominations were expected by the end of the year. Mr Rapley said that Limuru wished to nominate Mrs Morson and Mrs Doig as honorary life members.

Chairman Grumbley said he had not been able to visit branches in recent months, due to his other commitments. He had been chairman since March 1972 and with his extensive travelling, he was not able to devote as much time to the Society. He asked that they consider a new Chairman, but the Council persuaded him to continue for another year. They invited Mr John Wright and Mrs Angela McCartney to join the Council but Mr Wright declined due to other commitments. Mr Grumbley asked that districts submit nominees by October for the new Chairman.

The 1980 AGM at Mr and Mrs Cameron's Tigoni residence began with a mention of the members who had died in the previous year. These included Mr Harold Gardner who had been Chairman of the Nairobi District, who had died in November 1979. The Chairman had written a letter of condolence to Mrs Gardner. He was remembered as someone who would travel 200 miles to judge a show. Others were Mr James Walker, a true plantsman who died in a boat accident, Mr Peter Greenway, Mr Donald Wilcock who was well known in the orchid world, Mr Covey and Miss Braga.

Mr George Classen had stepped down as Chairman of Nairobi District after leading it for 19 years. It was the largest District, and the mainstay of the Society. Mr Watson took over, assisted by Mrs Eleanor Thompson, Mrs Cowie as Hon Treasurer, Mrs Gaye Aikman as Hon Secretary and a committee of eleven.

Nevertheless, Mr Classen agreed to stay on the main Council and continue to serve as Vice Chairman. Unfortunately, he passed away in 1981, and the Chairman sent his condolences to Mrs Classen. He is remembered for his extensive knowledge and experience and someone who had a major impact on the horticultural scene.

Reading the financial report to the 43 members present, Treasurer Renney mentioned that the only income item was the sale of the 1978 greeting cards of Shs9,031. The expenses were large mainly due to show expenses that included Shs1,340 to Securicor, repairs to the banda of Shs2,530 and Rentokil for Shs1,760 who had been called to deal with a white ant problem. The office rent had also gone up and they had made a

contribution to Sir Michael Blundell's book and also printed the revised constitution and rules. As such expenditure exceeded income for the year by Shs11,002, but with the amount in the bank and stock of cards, he said the Society was in a reasonably healthy state.

At the 1981 general meeting which was held at Mr and Mrs Harries' nursery, a new venture on Kiambu Road, Mrs M Hodge, Mrs D Powell, Mr J B Gould, Mrs K Doig and Mrs Millicent Morson were appointed as honorary life members of the Society.

60 years in 1983

The Kenya Horticultural Society entered 1983 knowing it was their Diamond (60th) year and the Council set about planning the anniversary celebrations: At first, they considered doing a flower show at the Norfolk Hotel, which had been the site of their first flower show in 1924, or a larger flower show in mid-June 1983 at which all districts would participate.

Mr Grumbley approached Norfolk Hotel's Mr Jack Block⁴⁷ who agreed in principle and the hotel manager, Mr Nigel Arensen offered them the use of the swimming pool area or part of the veranda. But after they formed a special Council of Nairobi and Limuru districts and met again with Arensen, they decided to have a flower show rather than an exhibition at the Norfolk. Mr Block agreed that a tree could be planted outside the Norfolk to commemorate the Society's occasion and they suggested that Mr Njonjo, the Patron, be asked to plant it.

They soon settled on having a special floral exhibition, a "mini-Chelsea" at the Cathedral Hall of All Saints Cathedral on 17 & 18 June that was arranged by the Nairobi District, assisted by officeholders and members from all districts. Mrs Gaye Aikman estimated that the cost of the show would be similar to that of the 1982 flower show.

The Chairman wrote to the RHS advising them of the upcoming celebrations and inviting them to send a representative to attend. They also invited the Aloe Society of

⁴⁷ Jack Block died in 1983 on a fishing holiday in Chile. He was in his sixties and succeeded by his brother Tubby - Nairobi's Norfolk Hotel (the first hundred years) – by Jan Hemsing

Zimbabwe and arranged to hire an adjacent room for members to informally meet with Society members from Zimbabwe.

They ordered an anniversary cake and invited Mr Njonjo to cut it. Sir Michael Blundell was invited to appear at the anniversary celebrations, and sign copies of his 'Guide to the Wildflowers of East Africa' book, the publishing of which had been supported by the Society.

The Diamond Jubilee was opened by their patron Mr Charles Njonjo, accompanied by his wife Margaret and was attended by guests from the Cactus, Aloe and Succulent Society of Zimbabwe. It featured a special flower show that was not for competition but was described by the Chairman as a floral extravaganza. Mrs Anderson gave an exhibit on the history of the Society.

The judges of Nairobi District at the 60th anniversary show unanimously awarded the Silver Veitch Medal to Chris Harries Nurseries for an outstanding display of roses while no less than four Bronze Medals were awarded to Nanyuki District, Limuru District, Nairobi District and Mrs Finney. Mr Barry Cameron offered to write an article about the anniversary celebrations and submit it to the RHS journal.

However, Chairman Grumbley told the Council a few months later that too many bronze medals had been given in the year, which he felt should be special honours only. While Mr John Wright said that the quality of exhibits had improved, Mr Grumbley said he would write to the RHS for guidelines on this award. If none came, they would come up with their own rules.

Commenting on shows at a Council meeting, Chairman Grumbley said that five flower shows had been held in 1983. But he said the schedules were all out of date, except the Malindi which was the only District that had brought out a new schedule. The Council agreed that all districts be asked to draw up new and simple schedules for their shows.

Also introduced in 1983 was a seed scheme through which seeds of interesting plants were circulated to members. This was a feature at larger societies like the RHS and the Botanical Society of South Africa, where they had dedicated staff to do this.

But the KHS was able to do this thanks to the coordinated efforts of Mrs Joan Grumbley and the Society's patron, Mr Njonjo gave them seeds. Mrs Margaret Smith typed the labels that were sent to the districts and over 60 members received the seeds after sending in prepaid envelopes along with their requests.

The seed scheme was a success and they continued it for a few more years with Mrs Grumbley continuing to collect, clean and collate the seeds that were provided by members. She handed this over to the Nairobi office in 1987 when she and her husband proceeded on an overseas trip.

At the 1983 AGM, Mrs Harvey asked members if they had heard of the Green Belt Movement. Mrs J Chubb said it had started a few years before as a project by the National Council of Women and they had set up several nurseries to supply tree seedlings to schools and they also educated children on the use and benefits of trees. Mrs Anderson thought it had a link to UNEP and the Chairman said he would follow up.

Society Changes 1984

Chairman Grumbley informed the Council that he planned to be out of the country for a considerable part of 1984 and 1985 and as such the question of a new Chairman should be brought up. Nairobi District would also be asked to propose a deputy chairman.

Nevertheless, as there was no other person proposed for Chairman at the AGM in March 1984, Mr Tom Grumbley was re-elected for another three-year term. Mr John Wright was also appointed as Deputy Chairman.

Speaking at the AGM the Hon Treasurer, Arnold Renney, told the 89-odd attendees at Mr Greensmith's residence at Wasaa on Mukoma Road that the Society was in a healthy financial position. He said that, as long as they maintained the deposit of Shs100,000 at NIC earning a reasonable interest rate, they would have an income that would cover the normal annual expenses of the Society. For 1983, they earned interest of Shs17,126 and ended with a surplus after expenses of Shs17,751 for the year.

At the meeting, Messrs Tom Grumbley and Arnold Renney were voted as honorary life members, proposed by the Council. Mrs Nicholson was proposed by Malindi/Kilifi and Mrs Cameron and Mr Garvey were proposed by Limuru district.

However, John Wright's stay would last only a few months as he moved to Naivasha and the Council found that it was preferable to have a deputy nearer Nairobi. Mr Grumbley approached Mr Barry Cameron who agreed to become the Deputy Chairman later that year and this was approved by the Council in November.

In November 1984, Charles Njonjo wrote to the Chairman, resigning as Patron of the Society on personal grounds. Mr Njonjo had been suspended from Kenya's Cabinet in June 1983 and faced a public commission of inquiry over the next year. Mr Grumbley asked that districts be notified of this and that a slip be inserted in copies of the constitution that were being distributed for members to give some consideration to a new patron.

Mr Barry Cameron would chair the next AGM in March 1985 as Mr Grumbley had to travel to Uganda at short notice, and he missed welcoming members at the AGM for the only time in his many years as Chairman.

Women Leaders in Nairobi

In his speech read to members, Mr Grumbley noted that he was struck that the bulk of the work and drive to keep the Society active was done by ladies without whose enthusiasm and hard work the KHS would go nowhere.

He also regretted that the participation of indigenous Kenyans in the Society continued to be minimal. He called on members to seek ways of getting more Kenyans to appreciate what the Society could offer and to get involved in its activities. This was the only way the Society would survive and flourish and asked that they direct their efforts towards this in the coming year.

The Chairman repeated his comments this following year. This was after 16,000 female leaders from across the world had converged in Nairobi for the World Conference on Women in July 1985 to celebrate and assess how women had fared in equality, development and peace over the previous decade. He said it made him again

appreciate the ladies who chaired the districts and played the most active roles in the committees.

Mr Grumbley was also sad to note, that despite the strong position of the Society, its numbers were still dwindling as expatriates departed and the hope that local people would start to participate had not materialized in 1985. This was his 15th year as Chairman and reiterated that it was time to step down and asked the members to consider a replacement.

Commercial Growers and Drawing Publicity

Commercial flower growing was becoming a big industry and an important export for the country. In June 1986, Peter Greensmith asked Council to consider having commercial growers put up stands as a separate part of flower shows and allow Society members to exhibit in an amateur atmosphere. He said this was because, while the presence of commercial entries enhanced the shows, their exhibits were overwhelming individual exhibitors.

A few months earlier, at the Nairobi District annual flower show at All Saints Cathedral church hall in June 1986, Naivasha's Oserian Development Company exhibited a four-sided display that swept the show⁴⁸.

Arranged by Mrs Gaye Aikman and Mrs Penny Reavy, it garnered the highest award that could be awarded by Kenyan judges, winning the Royal Horticultural Society's Bronze medal. It also won the Sir Edward Grigg Challenge Cup for the most meritorious exhibit of the show, and the Simpson & Whitelaw Challenge Cup for the best display of cut flowers.

At the show, Reavy and Aikman also won individual awards for most meritorious exhibit by an amateur, and the Chris & Marty Harries Memorial Rose Bowl, respectively. Other winners were the Nairobi Orchid Growers Association which won both the Honoraria Hughes Memorial cup for an exhibit of cultural merit and the Mrs H Grahame Bell Challenge Cup for most artistically arranged cut flowers.

⁴⁸ The Standard, June 13, 1986.

The 1987 meeting was held at Mrs Jane Mayers garden in Kedong Valley, on Kikuyu escarpment, following a suggestion by Barry Cameron to the Council and after getting the approval of the provincial administration. At the meeting, after appealing for new blood and a younger person to lead, Mr Tom Grumbley offered to serve for one more year as Chairman. He followed this up at the next Council meeting saying it was important to have a Chairman who made links to the districts by travelling to them, as Nairobi was now strong enough to stand on its own

He proposed that Mrs Angela McCartney be added to the Council after saying that it was difficult to get members to attend. Mrs Pam Grattan of Nanyuki/Nyeri said it would be easier to attend if the meetings were held on a weekday.

Mr Fenwick asked if they would have a public relations committee to look into new members. The Chairman said he would take it up with the Council. At the next Council meeting in April 1987, the public relations committee was formed. Mrs Thompson agreed to be chair and Mr Fenwick asked to be added as a member. Prof Lucas from Limuru said members should be more outgoing and make an effort to speak to Africans visiting their shows to stimulate their interest.

They decided to print 5,000 brochures about the Society's activities that Mrs Thompson would design. Later, Nairobi Creative Associates did the artwork for a brochure that was intended for use by all the districts to explain their objects and activities.

Revamping Awards, Illuminated Scrolls, No more RHS medals

In October 1985, the Nairobi District had asked to create its own awards to be given at shows in addition to the RHS awards. Members, including Peter Greensmith, asked if the Society could have its own premier award. The Council discussed the proposed card system and agreed that the RHS bronze medal would remain the premier KHS award. Then one KHS certificate would be printed and as an award of merit would be the Society's own highest honour given to exhibits of outstanding quality. Mr Hugh Borland agreed to do the colour separation for the Society awards, free of charge. The Award of Merit design was approved later that year and the Council approved tokens of Shs1,000 from the Sarit Center to be given as thanks to Mrs Anne Birnie for her painting and Mr Borland for his assistance in colour separation and printing.

In April 1987, when Mr Cameron brought up the matter of the ranking of the KHS award of merit vis the RHS bronze medal, the Chairman proposed that the bestowing of awards per flower show should be limited to one RHS bronze medal and up to a maximum of three awards of merit. An awards committee, whose members were Mr John Wright, Mrs Cameron and Mrs Campbell, was then asked to look into the status of medals including the Silver Veitch Memorial.

The Committee presented its report to the Council early in 1988. They recommended that the Society should no longer award the RHS bronze medal. Instead, they would have three local KHS awards – gold, silver and bronze certificates. But if any visiting RHS judge wished to award an RHS bronze medal at a show, they would be able to do so. The Committee also recommended that the new KHS top awards be in the form of certificates rather than medals, due to the expense of producing them.

The Council then circulated this report to the districts to make judges aware of the new award standards and the discontinuation of all overseas medals. The new certificates were first used at the Nairobi District flower show on 10 June 1988. They were rolled out to other district shows at Rift Valley and Malindi/Kilifi later in the year.

When he became Chairman in 1988, Mr Barry Cameron was concerned that there were no formal guidelines or qualifications for the selection of honorary life members. He asked the district Councils to consider this as they also forwarded the names of honorary life members on their membership rolls. The following May, the Council resolved that ten years of service was a minimum qualification for honorary life membership.

Illuminated Scrolls

At the 1995 AGM, Nairobi District through Mr John Wright, proposed Mr Barry Cameron for honorary life membership, and this was approved with acclamation. Later that year, members began to consider how to recognize exceptional service to the Society, in a way that exceeded the qualification for the honorary life member.

The Council agreed that this would be through the presentation of an illuminated scroll, which was preferable to a medal. They sought local artists to do the work and the Chairman hoped to make the first presentations at the 1996 AGM that was held at the

residence of the British High Commissioner, Mr Simon Hemans who had a great interest in gardening and horticulture.

They obtained scrolls from the RHS at Vincent Square, London and asked Mrs Leelee Koch for a draft and quote for A4 scrolls with a colourful border and indigenous plants. Later they authorized Mrs Jean O'Meara to paint a final scroll with the Society logo being more prominent.

The Council approved two illuminated scrolls to be given at the 1997 general meeting at Wasaa Estate. The first was to Mr John Wright who, for nearly 40 years, had done sterling work that was often unnoticed at Council, district committee and flower shows. The second was to Mr Arnold Renney who had served the Council for over 30 years as Treasurer and Secretary. Later in the year, the Chairman informed members that Mr Renney had asked to relinquish the position of Hon Treasurer while continuing as Hon Secretary. However as no one came forward during the year, he continued as Treasurer.

In 1998, Ian Robertson, the Chairman of Malindi/Kilifi, proposed Mrs Irene Humphreys as an honorary life member. He noted that in her time at Malindi, she was the main supporter of floral arrangements at the flower shows while also holding voluntary regular teaching sessions to encourage new and young members. These had all enhanced public interest and the reputation of the Society.

Then near the end of 1998, Mrs Joan Grumbley, the acting Honorary Secretary for Malindi-Kilifi, wrote to propose that their Chairman, Mrs Ian Robertson be considered for a life membership. Mrs Jane McKeand was proposed for the status by Mt Kenya District the following year.

New Chairman - Barry Cameron 1988; leadership and governance changes

1987 saw the departure of Mr and Mrs Magius, great supporters of the Society and exhibitors at Naivasha. They had one of the best nurseries in Kenya, first at Kinangop then Naivasha and were now moving to Spain. Mrs Gaye Aikman hosted a lunch for them and presented them with a Mary Russell painting of Lake Naivasha that had been commissioned by the KHS.

Mr Tom Grumbley told the Council that he would step down at the 1988 AGM. Mrs Thompson proposed that Mr Barry Cameron become the incoming Chairman. This was supported by Mrs Gaye Aikman on behalf of the Nairobi district and the Council agreed. Mr Cameron accepted in February but said, with his busy office life, he would need a good backup.

At the February 1988 AGM held at Peter Greensmith's Wasaa residence, Mr Tom Grumbley told members that it was time to step down after 16 years as Chairman and hand over to someone younger to bring in new and progressive ideas. He said that a similar transition at the Royal Horticultural Society had happened with admirable results and also called for a revision of the constitution and rules which had last been updated in 1978. He was particular that the Council members should be elected to serve for three years, rather than the current term that was in perpetuity.

He then proposed Mr Barry Cameron as the new Chairman. This was seconded by Mrs Gaye Aikman, and the motion was passed with acclamation. Mr Greensmith, their host, gave a speech in appreciation of the outgoing Chairman's service to the Society and presented Tom and Joan Grumbley with a brass-bound custom-made chest as a farewell gift.

Later that year, Tom Grumbley stepped down from the Council and moved to Malindi. There in 1989, he launched a succulent group in the district and grew a splendid collection of succulents and cacti in his garden. He also helped the Kilifi District with projects including the rehabilitation of the garden at the Portuguese chapel and working with Malindi Rotarians with the rehabilitation of Uhuru (Coronation) Garden. They planted drought-resistant plants which the town council was to maintain.

Lawrence Arthur Stafford Grumbley passed away late in 1997 at his home in Malindi and Chairman Cameron sent a letter of condolences to Mrs Joan Grumbley on behalf of the Society. Cameron told members that Tom Grumbley had chaired the Society for 16 years and also served as a judge, exhibitor, lecturer of knowledge almost unsurpassed in Kenya and an excellent ambassador.

At the first meeting chaired by Barry Cameron, in April 1988, he told the Council that the position of Vice-Chairman that was held by Peter Greensmith under the 1978 constitution had been scrapped in 1979 and replaced by a 'Deputy Chairman'. He now

nominated Mrs Eleanor Thompson for the post and after she accepted, Mr Greensmith said it was advantageous to have two deputies.

Mrs McCartney agreed to supervise the review of the Constitution and all members of the Council were asked to re-read the Constitution, make suggestions, and make final recommendations by August.

The constitutional changes were adopted by members at the 1989 AGM. The old handbook would be retained, with the section on the constitution and rules stamped with "superseded". Later Howard Humphreys Kenya Ltd agreed to print the Constitution booklets and they placed an order for 200 copies at Shs3,000.

For show venues, the Orchid Society asked the KHS to improve the lighting at Cathedral Hall. But the Society deferred this as they only used the hall once a year. Barry Cameron went to check with the Kenyatta Conference Center about the cost and feasibility of using it for a flower show, possibly with the Orchid Society.

But their offer of the Plenary hall was at a sizeable rate of Shs14,300 per day. Cameron tried to get them to reduce the charge as the area was small, but he found the KICC staff difficult to deal with. Mrs Gaye Aikman also opposed the venue change, saying that the Nairobi District would prefer to continue with the use of Cathedral Hall.

However, the Cathedral wrote to state that they could only offer the use of the Cathedral Hall during April, August and December. These were all deemed unsuitable months for the staging of flower shows. The KHS, Orchid Society and Flower Club continued their search for alternative sites to stage the flower show and they managed to have a small flower show in November at the German Community Hall.

Later, when the Cathedral Hall raised its prices to Shs6,000 per day, early in 1989 Nairobi District decided it would not be possible to have a flower show at Cathedral Hall that year, nor again in 1990.

At the first AGM at which he officiated, at the Mutamaiyu Road, Langata garden of Mr and Mrs Rob Glen in March 1989, Chairman Cameron started a practice of inviting the district chairmen to say a few words on the highlights of activities in their area. Mr John

Wright spoke for Nairobi, Mrs Sue Deverell for Limuru, Mrs Barbie Nightingale for Rift Valley, Mrs Pam Grattan for Nyeri/Nanyuki and Paddy Weaver for Malindi/Kilifi.

These more detailed reports from the districts and their gardening activities, tours, plant sales, shows, and actions of their key members were now highlighted. It also allowed individuals to be acknowledged for the hard work they did in the districts, along with mentions of outstanding gardens that owners had displayed.

Paddy Weaver brought some sad news about the rapidly failing health of Adrienne Richardson which forced her to resign from the Chairman of the Kilifi/Malindi. Still, Mrs Anne Donnelly continued as Secretary/Treasurer for her 18th year in the essential job. Mrs Donnelly relinquished the post in 1990 to become Chairman of the district after Paddy Weaver resigned.

At the beginning of 1990, it was noted that the revised Constitution stipulated that two members of the Council were to retire annually. And due to their length of service on the board, Mr Peter Greensmith and Mrs Eleanor Thompson were to retire by rotation. Mrs Thompson immediately agreed to stand for re-election and was elected unanimously. But when the Chairman later checked with Mr Greensmith who was absent from the meeting, Mr Greensmith declined re-election due to his deteriorating health.

The new decade began with the untimely death of Mr John Gordon (JG) Highwood at Tigoni, Limuru in February 1990. He had audited the Society's accounts since 1982. At short notice, Kanwaljit Singh (K.S.) Syan stepped in and offered to carry on the work of the honorary auditor and audited the accounts presented to members at the 1991 general meeting. Also, in 1990, Mr Michael Aronson became the Society's legal advisor after Mr Jack Couldrey retired having provided many years of service.

Ahead of the 1991 meeting, Mr Cameron told the members that he was willing to step down at the end of this three-year term if someone else wished to Chair but the Council recommended he continue. Perhaps seeing a window to exit after long service, Mrs Thompson and Mrs McCartney both expressed wishes to resign at the AGM that would take place a few days later. After the Chairman tabled a list of people he proposed to bring on to the Council, Mrs Thompson said having workers on the Council was important as experts. The Council then settled on approaching Mr Bruce Hobson, Mrs Anne Birnie, and Mr Norbert Krasensky.

Addressing members at the 1993 AGM, the Chairman mentioned five members who had passed away since their last gathering. Sir Michael Blundell who had produced two books on the indigenous flora of Kenya and whose beautiful garden, full of bougainvillea and shrubs in Ridgeways, was the venue of several KHS AGM's, died in February 1993. Sylva Mather who was famous for growing Saintpaulias and was the recipient of the RHS bronze medal also died in a tragic car accident. He also cited Mr Tiny Kingsford of Limuru District who exhibited bulbous rooted flowers, and Mrs Barbie Nightingale who, as Chairman of the Rift Valley District from 1977 to 1989, kept an open garden, worked tirelessly for the branch and gave many talks at conferences. The eulogy at her funeral was given by Sir Michael Blundell. They also lost Mr Brian Perkins, a colleague of Peter Greensmith at the City Park, Nairobi who later ran a landscape business and his work was seen in the gardens of the Serena Hotel and Panafric Hotel.

For the 1997 AGM, Chairman Cameron introduced a new format to increase attendance, which apparently was decreasing as meetings were seen as boring. He started having the Chairman and Treasurer reports circulated to members along with the notices of the meeting. This would give members the chance to study them and come up with questions that they could ask at the AGM. He hoped this would cut the AGM to 15 minutes and allow for other, more exciting events such as guest speakers.

However, this was modified the following year as the Secretary, Mr Arnold Renney, told Cameron that it was not practical, and so they altered the format to hand out the report to members as they walked into the AGM.

Fifth Society Book

Barry Cameron, who took over as Chairman in March 1988 suggested at his first Council meeting that the Society consider doing a book on Gardening in Kenya as a new project. This came after a member asked that the Society reprint their now out-of-date book which was described as the gardener's main reference 'bible' as it covered conditions and seasons specific to East Africa. The first edition was published in 1934, followed by editions in 1939, 1949 and 1957. Sir Michael Blundell agreed that this was an excellent idea and suggested they aim for a new book that covered Kenya only, not merely an update of Gardening in East Africa.

A committee of the Chairman, Mr John Wright, Mrs Sue Deverell, Mrs Gaye Aikman and Mr David Gray was asked to consider the contents and financing of the book whose print run was initially estimated at 8,000 copies.

Meanwhile, they agreed that the KHS donate Shs5,000 to another publication. This was 'Wayside Flowers of Kenya' by Teresa Sapiuha, which was a booklet of photos and descriptions of 103 species. The book was published at the end of 1989.

The new Gardening book was an ambitious project that would take several years. The estimate provided by Mr David Gray, Managing Director of Sulmac Flowers who agreed to oversee the finances was between Shs600,000 and Shs1million to produce the book. One member asked if a bank loan could be taken out to produce the book but Mr Cameron said the interest on such a loan would be expensive and the Society had no assets to pledge as security. This would be considered as a last resort.

The Committee proposed that the main Society put up Shs50,000 which was approved by the Council. At the time, the Treasurer reported that the Society had Shs156,439, which included Shs115,000 at NIC Bank. Districts would also be invited to contribute and Limuru pledged Shs10,000, and later, after a plant sale, Nairobi added Shs7,000. Another plant sale was planned, the proceeds of which would be divided between the "Gardening in Kenya" book project and the Philadelphia flower show.

The Committee proposed printing 5,000 copies of a book with 16 chapters. Eminent horticulturalists and members in different districts would be invited to write a chapter on their specialties. Some suggestions were for Mr Tom Grumbley on Garden Planning, Ms Christine Kabuye on Indigenous Plants, Mr Peter Greensmith on Bougainvillea and another on Succulents & Cactii by Mr Arnold Renney & Mrs Jean Classen. They set an honorarium of Shs 2,000 per chapter and proposed that Mr Phil Galley do the artwork and colour separation.

Mr Bruce Hobson, a producer of several children's books, was appointed editor-in-chief and would be granted an honorarium of Shs10,000. Mrs Ann Birnie who had published 'Trees of Kenya' was co-opted to the Committee along with Mrs Jennifer Stitchbury, Mr John Wright and Mrs Sue Deverell. They selected two sample chapters to have ready by early 1990 which would be used to more accurately assess the cost of the project. Towards the end of the year, Mr Len Newton replaced Mr Renney in writing the chapter

on succulents and several artists began to submit samples of their work. The notes were typed by Mary Sinclair.

But at the March 1990 general meeting, David Gray told members that the Council had deliberately decided to focus on exhibiting at the Philadelphia Flower show in March 1991 as their priority. Later they would return attention to the book project. Nevertheless, a payment of Shs50,000 was made in May 1990 into the new bank account that had been opened in the name of the KHS book.

At the time, the Society was dependent on two sources of revenue. One was subventions from the districts and the other was the sale of greeting cards. After a wildflower painting competition, they printed 20,000 greeting cards in September 1989 and managed to sell 17,000 of them.

After the Philadelphia show in March 1991, attention returned to the book project. Mr Barry Cameron told the members at the 1991 AGM they had fallen behind, but could now devote the next 18 months to the book. Already they had drafted the introduction and chapters on “lawns & hedges”, “fruits & trees”, and the tree part of “trees & shrubs” while the Nyeri/Nanyuki and Malindi/Kilifi districts had already sent in their sections.

He said they would be a bit “kali” (harsh) with the authors of the other chapters to ensure they completed their work in time, as a year of slippage could add another 20-30% to the book cost. There were still decisions on what colour plates to include and what styles of drawing and botanical paintings to add. Also, to decide if they would do 3,000-5,000 copies or 8,000 which would affect the final selling price.

Mrs Sue Deverell took over as the Chair of the book sub-committee after Mrs Gaye Aikman, who was instrumental in arranging the Philadelphia show, resigned. Mrs Deverell wrote to the authors giving them a deadline of 30 June 1991 to submit their material. They also sought artists and graphic artists for the line drawings.

The budget was still around Shs1 million, but with the success of the Philadelphia show behind them, they were confident about this challenge. The Society received funding from a surplus on the Pennsylvania trip and could even aim to double the resources available for the book.

The distraction of the Philadelphia Show had slowed progress on the book but once they got the new funding, the book committee hired professional writers and artists to get the book ready for the publishers. A synopsis was done and four UK publishers had been contacted. It was decided there would be no individual district chapters but relevant district information would be included in the general chapters.

Mrs Sylvia Howe, a professional journalist and new Limuru district member, was recruited to the committee to give advice and help with the book writing and production difficulties. She and Marty Collie would write chapters and would be each paid Shs25,000 in advance and Shs75,000 when the work was completed. They would also be paid travel expenses but not accommodation. Mrs Leslie Duckworth would type the book for Shs200 per page plus Shs200 per line drawing.

Overseas publishers did not show much interest this time, but in Nairobi, both Heinemann and Westland Sundries had expressed interest in publishing the book which was being typeset and Mrs Deverell hoped it could be published by October 1992. The publishers had however held off commitment till they had a text to review and their negotiations moved to the "ready for camera" stage. Cameron told the members at the 1992 AGM that, if no publisher signed on, it was possible that the Society would have to finance the book alone.

Gray asked if the point of the book was to break even or make a profit. If it became a profit-making venture it would lead to legal and tax problems. Cameron said it should cover costs and a small profit would be ideal, but they would consult the legal advisor, Mr Michael Aronson.

They proposed Miss N Poulton edit the book but as she had still not accepted their offer of Shs40,000 in May 1992, they sought an alternative editor. Mrs Campbell also agreed to write a chapter on orchids. The book was moving satisfactorily but they accepted that the October deadline would not be met.

By the end of the year, all chapters had been written up, by the KHS and the professional writers. These were sent for review for technical accuracy by Mr Bruce Hobson and Mr John Wright while Ms Leslie Duckworth was preparing line drawings and type settings. They hoped to have it ready by the middle of 1993.

Heinemann Kenya Ltd remained interested in publishing the book, making it an all-Kenyan affair, except for some possible public relations work in the UK. The terms were for a run of 3,000 books of which the Society would be required to purchase and pay for 1,122 copies. Heinemann would pay the Society a royalty rate of 12.5% on the 3,000 books. Mrs Sue Deverell told the Council that the Society would lose about Shs200,000 on the first run but hoped to make back its money with the second edition of the book which would be two or three years in the future. As such, they would aim to have made advance purchases of books possible by the time of the Society AGM.

Heinemann had proposed a retail price of the Shs500 but Mrs Deverell hoped it would be Shs600 They also proposed enlisting other publishers in South Africa and the UK, at Kew and to also put the book on the RHS book list.

But by the time of the 1993 AGM, the book project that had started in 1988 was only about 60% complete and they decided to get a better deal for the venture and to make a small profit on the first print run. Mr Cameron told the Council that their best interests would be served by publishing the book themselves, but this would push the resources needed for the project to about Shs1.5 million, two-thirds of which would have been picked up by the publisher. He said they had spent Shs500,000, which included Shs223,405 for editorial and professional writers in 1992, and would need to raise another Shs1 million to see the project through.

He proposed that they print 5,000 copies at an estimated cost of Shs300-350 each. They planned to sell them at Shs900 out of which a discount of 15% would be granted to members and non-members who placed a pre-publishing order. They hoped 1,000 copies would be snapped up by members.

Mr Gray drew up a circular to seek financial assistance from friends of the Society. The early response was slow, but eventually yielded a donation of Shs25,000 from Rhone Poulenc and Shs5,000 from Twiga Chemical Industries. Funding of more than Shs1 million was still needed and they would continue the plea when companies started their new financial year. Mr Ian Robertson cautioned that there should be no further delays in publishing or members and other parties would lose interest in the project. He suggested they approach Brooke Bond or another large company to grant the Society an interest-free or low-interest loan.

But by early 1994, the Council believed they had exhausted all the funds they could donate to the book. They decided to sell their Kenya Breweries shares. They were aided in this direction by a bureaucratic reason as bank charges that they paid to Barclays who held their shares in a nominee account absorbed the whole interim dividend paid by the Breweries. The shares were sold in 1994, yielding a profit of Shs137,633.50. Later, through David Gray's efforts, they received donations of Shs50,000 each from Stanbic Bank and Brooke Bond Kenya. They could now pay Mrs Sylvia Howe the Shs75,000 due to her.

They agreed on a selling price of \$20 or about Shs1,500 per copy. Advance purchase forms would be available at the March 1994 AGM where they hoped to have a majority of the Society's members pay the advance deposit of the book due to be ready by September. Members were told that the book costs were now at Shs2.5 million for the production of 5,000 copies. With headquarters contributing Shs500,000 they hoped that pre-orders by members ahead of the launch would help reduce the balance.

Mrs Diana Thomson handled the word processing for the 400-page book. Members contributed colour photographs including Mr Bob Campbell and Mr John Karmali who donated his entire collection of plant slides to the Society. It took longer to finish the word processing and proofreading. Some spelling mistakes were found and they decided to use a word processor to correct them. They started to get the typesetting done and approached Ms Jennifer Ogallo who worked at the UN to get her quotation for the typesetting and line drawings.

Mr Arnold Renney, the Treasurer, told the Council that the book project accounts had Shs516,533. The amounts from sponsors had been surprisingly small, and member advance payment for copies had reached Shs140,000. At this point they had sufficient funds to complete the book up to the printing stage, but not the actual printing.

Mrs Cecilia Cege suggested they approach Overseas Development Administration (ODA) for assistance and Mr John Wright proposed they go to the RHS. Mrs Ann Robertson said the priority for the book committee should be to get it ready for printing and that with a completed manuscript, they could approach donors or get a loan at a low rate of interest. They also agreed that the Treasurer should open an account with NIC for the deposit of money from the book project. Its signatories would be Messrs Cameron, Renney and Gray. The book account at Barclays was closed.

In December 1994, Gray said people and companies were holding back on orders until a proof of copy was available for inspection. He asked if Mr Hobson could produce sample chapters and a chapter list to show potential sponsors, raise finance, and also obtain quotations for printing.

In February 1995 Mr Bruce Hobson tabled four complete chapters on pests, succulents, herbs and planning & planting. The 15 chapters for the final book contained 250 pages with a central colour spread of 64 photos on 16 pages. These were shown to members at the AGM in April 1995. They now hoped to publish the book in mid-1995 and have 3,000 copies available.

Mr Cameron thanked Mr Hobson, the editor-in-chief who had rechecked the text many times, with professionals, to produce a fine reference book, as well as Mrs Sue Deverell and Mr David Gray. He said Mrs Sue Deverell was seeking quotations for the printing while Mr Gray had spent a lot of his time fundraising for the book and had collected Shs700,000 for the project.

As Chairman, Barry Cameron said he felt embarrassed that, year after year, he had reported difficulties and delays with the project. 250 members had ordered and paid for the book which had helped its finances, but they were anxiously awaiting their copies. He offered to refund anyone who wanted their money back, but hoped this would not happen. However, Mr Gray expressed disappointment that only 250 members out of the whole membership of 1,000 had ordered the book.

The Council resolved to request a loan of Shs200,000 from Nairobi District and Shs600,000 from an unnamed friend of the Society, while the main Society would also chip in another Shs450,000. The quotations they had from the printers were still quite high and it was suggested that they advertise the book to horticultural societies in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa and see if they would want to make bulk purchases for their members. There was still no cover or photograph for a cover when they were in the final stage of editing in July 1995.

The first copies were printed before the end of 1995, starting with 2,890 softback and 110 hardback copies. After the payments to the printers, the main expenditure on the book project was now complete at Shs2,126,680. Mrs Sue Deverell immediately

distributed 830 copies and they arranged for all districts to have a small stock of books for sale as they also sought distributors in Kampala and Dar es Salaam.

It had taken seven years to publish and the Chairman thanked members at the 1996 AGM for their contribution to getting it published and saving him embarrassment, which had been replaced with relief and pride when he got the first copy,

Early sales of the first book yielded Shs311,500 and with the steady progress of sales, they paid back the Shs450,000 book loan in 1996 and planned to settle the second one to the Nairobi District.

By March 1996 all loans had been cleared and all sales would now go toward replenishing their funds to finance a second edition at the end of 1997. The Chairman regretted that it had a few errors despite the numerous proofreadings' it had gone through and they hoped a second edition would give them a chance to remove those.

The Treasurer said this was a heavy investment and they must try to increase sales of the books to recoup costs. They closed the book production account and opened a book sales account. When sales slowed down, each district was asked to assist with sales at every opportunity such as at plant sales and flower shows

With the publication of the book, Mr Bruce Hobson resigned at the end of 1996 due to his many other commitments and Mrs Sue Deverell was incorporated to become an officer of the Council.

They sold 30% of the book copies but the pace had fallen off, even during the Christmas period. This meant that a second edition would not be considered for several years. 1,500 copies of the books were in David Gray's garage in 1997 and they made arrangements to move them to the Waridi office at Embakasi.

212 books were sold in 1997 and KHS remained with 1,932 books. Council agreed to increase efforts to sell books and cards. The following year they sold only 184 books and remained with 1,748 copies representing a value of Shs1,239,157. The Chairman told members at the 1999 AGM that as all costs had been met, sales would go to the bottom line.

They wrote to Mrs Bassett at Fort Portal and asked her to find someone suitable in Kampala to act as the Society's representative for the sale of books and cards in Uganda. At the end of the year, they asked Mrs Else to send greeting cards of both the old and new designs to Mrs Rothan at Kampala.

In 2002 they sold another 111 books and were left with a stock of over 1,000 books. The Chairman estimated that, at the current rate, they had ten years supply of books and the Council could look for a new worthwhile project to fund.

Mount Kenya district would later that year propose that, as the Society was well-off financially, they produce a book on different plants, their gardening and care. The Council members thought it was a good idea but no one volunteered to adopt it as their project.

In 2004 they sold 182 books, higher than the usual rate and also sold 930 calendars. This increase was attributed to sales in Kampala, and sales of the book earned Shs107,034 compared to Shs15,942 the year before.

In 2007 March with over 600 copies of Gardening in East Africa remaining, Mr Barry Cameron suggested that they send copies of the book to Arusha. Mrs Sue Deverell and Mr John Golds offered to help find bookshops in Tanzania.

By 2011, nearly all the old gardening books had been sold as they prepared to publish a new copy of Gardening in East Africa. Mr Barry Cameron retrieved the last box of books from storage to give to Mrs Sue Deverell, the current Chairman, to distribute to the districts.

Greeting Cards

The 1993 AGM was held in the garden of Rob and Julia Glen on Mutamaiuyu road in Langata. This enabled eight artists who had entered a painting competition of the Society to display their work to a high standard. The winner, chosen after enormous difficulty among the judges, was Mrs Jean O'Meara with second and third place going to Mrs Chim Gordonstown and Mrs B Haskey respectively.

The proposal was to turn the winning paintings into new greeting cards after selling out the current stock of cards. But the paintings done by Mrs Jean O'Meara went missing for a few years during the printing of cards and were only located in 1998 at Prudential Printers. The Council agreed that these paintings should be framed and made ready for hanging.

Then in 1999 as the stock of cards ran low, they decided to produce 12,000 new greeting cards. The Society's painting exhibition held at Kenton College attracted twenty entries and the winner was Roshan Manzoor and the runner-up was Claire Jones. The Society decided to use the paintings of Roshan Manzoor to make a new set of greeting cards. Mrs Sue Deverell had sourced local and foreign printers including colour separations from Kul Graphics and printing by Prudential Printers. The Council approved a budget of Shs220,000, but after expenses had been tallied, the final sum was Shs187,250. Chairman Cameron congratulated Mrs Sue Deverell for getting the cards printed cheaply and quickly in time for sale before November 1999. Mrs Sue Deverell said that it was due to the computer printing technique which eliminated the need for colour separation.

Philadelphia 1991 - All those flowers came from Kenya?

Matters overseas were put on hold for a few years, till their new Chairman Barry Cameron proposed that they consider participating at Chelsea in 1989 or some other European show and ask commercial companies to participate. They later got word that Oserian would support entry to a show in Germany or Holland, but would not support any exhibit in the UK.

The year before, they had several groups visit Kenya. Some tour operators even contacted Mrs Gaye Aikman to ask about suitable gardens which they could show tourists. This was not viable as it was a matter for individual garden owners, not the Society.

In June 1988 members of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) visited Kenya for two weeks. The friendly group of horticulturalists, which included their President Jane Pepper, toured noteworthy gardens in many KHS districts from the Mountains to the Coast and saw the diversity and abundance of plants. They also saw cut flowers being prepared for export to Europe. They later attended the staging and final judging of

the Nairobi flower show, after which they hosted a cocktail party for the Council and the Nairobi District Committee.

Something was afoot, and before their return to the USA, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society extended an invitation to the KHS to attend and stage the principal exhibit at their Philadelphia Flower Show in March 1991.

The PHS, which had been started in 1827, is America's oldest horticultural Society and organises the USA's longest-running horticulture show, first held in 1829. In the 1980s the show had turned to a more international outlook and began inviting participants from other countries to exhibit. It was internationally famous, with a reputation second only to Chelsea.

The Council considered that this was likely to be a costly venture, but it was also a great honour. They agreed to the invitation to Pennsylvania in principle. The PHS had also offered to pay for two return air tickets plus accommodation and travel in the United States.

The genesis of the invitation to Philadelphia was a conversation the PHS had after one of their shows on how to improve them. There, one of their members asked whether "they had ever featured cut flowers on the central display?"

After some discussion, they agreed to try this. The average life of a cut flower was two weeks and they made overtures to find partners in Italy and Netherlands, markets with which their local florists were familiar. They had held back-and-forth conversations with reluctant, and busy, Europeans about a show five years in the future, but after the Kenya trip, they found a partner in the KHS.

The KHS Council tasked Mrs Eleanor Thomson to organize a committee of her choice to be responsible for the detailed planning and to draw up costs of this show that would happen two and a half years and 12,000 kilometers away. Initial estimates were in the region of Shs200,000 to attend and they decided to reach out to sponsors for support. Council members were asked to come up with names of people and companies that the Society could also approach for sponsorship.

The Society had Shs115,000 at NIC and Shs15,536 in the bank after paying Shs50,000 to the Gardening book project fund. As such, they drafted a sponsorship letter to entice well-wishers. Sponsor names would be included in the Philadelphia brochure. They opened an account at Barclays Bank of Kenya's Westlands branch in the name of the "Kenya Horticultural Society Project Account"

Messrs John Wright and David Gray were asked to approach Oserian and Sulmac respectively and see if they would be willing to support and sponsor the KHS in this project. Mrs Sandra Waldie and Mrs Pauline Balletto joined the Committee, with Mrs Waldie taking on financial reporting for the project. Pauline Balletto and Irene Humphreys were members of Malindi/Kilifi who travelled on many occasions to attend committee meetings and functions.

All nurseries and growers would be contacted to see if they could contribute flowers for the Philadelphia show. Mrs Waldie mentioned that the members of the Flower Club who were also KHS members would donate the proceeds of a January 1991 show to the Philadelphia project. The event at the Norfolk Hotel ended with a profit of Shs15,650.

Preparations continued with letters, phone calls and faxes, exchanged with the PHS. The KHS established connections between the Pennsylvania Society and Sulmac while the Chairman undertook to report to the Horticultural Crops Development Authority (HCDA) on the KHS plans to participate in the show. Sulmac offered Shs5,000 while Oserian remained interested and offered the use of their cold room at the Nairobi airport where the flowers would be pre-cooled and treated before packing and dispatch.

Later David Gray received a letter from Mr. von Isenberg of Dibrell Brothers in Virginia who offered to support the Society's organization and participation in the show, while the Department of Agriculture of the USA also wrote to inquire what seeds the KHS would be taking to the show as they had regulations for different plants and they had to do some fumigation on the exhibit in Nairobi.

When they checked with the airlines, KLM offered to fly the flowers to New York via Amsterdam for Shs20 per kilo, but the flowers would then have to be trucked to Philadelphia. Lufthansa would charge Shs40 per kilo, to fly them to Philadelphia via Frankfurt and Montreal.

The PHS had suggested an area of 800 square feet and Roy and Irene Humphreys of Malindi began to design the stand. This was later reduced to 350 square feet.

Jane Shepherd and Henry West of Interior Design had worked on the concept by revamping an old stage exhibit that had worked well and made it bigger. Jane kept pushing them “think big” and they took rough sketches by Amrit Sandhu to Henry West who came up with construction drawings. Later the Alvik firm designed and built a stage for the Society at their warehouse that was free-standing and which would be easy to erect in America. They also got ‘jua kali’ artisans to build some copper u-beds for watering

They staged a mockup at a “Flower Festival” at Sarit Centre in March 1990 and the show made a profit of Shs18,472 to go towards the Philadelphia project. This was less than expected but they had learned a lot from the successful show and the sub-committee felt more relaxed about how they would organize their Philadelphia stand. In addition to Sulmac, they won support from Fairview, Tropiflora, Oserian, Karen Roses, Muthithi, and Waridi as well as from the Malindi/Kilifi, Nyeri/Nanyuki and Limuru districts.

In November 1990, they dispatched their first container with the Maersk company to the Gulf and onward to Philadelphia in the United States. It contained staging materials including a Zanzibar chest, one painted wooden giraffe, rocks, 60 meters of clear hose pipe, pots, carvings, sisal matting, watering beds, angled bolts and fishnets. It arrived in Philadelphia on 23 January 1991.

They had several dozen sponsors and the final tally of sponsorship was about Shs600,000, with Nairobi District also pledging Shs50,000. They had also proposed to sell 21,600 copies of colour brochures at Philadelphia at \$0.75 to defray some of the show costs and, if there was a surplus, it could be repatriated into Kenya, earning ‘brownie points’ with the Government.

But they got some good news towards the end of the year as sponsorship of \$10,000 was promised in response to a drive in the USA. The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society would deal with all money on behalf of the KHS and also arrange for an import license to the USA and provide a vehicle for the Kenya contingent to use. An agreement sent by the PHS was reviewed by Mr Addly, signed and returned to the US for approval.

Six Society members Gaye Aikman, Pauline Balletto, Heather Campbell, Irene Humphries, Amrit Sandhu, and Eleanor Thomson flew to Philadelphia late in February. Also with them was Bob Campbell who planned to film the show.

Unfortunately, Sandra Waldie and John Wright, who had been active on the committee, were not able to travel. But Bob Campbell and Gaye Aikman agreed to give the slide show talks and demonstrations at Philadelphia in place of John Wright.

The 1991 Philadelphia Flower Show was held between 10-17 March and had the theme of “Endless Spring – New Days Dawning Round the World” and was held at the Philadelphia Civic Centre which covers six acres.

The delegation made a first visit to the Philadelphia Civic Center the day after arrival. Inside the six-acre building, they found scaffolding, and tipper trucks, all bringing in pieces of equipment, rocks, canals, bridges and fountains for the different exhibits. There was even a waterfall the PHS was putting up next to the KHS exhibit. It was the usual hectic flower show preparation, but on a much larger scale. Gaye Aikman later took a buggy tour inside the Philadelphia Civic Centre with the designer of the show, Ed Lindeman while Jane Pepper of the PHS also passed by several times a day as she went around on a motorized scooter inspecting the preparations across the vast hall.

The Kenyans were given a team of fundis (workmen) to help unpack the first crates to arrive and bolt the alcove with a water system into a waterfall. The crew was surprised that women wanted to help them because it was against union rules to have them hold the hammers and bolts. A painter then did a touch-up before the carvings and other items were placed.

Some PHS members had been detailed to provide lunch for the Kenyan guests every working day and the hosts also lent the guests a new GMC 7-seater Safari van to use and the ladies were taught how to drive on the wrong side of the road. They were relieved when Bob Campbell took over the driving. A film crew also followed them to film the Kenyan flowers exhibitors during their unpacking and staging.

On Monday, 4 March, VIP exhibitors were allowed into the Centre. The day was marked for international flower arranging and the KHS team went out to a local cold store to make arrangements for the arrival of their flowers the following day

While this was happening, Sulmac was transporting cartons of flowers from their Naivasha farm, along with other companies and KHS districts. At their cold storage at Nairobi Airport, the flowers were packed into 160 boxes, loaded onto a plane and flown to New York via Frankfurt.

New York's JFK airport was a flower hub that saw 65 refrigerated trucks arrive daily to meet planes and collect flowers. The Society's flowers, part of 2.5 tons of airfreight from Kenya, were cleared, after plant quarantine and customs, by local flower handling companies and forwarded to Philadelphia on Tuesday, 5 March.

This was the sixth day of preparation, and it was spent preparing hundreds of buckets, putting in the correct 'dawas' (cocktails) for the different types of flowers. The 114 boxes were delivered at 10:20am and they were in excellent condition after their long journey.

They started by putting roses in the cold room store. They unpacked the other flowers and left them out in the main room where the temperature was turned down. By the time they were finished Gaye Aikman felt they could qualify to work in the grading halls of any growers.

On Wednesday they moved the flowers to the hall where their floor was now in place and covered in plastic sheeting. They spent all day getting the buckets of flowers from the cold room, arranging them all, and putting some on a balcony 16 feet in the air. For this, they had to work from a scaffolding tower.

As they were working on the exhibit, they received a lot of interest from people around, including the video crew from the PHS. They had never been filmed closely, but there was no time to notice this as they continued working, even as the crew asked them questions about their lives and the trip from Kenya. Bob Campbell was also filming the staging work to show members back in Nairobi. And on Friday they worked for 17 hours and managed to complete their work by midnight.

A few hours later they were all smartened up and back to the Civic Centre. The KHS members had applied to observe the judging at the show. This was their tenth day in the country and they arrived an hour before the 7:30am start to see if anything needed replenishing at their exhibit. Pauline, Amrit, and Gaye joined different horticultural judging teams while Irene and Eleanor joined the flower-arranging judges. Heather, being a world orchid judge, went to join the other orchid judges.

The PHS show had 1,500 entries in 583 competitive classes. There were 202 judges from all over America and later when some classes changed mid-week, Amrit got a chance to judge in some horticulture classes. After an excellent judges' luncheon, where the KHS members were introduced, they went back to duty at the exhibit. It was Members Day and they answered many questions from the guests. They also had several press interviews as their exhibit garnered a high level of attention.

That evening there was a black-tie special Preview Dinner with 2,300 guests and they were all split up among different VIP tables.

Sunday 10 March saw another early start to check the exhibit and do any replacements. After that, it was open to the public. Hundreds of people poured in down the stairs, prompting Bob to say it "looked like the wildebeest migration in the Mara."

The KHS had been invited to be one of the center-piece exhibits that would spotlight cut flowers which, through modern technology, had been flown from as far as the Netherlands, Italy and Kenya to Philadelphia in less than 48 hours.

The story for the KHS stand, which was the central exhibit at the show, is a bloom of flowers growing at the foot of Mt. Kenya and freshened by a spray from a glacier-fed shower. The Kenyan display contained statice, roses, carnations, orchids, alstroemeria, lilliums, arums, and smaller quantities of exotic cut flowers of heliconias and strelitzias that exporters had donated. Their exhibit was made even more noteworthy by a 30cm bronze statue of an elephant that was lent to them by Rob Glen. He intended for them to also sell it and have the Society get the proceeds. While they did not manage to sell it, they received three strong offers. Julia Glen had arranged for the transport and all the necessary paperwork for transporting the elephant to the show.

Meanwhile Rose from Let's Go Travel roamed the show and went around handing out brochures. El Al airlines had flown some corrected brochures to the US free of charge.

This was after some brochures were damaged and they later lodged an insurance claim with the support of El Al. It snowed for two days that week, but that did not deter them and someone gave Amrit a box of snow after hearing her say that she had never seen snow.

Every day that week the show was open from 10am to 9:30pm to large crowds. They worked hard to keep the flowers fresh throughout and then also had to unpack the second consignment of 63 boxes of flowers that arrived from Nairobi during the show. Gaye later said that throughout the week people had one collective comment when they saw the KHS exhibit "you mean to say all those flowers came from Kenya?"

They had great publicity on local TV in Philadelphia and even on Good Morning America, a nationally televised show. Reporters and TV journalists asked what Kenya expected by participating in the show and they replied that they hope it would encourage our thriving horticultural to develop an export business to America and also stimulate interest in tourism to Kenya.

Jane Pepper, President of the PHS and show master, expressed surprise as to how much effort the KHS had made to get to Philadelphia which they only discovered when the team arrived there. She described the team as the best ambassadors of the KHS and the country.

On Saturday 16 March there was an awards luncheon and the KHS donated flowers towards the large arrangement for the prize-giving ceremony. The Kenyan entry was a non-competitive exhibit, but they all got medals and received tremendous cheers when they came up to collect them. The Kenyan delegation comprised amateurs, unlike the delegations of other countries like Holland, Italy and America that had well-known professional teams.

On Sunday, the last day of the show, they had two lectures and slide shows on "Floral Contrasts on the Equator" that day. The exhibit was dismantled on Monday.

After the show, the members all took breaks to rest after the exhausting and hectic events. Eleanor went to Canada to visit her family, Pauline and Irene went to the UK, while Amrit, Heather and Bob extended their stay in different parts of America.

Some visited other sites in the city and the region such as Longwood Gardens, America's famous Liberty Bell and later the Capitol in Washington DC,

On her return to Nairobi, Gaye Aikman told members that it had been a huge venture and she said Philadelphia did not expect so much from Kenya and would like them back again. She said they had surprised Americans who did not know what cut flowers were all about and what hard work it took to get them there. They also proved that flowers could travel that far and last the duration of a long show, thanks to growers who produced and shipped them to the members in good condition.

After receiving a financial report of the Pennsylvania trip, the Council agreed that Nairobi and Nanyuki districts be reimbursed for their donations to the project. Arnold Renney told the Council that there might be a surplus of Shs90,000 after refunding the districts and the Council had agreed to a proposal by Mrs Sue Deverell that any remaining surplus should go to the book fund and Shs50,000 was paid in August 1991.

The final Pennsylvania financial report was tabled to the Council in October 1991 by Sandra Waldie who said that the Pennsylvania committee had been disbanded. She disclosed that the show had been financially successful and made a profit of Shs249,205, and this was after returning donations to the Nairobi and Nanyuki Districts of Shs56,400.

The trip had been done with a budget of Shs 580,000 and she said while the Society had comfortably spent within its expenses of Shs375,825, many sponsors paid invoices directly, while others sponsored in kind, and these did not appear on their books. She estimated that these items would total about Shs300,000 which would have exceeded the budget and income. Other sponsors in America had financed part of the committee's airfare, living and show expenses during the trip. The committee report included a list of sponsors.

She said that doing events abroad was costly and it was important to demonstrate to would-be sponsors that the Society was funding a good part of it themselves.

She recommended that overseas ventures benefit from having overseas sponsors. She said the reward was that the Society had undertaken this mammoth venture profitably without using its money. They had spent two and a half years preparing for it and they had put Kenya on the map with all the publicity they got.

In addition, the growers who helped the KHS had shown the feasibility of the American flower market if local freighting problems could be ironed out. They had documented all their learning experience with the export business including documents, delays, licensing, and fumigation regulations for future reference.

Mr Barry Cameron felt the Society could only afford a show overseas every five years, and later that year, they declined a formal invitation to exhibit at Chelsea in 1992. And a decade later, a proposal to stage a show at Chelsea was shelved in 2002 as it was too expensive.

Mr David Gray, the Managing Director of Sulmac Flowers, suggested that the Society should encourage commercial growers by making corporate membership available. Also, that the Society should engage with the HCDA. He later raised the matter at the Council who agreed in principle, to allow corporate membership of the Society. They would be members of the main Society (rather than a District), pay a fee of Shs1,000 and could nominate six staff to attend meetings on their behalf with one of the six authorized to be a voting member. Members at the AGM then endorsed the addition of corporate members by adding a clause to the KHS constitution enabling membership from a corporate body, institution, Society or registered association.

Mr Gray then went out to organize a commercial growers flower show. He sought out several companies, growers of flowers, fruits and vegetables to join the Society. He said that Sulmac had already committed to exhibiting at that show as well as the Nairobi District flower show. He said the response to the proposal was good with 20 of the 21 replies being positive and he aimed to have a show in September or October.

But by the end of the year, there had been little response from the 100 companies that had been contacted to become members.

1992 was an election year in Kenya, with the first multi-party elections that were hotly contested with vibrant campaigns and some scenes of violence around the country. The show plans were scrapped for that year but Mr Gray still hoped they could do a show in Nairobi the following September. He suggested that the KHS form a committee with commercial growers to assist commercial firms with arranging a show and it was agreed that Mrs Amrit Sandhu would be the KHS representative.

This led to plans for a commercial flower show to be held in 1994 that was organized by the Fresh Horticultural Produce Exporters Association of Kenya

By early 1994 preparations were under way for an exhibition called HORTEC that was staged at the Kenyatta Conference Center in March 1994. The show became a biennial meeting for exporters and equipment suppliers in the horticultural industry, as well as international buyers. The KHS was not involved in it.

That year, different districts furthered their links with commercial growers. Malindi hosted Mr John Mattok a former Council member of the RHS and one of the biggest rose growers in the UK. He gave a talk on the development of flower shows in Britain, including Chelsea whose committee he had once chaired. Mt Kenya District members visited Mweiga Blooms, an extensive Rose export project near Nyeri, while Nairobi district visited Tropiflora at Tigoni and Waridi Ltd at Athi River to see commercial rose growing, an extensive aloe collection, and other export flowers.

The video made by Bob Campbell at Philadelphia was edited with narration by John Wright and shown to members in Nairobi. It was also available for districts to borrow and they cut a shorter version to use for publicity. The PHS also sent the Society a 30-minute official video of the Philadelphia Flower Show that contained press coverage by American television stations.

The tapes were stored in the Museum office library. Later in 1992, the HCDA requested a copy of the Society's Philadelphia video, and this was later handed to Mr Martin Mulande at the HCDA office.

Sandra Waldie left Kenya for good in June 1992 and the Chairman wrote her a letter of appreciation for all the hard work she had done for the Society, especially with the Philadelphia flower show.

A few years later, they received an invitation from a botanical Society in Texas that had 300,000 members. The National Council of State Garden Clubs in Canyon Lake wrote and offered to sponsor the first year of membership of \$25. Chairman Cameron initially preferred that they reopen contacts with Philadelphia and continue with the RHS, but in May 1996 they accepted and joined the group.

Also, at the 1996 AGM Amrit Sandhu, Vice Chairman of Nairobi resigned as she was moving to Australia.

Peter Greensmith and Wasaa

In 1978, Mr Barry Cameron suggested that the Society looked into creating a botanical garden. At the time, they decided to support any attempt to create a garden or improve an existing one such as the Arboretum.

For a few years, members had suggested that the Society involve itself in setting up and managing important plant collections for future generations. The country had several fine specimens of plants. With land changing hands and new owners with different interests taking over, some specimens would die away. This was happening in the UK and across the world. The Council identified a national bougainvillea collection as its first project at Wasaa.

Mr Peter Greensmith had fought in the Second World War and later decided to settle in Kenya. He was appointed to the Nairobi City Council, then worked at Closeburn Nurseries before returning to the City Council where he worked for another 18 years before he retired in 1965 as the Park Superintendent. For some years, he lived at City Park and landscaped many Nairobi city gardens and streets. He remained a bachelor which may have been due to his war injuries which caused him considerable pain as he grew older⁴⁹.

At his home by Mukoma Road, off Magadi Road, which he named Wasaa, Greensmith cultivated, selected and developed new varieties of plants, some of which were rare,

⁴⁹ Interview in January 2021 with Josphat Muinde at Wasaa

difficult to propagate and would likely have died out. He often gave tours of Wasaa after Society meetings and told guests the stories behind each unusual plant in the garden.

In 1988 Royal Botanic Gardens Kew wrote to request that the KHS consider turning Wasaa Gardens, Mr Greensmith's Nairobi residence on 43 acres, into a national botanical garden and international propagating centre. Mr Greensmith had met with Mr Richard Leakey, Director at the National Museums and they had agreed on initial steps. This would entail a written commitment by Mr Greensmith, and a valuation of the land, buildings and nurseries, as well as a feasibility study of its viability, both done by international experts. Finally, the Kenya Government would apply through Mr Richard Leakey for funding from the British Government.

Wasaa was the site of the 64th AGM in 1988 where Mr Greensmith gave a talk on the history of the Society. He mentioned a hybrid Bougainvillea, "Daphne Mason" which he had named after Mrs Daphne Mason, the former President of the KHS, who died a premature death at the age of 41 in 1971. He told members that the plant "sits on our hedge as you come in, and is also on a pillar which is peeping over the top of this awful roof. It is one of the most splendid bougainvilleas on earth. It is one of the few that cascade".

KHS Chairman Barry Cameron had several meetings with Mr Greensmith in 1989 and with the Aid Section of the British High Commission. He also took Professor Bell of Kew to visit Mr Greensmith and see the garden and nursery. He said both organizations were keen about the project and he hoped funding would soon be available.

In the coming months, Mr Cameron told the Council that, while the UK Government was supportive of a national botanical garden with the Kenya government, it did not have funding for this. The Royal Horticultural Society which had also enquired about Mr Greensmith's plant collection did not have funding for this type of project but had supplied the contact of a UK trust which might be able to assist.

However, the Society felt that they should ensure Mr Greensmith's plant collections were safeguarded and Mr Cameron proposed that the Society set up a national collection of plants starting with Bougainvillea. Ms Christine Kabuye the botanist in charge of the East African Herbarium suggested that it be located at the Museum's plot

at Ololua Forest, both as a collection and a propagation centre, possibly with a retail outlet. Three plants of each bougainvillea cultivar would be needed to start this.

The residence of the British High Commissioner, Sir John Johnson, was the venue of the 66th AGM of the KHS in March 1990. Members were told that Mr Peter Greensmith, who was in deteriorating health, had opted to retire from the main Council and Mr Cameron noted the loss of Mr Greensmith after all he had done for the Society, contributing plants to every Nairobi district plant sale and opening his garden for many meetings and lectures and wished him a good recovery.

Regarding Wasaa, Mr Cameron had received a favourable response from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust who had asked for more information about setting up and maintaining a botanical garden. He had produced a budget for the national bougainvillea collection at £15,000 and the Council agreed that he could submit this figure. But by early 1991, there was still no word from the Trust or the Herbarium at the Museum.

Funding remained a challenge. It was clear that for the long-term security of the garden, the KHS would have to fund it for three years and make it financially self-supporting from its own propagated stock and nursery. The KHS approached Mrs Kitty Hempstone, wife of the US Ambassador in Nairobi who undertook to look for an American sponsor. They also gave the KHS group that was about to travel for the 1991 Philadelphia Flower Show a copy of their proposal which Heather Campbell left with the Philadelphia Society.

Mrs Kitty Hempstone continued to seek financing for the Society and a possible new site for the botanical garden. Her enthusiasm for horticulture led to the Muthaiga residence of the American Ambassador being the venue of the AGM of the KHS in March 1992. She also asked if the Council would be interested in organizing a tour of diplomats to their districts.

Henry Powell (a.k.a Peter) Greensmith, who was one of the Society's most famous members, passed away on 9 March 1992. Chairman Barry Cameron mentioned how much Mr Greensmith had done for the City of Nairobi, the Society and the gardening community as he invited members to a memorial service at St Francis in Karen on 14 April followed by tea at Mr Greensmith's well-known Wasaa garden.

They put together a remembrance book on Mr Greensmith and invited KHS members and the public through the different districts to send in anecdotes and memories. Mr Cameron also informed the Royal Horticultural Society about the passing of Greensmith as he had been named an associate of honour of the RHS in 1959.

Mr Cameron told the Council that following Greensmith's death, the bougainvillea garden should be the Society's main project as it was of great value to Kenya. It was now likely that Mr Greensmith's garden and the house would be sold to an institution such as the Kenya Conservation Trust and managed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) which itself could not own land. It was possible that Wasaa could be the headquarters for the KHS but he said this would be subject to further discussion.

The IUCN made an offer to purchase the estate and Mr Greensmith's niece Ms Gillian Greensmith accepted. IUCN planned to rehabilitate the house, including a partially completed building at the rear and create a new library. They would also maintain the garden, but the present nursery would be wound down and its emphasis changed to a nursery for indigenous plants for propagation and education. The KHS was invited to advise on the garden, and they reached out to Dr Robert Malpas and Dr Stephen Njuguna of IUCN. As the IUCN was looking for a horticulturist to manage the garden, he suggested that the Council set up an advisory committee to cooperate with IUCN staff on the matter of the garden.

The Swiss-headquartered IUCN completed the sale by December 1992 with a plan to make Wasaa Estate their regional East African headquarters with an office, library and lecture hall. Mr Cameron told the members that the IUCN had also invited the KHS to use Wasaa for its headquarters and office. The Council considered this but decided it would not be practical for Nairobi District to be staged there. The Chairman said it would still be nice to have the AGM again in the garden which had been the site of many happy occasions with Peter Greensmith

Later in 1993, IUCN formally took over the Wasaa estate and they started by phasing out the nursery. Geoff Hodson was in charge of turning the nursery garden into an indigenous plant nursery and building rehabilitation. Paul Mackenzie of Rosslyn Garden

Centre had started a bougainvillea collection and purchased most of the plants from the Wasaa nursery.

After inspections of the buildings and grounds, the IUCN moved in on 1st February 1994. They hoped to have an office ready for the KHS to use by July and the Society was invited to hold its AGM there in March 1994.

Kenya's President Daniel arap Moi officially opened the new IUCN premises at Wasaa in March 1995. The occasion was an open day when guests could see what IUCN had accomplished and the role they would be playing in conservation in the region. In the coming years, the garden experienced no disturbances even as other prime Nairobi green spots were threatened by land-grabbing efforts.

Encroachment in the '90s

In 1992, Mrs Anne Birnie told the Council that Leopard Orchid plants were fast disappearing from forests at the coast and being sold by hawkers in Nairobi. The District Commissioner at Kwale had banned collection in the district but other areas were still open. Prof Njuguna advised that she approach the Kenya Wildlife Services while Mr James Hamilton would check the law on this. He later found that there was no law against collecting them except in gazetted forests.

The following year, Mrs Phyl Dickens reported that an Israeli businessman was cutting down flowers, buds, and seed pods from trees in the Rift Valley district, drying and exporting them. He was doing extensive damage to trees. The Chairman agreed to check with National Museums if anything could be done about this and if any license was required for this activity.

Then in 1996, Mrs Heather Campbell voiced her concerns to the Council about Ololua Forest along with Mrs Anne Birnie who had recently joined the Kenya Forest Working Group under the umbrella of the EAWS. Towards the end of the year, Mr R Evans approached President Moi who stated that he would stop the encroachment.

Mr David Gray then suggested to the Council that the KHS should support the Kenya Forest Working Group at the EAWS in their efforts to prevent the land-grabbing from happening at Karura forest.

They collected signatures of members to present to the government in protest of the forest excisions. All members of the Council signed to protest the retrogressive step. Later when they heard that a court injunction against excisions had been removed on appeal, they wondered what more they could do but took comfort as other groups such as the Kenya Forest Working Group were leading the fight.

They were finally assured in 2002 during the Nairobi District AGM when Mr Pravin Bowry, who was a member and a prominent lawyer, explained the mysteries of the recently enacted environmental act, which he said should put an end to the desecration of forests.

There was trouble closer to home for the KHS though it was not to become apparent for a while. Not much had been heard about the Lady Muriel Jex Blake Memorial Garden which had been surrendered to the Nairobi Council in 1957. In August 1998 Chairman Barry Cameron asked who owned the Lady Muriel Jex Blake Memorial Garden on Ngong Road. This came after Mrs Anne Birnie had been approached by the granddaughter of Lady Muriel asking for information about it, as a development was evident adjacent to the site. Also, Tim Vaulkhard of Triad Architects who was working on the new project wanted to include the site as a garden in their development.

National Museums Botanic Garden Projects

Even as they made arrangements for the Wasaa estate, the KHS's plans for a national botanical garden continued. Barry Cameron visited Jane Owalo, a director of the National Museums of Kenya and discussed turning the Karen Blixen Museum into a National Botanic Garden. The museum had 10 acres that were not been fully utilized and he suggested that it could be turned into a Kenya botanical garden. There were several legal aspects to tie up with the Blixen Museum such as security, the quality of soil and the water supply which was considered inadequate and the Council agreed these had to be settled before the Society made any contribution.

Mr Cameron met with staff of the RHS and the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and told the Council that Kew remained supportive of the Kenya National Botanic Garden project but wished to see it cover several small botanical gardens with flora in different climatic

zones rather than one large garden. This would involve a feasibility study and a committee was put together to come up with a study in three months.

The KHS hoped to encourage other Kenyan institutions to support the project. This would place the Society as a catalyst but not the sole promoter and organizer and lead to the creation of a National Botanic Garden authority, with KHS advising on a board of trustees. The Society paid the affiliation fee to Botanical Garden Conservation International, an independent charity registered in the UK that had membership from botanical gardens from all over the world. BGCI was also part of the IUCN who had taken over Wasaa.

But in March 1993, the Chairman told members that, as with the Philadelphia show and the book project, the Society had limited personnel and resources, and could not handle more than one project at a time. The botanical garden would take several years to accomplish, and with the same people trying to run the National Botanic Garden and the Gardening in East Africa book projects, both were falling behind. At the AGM members agreed to put the botanical garden aside till they finished the book project.

As the book project wound down in 1995, Council re-established talks with the Karen Blixen Museum. Barry Cameron told members who attended the 1995 AGM held at Karen Blixen House, that the Museum welcomed 90,000 visitors a year but this figure could be increased if the grounds were turned into a botanical garden.

The specialists at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew were still in favour of having several botanic gardens that covered all the major botanical zones in Kenya, but a challenge was how to bring all the interested societies and different parties together to plan the strategy. They discussed asking the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) in the UK to finance a seminar for this as the presence of many organizations made the project a more demanding task.

The donors wanted sustainability in the different projects they were considering. One was the Nairobi Arboretum under a group called Friends of the Nairobi Arboretum (FONA) and another was for a botanic garden at the Nairobi Museum. This was led by Tim Pearce who was the ODA manager of plant conservation and Katherine Morris who was an advisor.

The KHS Nairobi District was working with FONA which had been founded in 1993 by the East African Natural History Society. FONA aimed to revitalize the Nairobi Arboretum and Nairobi District donated Shs20,000 towards the cost of sending William Wambugu, a forest department employee, to Kew Gardens for a course. Mrs Ann Birnie was instrumental in this, and once the KHS donation was pledged, other donors also chipped in. After the job was advertised, Wambugu got the position of overseeing the projects in 1996.

The UN Habitat's Programme Planning and Coordination Unit (PPCU) had set up a greenhouse for orchid collection and trained staff, but they did not have staff with the right background for gardening. The National Museum of Kenya project was going ahead and the committee started to look for finance.

In October and November 1996, Barry Cameron spoke with the Botanic Garden of Seychelles, the Singapore Botanic Garden and the Perth Botanic Garden. All the senior staff and directors were interested in the proposed Nairobi Botanical Garden. He had also supplied the Director of the Seychelles Botanic Garden, who was hoping to set up a Horticultural Society there, with a copy of the new edition of Gardening in East Africa and KHS flower show schedule.

The KHS could not offer financial assistance, but its members who were professional landscapers had been asked to assist, and Paul Mackenzie and Melanie Richards had stepped forward. The steering committee included John Wright, Katherine Morris of the National Museums, Mrs Dar of the Orchid Society and chaired by Barry Cameron who would report to the Director of the Museum.

The biggest challenge the committee faced was raising money and they considered looking for a public relations person or company who would be responsible for fundraising.

The Museums set out to implement a master plan drawn up in 1995 by Caroline Gohler and Mike Maunder, consultants from Kew for the development of the National Museums of Kenya Botanic Garden, Nairobi. The first phase comprised ten mini-projects which were the Children's Corner, Butterfly Corner, Commercial & Visitor Center, Compost area, New Nairobi Forest, Picnic Corner, Quarry Garden, Shamba area, Threatened Plant area, Wetland Plant community, and a Wooded garden.

An “Information Day” held under the auspices of Brooke Bond Kenya. Mr Stanning, the MD for Brooke Bond undertook to assist in raising funds from the commercial sector. His firm was already supporting the rehabilitation of the Memorial Garden in the Botanic Garden. The Memorial Garden had originally been landscaped by Mr Peter Greensmith and Mr John Wright and had a plaque in memory of those who lost lives in two World Wars.

After the “Information Day” which had a good attendance of 80 possible donors, the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) pledged Shs 2.5 million for the Path Network which was the most expensive item of phase one. The ODA also arranged for a Botanic Garden Manager and an Assistant Supervisor to be sent on 3-month training course with The Really Useful Landscape Company.

By 1997, no public relations company had agreed to act on the project fundraising and Mr Cameron wrote to Mrs Kitty Hempstone and the Garden Clubs of Texas to seek funding for the mini-project. During the year, Mr Mark Bower, a consultant, visited the arboretum. FONA drew up plans and the arboretum proposed to celebrate its 90th anniversary on 29 November 1997 but the dicey political situation and the weather with the El Nino rains made it doubtful.

Progress on the botanic garden was slow that year as the committee was not able to raise funds to get started. Kenya held its second multi-party elections in December 1997 and politics took a lot of attention, so planning and decision-making was slow.

After the 1997 elections, the projects picked up. Mr Cameron asked the KHS Council to consider financing one of the mini-projects.

Nairobi district donated Shs200,000 to the Butterfly and Children’s corner mini-projects. The Council also agreed to donate Shs120,000 to FONA which would be paid out as Shs10,000pm salary for a new arboretum officer. The recipient of the KHS grant was Daniel Kathurima and after a year, FONA wrote to the KHS asking if they would continue support into 1999. The Council agreed on a further donation of Shs120,000 but with a note that funding was not to be seen as an automatic annual matter and that FONA and the Forest Department should address the sustainability of the Arboretum project.

But when the Nairobi district committee visited the Butterfly and Children's corner early in 1998, they were surprised at how small it was and wondered if Shs200,000 was not too much for the project. They decided to follow up with Katherine Morris who was on maternity leave.

In April 1998, DFID funding allowed the committee to hire consultants to advise the government of Kenya on the design and construction. But when the tenders were received, they were for much more than previously expected - about Shs 14 million.

With the funding of the British Government through DFID, the Museum started with the succulent garden, orchid house, water storage and expansion of classroom space. There were other donors including UNDP for the quarry garden, shamba, compost and the new Nairobi forest, Netherlands Embassy for the wooded garden and KHS for the Children's Garden and Butterfly Corner.

In the coming months, the succulent garden progressed well with plants donated by the Succulenta Group. The UNDP GEF donated \$50,000 and the Netherlands Embassy \$9,000. However, the funds from the UNDP/GEF were late in arriving due to bureaucratic delays.

The Children's Corner that the Society was financing overlapped with the Wooded area so they would be coordinated at the same time. Bruce Hobson of Concrete Jungle was the contractor for the wooded area and quarry garden.

The project was moving slowly, so the Council approved that the KHS, either through the Council, or with support from the districts, should support another of the mini-projects. After some discussion, they settled on the compost area project.

In 1999 many plants were marked with laminated plastic name labels in the succulent garden. John Wright donated several plants bringing the species donated and planted to 147. The funds arrived from the Netherlands Embassy and work started. Two large Bombax trees were removed and earthworks were completed and a vehicle route opened up. Meanwhile, the Children's Garden and Butterfly Corner, financed and designed by Nairobi District, progressed well with earthworks being completed and landscaped into an Amphitheatre where children could have educational talks.

The Path Network was still difficult to finance due to the high cost but Mr Cameron sought out Richard Leakey who was the new Chairman of the Board of the National Museum to obtain support and fresh ideas on fundraising.

The Road Path progressed slowly and funds were reallocated from other projects to complete the Path network. Mr David Gray suggested they approach Bamburi Cement who had produced a new type of cabro block. They also considered approaching the Chandaria Foundation for Shs 500,000 to complete the vehicular access.

The Succulent Garden was officially opened in June 1999 along with other parts of the botanic garden. By the end of 1999, the landscaping had been completed for the Quarry Garden which was supported by the UNDP, and the Memorial Garden that was supported by Brooke Bond.

Designs were undertaken for a Commercial Center that had a budget of \$55,000⁵⁰. Ten shortlisted candidates had been interviewed for the post of senior gardener and software for a database had been obtained, but more funds were needed for the purchase of a computer. However, the Path Network had no funds and there was no word from the Chandaria Foundation and the new Nairobi Forest was still in the planning stages with a major hitch being that part of the land was outside the Museum and owned by Norfolk Towers.

The new Nairobi Forest began with the felling of some eucalyptus trees in 2000 and the planting of appropriate indigenous trees. The Kenya Orchid Society donated Shs100,000 towards the improvement of irrigation at the Orchid House and to buy one year of consumables at the Botanic Garden. They also planned to get a security guard to protect rare plants from theft.

One concern that remained was with the staff at the Botanic Garden. Shirley-Anne McConnell said while training them on general maintenance they were extremely uncooperative and she thought this attitude stemmed from the low pay to government

⁵⁰ Today, the commercial centre comprises the cafeteria restaurant, outdoor seating area, bookshop, souvenir shop, and an art gallery.

employees. Their productivity in the garden was low as their interests were elsewhere, moonlighting to earn more to survive.

The Botanic Garden distributed surplus plants in 2001 and several KHS members applied. These included plants on an endangered species list that had been propagated in the garden under the DFID-funded plant conservation project. They took them to grow in secure locations for these special plants.

Mr Cameron said there was a need for a botanic garden at the Coast as 50% of endangered species are indigenous to the coast. He had visited Ms Sabine Baer, the biological scientist at Baobab Farm which was part of the Bamburi Portland Cement Company. Ms Baer had an interest in a botanical garden project which could be incorporated into the ongoing quarry rehabilitation and she planned to seek approval from Lafarge Ltd. in Paris. She thought the project could be self-sufficient in the long run.

Another option for a botanical garden was at Mazeras but the site was owned by Mombasa Municipality and would involve some politics as a considerable part had been given away. The development of a botanic garden at Kitale was estimated at £30,000 and at Mazeras was £45,000.

Nairobi Centenary

Nairobi district started planning for their 100th show to take place in May 1993. It would be held at the Simba Union and they hoped that two international judges would attend with one from the UK and one from South Africa.

Eventually, a Gold Anniversary Flower Show was staged at the All-Saints Cathedral Church Hall.

African Membership, District splits

In March 1994, John Budds asked that the Society pay more attention to the matter of African membership. Budds was the Chairman of the Limuru District whose members voted to shut down in 1994, and Barry Cameron, who had been re-elected for his third term as Chairman, said this would be one of the priorities of his new term.

At the next Council meeting, Cameron said that a membership drive was crucial to increase their membership, especially of the African population. John Wright said that African horticulturalists in Nairobi were mainly commercially oriented and that it was unfortunate but understandable that African nurserymen were mainly concerned with sales but not the plants they were selling. He suggested that the KHS change its focus from pure garden meetings to more educationally-based meetings such as plant clinics, which he said had contributed to a stable membership in the Nairobi district.

All districts were then asked to have an educational bias to their meetings and also asked to come up with ways of increasing African membership and provide ideas for action by the Council.

It was later agreed to have educational meetings that were aimed at teachers and children. Mr David Gray would speak to heads of botany departments at Universities that were running horticultural courses. Gray later reported that, after meeting several officials at universities, there was a positive response and that there would be a mutual benefit to both the KHS and students if there was a student membership category.

He then suggested that a student membership rate be introduced and Council asked Nairobi District to have a student membership at Shs100 per year. This would necessitate a change to the constitution and they agreed to have individual districts promote this grade of membership.

The Secretary reported that the new class of student members would have to be formally approved by a resolution at the AGM in 1998. While awaiting this, the Council approved that they could go ahead and enroll full-time students at universities to be members, at a fee of Shs100 per annum for a maximum of three years.

At a Council meeting in 1997, Mrs Sue Deverell suggested that members visiting flower shows should take their gardeners with them and the Council agreed this was a good idea that should be circulated to all districts.

Naivasha splits from Rift Valley

At the beginning of 1995 Rift Valley District decided to move their headquarters to Naivasha which was growing rapidly with many young people with gardens.

Phyl Dickens, the outgoing Chairman wrote to members that she was disappointed with the lethargic attitude in Nakuru where interest had disappeared. This was a sharp difference from years before when Nakuru used to host two flower shows in a year and garden days every month. But now, she said, the tables that the Society had repaired in 1990 were gathering dust in a store. She attributed the decline to the lack of a place to stage shows in Nakuru as the Hughes Showroom they used to use was not suitable while the Church Hall was not popular.

She cautioned that without enthusiasm from Nakuru members, the Rift Valley District which had 37 paying members and 25 life members, may be shelved. She did note that members had attended events in 1994 such as a successful plant sale with the EAWL, garden days, and a rose workshop conducted by Mrs Gaye Aikman, who also entered the Nairobi flower show in September 1994. Paired with Mrs Frankie Cuthill, Mrs Aikman had won an order of merit, even as the district did not place an entry at the show.

The KHS Council approved the move in February 1995 but asked the District to continue to alternate meetings between Nakuru and Naivasha so that interest was maintained in Nakuru.

Later, Mrs Phyl Dickens introduced Malcolm Foster, a teacher at Greensteds School Nakuru, who would take over as Chairman of Rift Valley District. Towards the end of 1995, Mr Foster reported to the Council that there was an active interest in the Society in Nakuru and Naivasha and he was optimistic about its prospects in 1996.

The following year, he reported that Rift Valley was going on well. They held a wildflower walk at Gilgil, had garden meetings and a well-attended flower show which was their first event in five years. The district now had 71 members, was financially sound and managed to have nine events that year. They held an AGM in February 1997 and elected a new dynamic committee. Later that year, Rift Valley had a children's section at a show for the first time in several years. They also had three learner judges Sushi Shah, Arthur Brown and Mr Foster the Chairman, participate at the June show.

But despite the growth prospects in both towns, the KHS Chairman received a proposal from a group at Lake Naivasha that was proposing to set up a Naivasha District. They argued that Rift Valley was a large region and it was difficult to involve all members in functions. Also, in 1996, Mr Pravin Bowry who was an active committee member at Rift Valley moved to Nairobi and joined the Nairobi District Committee.

Chairman Cameron visited Naivasha and found a group that was interested and keen to establish a new district. They had elected Jillian Devine as Chairman, started a newsletter and were taking subscriptions from 1 January 1997.

Naivasha was active for a few months, but in 1998 the KHS lost communication with the district. The Council later heard that Jillian Devine, Naivasha District Chairman, and her family had left Kenya and would check with Mrs Beryl Stephenson who was on the Committee. But by December there was still no update and the Council proposed to persuade Mrs Claire Jones to take on the Chairmanship of the Naivasha District.

Mrs Beryl Stephenson brought the district subvention to the Treasurer and confirmed that Jill Devine had left the country. The Society was now relying on Mrs Stephenson to revive the district and Barry Cameron and Heather Campbell reached out to help her.

Over the next two years, the district was reactivated and found enthusiastic members from as far as Gilgil. Mrs Stephenson reported to the Council that Naivasha had prospered in 2000. They had their first AGM, which was attended by 29 of their 40 members, in January 2001 which was followed by a talk on the propagation of chrysanthemums for export. They had set meeting dates and planned a flower show and she thought the prospects were very good.

Mrs Elli D'Olier, Secretary for Naivasha wrote from the new district in 2001 to seek guidance on pending issues. Some members belonged to the old branch and had paid subscriptions to the defunct group and also had some life members who wanted to know if they should pay subscriptions to the new branch. The Council advised that it was up to the districts to decide whether or not to accept life members from other districts as their members.

Judges Seminar and Improvements 1999

In 1998, Ian Robertson raised an issue at Council that the accreditation system for judges was too casual. Mr Robertson, Chairman of the Malindi/Kilifi district wanted clarity on the judge's certificates and log cards, judge's workshops, rules for judging floral workshops as well as guidelines for KHS judges observing in other countries and for overseas judges visiting from the RHS or South Africa.

Barry Cameron as the Chairman agreed with his comments and the Council started a database of all the current judges and their details as well as another for learner judges and floral arrangement judges and asked districts for their input. The list drawn up had the names of judges, their districts, dates of qualification, their specialities, who had tested them and shows they had judged at. As they sped up completion of the list, the Council agreed that a judges' seminar was long overdue. They proposed to hold one in May 1999 followed by a workshop later in the year, possibly to coincide with the Nairobi District Flower Show to which an overseas judge would be invited.

They decided to have the Royal Horticultural Society identify a suitable person, such as Mr John Mattock who had visited previously and Mr David Gray said he would seek to obtain sponsorship of an air ticket from Kenya Airways or British Airways. They proposed having the Nairobi District Flower judging and seminar in September 1999, followed by a flower show and a prize-giving.

Later in December 1998 the Council approved the appointment of specialist succulent judges and asked John Wright to hold a short induction course for new succulent judges. By early 2000 four people had been identified to be prospective judges of succulenta; Prof Len Newton, Mrs Maria Dodds, Mrs Dee Roberts and Mrs Sue Allan. The panel for learner judges was John Wright, Gaye Aikman, Pauline Balletto, Jose Hays and Ann Robertson.

Chairman Cameron wrote to the Royal Horticultural Society to invite a judge to come and judge a flower show in Kenya and lead the judges' seminar and the RHS proposed Colin Ellis to attend the show and seminar in September 1999. The Society would provide hospitality and an air ticket. They set up a schedule for Ellis's visit including the Judges' conference, flower show and travels around Kenya. British Airways sponsored his return airfare and Julian and Theo Stanning provided his accommodation in Nairobi.

Colin Ellis and John Wright conducted the judges' seminar on September 23, 1999, which was attended by 34 judges and learner judges. At the time, the five districts of the KHS had 15 judges and 30 learner judges, except for Mombasa which had none of either and their qualifications were based on the 1989 constitution.

Mr Ellis explained how the RHS operated its judging team which had 467 qualified judges and how they qualified and judged at shows at Chelsea, London and other places in the UK. He said there were many specialist committees responsible for different categories of plants and they used experts and specialists from different fields to help with the judging. He said a points system was difficult to use, but there were accepted ranges for bronze medals, silver gilts and gold ones.

But, after listening to an explanation of the Kenyan judges' qualification system, Mr Ellis said he would not recommend any particular changes as they were comprehensive enough and covered Kenyan conditions well. They all agreed to leave the present rules of KHS judges' qualifications unaltered but proposed to create a subcommittee to handle all matters of judges and supervise a panel of learner judges. They also agreed to have a novice judge section and a training workshop for stewards in future. Another recommendation was to improve the design of gold, silver and bronze awards.

The flower show was then staged between 24 – 26 September at the Simba Union Club, with assistance from the Floral Arrangement Club. The Nairobi District managed to get sponsorship to cover the rental of Simba Union, which was their biggest expense. Earlier, at the 1999 general meeting, the Chairman had told members that the previous months had been a nightmare for gardeners. The effects of El Nino carried over into 1998 which was wet in the first half of the year and dry in the remainder, from July up to March 1999. But September 1999 turned out to be a good time for flower growers rather than the traditional show time earlier in the year.

The flower show resulted in two gold medals, the highest award of the KHS, which went to Palmy at the Coast by the Kilifi/Malindi district, and Smita Patel for her display of Eustoma. Mr Ellis was impressed and said they would have also won the RHS gold medals if they were seen at Chelsea. "Palmy" also won awards for the best in the show, and most artistic. Smita and Narin Patel grew lisianthus (Eustoma) for export at Juja.

Mr Ellis, accompanied by Chairman Cameron later travelled to visit Mrs Jane Tatham-Warter's garden in the Mt. Kenya District where he gave a talk on Bonsai to members. The next day they visited George and Irralie Murray's home at Marania in Timau followed by a picnic lunch on Mt. Kenya at an altitude of 10,000 feet. Along the way, they had several stops and discussions on local vegetation, especially bamboo which Mr Ellis specialized in.

Soon the judges' sub-committee was formed. Its members were Barry Cameron as Chairman, Ann Robertson as Secretary, John Wright as chief judge, Jose Hays as the senior judge and Celia Hardy as learner judge. Pauline Balletto was an alternate Secretary to Ann Robertson.

They also reviewed the sample Judge's certificates, 100 of which had been printed by Mrs Sue Deverell and asked her to redesign the gold, silver, and bronze awards to make them more attractive and to standardize the stickers for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place that were used at flower shows. The first certificate was presented to Mrs Liz Coverdale who was a newly qualified judge.

The sub-committee also recommended changes to Section F of the Society's constitution to mandate that they maintain a register of accredited show judges, have a judges sub-committee whose members would serve for three years and appoint an examining panel while districts would select learner judges. It would also provide exemptions for people who had previous experience judging under the RHS rules in the UK or elsewhere, provided the judges' subcommittee was satisfied they had adequate knowledge of Kenyan conditions.

Ann Robertson also suggested some guidance be given to exhibitors on how to better label their entries. She provided the Council with a list of plant names from the Kilifi/Malindi shows in 1998 and 1999. The four-page list ran from achimenes longiflora (orchid pansy) to zehneria pallidinerva (cucurbitaceae).

In September 1999, Mr Raju Shah of the Pop-In Group offered to produce and donate 30 new high-quality lapel judge badges in enamel and also design a badge for members which he proposed to manufacture and sell to members at Shs300 each. The minimum order was 200 and they would be ready in two months. He was the husband of Mrs

Madhu Shah, a member who had attended the KHS judges' seminar earlier that month. Council deferred on members' badges but accepted the offer of badges for the judges.

Following the judge's seminar in September 1999, Gaye Aikman from Naro Moru, Ann Robertson from Malindi, Mr Lowe, Jose Hays, Mrs Avery, John Wright and also Mrs Shah from the Kenyan panel of the Floral Art Judges met to revise the flower show schedule. Ann Robertson took notes and Mrs Avery typed them on her computer to produce a master schedule suitable for all districts to use.

When the Council met in March 2001 to review amendments to the constitution and rules on life members and show judges, they resolved to maintain a register of people authorized to judge at KHS shows. No one would judge at a show unless they were on the register or were overseas judges invited by the Council. They added learner judges for all classes, for roses & florist flowers, pot plants & orchids, floral arrangement, vegetables, fruit and succulents, including cacti. Members of the judging sub-committee would serve for three years in positions of chairman, secretary, chief judge, senior judge and learner judge. Some of their early roles would be to redesign the judge's certificates, and learner judge cards, and advise on show schedules.

They also decided to increase the members on the learner judge panel so that two were always available. At a Kilifi flower show in September 2002 two learner judges, Mrs Jane Mckeand and Ms Celia Hardy were tested and passed as new KHS horticultural judges. Mrs Gaye Aikman was confirmed as a senior judge to the committee and later Mrs Darshna Patel was added as a learner judge to replace Mrs Ann McConnell who was now a judge.

Volume IV: Millennium to Centenary

The first AGM of the new decade was held at the gardens of the IUCN's Wasaa Estate on the afternoon of 1 April, 2000. It began with Josephat Muinde leading a walk through the garden and talking about the plants that Peter Greensmith had collected and planted around his home. After the AGM Dr Geoff Howard gave a talk about the IUCN and his work on the Rufiji wetland project in Tanzania

Chairman Barry Cameron was glad to be back at Wasaa, where he and his late wife Sandy used to visit Peter Greensmith. He would show them around the garden after lunch, then go to take a nap and leave them to carry on with their exploration, till they all met for tea. He said 1999 had been tough with the weather, but it had been a satisfactory year for the Society and he applauded the members in all districts. He gave his personal rank to the five districts, based on their enthusiasm and programs, and scored 10 for Kilifi/Malindi, 9 to Nairobi, 8 to Mt Kenya, 7 for Mombasa and 5 to Rift Valley which had been especially affected by the drought in the year.

Ahead of the 2000 AGM the Council had noted that Mr Cameron, Mrs Cecilia Cege and Mrs Sue Deverell were due to retire by rotation. Sue Deverell agreed to continue and the Cameron would seek out Cecilia to see if she wished to remain on Council. They discussed suitable candidates in case she was not willing and Council members were in favour of Mr Alan Kangethe joining. It was agreed the Chairman would approach him after hearing from Mrs Cege. When Cecilia opted to resign by rotation, Alan Kangethe was approved at the AGM and welcomed to his first Council meeting in November 2000.

Executive Changes at the Council and the Districts 2000-05

Mrs Ann Birnie asked to step down from the Council and this was accepted with regret. She had been instrumental in creating the Friends of Nairobi Arboretum (FONA) in 1993 which the KHS had supported for many years and she hoped this would continue after her retirement. Birnie became the Chairman of FONA, that oversaw the 30-hectare

garden with over 350 species of indigenous and exotic shrubs and trees. It now had Government of Kenya support while the Ford Foundation was financing a footpath.

Mr Cameron said the Society must get stronger through having more African membership and Mr Kangethe said he would try and promote the Society among his circle of friends.

Mr Cameron also said that there ought to be a deputy chairman. He proposed Mrs Sue Deverell and this was accepted as there were no other names put forward. There were now two vacancies on the Council. Mr Kangethe suggested Mr George Gitau and other names proposed were Mrs Shirley-Anne McConnell and Ms Celia Hardy, both by the Chairman.

Mr Arnold Renney wanted to relinquish one of his two roles of Secretary and Treasurer. They agreed that the new nominees of the Council could also take on one of the roles.

Mrs Beryl Stephenson, Ms Celia Hardy and Mrs Shirley-Anne McConnell joined the Council in March 2001. Later, Mrs McConnell was to be the next treasurer and take over from Arnold Renney after working for a suitable handing over period with him. She was confirmed as the Hon Treasurer and as an additional bank signatory with effect from 21 March 2001.

She started by transferring the draft accounts onto her computer. But later in 2002, Mrs McConnell resigned as Treasurer but would continue as a Council member. The Society had no Treasurer and Mrs Sue Deverell agreed to take the position for a while.

Arnold Renney and John Wright Step down

In April 2003, the Society held its first AGM out of Nairobi since 1987. At the meeting at the Mayer's farm in Kedong, Arnold Renney was presented with a painting in recognition of his 40 years of service as Hon Secretary. The painting showing two succulent plants - monadenium renneyi and illadoresstenia renneyi, was done by Andrew Kamiti.

Arnold Renney had requested to resign as the Council's honorary secretary, a position he had held since the 1960s and the Council accepted and set out to find a successor. He would continue in the position until someone was found.

Renney had interviewed a suitable replacement, Ms Biverlyn Imali, a KHS volunteer who had three years of secretarial work experience. She would work from 9am to 1pm, at the Society office at the Museum, with both the Society and Nairobi districts each contributing to pay part of her Shs8,000 salary.

Mrs McConnell who stepped down as honorary treasurer would hand over to Mrs Sue Deverell in the year after completing the 2002 accounts. Mrs McConnell tabled the unaudited accounts at a Council meeting, and it was noted there was a large discrepancy in the amount in the NIC savings account. She said she would investigate and give an amended report to the Council in April.

Shirley-Anne McConnell stepped down from the Council in November 2003 and Mr Cameron proposed to invite George Gitau Barua to join. At the AGM, Barry Cameron was re-elected as Chairman and he said, having served for 15 years, this would definitely be his last term, as new blood was needed to lead the Society. John Wright was away recuperating in the UK from a stroke and they would write to see if he wished to continue on the Council.

Also, in 2003 Arthur Brown stepped down and Mrs Beryl Stephenson stepped down at Naivasha being replaced by Mrs Kay Blackwell. Sujata Morjaria replaced Heather Campbell who retired after many years in the Council.

Later in the year, Mr Cameron visited Mr Wright who was having therapy on his left leg and arm. It was agreed that they would continue to send him newsletters and Mr David Gray arranged to have a basket of fruit sent to him. Mr Wright received the basket in Scotland and sent an email, thanking the Council for the present, which he had enjoyed.

But later in 2004, they got word that John Wright would not be returning to Kenya. The news was received with sadness as he would be greatly missed. He had been associated with the KHS since he came to Kenya in the 1950s.

With his departure, the number of members on the Council was down to five and his position as the Society's chief judge was vacant. Mr Cameron suggested that Mrs Jose Hays, who was currently a senior judge on the judges' subcommittee, be invited to fill the position and the vacancy on the Council.

Anne McConnell stepped down as Chair of Kilifi Malindi in 2004 as she was moving to another part of the country and Shrena Malde was elected as the new chairman. Also, in 2005, Pam Grattan former chair of the former Nyeri/Nanyuki and Mt Kenya district for 19 years from 1970-89 passed away.

In 2006, Jose Hays proposed that Pauline Balletto and Ann Robertson of Malindi be made honorary life members. They had served for many years as secretary and chairman of the Malindi district and both sat on the judges' subcommittee and had worked on the flower show schedule database, members' handbook and show handbook. The Council agreed and put it to the AGM the next day where the award was applauded by members. Mrs Balletto was acknowledged for the reworking of the judging handbook while Mrs Robertson was hailed for her undertaking the difficult task of rewriting the KHS constitution.

Barry Cameron thought that the Council needed more Asian members and suggested Mrs Azmina JanMohammed while Mrs Darshna Patel offered to look up other possibilities. The Council decided to invite Mrs Priya Shah, the current chairlady of the Kenya Floral Arrangement Club who had held a Nairobi District show in conjunction with the KHS. Shah joined the Council in 2007 replacing Sujata Morjaria.

A new auditor would also be needed as Mr Cameron told the Council that Mr Syan did not wish to continue. While Mrs Sue Deverell looked for a new person, Mr Jim Birnie agreed to be the Society's auditor. His fee would be Shs10,000 and he would start with the 2004 accounts.

New Chairman: David Gray 2008

Mr Cameron prepared to fulfill his pledge to step down and told members at the 2005 AGM that organizations should change the top position every five years. He had served for six three-year terms, making 18 years, and had planned to step down from both the

Society and the Nairobi Committee, which he had joined in 1998 when he took over from John Wright, but he reluctantly agreed to continue with the Nairobi committee.

He told the Council in March 2005 that while it was traditional for members at the AGM to appoint a Chairman, it was up to the Council to come up with a name, usually of a member of the Council who resided in Nairobi. He proposed that the Council members have a mini-poll and elect a new chairman at the next meeting before the AGM. He also invited members to forward the names of people they would like to see as Chairman to the Council.

Mr Cameron did not step down at a Council meeting in August 2005 as he had planned, because the turnout was too low. Present were Mrs Jane McKeand Nanyuki, Mrs Susan Church Naivasha and Mariam Mwangi for Rift Valley. Also, Council members Jose Hays and David Gray along with the Secretary, Christine Iminza. But Mrs Sue Deverell, the Deputy Chairlady & Treasurer, was absent as were Council members Celia Hardy, Alan Kangethe and George Barua along with Margaret Smith, Shrena Malde and Pauline Balletto for the districts of Nairobi, Mombasa and Malindi/Kilifi respectively.

He later told the Council he had hoped a better turnout would enable a vote to take place. He again said the next Chairman should come from Nairobi or reside near Nairobi and that it could be Mrs Sue Deverell, George Barua, Celia Hardy, Alan Kangethe, David Gray or Jose Hays.

Ahead of the 2006 AGM, Sujata Morjaria had left the country and would need to be replaced on the Council. Darshna Patel would be the new Nairobi Chairman and represent them on the Council. Morjaria had resigned in May 2005 and another resignation followed in October as Margaret Smith stepped down for health reasons. She was chair of the Nairobi district and had served that Committee for over 25 years. The Council planned to invite Ann Robertson from Malindi to take up the vacancy left by Morjaria but they were concerned that she would have difficulty attending meetings. Cameron proposed they identify a suitable person from the Asian community as they were not represented on the Council.

There was a challenge in getting a new Chairman and they proposed changing the term for Chairman to two years. Cameron invited Mr David Gray to be the new Chairman but

he declined as he had several commitments, including being Chairman of the Horse Association of Kenya until 2007. Cameron then proposed that the chairmanship rotates in the districts in alphabetical order but Mrs. McKeand thought this was not practical.

She suggested they operate without a Chairman for a year and during that time Council officials would take turns chairing meetings. She had earlier suggested that Council meetings should rotate in the different districts.

Pauline Balletto supported this saying the person had to access mail, sign cheques, get files & records, and work closely with the Secretary. While appreciating what Mr Cameron did, she also felt it was not fair to have someone busy chairing a district to also take on the responsibility of being the Chairman.

Mrs Sue Deverell also wanted to set term limits to encourage more people to not think that being Chairman was like taking on a lifelong obligation. She also felt that with email and mobile phones this person did not necessarily have to be in Nairobi.

Mr Cameron said the seat was not as demanding as it appeared which may have swayed Mr David Gray to reconsider if he could take the seat after 2007. Mr Gray sent an email in April accepting to be the Chairman of the Society. A few days later, the members at the 82nd AGM of the KHS meeting at Wasaa on 29 April 2006 confirmed Mr David Gray as their new chairman replacing Barry Cameron who had proposed him. Cameron was presented with a painting of a cinnamon-chested bee-eater done by Andrew Kamiti in appreciation for his 18 years of hard work as Chairman of the main Society.

In his farewell speech as Chairman to members at the 2006 AGM, Cameron noted some of the highlights of his tenure which included the KHS exhibiting at Philadelphia in 1991, Mombasa rejoining the main Society in 1995, the writing and publication of 3,000 issues of Gardening in East Africa, a mixed-race Council, the judges' subcommittee, flower show schedule and equipping the Society with equipment to function in the new century. He also noted the passing of their former chairman Tom Grumbley in 1998 and their member Peter Greensmith in 1992 and the departure from Kenya of John Wright in 2001, who were all missed by present-day gardeners in Kenya.

The Council had approved a change to the constitution regarding the tenure of the Chairman. It would see the term of the chairman reduced from three to two years, and at the end of his/her term the chairman would not be eligible to be re-elected until another three years had passed

But when the proposal was read to members at the 2006 AGM, it elicited a lot of objections as members felt that it was important to have good continuity of the chairman to the running of the Society. Members resolved to keep the three-year term but agreed that a Chairman would not be re-elected until another three years had passed.

Mr David Gray chaired his first Council meeting in June 2006 and said that he would like to work closely with the districts. He proposed that the Society's Illuminated Scroll be awarded to his predecessor. He said Barry Cameron was a hard act to follow. He merited this as he had been an honorary life member who had given outstanding service to the Society.

Mr Gray requested all Council members to review the Constitution to see if any other amendments needed to be made and send their comments to him. Mrs Hardy thought the Nairobi district needed a name change and to this Mrs Hays said they should change the way they attract new members.

The Council agreed in November 2006 that three meetings a year were sufficient and set their next meeting for March 2007 with the main Society AGM on April 28. Barry Cameron returned to join the members at the 2007 AGM where he was presented with the Illuminated Scroll. This was in appreciation of his long-serving commitment to the KHS and horticulture in general.

Members at the AGM also stood for a few minutes of silence in memory of Mrs Cecilia Cege a well-known member from Tigoni and Council member who had died in a road accident in early 2007.

The AGM was held at the Nairobi Arboretum and members approved two amendments to the constitution; one recommended that the AGM be held within six months of the end of the financial year and the other ruled that a Deputy Chairman be appointed from within the membership of the Council. These were approved and Chairman David Gray

thanked Mrs Sue Deverell who occupied the post of Vice-Chairman as well as being the Society's Treasurer.

During the meeting, he spoke of the constitutional changes that set a limit on his term and asked the Council to think of names of possible candidates to succeed him as his term would be ending in March 2009. He thanked officials of the six districts, which he would endeavour to visit in the year, and expressed a wish that they have a branch in the Kericho area. After the meeting, Mrs Ann Birnie gave a talk on the history of the Arboretum, followed by a short tour.

The 2010 AGM held at the office of FONA saw members again reconstituting the Council to have a maximum of six members nominated from any district who would double as Council members. The immediate past chairman would act as an ex-officio member for a year, and David Gray whose term had ended, took the place of Celia Hardy when she decided to resign from the Council due to the pressure of work.

The Constitution booklet had not been updated since 2003 and David Gray offered to go through the minute books and clarify what amendments had been made since the last publication. Every member was supposed to have a copy of the constitution and the Council agreed in February 2012 that a soft copy would be posted on the website once it was up and running.

The AGM was held ahead of the Nairobi District flower show at the Oshwal Centre with Mrs Sue Deverell as Chairman and Treasurer. Mrs Sue Deverell asked Mr Jim Birnie, who was in attendance with his wife Anne, to resume auditing the Society's books and fortunately, he agreed. The audited accounts were not ready in time for the AGM, but the Society had Shs342,468 in the bank and Shs3.93 million in the Old Mutual money market account.

Pauline Balletto, on behalf of the Malindi/Kilifi district, proposed Mr John Golds for honorary life membership. He had done a lot for the district and the main Society and had spearheaded the push for the new Diani district. The conferment was unanimously approved.

New Handbooks 2002

The judges' sub-committee was tasked with updating the Society's handbook in 2002. They started by reviewing the last edition, the fifth one which had been published in December 1978 which contained a letter from their then-patron Charles Njonjo and was considered out of date.

In reviewing it they wondered if there was still a need for the Society to have a patron, and also the need to separate the constitution from the handbook as the constitution was changed more frequently. The Society had not had a patron since Mr Njonjo resigned in November 1984 and it was agreed there was no need for such a position.

The Council approved two official publications - the KHS member's handbook and a KHS flower show handbook. The member's handbook would be issued free to all members while the show handbook would be free to each district committee and offered for sale to members at Shs20.

The show handbook would have guidelines for flower shows, show committees, guidelines for stewards and exhibitors, judges, and learner judges and also sections on judging items like fruits, herbs, orchids, container plants and cut materials. The committee would update the previous edition of the handbook while noting the wording of the revised 1999 edition of the RHS publication.

The member's handbook would combine previous editions to form a short history of the Society, list past presidents, chairmen, and affiliated societies, and also contain a map of districts and useful addresses.

The drafting of the two books would be done by the secretaries to the judges' committee. Ann Robertson circulated a draft of the new handbook that she had prepared to all the Council members and had early responses from Ann McConnell and David Gray. She then opted to step down as she had many other commitments and handed over the draft with the additional comments to Mr Cameron when he visited Kilifi/Malindi in July 2002 for a mini-garden course.

Mr Cameron undertook the final editing and completion of sections that had not been drafted. These included the write-up on past chairmen of the KHS which would entail a visit through the district archives and he sought a volunteer from the Nairobi district to help with the 30-page A5 handbook.

Progress on the member's handbook was slow as there was no information from the districts, other than Mt Kenya and Malindi/Kilifi on their past chairmen. Also, at Nairobi, the minute books before 1980 had been lost. Mr Cameron decided that the member's handbook should proceed without this information and not lose any more time.

The member's handbook was ready later in 2003. Mr Cameron presented it to the Council and recommended that 2,000 copies be printed which would cover the 1,000 current members and 1,000 new members over the next five years. The distribution of the member's handbook started in 2004 to paid-up and life members. Mr Cameron sent 150 to Malindi and 100 to Nanyuki while Ann McConnell took 150 to Mombasa. Joan Yakas also collected 100 for Naivasha and 50 for Rift Valley.

Meanwhile, work on writing the show handbook proceeded through 2003 and into the following year. The judge's subcommittee of Pauline Balletto, Ann Robertson, Ann McConnell, Jose Hays and Barry Cameron met in October 2004 in Malindi, the day after the Kilifi flower show. They worked through the draft of the show handbook and approved the first edition. They hoped it would be ready by April and be photocopied and circulated to the districts for members to use at their shows. A second smarter edition incorporating any changes would only be printed after all districts had satisfactorily used the first edition.

Pauline Balletto and Ann Robertson continued to update the show schedule database. The latest version was put on a diskette and shared with all the district chairmen. The schedule was first used for the Mombasa flower show in February 2003 and later at the Nairobi flower show in May 2003.

Mrs Robertson and Mrs Balletto then resumed work on a third edition of the show schedule database in 2005.

KHS Calendars

In March 2001, the Council proposed to create a calendar and agreed in principle that 500 could be produced. Chairman Cameron suggested they emulate a type of appointment calendar from South Africa that had a vertical format with small paintings of sunbirds. Mrs Sue Deverell was asked to get quotes and brought two examples that Kul

Graphics had produced using one of the paintings from their 1999 card series. The Council now decided to print 1,000 calendars for the year 2002 to sell at a price that would make a profit for the Society and the retailer. A budget was approved of Shs200,000 for the calendar project.

Because of the high cost of getting new paintings, they decided to only use old paintings or donated paintings as the Society could not afford new ones. Also, the 12 paintings did not have to be by one painter. Mrs Sue Deverell was asked to approach Roshan Manzoor, Claire Jones, Elizabeth Dames, Sue Dumbleton and Beryl Stephenson for indigenous or exotic plants of horticultural subjects 15x10cm. The Council would select the paintings in July 2001 and they planned to print the calendars by September 2001.

This was done and they started distributing the calendar in September 2001. They had to sell 600 calendars to break even and early sales were brisk. They congratulated Mrs Sue Deverell for having the calendar printed and distributed so fast. In this, she was assisted by Mr R Campbell and Mrs E Dames. Mrs Sue Deverell said the final cost was about Shs206,000, which was more than the original Shs176,000 quoted, as they had added a front and rear page of the calendar, with a brief note on the Society and details of the paintings

By the end of the year, they had sold 875 calendars, easily passing the break-even target. They decided to speed up the sale of stocks in the districts and began to plan whether they should do a new calendar for 2003.

Mrs Sue Deverell proposed to invite two or three artists this time to each produce four to six pictures in the required format. Other suggestions made were to add the day of the week and the name of the flower and the artists. Also, they would use Securicor to deliver them to the different districts as this was quick, direct and cheap.

In August 2002, the Council approved a budget of Shs224,000 to print 1,000 copies of a 2003 calendar which Mrs Sue Deverell said would be ready by September. Members also proposed that future editions use photographs taken with digital cameras, and include gardening tips for each month. They would also consider finding a sponsor to support more elaborate designs.

The 2003 calendar sold well but when the Council proposed doing another edition in 2004, Mrs Deverell opted not to get involved. She said it was too time-consuming, as she had also been doing the design, distribution and sales. She said obtaining good-quality botanical paintings had also become difficult. Her parting advice was that printing 1,000 appointment format calendars was not competitive on price and that they should adopt a desktop format.

The Council proposed to ask Bob Campbell to take over and he started by asking for digital photographs from the Districts. The 2004 calendar, the third issue sold well, as did the fourth in 2005. Bob Campbell again did the designs and provided some of his photographs and it sold 930 copies before the calendar year even started.

For the 2006 issue, the Council decided that they would have a photographic competition amongst their members and make selections from these. Entries were due on 30 June 2005 and they received entries from members in Malindi, Mt Kenya, and Naivasha.

Akbar Hussein, Bob Campbell and Mrs Sue Deverell judged 187 entries from 16 members and selected 15 photographs. A budget of Shs170,000 was set and quotations were sought from three printing companies for a wall-hanging calendar. The following year, they had another photographic competition for the 2007 calendar. The same judges' panel continued and they worked with a budget of Shs200,000.

Printing Greetings Cards, Calendars and Brochures

In September 2006, with the calendar for 2007 done, they decided to design new greeting cards as the old stock, done in 1999, was running low. They would have a painting competition to design 5 x 7-inch cards, with similar rules to the photographic calendar competition. Mrs Sue Deverell asked that this should be open to non-members and be advertised widely in their newsletter and magazine columns. They would give members six to nine months so the paintings would be ready the following year. They decided to invite Roshan Manzoor who had painted previous cards to participate. Mrs Sue Deverell asked that it be made clear to participants that the paintings chosen would become the property of the Society and in this way, they could be reused later.

For prizes, Mr John Golds suggested they give gifts instead of cash. This was agreed upon by the Council. Alan Kangethe said he knew someone who could paint beautiful art on glassware.

In 2007 Mrs Sue Deverell organized the printing of 50,000 brochures and 1,250 calendars, 850 of which were distributed in the districts by October. She also had 600 cards and 557 books left for sale. Alan Kangethe suggested that they put up the new brochure on notice boards at Village Market and Sarit Centre as well as the website, though Mrs Sue Deverell was worried that someone would copy their design if it was put on the website.

Mrs Sue Deverell said there had been many requests for photographs of indigenous flowers in the 2009 calendar especially from members at Nanyuki. The 2009 calendar sold well thanks to Mrs Sue Deverell and was the best ever at over 1,300 copies. They even asked for a second print run.

For cards, they had broken with the tradition of having an internal competition and asked Andrew Kamiti to work on paintings for the cards that would be ready by the end of 2007. The new cards would be a smaller size and sold in packs of four. But Andrew Kamiti fell behind as he destroyed the paintings he had done and began working on a new set in 2008.

Mr Kamiti was not able to complete the paintings and Mrs Sue Deverell found another artist, Taryn Bebbington, who after showing her samples to the Council, had quickly produced a new set that was acceptable.

Sustainability: life members and growing membership

Ending Life Membership 2000

At the end of 1999, Ann Robertson told a Council meeting that the number of life members was increasing rapidly in proportion to the number of ordinary members. This was having an impact on some district finances and she suggested that Life membership be abolished. An alternative was to charge life members postage for receiving the newsletter, which was the main expense of supporting the grade, but this matter was not agreed.

The Council met again on 24 March 2000 and, after more discussions, agreed to abolish the grade of life membership. However, this would require a change in the constitution and due to the time limit, it would not be possible to have the proposal put to members at the AGM that was set for 1 April. It was resolved to put the change to members at the AGM in 2001. A distinction was made that the decisions would not affect the status of "Honorary life members" which were awards given to members for service to the Society.

It was recommended that districts immediately stop enrolling new life members. Also, districts were asked to approach their life members and ask if they would make annual voluntary contributions towards the high cost of printing and posting newsletters, particularly to those who had been life members for more than ten years.

The 2001 AGM was held in April at the home of the British High commissioner on Tchui road in Muthaiga, where Mr Barry Cameron, as the Chairman, proposed the changes to the constitution and rules on life members and show judges. He explained how districts had a financial burden in supporting life members in relation to those paying the annual subscription and the Council's recommendation that life membership be discontinued. Current life members would continue to be recognized but no new life members would be accepted. There was no objection and this was unanimously approved. They thanked the High Commissioner, Sir Jeffery James and presented Mrs James with a bouquet of flowers.

A few months later, in October 2001, Mombasa proposed to increase its single subscription rate from Shs300 to Shs400 while Nairobi also proposed to increase its rate from Shs500 to Shs700. Mombasa also proposed to introduce membership for doubles at Shs600 while Nairobi proposed to increase its double membership rate from Shs700 to Shs1,000. The Council approved these measures and also agreed that the category of corporate membership is discontinued. This had been introduced in 1992 and the proposal to end it would be put to members at the 2002 AGM.

Mr David Gray suggested the subscription rate for double membership be increased but the Council resolved that, in the economic climate and with a need to attract more members, the rates would not change in 2003.

Concern about member numbers and a 'too scientific' name

Ahead of a Council meeting at their National Museum office in February 2002, Chairman Cameron told the Council he was concerned about the future of the Society. Membership was declining and it would not be sustainable in the long term. He asked the Council to decide what kind of Society they would want in five years' time - one with the same number of members or more?

The Society had 977 members led by Nairobi with 627, Mombasa with 113, Malindi/Kilifi with 109, Mt Kenya with 74 and Naivasha with 54. Mr Cameron said there had been a decline since a few years earlier when Nairobi had 850 and the whole country had 1,200 and he suggested they needed to increase this to 3,000 to afford the administrative staff who would do day-to-day tasks. These tasks were done by volunteers but it was more difficult to attract members to join committees. The Council agreed that 3,000 members countryside was attainable with 2,000 being from Nairobi and the KHS should do more to attract young people to join.

Mr Cameron said he thought that the KHS name was too highbrow and stuffy. He instead suggested, 'Kenya Gardening Society' or 'Gardening Kenya' saying that the East African Natural History Society now operated as Nature Kenya. Also, its objective would change "to create, increase, foster and stimulate interest in gardens and plants in Kenya". However, Council members opposed the renaming and the proposal was dropped, leaving the KHS name unchanged.

David Gray suggested a subcommittee be formed to explore how to increase membership and this was approved. Mr Gray was asked to chair the committee and he worked with Alan Kangethe and Shirley-Anne McConnell on a report presented to Council in February 2003.

They found the KHS had an image of being too scientific and made up of long-term expatriates with few indigenous Kenyan members. They concentrated on flowers but had little interest in fruit or vegetables, membership was failing in Nairobi and it was unclear if it was increasing in the other Districts. Nairobi also had lower participation at shows, meetings and events compared to other districts, except for the "Know your Garden" course that was always over-subscribed.

Their recommendations included that the KHS produce a poster with brochures to be distributed at places such as greengrocers, flower shops, embassies and environmentally-inclined NGOs. Also, that all districts designate a committee member responsible for increasing membership, non-members be encouraged to attend at least one meeting with no charge and that a recruitment drive should be done to attract more corporate and student members by resurrecting these classes of membership. These would draw both young members and those with technical expertise.

Other proposals were to employ part-time staff, obtain editorial space in newspapers and magazines, make the KHS office more attractive and publicize the KHS involvement in the Nairobi Botanical Garden. They also emphasized that the need for staff to spearhead membership drives was not meant to denigrate the efforts and enthusiasm of the dedicated volunteer officials and helpers but an acceptance that the Society's long-term well-being was under threat unless membership was increased.

Shirley-Anne McConnell wanted districts to make meetings lighter and more fun, with events like raffles and to also share details of good speakers with other districts. Celia Hardy agreed that members' guests should be admitted to events free of charge as this would encourage them to join and spread the word. Some districts had tried to analyze guests at their events to see who could be attracted to be members, but this showed no pattern.

The Council agreed to produce a poster and look for a part-time employee for Nairobi. The first poster done by Tequila Ltd was criticized as the Gloriosa flower was too large and the wording unsuitable and the Council asked for a redesign. They approved a budget of Shs40,000 and the poster was completed later in 2003. These were distributed to the districts and of the first batch of 200 printed posters, 30 were sent to Mombasa, 20 to Malindi/Kilifi, 15 to Naivasha, 10 to Rift Valley and 3 to Mt Kenya.

To broaden membership, it was decided to reverse an earlier Council proposal that corporate membership should be dropped. Instead, it would be retained at a rate of Shs2,500pa and each corporate member would be allowed to nominate up to 4 people to represent them and attend meetings. Mr David Gray agreed to reach out to his contacts in the horticultural sector to get them to sign up while Mrs Beryl Stephenson would try and engage the commercial flower companies around Lake Naivasha. She would also get some of these commercial growers to take part in the Society's activities.

This was after Cameron asked that they engage with commercial growers to expand the pool of lecturers for the “Know Your Garden” as well as judges.

They also decided to invest in a new national newsletter comparable to other societies. It would be produced quarterly using computer software and personnel. At the time, the Nairobi district was in negotiations with the Nation newspaper to run a series of monthly articles on gardening, but the Council considered that a newsletter was a better way of recruiting members than newspaper advertisements.

Despite the membership numbers, the Society was in a strong financial position. This was mostly due to the 25% subvention paid to the Council by districts. Mr Cameron asked whether it should be reduced to help the districts with the additional cost of attracting new members. The Council decided to leave the subvention unchanged but would consider supporting some show costs if the districts applied to the Council to meet specific costs.

There were discussions on whether districts should harmonize their rates. Nairobi charged members Shs700, at Mombasa and Malindi/Kilifi it was Shs400, Mt Kenya was Shs200 and Naivasha charged Shs300. The Council would review the need for some districts to increase their rates to meet the additional costs. Later the Council agreed to reimburse Council members who travelled long distances to meetings with Shs1,000. In November 2003, Ann McConnell pushed for travel allowances for Mombasa and Malindi members to be increased as it was not sufficient and the Council agreed that for these two districts, it should be Shs2,000.

Nairobi Membership Struggles

Going into 2003, the Society asked the districts to send in their current membership numbers so they could monitor the impact of measures to expand their numbers. Nairobi had 674 members and Margaret Smith, their Chairman, was concerned that despite their vibrant activities such as garden meetings and visits to horticulture estates, only 60 to 80 members were active.

Mr Cameron expected Nairobi would have another financial loss in 2004 and he requested the Council to approve for Nairobi to raise its subscription rates. Rates increases were approved by the council as follows: single from Shs700 to Shs900,

double from Shs1,000 to Shs1,500 and corporate to Shs3,000. Junior membership would remain at Shs250 and while the status of life members could not be changed, Mrs Sue Deverell proposed charging them for the cost of sending newsletters. The cost was estimated at Shs250 and the Council agreed. Following this, 26 of the 340 life members paid the cost of printing while 43 others asked to have it by email.

Mr Cameron said the problems in Nairobi were still a lack of speakers for garden meetings, a lack of volunteers to run committees, and all categories of members were showing a serious decline.

He also lamented that the membership sub-committee had not achieved its objectives. Though in 2003 the KHS membership at 1,100 appeared to be 10% greater than in 2001, Cameron worried that the numbers were not correct.

The number of members in Nairobi declined by 78% in 2004, going from 578 to 230. This was after they did a clean-up of the life members register, to remove those not interested in the Society or who had left the country. Cameron said this was needed as sending newsletters to 340 life members was expensive.

Surjata Morjaria joined the membership sub-committee. They recommended that district flower shows should also have plant sales, and distribute posters to colleges and companies. Also, that the Society should have more newspaper articles, which could be excerpts from the KHS gardening book.

More suggestions were made for getting articles into magazines like Travel Magazine, flyers in supermarkets, marketing to women's organizations and making garden meetings more attractive.

Alan Kangethe tried to get more African members to join but he said the main challenge was a lack of awareness about the Society. Nairobi district had started to work on the flyer to help grow African membership. Two were produced and they endeavored to pick the best points from each into a final draft for the Council to approve.

The flyer was printed in time for the Nairobi flower show in May 2002 where the KHS had a stand and had hoped to attract new members. Mr Cameron apologized to the Council for printing the flyers without their approval for the design or cost which was

Shs42,000 for 3,000 copies, 1,000 of which had an insert on Nairobi district subscription rates. He said hundreds had been distributed at the show and 35 members signed up. The Council approved this decision in August 2002 and directed that flyers be distributed to all Districts who could fund their own insert with subscription information.

Celia Hardy offered to join the membership subcommittee in March 2005. But some time in 2005, the Council took the mandate of growing the KHS membership away from the membership subcommittee as their numbers continued to decline. Mr Cameron said it was essential to attract younger members of all races and particularly in Nairobi which, while it was undergoing urbanization, had homeowners who wanted gardens and plants.

One way of attracting new members was by having interesting speakers but the knowledge pool was shrinking with the departure of John Wright and other older members. Mrs Sue Deverell started talks with the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) to locate interesting people to lecture at garden meetings while Mr Cameron had talks with Catherine Ngarachu of Nature Kenya about whether the two societies could advertise in each other's newsletters and also hold joint meetings so they could attract new members.

To address the decreasing membership Mrs Ann Robertson suggested that they invite vendors of roadside "jua kali" nurseries to become members. But Jane McKeand and Jose Hays thought they would not be interested if there was no monetary gain.

Overcoming Bank issues

In November 1997, Arnold Renney as Treasurer transferred the Society account from Barclays at Queensway House in Nairobi to the branch at Lavington Green. The signatories were Mr Renney, Mrs Heather Campbell and Mrs E Smith. Shirley-Anne McConnell joined the Council in March 2001. She was also to take over from Arnold Renney and she was confirmed as the Hon Treasurer and as an additional bank signatory with effect from 21st March 2001. But Mrs McConnell stepped down as honorary treasurer a few months later and after completing the 2002 accounts, and handed over to Mrs Sue Deverell.

Later, at the Council meeting in July 2003, Mrs Sue Deverell told the Council about an issue at Barclays where their main account was in credit Shs716,403. She said the bank had made a muddle with the signatories of Council members and they agreed that all signatories be deleted and replaced afresh with Mr Barry Cameron, Mr Alan Kangethe, Mrs Sue Deverell and Mr David Gray.

She went to the bank to get the forms and signature cards sorted. But when she presented the Council with forms, she also brought back a request from Barclays for the Society's constitution and registration certificate. This started a new discussion about whether they should continue to invest with NIC where the rates were low. The KHS had four fixed deposits maturing later in the year and which earned interest ranging from 1% to 4%. Mrs Deverell would ask Mr Syan about interest rates at Old Mutual or obtaining commercial paper.

Mrs Robertson then asked why they needed so much cash and the Chairman said that the Society's wealth had accrued from sales of the book "Gardening in East Africa" and if a reprint was ever required, the Society could fund it from its resources. He said they may also need a new office in future. Later, in 2004 with the Barclays current balance at over Shs1 million, the Council agreed that it was too large and that Shs500,000 should be placed with Old Mutual.

When the Council met at the beginning of 2006, Mrs Sue Deverell had not yet finished the accounts, but she cautioned the Council that income from subventions was not enough to cover their expenses including rent and secretarial services. The Council decided to put off this discussion till the accounts were ready.

This warning about their financial situation was largely due to their moving from the Museum where they had been paying a peppercorn rent for 20 years to the new office at Ndani, Ngong Road in September 2005 where they were now paying real-world rates. Mrs Deverell cautioned that Nairobi and the main Society would be digging into their capital.

Aside from being expensive, the office did not attract many visitors, and fewer members passing through meant fewer book sales. For 2005 their income increased on the Old Mutual fund but other income was down as they did not sell as many books. Still, they managed to sell 100 copies of Gardening in East Africa and remained with about 600

books. Alan Kangethe enquired where the books were sold. The response was Text Book Center. Mrs Sue Deverell told the Council she had been to Nakumatt but their bookshops NuMetro, were run by a South African firm that only stocked books from South Africa.

There was more distressing news as when Sue Deverell visited Barclays, she was shocked to find that the Society's accounts had not been updated in two years and still had the old signatories on record of Barry Cameron, Arnold Renney and Shirley-Anne McConnell and not the new ones they had provided in 2003. She herself had written cheques and wondered if they were being cleared as she was not on the bank list.

She proposed that they change banks and the Council agreed that they move from Barclays Bank at Hurlingham to a branch of the Commercial Bank of Africa at Village Market. There they would operate a savings account with a cheque book and its signatories would be Mr Cameron, Mrs Sue Deverell, Mr Alan Kangethe and Mr David Gray.

The Council adjusted this a few weeks later and resolved to transfer the account from the Barclays branch at Hurlingham to Barclays at the Muthaiga branch. It would be operated by the new signatories, but if the bank's efficiency did not improve, they would close the account and move to CBA.

Mrs Deverell proposed and the Council agreed to transfer Shs500,000 of the Shs886,000 at Barclays to the Old Mutual Money Market Fund. The balance would be used to pay for printing costs for the 2007 calendar. The Council also agreed to her proposal that the main Society increased its contribution to the office rent from Shs8,000 to Shs10,000.

But things did not progress with Barclays as the bank was still searching for the Society's file at their headquarters. In March 2007 after Mrs Deverell presented an income and expense statement, the Council resolved to open an account at CBA, transfer all funds and close the Barclays account. The CBA signatories would be Mr David Gray, Mr Sue Deverell, Mr Barry Cameron and Mr Alan Kangethe with any two able to sign on behalf of the Society.

Name Change Proposal 2006

In early 2006, Mrs Sue Deverell proposed changing the name of the Society to be more aligned with gardens. Mr Cameron told the Council he had proposed this in 2002 but it had not been agreed upon. They decided to put it to members at the upcoming AGM and ask the districts to collect views from their members.

Ahead of the 2006 AGM, Nairobi District had received 26 replies. Fourteen were in favour of a name change with the favourite being a change to the “Kenya Gardening Society”. Eight were against and 4 were undecided. The Council also heard that members at both Malindi and Mt Kenya districts had discussed the proposal at their recent AGM’s and their members, along with those at Mombasa, were strongly opposed to the name change. No word had been received from Rift Valley and Naivasha districts.

Malindi/Kilifi members said that the KHS name was well-known and respected across Kenya, while the members at Mt Kenya said the KHS had a long history attached to it.

The Council now considered that changing the name would not attract new members. They would also incur a great deal of cost in rewriting and publishing their books, constitution and prize cards. As such, Mr Cameron proposed that they drop the name change from the agenda of the AGM.

At the main AGM in April 2006, members resolved to retain the name as the KHS but that districts were free to find more appealing names if they wished while remaining under the umbrella and rules of the main Society.

Nairobi: Shared Offices, KHS Library or District splits

The Nairobi District ‘Know your Garden’ course continued to be popular. From 2001 the number of participants was reduced from 40 to 30 so that everyone could participate. The charge for the ten-week course was also increased to Shs4,000.

Nairobi district held its first flower show at Sarit Centre in May 2002. Mr Pravin Bowry negotiated a donation from BASF EA, a German chemical company, and this helped with the high cost of the venue. It was a beautiful show with a high standard of exhibits, and a display by the Kenya Orchid Society which attracted a great deal of interest.

Nairobi District found the Sarit Centre to be an ideal venue and they returned for another flower show in May 2003. While there were fewer entries by commercial firms, there were more flowers exhibited and this was more attractive for visitors.

Two years later, when Nairobi held its annual flower show in June 2005, the fourth at the Sarit Centre, they had keen interest from corporations. Safaricom sponsored the hire of the hall, Kenya Airways provided the first prize in the raffle draw and Osho Chemicals printed the posters and flyers for the show. These all enabled the show to make a profit, after two years of losses.

However, when Nairobi District started to plan a show for 2006, the Sarit Centre wanted Shs500,000 for the hall, and this was much more than the Shs100,000 they had paid previously. They had no sponsor this time and the Nairobi Committee agreed to a suggestion by Darshna Patel that they hold shows every other year because of the high cost.

In the turmoil of moving the KHS office from the Museum and searching for a new Society Chairman, the Nairobi 'Know your Garden' course had to be cancelled in 2006 which was also a drought-hit year. This popular course had been fully subscribed to in 2005, but only 8 had signed up in 2006 with just a few days to the first lecture. This was disappointing as it meant a loss of revenue for the district.

Later that year, the Nairobi District staged a flower show at the Oshwal Centre as a joint venture with the Kenya Floral Arrangement Club. They sought sponsorship from Safaricom for this and it turned out to be a wonderful event in November. Though the visitor turnout was low, they managed to get 70 entries.

But when the District proposed to hold another show for 2007, neither the Floral Arrangement Club nor the Orchid Society was keen, so they decided not to have a flower show that year. Jose Hays pushed for Nairobi to host a flower show, even if it was a mini-show at their new office space at Ndani Interiors. She asked that the Council request each district to have a show every year and add this to the member's handbook. Mr John Golds suggested that this could be done by a letter to all district Chairmen.

The 'Know Your Garden' course was back on track in 2008. At short notice, it was held in February and fully booked with 30 participants. There was a waiting list and a second one planned for October.

Nairobi committee crisis

The loss of members in the districts was more pronounced in Nairobi whose membership in 2006 was 266, down from 578 in 2004. Mr Cameron spoke of his disappointment that when he asked for volunteers, he only got seven responses. This was at a time that several vacancies were arising in the Nairobi committee.

Mrs M May was leaving the country, Mr John Wright was recuperating abroad, Mr Pravin Bowry had resigned for family reasons, and Ms Roshan Manzoor was on an extended visit to the UK. Also, Mrs Scanlon would not find the time to continue as Secretary and Mrs A K Fitzjohn resigned as Hon Treasurer. Mrs Fitzjohn hailed the work of Mrs Sally Shaw, her assistant treasurer who was taking over from her, and who had kept the records and produced the district accounts for 2002.

Some members were not able to attend committee meetings on Wednesday mornings and Cameron proposed that Mrs P Harley, Mrs R Kiwanuka, Mrs Sarita Sheth and Mrs Darshna Patel be asked to join the committee.

In 2005, Mr Cameron also stepped down as Nairobi District Chairman after eight years. Mrs Darshna Patel was elected as the new chairman with Mrs Sarita Sheth as Vice Chairman of the committee that was now back to 12 after volunteers stepped forward at the Nairobi District AGM.

Split Nairobi District?

At the 2007 AGM Jose Hays suggested that the Nairobi District be divided into two branches with one in Karen having the main office and another at Muthaiga. Mrs Sue Deverell supported this idea and said it should be shared with the Nairobi District members through a newsletter to get more views.

In 2008, the Society was visited by the Nairobi City Council at the KHS office and was told that they needed a license to sell plants. Mrs Sally Shaw checked with Mr Pravin

Bowry and he confirmed this was the case. Chairman Gray then asked that no more sales happen until it was resolved and that all items be put in the store. A year later and still with no license, Mrs Deverell proposed they only sell Society items such as cards, books and calendars

Mrs Sue Deverell later explained in April 2009 that the proposal was to create two districts of Nairobi North with Westlands, Muthaiga, Rosslyn, Kiambu and Limuru while Nairobi South would cater for those living in Langata, Karen and Lavington. The two would share an office and secretary but have different committees and garden meetings.

A few weeks after this, Darshna Patel resigned as Chairman of Nairobi and there was no Deputy. This may have stemmed from the proposal to split Nairobi. Nairobi had 341 members, 150 of who were life members.

2009 was a tough year for the Nairobi district that started with 11 committee members and ended with 7 members. There were a few vacancies at the Council after Mrs Celia Hardy stepped down and Mrs Eleanor Thomson passed away. The Nairobi District set out to attract more young members by holding Society events and short talks.

While Mrs Sue Deverell suggested members be asked which section of Nairobi they would wish to be in. Mr Barry Cameron said that a proper proposal, with reasons for the split, should be put to members at a Nairobi District special general meeting. Mr David Gray suggested that another option would be to resuscitate Limuru and have it as a separate district that encompassed Muthaiga, Rosslyn and Kiambu.

Mr John Golds argued that a decision to split the Nairobi district, which shared office space with the KHS Council, would also have an impact on the necessity for the Council to have an office. The secretarial role would also be split with more functions going to Council members.

Mrs Sue Deverell met with members from Limuru, Muthaiga, Rosslyn and Runda in October 2009 to discuss the revival of Limuru District. There were many positive replies and especially from young people. Those at the meeting all agreed on the formation of the district and paid their membership dues. As Chairman, Mrs Sue Deverell hailed

2009 which had seen the creation of two new districts with the revival of Limuru District after 15 years, and one at Diani in the south coast, under Ms Joan Wilson.

But for almost a year Mrs Sue Deverell got no help with the Limuru Committee. This was until three new members signed up. One was Juliet Campbell-Clause who had moved to the area. She did the newsletter for Nairobi and would make sure that Limuru meetings were also listed. Despite efforts over many months to revive it, the Limuru chapter was deemed to be closed again in July 2013 when the Council decided to take Limuru off its list of districts. This was because all its past members were now members of the Nairobi district.

Later Mr Vishy Talwar brought up the matter of splitting Nairobi into East and West areas, with each having its own events. Mrs Sally Shaw suggested that Mr Talwar invite his friend to the next Nairobi district meeting who might be able to lead one side and relieve Mrs Sally Shaw of some of the burden. Talwar met with Ms Wanjugu Wambugu about resurrecting Limuru District and combining it with Kiambu. Mrs Deverell said this had been tried before without success. Mrs Sally Shaw suggested that Mr Arjun Kohli be brought to the Nairobi District and ask him to manage the proposed split and the KHS website.

Society Library

In 2009, it was also not clear who owned the library. Had the KHS officially handed it over to Nairobi, or did the District only run it for the Society? There was no written agreement. Mr Barry Cameron returned to attend the 2010 AGM and confirmed that the library did belong to the main Society, and not the Nairobi district which had been operating and looking after it for many years. An inventory was done that found the library had 641 books.

Nairobi District members listed all books on a computer which Mrs Sally Shaw shared with all members. The list was also sent to Ms Joan Wilson of the new Diani district so the members could start to borrow books.

With the matter settled that all library assets were owned by the Society, the Council approved Shs 30,000 as a donation to purchase good reference books. Mrs Sue Deverell brought seven books that were donated by the estate of the late Mrs Eleanor

Thomson and Ms Katie May donated a good collection of books and journals from the estate of the late Mr Arnold Renney, many of which related to succulents.

With the move to the new district office, they decided to spruce up the library which was not actively used and what books they should have in it. They decided not to buy any new magazines and they also held talks with the Natural History Society. It was suggested that some duplicate copies and rarely used books be separated and sold or given to colleges or schools. The library planned a book sale for October 2010 of books that had been donated but were not of general interest.

At the new Riara Road office, Mrs Sally Shaw sorted the stocks and drew up a list of books that would be sold. After she established the online prices of the books, it was agreed that some books on roses and lilies should be donated to Egerton College, and the surplus sold at KHS plant sales.

At the 2011 AGM Peter Paterson suggested that since the Society owned the library it should contribute to its upkeep at the Nairobi office. There was some discussion on what would happen to the valuable book collection if Nairobi gave up its office. Mrs Sue Deverell said there was a possibility of combining the KHS library with that of the Natural History Society. But in the meantime, the KHS continued to make donations to the Nairobi district to purchase new books for the library.

With ownership of the library settled, it turned to what the Council would contribute to support the Nairobi office, either a daily charge or an hourly fee. There was also the question of what to do with the Society archives which were kept in tin trunks in a store on the property. They decided to make an inventory of what was being kept.

Mrs Sue Deverell wrote to all the districts asking them to do an inventory of cups. This would include their historic value, points of interest and possibly their original presenters, Mrs Sally Shaw said Nairobi was photographing all their cups.

In April 2011, the Council decided that KHS main Society would pay the Nairobi District Shs 2,000 per day for use of the office during Council meetings, and if the secretary was used, she would be paid Shs150 per hour. Later when Rowena Buxton agreed to take the minutes, this amount was also saved.

But by 2013, the library was still not viable and only 22 books were borrowed in the first half of 2013. The Council considered its prospects and discussed the possibility of merging it with the Natural History section of the Museum or housing it at Egerton College campus but the Council felt that would be too far away for most members. Mrs Sally Shaw and Mr Pravin Bowry felt it was part of the Society's heritage and should be retained and administered by the Nairobi District.

Society Nairobi Office and Library Space

Mrs Pauline Balletto was confirmed as chairman of Kilifi/Malindi in February 2001, taking over from Mrs Ann Robertson who retired after leading the district for nine years. Mrs Balletto also received old files and records and asked if these would be better being stored at a Society archive in Nairobi. Otherwise, they would stay in people's lofts and be destroyed. She planned to throw out what was unimportant or duplicated. But the Society did not have any such space for storage and Mr Barry Cameron said districts should be responsible for their own storage.

That year, Mr Cameron put forward a proposal that the Society should contribute towards the library. It was run by the Nairobi district and was badly in need of an injection of new books. Nairobi District estimated that Shs20,000 would be needed for a new stock given the higher cost of books and the Council agreed to contribute Shs30,000 to buy more books for the library.

But in November 2003, Barry Cameron told the Council that the KHS and all societies would be asked to move from their offices at the Museum when a new European Union-funded project was started. He advised that the societies work together to obtain a site in the museum compound to construct a "societies" building. Nature Kenya was ready to support the budget for this and Mr Arthur Brown said other overseas supporters would be ready to give donations.

Then on 15 July 2005, the National Museums of Kenya wrote to give notice evicting the KHS from its rented office ahead of the museum reconstruction project that was set to start on 1 October 2005. The project was scheduled to last for two years and Mr Cameron told the Council that Museum had indicated they would re-invite the Society to resume the tenancy they had enjoyed for over twenty years, but on new terms, not the Shs900 per year they were paying.

The notice for KHS to leave the Museum by 31 August was very short and Cameron emailed Council members appealing for help in finding new accommodation. He and Mrs Sue Ashworth rushed around looking for spaces. Some sites considered were the Racecourse, the dilapidated Sirona hotel, Rosslyn River Garden Centre and Viking house. Mr Pravin Bowry offered space in his office and they also tried to get information from both the Hindu Council and East Africa Women's League with no success. Meanwhile their Museum neighbour, the Orchid Society had moved to a room at the Goan Gymkhana Institute.

The Nairobi District selected three locations to consider - Ndani Interiors at the Racecourse, Foresters Cottage at the Arboretum and Mrs Bivji's house at Getathuru Gardens, off Peponi Road.

Cameron explained to the Council why the Ndani location was preferred. It was at a nice old house set in a wooded garden on the opposite side of the Racecourse. Though small, it had an overflow store that could accommodate any furniture that was not essential. The Arboretum cottage⁵¹ space was small, and as it was under renovation, would not be available for a few weeks. Mrs Bivji's house had a higher rent and they would have to pay extra for security as it overlooked the Karura Forest.

Mr Cameron said moving from paying a peppercorn rent for 20 years to joining the real world would be a shock. He proposed they take up at Ndani and have the Nairobi district pay Shs12,000 and the Society contribute Shs8,000 to the rent and this was agreed to.

After painting and wiring of the small room was done, the move to Ndani was done on 7 September 2005. Some furniture was cut to fit into the new office and the others kept in the adjacent store at no extra cost.

The office did not attract many visitors, and they had no telephone line at the new office. A cyber cafe had to be used for website updates which had slowed since they lost the

⁵¹ Forester's cottage is on the left side of the Arboretum entrance, and is now the head office of the Friends of the Nairobi Arboretum (FONA)

phone line in September 2005. Work at the Museum was scheduled to be done in September 2007, but it was now less clear if they would be able to return.

Later in 2006, as they still did not have a working phone at the office, Alan Kangethe suggested that they get a wireless line from Telkom. The advantage of this was that they would be able to keep the same phone number when they moved. The Telkom line was installed but it never worked. Soon after, they were able to download emails at the office using a Safaricom connection and once this started working well in 2007, they gave up on the office telephone.

In just over a year, the office rent, which was shared with Nairobi District was becoming costly and the new KHS Chairman Mr David Gray sought out the Director-General of the Museum in 2007 to ask if the KHS would be given space at the Museum after the renovations. He also asked the Council members to look out for cheaper places that might be suitable.

But after he met the Museum Director, Mr Gray told members at the AGM that he was not confident that they would be allowed to return to the Museum. They started to consider alternatives. Mr Gray also asked Mrs Heather Campbell if the KHS could share space with the Orchid Society at the Goan Gymkhana and Mrs Sue Deverell started working with Castaway to alter the lease between Ndani and the Jockey Club.

Mr Cameron spoke to Mr Bowden at the Castaway office. The lease with Ndani would still be in the Society's name even if they no longer worked in the building. Mr Gray later visited the Jockey Club and confirmed that their lease allowed Ndani to sub-lease to four other sub-tenants but some of the clauses in it did not relate to the KHS.

Mr Cameron went to visit the Orchid Society at the Goan Gymkhana to see if KHS could share their space but he was sure their furniture would not be able to fit the room there. Alan Kangethe suggested that they look at ABC Centre on Waiyaki Way.

Mr Cameron told the Council that the government had added VAT on commercial property rents and their monthly payments had now increased from Shs20,000 to Shs23,200 that was shared between the Council and the Nairobi District

The Ndani lease with the Jockey Club was expiring at the end of 2008 and was likely to increase by 10% and have a new charge for water.

Mr Gray asked Mr William Wambugu with whom the KHS was working on the Botanic Garden at the Museum to again check with the Director-General. Mr Wambugu suggested that they write a letter to the Director-General of the Museum reminding him of their interest. They did this but there was no reply. It was not looking good as even Nature Kenya which worked closely with the Museum had not been allocated space.

In 2009 Mr Pravin Bowry took up the matter of trying to get the Society an office at the Museum. They were also looking at space at the East Africa Women's League and the Arboretum.

Ndani were renewing the lease but the Society continued to look for offices. Mr Barry Cameron and Mrs Sally Shaw would check on other rooms at the Goan Gymkhana with a view to the Society finding a place for not more than Shs10,000 per month.

The Racecourse office was robbed twice, with the second incident in March 2009. This spurred a new search for alternative premises, more so after the Jockey Club refused to pay for window bars.

The Museum was not available and they looked at a Business Park on Link Road. The maximum rent amount was set at Shs30,000 per month.

There was a renewed push to move to a more central location. The membership numbers were also down slightly as well as those who actively used the library. In November, Ms Christine Iminza resigned as secretary and it was decided to only open the office once a week rather than for 5 days as before.

The Council considered a move to Goan Gymkhana or staying at the Ngong Racecourse and voted 2-1 in May 2010 to stay at their current office. They discussed the additional precautions after the break-ins such as doing computer back-ups regularly and not leaving valuables in sight.

But in 2011 with their lease renewed by Ndani, Mr Cameron told the AGM at Kentmere Club that the landlord had increased the rent to Shs35,000 per month. It had been Shs20,000 when they moved in.

Nairobi District had 173 members in 2011 including single, junior, double and corporates as well as 122 life members. The district needed to generate more funds to pay for an office especially as the Council had withdrawn its contribution. The District asked how the KHS Council could own the library but not contribute any rent to house it.

But in a good turn, at a Nairobi district AGM held in March 2011 at the Rusty Nail restaurant, Mr Nigel Hunter, the executive director of the East African Wildlife Society offered the KHS the chance of moving to a room in the EAWS compound. The room was small and he said much of what was in the office would be sold or given away. The EAWS gave them time to decide. He said there would be one price if the room was used exclusively by the KHS and another if the EAWS could sometimes use when it when the KHS was not there.

In May 2011, Mrs Sally Shaw gave two months' notice to the landlord at the racecourse and Mr Nigel Hunter's offer was accepted. During the month, they worked to paint and prepare the new offices. In May, KHS moved to the new office at the East African Wildlife Society on Riara which attracted a rent of shs10,000 per month. Council agreed to contribute shs3,500 as the library was housed there.

Good quality medals

In November 2000, Mrs Sue Deverell raised a concern about the cost of issuing the KHS gold, silver and bronze medal certificates. This came after she had obtained a quotation of Shs80,000 for 1,000 cards. She instead proposed a redesign of the current certificates on A4 paper with the medals embossed in gold, silver or bronze. In this way, they would not lose the KHS logo – the Gloriosa lily. The size would also allow people to frame and hang certificates in their homes.

Early in 2003, they ran out of gold medals, only silver and bronze ones remained. They decided to make a card with a different design and an embossed logo. Mr Barry Cameron would find out who made the RHS cards and Mrs Sue Deverell would find out the cost of embossing.

Failing to find good quality cards in Kenya, they extended the search to the UK and South Africa. But when Mrs Sue Deverell got the overseas quotations in 2004, the Council said it was too high. The company that printed medal cards for the Royal Horticultural Society quoted more than Shs150,000. Further queries to South Africa by Mr Cameron also found that it would also be too expensive to produce as the quantities the Society wanted were too small.

Medal cards were needed urgently and Sue Deverell continued to explore local options of embossing and printing cards in Kenya with an improved design. A budget of Shs150,000 was allocated. Alterations were made to better distinguish the shades of gold from bronze. The new gold, silver and bronze cards were ready in time for the Nairobi district flower show in June 2005.

Then after presenting Mrs Irralie Murray and Mrs Bisto Fernandes with their Honorary life badges at the 2008 AGM at the Arboretum, Chairman David Gray had asked the Council if they should change their award designs. The KHS still had a large stock of badges that bore the RKHS name even though they were no longer affiliated with the RHS that had the Queen as their patron. But the Council decided that they could still be used, and be handed out to Honorary life members.

Judges Committee

in 2006, Mrs Jose Hays brought a request to the Council from the judges' sub-committee that judges, who were also gardeners, be allowed to exhibit at flower shows. Mr Barry Cameron, who had recently stepped down as the KHS Chairman, was against this and proposed that it would only be possible if someone else staged the exhibit for them. After more discussions, it was agreed that judges would be allowed to display at flower shows. Chairman David Gray would write to the judges' sub-committee on this decision and give the go-ahead for them to alter the show handbook.

Later in the year, two learner judges were appointed; Sarita Sheth from Nairobi and Mariam Mwangi from Rift Valley. As judges were finding it expensive to travel to districts to judge at shows, the Council proposed to help by paying half the fare, with the District holding the show to pay the other half. This was amended soon after to have the expense split three ways between the Society, the district and the judge. The Council

would cover up to Shs2,000 per judge per show and a maximum of Shs4,000 per judge per year for travel.

Mrs Ann Robertson and Mrs Pauline Balletto proposed that a judges' and learner judges' workshop be held in 2009 or 2010 for them to exchange ideas, brush up on techniques and complete the show handbook. They also needed to re-build the subcommittee after Mrs Jane McKeand and Mrs Gaye Aikman had resigned. Also, Mrs Jose Hays had indicated in March 2008 that she wished to stand down, and continue on the main Council. One proposal was that they ask the horticulture industry to support them so that judges would not have to pay more than Shs3,000 for transport. Others were to explore collaboration with groups like the Agricultural Society of Kenya and the Kenya Floral Arrangement Club.

In July 2010, the Council reconstituted the judges' subcommittee with Mrs Pauline Balletto as the senior judge, Mr Noel Hays as chief judge, Mr David Gray as chairman of judges and Mrs Darshna Patel as learner judges' representative. Mrs Balletto and Mrs Ann Robertson would be joint secretaries and it was proposed to have the chairman or chief judge attend Council meetings.

Later Mrs Balletto and Mrs Robertson who were both based in Malindi wrote to apologize for the delay in confirming learner judges. Mrs Balletto had refused to chair the judges' committee, as she would not be able to attend Council meetings as proposed for the seat holder.

It was then decided to put the judges' subcommittee on hold and have the Council deal with matters of judging. The subcommittee had already dealt with many of the roles it was set up for. These included completing the members' handbook, show handbook, schedule database and judges' register. Mrs Balletto and Mrs Robertson agreed to maintain the database provided they received up-to-date information from the Council on judges and shows. Members at the 2011 AGM at the Kentmere Club in Limuru, agreed with the decision to put the judges' subcommittee on hold.

In 2014, the Council considered how to subsidise travel expenses for flower show judges, especially at the coast where there were only two resident judges. They set an amount of Shs10,000. They would also assist judges travelling to other shows with a

lower amount. Mr Vishy Talwar reported that he had negotiated a special price for tickets with a local airline, Fly 540 for future KHS events.

There was a judges' secretaries workshop meeting at the Nairobi District flower show in September 2017 - the first since 2005 for there to be such a gathering of judges and a review of the schedules and standards. At this meeting, the efforts of Mrs Pauline Balletto and Mrs Celia Hardy were appreciated.

Later in 2019, after the Plant and Flower show in Nairobi in April, discussions were held about improving the judging. The Council proposed to fund a visit by an overseas judge to preside over the next show and guide local judges on how to improve the standards of judging.

New Chairman 2009: Mrs Sue Deverell

Ahead of the 2009 AGM David Gray proposed and the Council agreed that Sue Deverell take over from him as Chairman as his three-year term was ending. Mr Gray, Mrs Sue Deverell and Mrs Darshna Patel of Nairobi also held discussions and proposed to nominate Mrs Sophie Kinyua, Ms Rowena Buxton and Mr Noel Hays to fill the Council seats of Mr George Barua, Mrs Jose Hays and Mrs Priya Shah whose terms were ending. But they deferred any decision to the next Council meeting.

The AGM at Mrs Sue Deverell's garden in Tigoni had the Council and 38 members in attendance. There, the members endorsed Mr David Gray's proposal that Mrs Sue Deverell take over as Chairman of the KHS. He also asked to defer the matter of new members to the Council. The members stood for a moment of silence in memory of Mr Arthur Brown, a long-time member of Rift Valley District who passed away in April 2009.

Honorary life membership for Jean Elms who had been proposed by Amama Kudrati, Chairman of Mombasa District was confirmed. Mrs Jean Elms had been a member of the KHS for 40 years and served as Chairman for Mombasa for seven years. A few weeks earlier, Mrs Elms had hosted the district AGM at her home, which was preceded by a flower demonstration using spaghetti.

Thereafter, they proposed to approach Mrs Sophie Kinyua to join the Council to help with Marketing and Ms Rowena Buxton who would help with administration work. They

also proposed to invite Mr Pravin Bowry but he declined as he had other work commitments. Mr David Gray also agreed to serve as Deputy Chairman to Mrs Sue Deverell.

Mesdames Kinyua and Buxton joined the Council in November 2009 and Ms Buxton would also assist Sue Deverell with the accounts. But in 2010, Mrs Kinyua did not attend two of their three meetings which was a requirement of being on the Council and Mrs Sue Deverell wrote to her. Mr Peter Paterson was ready to step in on the Council.

The 2011 AGM approved a change to the constitution to have six Council members nominated by districts of the Society to serve a three-year term, and two would retire annually. This replaced the previous wording of 'six Council officers' and this would allow all districts to nominate any member from their own or another district. The Council would have the authority to fill vacancies and members were to attend two of the three Council meetings in a year.

A few weeks later, Mrs Liz Coverdale, whose term as Mt. Kenya Chairman had ended, was invited to join the Council. Mrs Coverdale attended her first Council meeting in October 2011. This was shortly after she lost her husband Miles and Mrs Sue Deverell extended condolences on behalf of the Council. Also at the meeting was Mrs Susan Church, the new Chairman for the Naivasha branch.

Mt Kenya Show and District

In August 2003, Mt Kenya held its first flower show in several years. Held at the Nanyuki Sports Club, it coincided with a horse show and they managed to fill the sports club hall with colorful displays. Mr Barry Cameron and Mrs Celia Hardy went up to judge entries that were of a high standard and two bronze medals were awarded.

Then in August 2007, Mount Kenya held an extravaganza called 'Dare to be Different'. It was open to anyone in Laikipia District, as an individual or group, to hire a table for Shs1,000 and they could exhibit or display anything connected to horticulture and also sell their products over the two days. Within a short time, the Sports Club hall was filled with people who would not normally be at a flower show. They had their first commercial vegetable grower, their first school and first African "jua kali" nursery taking part. They also got interesting feedback from the attendees who said that flower shows had

become too elitist, with everyone knowing who was going to win each class and this discouraged new exhibitors from showing.

Despite the lack of rains that turned the area into a dust bowl, Mt Kenya also planned another Horticultural Extravaganza for August 2008 to follow on the success of the previous year. It would be open to commercial growers of flowers and vegetables in the district, but the displays would not follow KHS rules, which they believed would make it fun and proceeds from the sale of tables would go to the Cottage Hospital.

Unfortunately, the district had to cancel the Extravaganza as there was a poor response. This was mostly due to the dry conditions and lack of rain in Nanyuki.

Mt Kenya had one of its most successful years in 2011 as the British Army moved families to live in Nanyuki. They had a surge of new members to 119 and some good rains.

Innovative Kilifi/Malindi and other Districts at the Coast

In 1997, the members of the Kilifi/Malindi District debated a move to Kilifi. Malindi members were reluctant, but Kilifi prevailed as the dining hall at the Kilifi Institute of Agriculture offered a much bigger venue than anything in Malindi.

As a solution, Malindi/Kilifi District had an equal number of committee members from Malindi, Watamu and Kilifi. They also held their monthly meetings equally divided between the three areas. They used the hall for some flower shows and were welcomed by the principal and staff.

Malindi/Kilifi district continued its activities around botanic gardens. In June 2001 they had one of their most popular activities which was a visit to the Bamburi Nature Trail where René Haller showed them around. When the district visited again in March 2005, Haller showed them the new “integrated agriculture project” which included fish farming, biogas, and irrigation for growing vegetables.

The year 2002 was also one of loss for the Kilifi/Malindi district. Four members, Anne Donnelly, an honorary life member, Joan Corbett, Meave Buxton and Jocelyn Kaenzig, all passed away. John Wright told the Council that the late Joan Corbett’s garden had

some interesting and valuable cactii which he had seen along with other Council members at Malindi and suggested that good growers be encouraged to purchase them from the estate.

It was proposed that an approach be made by the KHS and the Society asked Prof Len Newton to visit and do an inventory and valuation of the cacti and succulent plants so that a sale or auction could be arranged.

In November members of Kilifi/Malindi were joined by Mombasa members for a visit to the late Meave Buxton's garden at Vipingo. There is a wonderful indigenous forest, beautiful beach frontage, ruins and a unique feature of underground coral caves. It had been developed many years before but was now neglected. The huge coral caves had been used by Mijikenda people for cultural ceremonies and the visitors felt that the forest should be gazetted and preserved as a national monument.

Ahead of the 2003 AGM at the Kedong Farm of Mr and Mrs J Mayers on 12 April, Malindi/Kilifi proposed Mrs Margaret Haworth for Honorary life membership. She had served the district as Treasurer for 13 years and been on the Committee for 21 years. Also, Mombasa proposed Mrs Shivin Najmudin and Mrs Shukla for the support they had given to the district for many years and all were unanimously approved at the AGM

Mombasa district in 2002 had a garden meeting at the home of their former chairman Mrs Jean Elms to see her Talipot Palm tree. This unique plant, with the scientific name of *Corypha umbraculifera*, grows for 30 to 80 years and then flowers once before dying. Mrs Elms had planted it 35 earlier when she moved to her newly-built house.

In 2002 Mombasa held a horticultural show that was sponsored by African Cotton Industries and Goldcrown Beverages. It featured 200 exhibits that impressed the judges, more so in that January was not a good time for gardens at the coast. Later in May, the district entered a display at the Nairobi Flower show for the first time. They hoped to improve in future years having learnt a great deal about transporting plants from Mombasa to Nairobi.

Meanwhile, Kilifi/Malindi continued to thrive, with their membership growing to 159 up from 149 in 2005. Mr John Golds took over from Mrs Pauline Balletto as Chairman of Kilifi/Malindi in early 2006.

Mr Golds told the Council he was concerned about the destruction of Mwangea Hill at the Coast. He had written to Nature Kenya to enlist their support to preserve Mwangea Hill. Mr Cameron also said that Mutoma Sanctuary that had been started by George Classen in the 1960s was also badly neglected and he had also written to Nature Kenya to ask them to look into it.

Another concern of Mr Golds, as the new district chairman was the low attendance in 2007, to their vibrant activities, that were held at different places such as Gedi, Watamu, Kilifi and Lamu. This could be attributed to the poor state of the roads but he asked members to turn out and give their support to the organizers and lecturers.

The district also had other innovations to connect with its local community. Malindi/Kilifi had a mini-flower show at Turtle Bay Hotel in August that had 75 exhibitors. It included a hotel category that got five entries, a class that was open to guests at the hotel and their children. Mr Barry Cameron and Mrs Celia Hardy were the judges.

Mrs Celia Hardy also ran a Swahili language Gardening course at the coast which was attended by 150 gardeners. Malindi now wanted to do an advanced two or three-day course. Golds suggested they include a gardener's in-training course and those attending at the District level be given a KHS Council certificate rather than a District certificate. Later, in 2010, Kilifi/Malindi also had a membership category for employees of district members at reduced rates. Mrs Sue Deverell thought that this should be emulated at the main Society, but this would necessitate a change of their rules.

By 2011, half of the entrants at a Kilifi/Malindi flower show were gardeners who had become members in their own right with the blessing and support of their employers. Malindi district requested a full set of notes in both Swahili and English for their gardeners' course. It was agreed that Mrs Sally Shaw and Mr John Golds would design a one-day course that could be used at Malindi.

That year, registration for the flower show was slow as the weather was dry, but later at Turtle Bay Hotel, the district had its largest flower show ever, with 137 entries that were of a very high standard. It featured new novelties of open-class exhibits and wheelbarrow displays. Later in November, they had a farmer's day at the Retief Farm in

Malindi. This annual gathering of farmers and gardeners was fast-growing and they recommended that other districts try similar events.

At the 2012 AGM of the KHS at the Kentmere Club, members approved a change to the Constitution, adding employee gardeners as the sixth class of membership.

Mr John Golds told the Council that Kilifi/Malindi was considering creating a school membership, in addition to their gardener's membership. Schools would be able to join and receive advice and assistance with equipment, but only the headmaster would have a vote. He said many schools were interested and the KHS Chairman, Mr Peter Paterson asked other districts to consider following Malindi's example.

The Malindi branch had a list of speakers who had been coming over several years and Mr Golds also proposed that the Council drew up a list of roving speakers ready to go to other Districts and have the KHS remunerate them up to Shs10,000.

It was decided that to encourage more attendance and participation at the 2013 KHS AGM, a good speaker at an attractive venue should be organised. Or consider having a lunch, or picnic, or over a long weekend perhaps at Malindi as a two-day event.

Mr John Golds said the North Coast district was keen on having a Society AGM at the coast so its members could give their input. Mr Golds said that 45% of the non-life members were at the coast and they should have some Council meetings at the coast and Council members would receive the same allowance to attend that coast members did when they attended the KHS ones in Nairobi.

Mr David Gray agreed that AGMs could be held at all districts in a rotational format. He said that in the past, many Council meetings had been held in Nakuru but Mrs Deverell said transporting all members of the Council would be too expensive. Mr Golds suggested postal voting and they agreed by a majority vote that the logistics of different venues was not possible.

A few weeks later the Kilifi/Malindi AGM had what they believed to be a record for possibly any KHS district when 80 members attended the district's 45th AGM at Driftwood Beach Club in Malindi. The District had 285 members, double what it had been a decade before, and Chairman John Golds suggested that this could be

increased to 300 by year-end. The members were told about a Council decision that had endorsed a change of name from Malindi/Kilifi to the North Coast District. The details were covered in Shamba Times⁵², a new quarterly newsletter the district had launched in March 2014 which they hoped would become the standard way of keeping district members up to date.

Anne Powys came to give a talk on her “Miti Ni Mali” (Plants are Wealth) book.

Marion Lady Langham who represented Mr John Golds at a KHS Council meeting in April 2014, told the Council that the Kilifi/Malindi District had formally changed their name to the North Coast District. They informed Mombasa District accordingly.

But the North Coast District took a serious hit in 2015. The District banked with Imperial Bank which was suddenly closed by the Central Bank of Kenya in October 2015. They lost over Shs500,000 banked there from various events and the sale of gardening equipment and materials over the years.

This came at a time when the North Coast District had set out to launch a school membership scheme with the Turtle Trust. While the Council was initially willing to support one of the three schools selected, the District wanted to work with all of them. The cost was about Shs100,000 per school and while the KHS had some funds, these were earmarked for the ‘Gardening in East Africa’ book project. Also, the school scheme would only benefit one district. Mr Golds said the funding request was not permanent and that the situation with Imperial bank was not helping.

Mrs Sue Deverell also noted that Mr Arthur Brown had established a similar scheme at Egerton that lasted for two years then enthusiasm fell away and it had come to an end. Mr Paterson had asked Mr Golds to produce a budget after he first pitched the idea to the Council in October 2014 when Mr Paterson was the chairman.

Other queries were as to why they should support the scheme in primary schools when these were well established in secondary schools with individual plots and evaluation systems. Mr Golds said the goal was for students to learn basic gardening and growing food and then take the knowledge back to their families.

⁵² Shamba Times Volume 1, Issue 1, March 2014. Journal upload on the KHS website.

But after all the discussions, the Council in November 2015 turned down this request to fund the school scheme at the North Coast. Mr Vishy Talwar explained their funds were committed to producing the Gardening book, but they would be able to look at it again after the book was published. He suggested the North Coast District approach corporations for assistance and he offered to share contacts with businesses at the North Coast

The North Coast Treasurer tried to gain access to the Shs480,000 lost in the Imperial Bank liquidation. A challenge was that while all districts had opened their own bank accounts, the registration of KHS was central. This had been the case for years and the banking authorities were now refusing to accept the KHS original certificate, without a supporting letter from the Registrar of Societies which was reluctant to get involved. So, despite submitting every conceivable piece of paper, they had made little progress in the claim and time was running out. Mr Pravin Bowry offered to assist.

The documents were submitted through the Kilifi branch of Diamond Trust Bank which was more sympathetic. They had sent the documents to the head office of Diamond Trust, but by 2016, it was doubtful if this would be done before the deadline set for Imperial Bank customer claims.

The North Coast District celebrated its 50th anniversary at its AGM in March 2019. The Council Chairman Sally Shaw and Council Treasurer Gail Paul travelled to attend the meeting and a launch after the AGM, which saluted its past officials including John Golds, Rupert Partridge and Vanessa Aniere. There was also a slide show to showcase the districts' achievements which included the quarterly Shamba Times newspaper, popup sales, and gardener shows. With 311 members, it had the second highest number of members, just behind Nairobi District. At the AGM, Katana Baya, one of their 46 gardener members was elected to the District Council.

John Gold passed away in Watamu on June 12, 2020, at the age of 92 after ailing for a few years. He had chaired the North Coast District for 12 years.

New South Coast District

In the early 2000's, a popular visit site for Mombasa district members was Nazir Khan's palm nursery at Diani. He had personally collected and grown 300 species of palm on his six-acre plot.

But it would be a few more years before the KHS had some good news. In July 2009 Mr David Gray said Ms Joan Wilson who lived at the South Coast was interested in starting a branch there. He suggested that he and Mrs Sue Deverell visit and talk to residents, which Ms Joan Wilson would arrange and they would also take brochures and members' handbooks for distribution.

The early response to the initiative by Ms Joan Wilson was good and their first meeting was set for December 2009. Mrs Sue Deverell wrote a letter encouraging Diani people to join and Mr John Golds attended the meeting. Despite the lack of rain, the inaugural meeting hosted by James and Eileen Wilson was a success. The new district set a membership rate of Shs1,000 for members and Shs5,000 for corporates. After Mr John Golds gave an interesting talk, 30 members were signed up and 40 calendars sold. Mr Golds later told the Council that the area had a variety of gardens, backyards, huge resorts and plantations.

The District held a meeting in February 2010 at the Diani palm nursery of Nazir Khan which was an arboretum of palms from across the world. Ms Joan Wilson said that after four months, 40 members and 2 corporates was a very good achievement. They planned to approach hotels when they reopened for the tourism season in July 2010.

Towards the end of the year, there was silence from Ms Joan Wilson when Mrs Sue Deverell asked how many calendars had been sold.

In 2012, Mr John Golds of Malindi/Kilifi told the Council that he had decided to find out what was happening with the South Coast district branch while new KHS Chairman Peter Paterson planned to visit Malindi in July 2012 and to extend his trip to visit the Diani branch.

But well into 2013, Diani was not doing well and the Council was out of ideas on how to revive it. Mrs Liz Schwarz was very active at Diani but was unable to get the district going again.

There were still no reports from the South Coast district which had many residents but no action. Mrs Sue Deverell said it needed sufficient residents to form a committee, a problem that had plagued Limuru which was now no longer in existence.

While the Council was finding some success in trying to assist Nakuru in 2015, it did not neglect Diani. Mrs Anne Vaughan wrote to explain the challenges they were having in resurrecting interest and Mr Pravin Bowry suggested they could organize activities like the North Coast.

Mr John Golds went down to organize a meeting at Diani and told members that the KHS was ready to assist them in re-establishing the branch by holding courses for gardeners. This would only work if there was a core group of gardeners who would take up the reins to run the district effectively. The KHS asked Mr Quentin Luke who had set up a substantial tree nursery for Tiomin at Kwale to arrange a garden meeting there as a way to generate interest and in 2015, they also sought Mrs Liz Schwarz, Ms Yvonne Matiba and Mr Aussie Mike to help with the revival of the district.

Mr John Golds wrote to follow up with Diani but did not get a response and it seemed there was no interest. Later, Mrs Sue Deverell met with Mrs Ann Vaughan at Diani and Ann proposed to donate all the Diani funds to the Council as there was little interest in organizing a Diani branch. Mr Arjun Kohli offered to help revive the branch and later Mrs Kiran Kapila volunteered to meet Ann and assist.

The Council felt that any more marketing should be done under the KHS auspices and not the South Coast Residents Association and revolve around garden-related events. But Mrs Ann Vaughan was unwell and no one else seemed interested in reviving the district in 2017. North Coast had given a gardener's training day but this was arranged with the South Coast Residents Association and not the KHS South Coast district.

Ann Vaughan passed away in June 2019 and the Society wrote its condolences to the family through Susan Church. Efforts to resuscitate the district would continue and the council members planned to meet other residents of Diani.

Rift Valley Revival

In 2000, Barry Cameron as Chairman wrote to Greensteds School and managed to reconnect with Mr Malcolm Foster, Chairman of the Rift Valley district. Mr Foster said it was difficult to run the district with the drought and Mr Cameron offered to advise him. He also wrote to Mrs Pat Paterson at Gilgil to ask if she would be ready to take over the Chairmanship.

Mrs Paterson then set out to reestablish Rift Valley and planned to start by asking Mr Foster for the district files but was unable to reach him. Mr Cameron then emailed Mrs Sushi Shah at Nakuru who had been the Vice-Chairman, but she too had been unable to reach Mr Foster.

After more discussions on how to improve things, they decided that it made more sense for Gilgil members to belong to the Naivasha district and the Nakuru members could have their own district if Mrs Shah could obtain sufficient support. Mr Cameron again wrote to Mr Foster in 2001 requesting that he hand over the district files to the Council.

Hopes for a new district at Nakuru did not materialize for a few more months. It was a tough time in the area and the flower association in Nakuru collapsed in 2002. But at a general meeting in Nakuru in March 2002, members agreed to the reformation of the Rift Valley district, with Mr Arthur Brown as the Chairman.

Mr Brown then worked to cement relations with Egerton College at Njoro which had faculties for agriculture and horticulture. He attended a function at the college and spoke about the KHS, which attracted a lot of interest and 13 new members signed up.

As a result of this, Rift Valley members were welcomed to use Egerton's world-famous castle as the district headquarters and to hold flower shows in the great hall at the college. After Lord Egerton died in 1958, his castle was given to Egerton College to manage, a role that continued after the institution became a university. A castle garden committee at Egerton worked with the district to develop a maze and turn the grounds into a horticultural showplace.

By the end of 2002, while it was difficult to find volunteers to do any work, they managed to grow to 29 paying members and 19 life members. Three of their members also attended and exhibited at the Glasgow flower festival.

An Egerton College staff show was set for the end of January 2004 and they invited the KHS to send judges for the event. The small flower show was held during events to mark the birthday of Lord Egerton. Mrs Jose Hays and Mr Barry Cameron travelled from Nairobi to judge. After the flower show, the district held a general meeting. There, Mr Arthur Brown decided not to continue his position into 2004 and offered his support as he handed over to the next chairman. Prof Ellis Njoka was elected as district chairman with a new committee. Mr Brown agreed to stay on as an advisor and was made the Patron of the district.

Rift Valley saw more growth in 2004 gaining new membership and proposed that the annual flower show and AGM be held every Founder's day at Egerton Castle as there was a synergy between the two events. Egerton allocated the district an office with stage facilities and several of their employees became members of the KHS.

New district members included staff from Sian Agriflora, Sarkish Flora and Fontana Roses which were all large flower exporting companies and who proposed that their members including Mr Ngolo, Joyce Akulu, Samuel Nyalala and Susan Mwaniki go for training as judges. They also proposed Professor Dorcas Isutsa and Dr Mwangi Kibe as editor and deputy editor of the Society's magazine, the Egerton Journal.

Egerton Castle also planned to start a plant museum and Mr Arthur Brown suggested in July 2008 that the district be split into two; one for Nakuru and one for Egerton.

Naivasha/Gilgil 2007-08

But things were not well with all the districts. At Naivasha, on 3 July 2007, Bette Hopcraft, the District Secretary for Naivasha/Gilgil brought the committee an envelope containing Shs140,000 which she had been keeping in her house. She did not wish to risk having this large amount of cash in her house anymore and asked that the main Society keep it in their account for the district. She told the Council that membership had been dropping every year and just 20 members were up to date with their subscriptions.

The Council meeting attended by Chairman Kay Blackwell, her Vice-Chair, Astrid von Kalckstein, the Secretary, Susan Church and Bette Hopcraft, agreed that there was no point in continuing to arrange meetings at which only 6-8 people showed up. As such

they proposed to close the Naivasha/Gilgil branch on 30 September 2007, unless they got more support from people living in the area. Members would be notified by email in July and with a reminder in August.

Chairman David Gray went to Naivasha to talk to Kay Blackwell and Susan Church about the district problems and he suggested that they try holding garden meetings similar to those at Mt Kenya and Mombasa districts. Sue Deverell said they should try to attract members with lunches and interesting speakers.

In March 2008 Mrs Kay Blackwell stepped down after leading the district as she felt it needed new blood to continue. She asked Astrid to take over as Chairlady and she agreed to be her Deputy. Also, Bette Hopcraft resigned as honorary treasurer and Kay asked Tom Pye to take over the seat. But she asked members, only ten of who were now regularly coming to meetings, to decide if they really wanted a district.

The area was also disrupted by the post-election violence and the Rift Valley district had to postpone its January 2008 show due to clashes. Nakuru and Naivasha areas were hotspots after the disputed Kenya election in 2007. But work continued at Egerton College where Dr Mwangi had created a lovely garden and Chairman Gray also donated books and magazines to the University library.

Astrid von Kalckstein stepped down in 2011 after three years as Chairman and was replaced by Susan Church.

Schools Push in Rift Valley

In 2006 Rift Valley District made contact with Knutsford Primary School at Tatton Park in England, which had won the RHS gold medal for school vegetable gardens. The school's headmaster and a teacher visited Kenya and with the Rift Valley District, started a training arrangement to try and duplicate the success of their garden. The Tatton Park show was the second largest show in England and the district hoped that, through a school-twinning program, a horticulture drive could be extended to three other schools at Egerton, Ol Gilgei and Ngata which had all been part of the Egerton estate. Flower Industries Africa, Mr Arthur Brown's farm organized to plant half-acre flower gardens at the Ol Gilgei and Ngata schools.

But the participation in the schools' tournament was cancelled due to clashes in early 2008. Later, the programme shifted to having the schools concentrate on growing vegetables rather than flowers. Students would learn to grow vegetables in plug trays, which were very economical and could be profitable.

Mr Brown showed the Council a plug tray that his company had worked on with Ms Cherotich who he invited to a Council meeting in July 2008. They hoped to persuade the Ministry of Education to support them to introduce it to primary schools. The Council supported this and asked Mrs Deverell to give him a cheque for Shs4,000 to buy seeds and materials. This would enable one school to buy four plug trays.

But early in April 2009, Arthur Fredrick Brown, the long-time member of Rift Valley District, died at the age of 85. Chairman Gray was not able to attend Arthur Brown's funeral but sent a message of condolences. Mr Brown, who was known as a pyrethrum, horticulture and vegetable farmer was buried at his farm at Ngata. Kenya's former President Daniel arap Moi attended the funeral⁵³ and said Mr Brown would be remembered for his flowers, cheerfulness and Christian spirit.

Rift District Revival 2009-2010

Anthony Mwangi the new chairman at Rift Valley asked that the district, which had been paying 10% subvention, continue with that rate, rather than the required 25% as they did not have many members - only 15 had paid up. But Mrs Deverell said this was not possible. Celia Hardy suggested they increase their subscription from Shs200. Astrid von Kalckstein said Naivasha also planned to increase its membership rates from Shs300 to 400, and Mrs Deverell suggested that Rift Valley members visit Naivasha and Nakuru for better planning of their future meetings. They could also combine their marketing and publicity.

Also, when Mr David Gray asked if Rift Valley would continue the school's project of the late Mr Brown, Mr Mwangi said in July 2009 that he had not followed up as Mr Brown's sons would sell the farm.

⁵³ Standard, April 22, 2009

Rift Valley saw a revival under its next Chairman, Dr Mariam Mwangi. Membership was increased and Nakuru residents were roped in after a talk at Lions Hall. Then in January 2010 a flower show was held at Egerton Castle. Mrs Celia Hardy and Mrs Jose Hays came to judge and Dr Anthony Kibe and Dr Mariam Mwangi were learner judges. Commercial growers included Sian Agriflora who won the best rose and Xpressions Flora who joined as new members while Flowers Industries Africa got a prize for vegetable collection.

Rift Valley Future – and Nakuru plans a Split

In 2010 Rift Valley had 40 members including three student corporates with ten members in each group. They sold 20 calendars and 10 diaries but it still had a challenge attracting old Nakuru members to come and participate or attend meetings.

By early 2012 reports were not being received from Rift Valley, Limuru and Diani and Mr David Gray volunteered to take on the Rift Valley branch as his focus and assist them to revive the branch. He would work with Mr Pravin Bowry on this. Mr Bowry had judged at the 2011 Rift Valley Flower show and suggested that they move the event to Nakuru, rather than have it at Egerton.

But the Council noted that Rift Valley District was now largely centered on Egerton College. The Council considered this a very important branch and with the intake of young Kenyan students, it could form the lifeblood of the future of the Society.

Meanwhile, Nakuru was not as active as it had once been. The age of members was older and distance may have been a factor but the Council saw that there was a need to create a new district for Nakuru and then encourage Rift Valley to broaden its activities in the area.

Mr Paterson suggested Nakuru should support Gilgil but Mr Bowry said Nakuru members were not prepared to travel outside the town He agreed to try and organize an event where people might be contacted to join the Society such as a visit to the Nightingale's farm. Mr Bowry felt the community in Nakuru had no interest in the Society as it was based at Egerton which was too far away. He suggested two separate districts; one for Nakuru and one for Egerton though Dr Mwangi was concerned this would add costs.

After more discussions, it was agreed that the two districts should be established as separate branches, working together as wings of the KHS. They would tap their surrounding areas for membership and knowledge.

Mr Bowry continued to push for a separate branch at Nakuru. He said the Nakuru branch could generate goodwill and make itself known by organizing a flower show and that it would be positive for Egerton to have its own Society. At the same time Professor Kibe confirmed that another institution, the Jomo Kenyatta University in Nairobi, had a Horticultural Association of Kenya and Gray agreed that universities were the future of the Society. Paterson asked Kibe to check with JKUAT to see if the KHS could have a liaison with them. With junior memberships now at Kilifi, Egerton and Nairobi, Paterson requested all districts to follow up on creating student or junior memberships.

Mr Bowry felt that holding flower shows was the best way to spark an interest in the district. He even offered to organize a golf competition to re-establish Nakuru District as a pilot project and it would be combined with a flower show.

Mr Paterson offered to contact Mr Neil Rudge who was the estate manager at St Andrew's School Turi with a lot of professional horticultural experience and was offering to assist. Meanwhile, the Naivasha branch was also in need of such help.

Mr Bowry was confident that Nakuru would be operating by August 2014. He said that, with 20-25 very interested members, meetings started happening to establish a committee and they hoped to have a flower show. They would however require a push from the Council to carry out the activities that took place in other districts. It was suggested by Mr Golds that the Council organize a meeting at Nakuru and Mr Paterson suggested inviting members to attend the main KHS AGM in 2015.

After Mr Vishy Talwar became the new KHS Chairman and he spoke to Dr Mariam Mwangi who suggested that the Nakuru and Egerton branches, while separate in the districts, should have a combined calendar of events and Mr Pravin Bowry supported this. They agreed to have a meeting at Nakuru with members and with a plant sale to attract attendees, and there they could discuss membership fees.

Mrs Nutan Patel was helping to put together a flower show in June 2016 and she met Chairman Talwar in April. It was hoped the show would establish a district separate from Egerton. The show would not be restricted to Nakuru members. It had a schedule similar to the Nairobi district. 18 people had signed up and Mr Talwar said he was keen to have more than a flower show, perhaps a demonstration course, plant identification events, and visits to plant growers.

Dr Mariam Mwangi offered to send back the cups that had been held at Egerton to Nakuru and to sit on the proposed Nakuru Committee and the cups at Egerton were retrieved by Nakuru. Mr Talwar offered judges from Nairobi and by the time of the 2016 AGM, Mrs Nutan Patel said they had 50 possible members at Nakuru.

The District opened with great enthusiasm and members wanted to be separate from Njoro/Egerton branch. It had 58 members and they wanted to focus on gardening and how to use gardens.

It was unclear who would keep the Rift Valley name and it was decided the new branch would be Nakuru. Mr Pravin Bowry set out to open a bank account. A challenge in opening a bank account was that Nakuru now needed a taxpayer PIN number and at the 2017 KHS AGM, Bowry asked the Council to hold funds as they were having difficulty opening an account at Nakuru.

Late in 2019, Dr Mariam Mwangi asked the Council to allow her Egerton District to go into abeyance as it had no members at present. The Council noted this with regret and saw this as an opportunity to amalgamate with Nakuru until there was more interest at Egerton.

New Media: Websites, Magazines and Calendars

Magazine Articles and Impact 2006-15

The Council proposed putting advertisements in well-read women's magazines like Eve and African Cosmopolitan to attract the African female population. Mr Barry Cameron was asked to provide photographs from the monthly garden meetings to go with the articles and the Council asked members to volunteer their help with articles and photographs. Mr David Gray led the effort for them to have articles in Eve Magazine.

Articles were being written to Eve and Travel News magazines to attract new members, with Mr Cameron writing for Travel News and Mr Gray for Eve Magazine. But early magazine articles did not increase membership and the member's committee also found that neither were A3 posters succeeding in getting new members. They wondered if they should work with a professional PR company to place gardening articles in more newspapers and magazines.

Mrs Deverell also proposed that they advertise the Society's book "Gardening in East Africa" in Eve Magazine. But Mr Gray told the Council that Ms Carole Argwings-Kodhek, the editor of Eve, now felt the articles were not suited to the readership of the magazine. Mrs Celia Hardy volunteered to go over the articles before they were sent to Eve.

By September 2006, Mr Cameron told the Council that he was no longer writing articles for Travel News magazine as they were difficult to style into a format they wanted. Meanwhile, Mr Gray continued to write for Eve, adapting articles from books and the 'Gardener's Notebook'. When he had a challenge obtaining good photographs to accompany them, Mr Alan Kangethe allowed the Society to use pictures from his flower shop at the Sarit Centre and Mr Cameron later volunteered to put some of his photos onto a CD. It would be kept at the KHS library for use in the magazine. But the publication of Eve magazine went into suspension sometime in 2007.

The KHS then went quiet on newspaper articles for a few years till mid-2014 when the Editor of the Star Newspaper asked Mr Pravin Bowry if the Society could do a weekly column of 300 words under the title of Gardening in Kenya. Mr Bowry suggested that they ask for 52 contributions for members to last throughout the year.

Mr Talwar's view was that they should have a monthly column in the Star, not weekly. He asked Mr Pravin Bowry to follow up and see if 12 articles would be ready to run from January 2015.

Mr David Gray said that with more horticulture articles regularly featuring in the press, the KHS should be encouraged to do its part and get the columns to include references to the Society. Mr John Golds offered to write an article about a recent Mombasa flower show and Sally Shaw would ask Hosea Omolo to write some articles while she would also digitize course notes and share press articles to draw in new members.

KHS Diaries: 2010-12

In March 2010, Mr John Golds proposed diaries as another source of income for the Society and they obtained quotations from Kenafric and Colourprint. While Kenafric offered a lower price, Colourprint had more experience doing coloured covers and inserts. They printed the first set of 1,000 at Shs307.45 each and 250 were sent to the different districts.

They sold about 500 diaries and the venture began to look like a loss. They had printed 1,000 as the unit cost was cheaper but it looked like 500 was the right amount and in 2011, they questioned if they should ever print another set of diaries.

But by 2012, the Council felt it was good to try again. They would do a smaller run of 500, although it was more expensive and aim to have them ready by September. Also, there were suggestions to include phases of the moon and pictures of gardens and flowers.

Newsletter to Website 2003-2016

Towards the end of 2002, there was still no progress on the national newsletter as a way of drawing in new members. Two people had been approached to edit it but had not been able to take on the work. The Chairman asked districts to advertise for this position in their next newsletters and they considered asking Bruce Hobson, who had edited the Society's book Gardening in East Africa, to help with this.

Then in 2003, as they were in the process of engaging Venessa Williams to edit it, the Council seemed to lose faith in a national newsletter as a tool to attract new members. The member's subcommittee had determined that it would have to be professionally prepared to be attractive to readers. Mr Barry Cameron said this would be expensive with an estimated cost of Shs47,265 to print and distribute 1,200 copies per quarter, which was not sustainable.

He instead proposed that the KHS set up a website so that it could be used by members to pick up information on events, news and collect their newsletters. The main drawback was that few members had computer facilities or were able to connect to the

internet from upcountry where they had poor-quality telephone lines. He asked all districts to find out from their members if they had email or internet capability to see if they could take this proposal further. This seemed to be the only way to make the newsletter economical as they could not mail a hard copy to everyone.

In April 2003, Mr Cameron requested and the Council approved a budget of Shs170,000 to design and set up a website along with ISP charges for one year. This came up after a discussion on the type of website, content and graphics to have on it, and they agreed it would have details similar to the KHS brochure.

The site would be interactive to attract new members to enroll and could be used by local and overseas members. The domain name “KenyahortSociety” was available for both “.com” and “.org” and they opted for a part-time secretary to help with this.

They chose to use KenyahortSociety.org and the site by Software Strategies was completed and launched before the end of 2003. It had cost Shs124,000 and Mr Cameron welcomed ideas on how to make the public aware of the site as it was still being edited and photographs changed.

Updates to the site were slow because they had to be done online, and they had a poor-quality phone line. In 2003, they bought a new computer for their office at the National Museum for Shs78,000. But they were not able to get a telephone line installed as the museum system was overloaded.

Then early in 2004, phone technicians began the installation of a digital phone line with the number 3756017. The service charge was higher but one could browse with a better internet connection and also make phone calls simultaneously. Mrs McConnell advised they get a local ISP for email as Yahoo and Hotmail had some restrictions.

Once they got the digital line connected things got much faster and they planned to update the site every two months and paste newsletters from the districts. With the new digital line, they got an email address kenyahorti@wananchi.com and districts were asked to send in their newsletters by email.

Mrs Darshna Patel told the Council that Nairobi members planned to put a newsletter together about their trips to the other districts. Mrs Sue Deverell proposed that they

have a newsletter instead that combined material from all districts and the Council agreed to forward the request to all district chairmen to put to their members.

Mrs Surjata Morjaria volunteered to go for more training so she could undertake considerable updates and editing. The new secretary Ms Christine Iminza, who took over when Ms Beverline Imali resigned in the middle of 2004, was also trained.

Mrs Sarita Sheth had been doing this but had other responsibilities on the Nairobi committee. At the beginning of 2006, Mrs Sheth found someone to help with the website at a fee. But if Council felt they could not run it themselves, they should abandon it, and Mr Cameron agreed to continue for a few more months.

Later in 2006, with no one to work on the site after Mr Cameron retired as Chairman, Mrs Sheth was again asked to get a quote on the service. Mr Paramjeet Singh Bhambra charged a fee of Shs23,075 to register a new domain and a year of hosting. Mr Cameron had all the website material on a CD and the Secretary, who had trained with Mrs Mojaria would carry out the uploading.

Mr Bhambra told them that once the site was running in a few week's time his involvement with the KHS would end. The Society would have to do its own updates although he was available to consult and charge for each update, which Mr Cameron thought might be every three months. While the site was being set up, districts were asked to send each other their newsletters and to make them aware of their events to avoid clashes.

However, soon Mr Bhambra left the country and Mr Cameron asked the Council for advice. Mr Alan Kangethe said his brother was a web designer who might be able to help. He was out of the country and Mr Cameron asked that he set up a meeting when he was back.

Mr David Kangethe set up the site and registered the domain www.kenyahorti.org. Within a few months, he taught the secretary how to make updates. NairobiNet was the host and after Mr David Kangethe was paid for redesigning the site, Barry Cameron urged members to visit and give their comments as district newsletters continued to be uploaded onto the website.

The website continued to be updated and regularly used in 2008. Mr David Kangethe planned to leave the country and he started working with Nairobi district treasurer Mrs Sally Shaw on changes to the site. With the newsletters uploaded onto the website, districts were now able to know what was going on in other districts. Mr David Gray suggested that districts acknowledged the names of new members in their newsletters.

The site grew well until 2009 when the domain, which was up for renewal, expired. The Secretary received an invoice of Shs4,640 for annual renewal. But after paying this amount, the site remained blocked and NairobiNet was now demanding \$90 to renew the domain name. The Chairman wrote to the firm asking for a refund of the Society's money.

At the 2010 AGM Chairman Sue Deverell lamented that the website had died and welcomed anyone to take responsibility for reviving it and keeping it updated.

Mr John Golds offered to find someone else to assist and update the website when it was renewed and the Council also suggested Ms Buxton could do this. Mrs Sally Shaw promised to pursue reviving the website which would be open to anyone. Mrs Juliet Campbell-Clause started work with Mrs Shaw on the website to get it running again and they noted that the cost had come down considerably since the KHS had first set one up.

The website was put on hold while they moved the office in 2011 and the following year, a budget of Shs30,000 - 50,000 was approved. Mrs Sally Shaw was asked to contact the companies that had done the sites for Plants Galore, Hygrotech and the Naivasha Sailing Club.

The website would have newsletters and meeting notes from the districts. Chairman Peter Paterson noted that communication with members was done through the districts but that the Internet provided a tool to rapidly communicate to all members and he asked that they start a list of names, addresses and email addresses. The list would not be confidential and people would be removed if they requested or if members are known to have resigned, died or left the country.

Districts could raise any objections and Mr Golds later said that his district would not release an email address list, only one of their members' postal addresses. It was

agreed that all districts would have a system of recording the names, postal addresses, and phone numbers of members with an optional entry of an email address.

In 2013 Marion Lady Langham was appointed to run the site on behalf of the Council and liaise with Sally Shaw. This was a one-year arrangement with Tempoweb and they emphasized that it was the Council in charge of the website. The estimate was for £500 to design the site and £100 a year for maintenance.

The website was up the following year but it was not used much by the districts. It had only 1,500 hits by April 2014 and Lady Langham questioned if it was worth continuing with the project. Mrs Deverell said the problem had also happened with the previous site and Mrs Sally Shaw asked that districts put their newsletters on the site. The handbook was now on the website while they planned to print 500 copies of the constitution.

Mr Talwar wanted it to be possible to apply and join through the website but a challenge was that different districts had various membership fees. Mr Bowry thought a social change of name would generate more interest as people would like to know about gardening, and this would not need approval at the AGM. Dr Magambo agreed that a Gardening Kenya website was more attractive and would generate more hits.

Later that year, they started two Facebook pages, one for the Society and one for Nairobi. They also started to use a new email address of khsnairobi@gmail.com after Wananchi Online stopped forwarding emails.

Then in 2015, the Council proposed handing the site over to the Nairobi district. The Council would create a second 'domain' under the name "Gardening Kenya" and maintain the existing domain name of kenyahs.com. Pravin Bowry also proposed that "Gardening Kenya" be registered as a trademark.

NetMasters would run the site and Mrs Sally Shaw would manage its projects. Lady Langham agreed with the idea and was ready to support it. Different districts would send their updates to NetMasters or Mrs Shaw. When Mrs Sally Shaw met with NetMasters they agreed to have a photo gallery for each district as well as to include monthly rain records and links to other websites.

In 2016, all districts came under one Facebook page. Then, in 2019, after Sally Shaw discussed with Ms Katy Barnes the subject of driving more visits to the website, they resolved to have an Instagram feed and a blog where they would post two or three times a month.

Katy Barnes continued to handle most of the updates on Facebook and Instagram and made the KHS website easier to post updates. The Council also worked to improve the site so that people could enquire, join as members, and pay, all digitally.

Jex Blake Garden Society Nairobi Office, and Library Space

Lady Muriel Jex Blake Memorial Garden Loss 2003-2020

In November 2003, Mrs Deverell told the Council that the Lady Muriel Jex Blake Memorial Park on Ngong Road needed to be properly maintained, cleaned and fenced. She suggested that a certain amount be paid to a gardening company to do this.

It was still unkempt in 2006 and Mrs Deverell proposed that they approach the Nairobi Mayor Dick Waithika to see what could be done to maintain the garden and Chairman David Gray agreed to write to him in September 2006. They hoped to have the garden included in the ongoing City beautification program.

It turned out that Mr John Gakuo the Town Clerk, who was overseeing the beautifying of Nairobi was the person they should write to. Mrs Sue Deverell suggested that they first get the plan of the garden from the City Council. Gray wrote a letter to the Town clerk but received no reply for several months nor was he able to get an audience with Mr Gakuo. Mrs Jose Hays offered to help arrange a meeting and to also take Mr Gray to the site as he had not been there.

Mr Gray and Mrs Hays managed to speak to Mr Ndungu Mwangi the Superintendent of Parks at the City Council in 2008 and they visited the garden, which they found was badly neglected and overgrown. The wrought iron gate was missing, and Mr Gray wanted it to be fenced. Mr Gray and Mrs Hays also went over the KHS minute books and confirmed that while the Society had created the garden, they had handed it over in 1956 to the City Council to maintain. At the time, Mr Peter Greensmith had been in charge of Parks.

Mrs Sue Deverell, who worked with the Society for the Protection of Historical Buildings, wondered if they should add the Jex Blake garden to the list of protected sites and the Council agreed it was a good idea.

But when Nairobi City Council sent a group of workers to start tidying up and cutting grass, they were served with what turned out to be a forged court order. In October 2008, a fence was put up by strangers on the memorial garden property which was at the corner of Haile Selassie Avenue and Lower Hill Road, the indigenous trees were cut down and bulldozers were moved across the land.

When a report was filed, the Police advised that guards are put on the site and Aksher Security was deployed. But new guards were soon attacked and chased away from the site by goons.

Investigations were made into what had happened with the garden. Mr Gray learnt from Mr Ndungu Mwangi that the land had been allocated to an individual who had fenced it off and obtained an injunction against the City Council. Mr Mwangi was trying to find out who had bought it. The Society employed a surveyor, Fredrick Hime, who found the land beacons were missing and other titles overlapped.

Mr Gray contacted Mr Michael Aronson and Mr Nigel Shaw at the law firm of Kaplan & Stratton who confirmed that the KHS trustees were the owners of the plot. Mr Gray suggested that the old Society minute books, which were in a bad state, be bound and he would find someone to do that.

Meanwhile, the developer proceeded to destroy what was left of the garden and the adjacent plot despite court orders.

The garden was now incurring costs of re-surveying, contractor visits and security. Chairman Gray withdrew the guards early in 2009 from the site as there was no activity.

Kaplan and Stratton asked for an estimate of the damages and Mrs Celia Hardy suggested that Mr Noel Hays who was a landscaper do an estimate of the cost to redesign the area.

Later in 2009, a land-grabbing case commenced against Antony Njehu Boro and Qian Quo Jun but their lawyer did not turn up and the case was adjourned. The Society's lawyer wrote to Mr Qian Quo Jun's lawyer asking him to settle by way of paying damages of Shs3.8 million which had been estimated by Mr Bruce Hobson. Mr Aronson said they should consider getting a new title for the land, with the Permanent Secretary of Lands, but a concern was that the Trust would be ended if they wanted to sell the land.

The new KHS Chairman Sue Deverell read an update on developments at the Memorial Garden to members at the 2010 AGM. She explained the different cases where the land grabber was charged in court, and the land buyer had sued the grabber in a bid to recover his money while the Society had taken them both to court for trespass and to recover damages⁵⁴. Kaplan and Stratton were assisting the Society at no legal charge except court costs.

The cases were going slowly and Mrs Sue Deverell asked Kaplan and Stratton to increase the amount sought due to delay by the courts. Later, while their lawyer said the Society could resume fencing, the contractor was unwilling because of what happened before and Kaplan & Stratton later provided a letter to allow them to begin clearing the land. The plot neighbour had also put up a fence and some beacons were missing and may have been damaged by bulldozers. After the KHS had cleared the area somewhat, they decided to go ahead and fence the garden and encourage the City Council to clean the sewer that went through the garden. They would also put a simple sign inside saying that it was the "property of the Kenya Horticultural Society."

Mr John Golds pointed out that while they had tidied up the garden, there might be continued disturbance at the site. He said if they ever received payment for damages, they should put the funds received to another garden site, maybe at Limuru or the Coast where they could charge for picnics, have demonstrations of gardening methods and get support from corporations.

⁵⁴ Kenya Law Case: Environment & Land Suit 46 of 2009 (Consolidated with Elc 296 of 2009) Registered Trustee of Lady Muriel Jex Blake Memorial Garden v Anthony Njehu Boro & another [2020]

While some members in 2011 questioned the merit of a garden, they decided to leave any decision about its future until after they had it back under their control. Many members of the KHS did not know the history of the garden and it was decided to give them a chance to participate in discussions about its disposal and its future. Mrs Sue Deverell would go and dig out some information from the Society archives and prepare a history of the Lady Muriel Jex Blake Memorial Garden for districts to present to members at their next AGMs and Mr David Gray offered to look up a copy that he had written to the Council in 2009.

Mr John Golds asked the Council to evaluate the legal actions they were taking. He said it would be costly and futile to pursue the man who registered the forged title and the developer. He advised they should work to get the government to obtain a change of title, not a change of user. The old title was very restrictive and they needed a new leasehold title as the plot was now worthless and could no longer be used for its intended purpose. He also posed that a judge may conclude that the KHS had not been good custodians of the plot. It was better, he argued, to enter a conditional sale arrangement with the developer and then approach the Commissioner of Lands and the Nairobi City Council.

At the time, plots in the Upper Hill were going for Shs100–150 million per acre. It was expected they would lose a portion to the widening of Ngong Road for which they would not be compensated as this was the condition of the old trust agreement. Mr Fredrick Hime was asked to provide a plan showing how much the road widening would excise from their land. If they managed to sell the land, this information would be provided to a purchaser

Later in 2011, Boro was acquitted of fraud and agreed to pay back Mr Quo. Kaplan & Stratton amended the plaint to include the Attorney General and the Registrar at the Ministry of Lands to get the court to cancel the fraudulent title. The Society successfully applied to consolidate the case with another where Boro had sued the Ministry of Lands claiming he was the owner of plot number 209/11295.

Kaplan & Stratton were still representing the KHS. Mrs Sue Deverell asked them to look at the trust and give their legal opinion on whether it was possible to sell the land. Kaplan & Stratton advised that if they sold the trust land, they would have to prepare a notice for the intended use of funds received. The directors of the KHS were the sole

trustees and they could also apply for a substitution of the property. He said court sanction must be obtained for their protection.

Mrs Sue Deverell felt that they should not hand the land over to the Council to look after even though maintaining the location was beyond the means of the KHS. When the garden was overgrowing again, she said that clearing the bush and grass would expose all the mess from the graders and they should leave it as it was.

Kenya's new constitution, promulgated in 2010 created a new National Land Commission and this added another hitch. Disputes were now to be settled by the new National Land Commission and Mr Gachuhi of Kaplan and Stratton said they would not be able to proceed with a sale or transfer until the Commission was set up and new land commissioners were appointed. It was agreed that Mrs Deverell and Mr Pravin Bowry would send them a letter after consulting with Kaplan & Stratton.

While they awaited the next hearing date in the court case that had been transferred from the High Court to the new Land and Environment Court, Mrs Deverell told the Council that the fences kept getting damaged each time they were repaired. Council resolved there was no point in continuing to clear vegetation for the time being.

The saga was still going on in 2015, nine years later, and Mr John Golds asked if they could sell the land. Mr Pravin Bowry said that while it may have a value of Shs500 million, land matters were shambolic and it would not be possible to sell until the case was resolved. The Society could not also transfer the title deed without properly breaking the trust as this would compromise their legal possession. Professor Kibe offered to help as he knew a member of the Commission of Lands but the Council resolved to continue to defer to Kaplan & Stratton's advice.

The case was proceeding very slowly and the defence kept trying to postpone the case and the courts were also full. But in October 2015, Mrs Deverell gave evidence, as did Mr Wallace Hime. The surveyor confirmed that there was no title deed in any other name and that the beacons were correct.

After the testimony, Mr Peter Gachuhi was positive about the outcome as the judge had checked the facts and past evidence. Going against them, the defendant's deed plan

had an incorrect area size while the Lands Department had disowned the signature on the fake title.

Ahead of the 2018 AGM, a letter from the Kaplan & Stratton was shared with the Council outlining the saga with the garden that had now stretched for 15 years. All Council members, apart from the Thika member, felt that the KHS should negotiate with the grabber of the land.

The Jex Blake garden matter had dragged on for years, there was no longer a garden with any relevance while the commercial value was being eroded with constant road widening. If they could succeed in persuading the other parties to withdraw from a losing position, then the KHS could break the trust and sell the land and reinvest the funds received in the Society. The land measured 1.469 acres and, once free of encumbrances, could be valued at Shs400-500 million as it had road frontage on two sides.

Mr Talwar asked Kaplan & Stratton to investigate with the grabber as to what it would take for him to drop his fight. Also pushing them in the direction of a settlement was the congestion at the land court. They planned to use "court assisted-mediation", a new system that had been introduced to speed up litigation.

But it turned out that mediation was not possible as the case fell under the Lands and Environment Court and they would have to wait for the next hearing in October 2018. The case was finalized in early 2019 and with a judgment expected in May 2019, the Council thanked Mrs Sue Deverell and Mr Gachuhi for their work.

Finally, Judge Loice Komingoi at the Environmental and Land Court delivered a judgment in May 2020. She found that the Trustees of the Lady Muriel Jex Blake Memorial Garden were the registered proprietors of the property on LR No. 209/4322 whose allotment, deed and plan had been done in the 1950's. No land parcel could have two different titles, and as they had never transferred or subdivided it, the documents of Boro were not valid and likely to have resulted in a fraudulent title of LR 209/11295. This made all his actions tantamount to trespass and he had no right to enter the property or to demolish structures and fell trees there. Quo's counterclaim was also dismissed.

The Judge restrained the defendants, the two developers, from interfering with the property and awarded the KHS Trustees with general damages of Shs500,000 and special damages of Shs3,311,137.⁵⁵ The sum awarded was to pay for survey fees, and re-fencing but the bulk of the award, an amount of over Shs3 million was to restore the garden.

It was thought that this ended the nearly two-decade-long battle with the developers. However, the defendant filed an appeal against the case ruling.

Botanic Neglect amid Museum Expansion

In 2006 Mr David Gray told the Council they were looking for the master plan for the Botanic Garden at the Nairobi Museum and Cameron asked that they check with Mr William Wambugu. Mr Cameron also wanted to see Mr Wambugu to express concern at the destruction of the succulent section at the Botanic garden. Mrs Celia Hardy was also working with Nature Kenya to stop the destruction of the aloe trees planted at the museum roundabout.

Mr Gray, who was now the KHS Chairman, met Mr Wambugu twice about the Botanical Garden. He lamented that it was a project which Mr Barry Cameron had steered a museum committee to drive through, but it had now been somewhat neglected during the reconstruction of the museum and a lack of trained staff. Mr Wambugu then wrote a report to the Director-General of the Museum about the state of the Botanic garden.

But there was not much that could be done until the Museum was opened after renovations. Mr Gray also hoped to ask the Director-General to allocate space to the Society. Mr Wambugu also emailed Mr Gray a request for funding to maintain the garden. He decided to wait and see the opening of the Museum and ascertain how best to use any funds.

In a related matter, Mrs Ann Robertson told the Council in November 2006 that Henk Beentje's book on indigenous plants was out of print and not many people were

⁵⁵ East African Standard, September 22 2020.

interested in publishing a reprint. Mr Barry Cameron offered to write to request the Director-General of the Museum to handle the reprinting.

The Danish embassy had been printing Beentje's book, "Kenya trees, shrubs, and lianas" to distribute to schools and had covered most of the expenses. But after the KHS learnt from Mr Quentin Luke, a research associate at the National Museum, that the embassy now found it too expensive to continue, they dropped the matter.

They did not get word from the Botanic garden but Chairman Gray later read in Trackers, the Museum's Society's newsletter that a medicinal garden, which was phase one of the Botanic Garden, had been launched. This was a new herb garden sponsored by the Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health.

In July 2008 Mr Wambugu requested assistance to irrigate the Children's Garden and Mr Gray asked him to prepare an estimate of the cost. The KHS Council decided to put the Botanic Garden and Arboretum projects on hold until they got more information.

Later in 2010, Mr Barry Cameron removed valuable cycads which Mr Peter Greensmith had designed and planted at the Museum Hill and Pangani roundabouts and took them to Plants Galore and Waridi to preserve them. This was because they would be destroyed by new road works.

Financial Sustainability in the 2010's

Financial State of the KHS and Audit Changes

In 2008, Mr John Golds was concerned that the costs of running the office were rising and the Council was living off of bank interest and was not getting enough money to cover the proposed new expenses. He said the Council should direct more money to reviving defunct districts and to establishing new ones, perhaps at the South Coast and Lamu.

Chairman David Gray suggested that Mr Golds consult with more people and also discuss the accounts in detail with Mrs Deverell. When Mr Golds had queried their

finances, the KHS had Shs234,000 in its account and a sizeable Shs3.8 million at Old Mutual that Mrs Deverell told the Council earned them Shs22,273 in interest per month.

A few weeks later Mr Gray sat down with Mr Barry Cameron, Mrs Sue Deverell and Mr John Golds to go over the Society's financial position. They also discussed a report that Mr John Golds had emailed in September 2008. Mr Golds argued that the finances were not sustainable and depended mostly on interest rates that could change at any time in Kenya. He argued that they could not sustain the office and secretary on the present income, and that income from interest should be earmarked for special projects for which they could also ask for donations. He cited creating a national garden such as the Jex Blake garden, or a scholarship fund to enable the KHS to fund the training of 2 or 3 Kenyans every year in horticulture.

He proposed separating the Council from the Nairobi district and increasing subventions by increasing the number of members where districts were thriving. Also, a national member's drive, perhaps a country-wide raffle be done, and better marketing to get income and hasten the sale of their books.

While it was thought it would be difficult to get good prizes, as they were not a charity, Mr Golds said people would support a good cause. That was the case in Malindi where a raffle on their farmers' day flower show went to support a bursary to study horticulture.

He offered to write a paper on several ideas and share contacts and said a raffle could generate a profit of Shs300,000 if the prizes were attractive. He asked the Chairman to write to districts giving them figures of books and of raffle tickets to sell. Mrs Sophie Kinyua and Mr Alan Kangethe agreed to help with the marketing and publicity of the KHS.

Mr Golds had proposed that districts increase subscription rates but Mrs Deverell said this was not possible. He proposed creating new districts such as Lamu, the South Coast, and Kericho and splitting the Rift Valley. Mrs Jose Hays said Nairobi should also be split into East and West and that concentration would be higher in smaller groups.

Mrs Deverell agreed that the Council did not need an office as they only met three times a year and the Secretary could be paid only during such meetings. Mrs Sally Shaw said

the small committee was busy with jobs and did not always find it easy to attend meetings.

Mr Golds was disappointed that district chairmen had not given their views on his proposal. He also lamented that most of the Council work was done by a small number of its members and the others should know there was more work than attending three meetings a year.

Chairman Gray asked members to go through Mr Golds' proposals which had only been sent a few days before and Mrs Deverell asked that they conclude the findings so they could recommend them to members at the next AGM which they planned at Muthaiga Country Club in 2009.

After presenting the accounts at the 2007 AGM in March, Jim Birnie announced he would be stepping down as the Society's auditor as he planned to move away from Nairobi. He promised to help find a new auditor to review the current year's accounts for the KHS.

But by October, Mr Birnie had not yet given the name of a replacement and he was about to move up country. By the time of the 2009 AGM, the Society still had not found a replacement and Mr Gray asked the members to allow the Council to choose one.

In March 2010, Jim Birnie agreed to resume auditing the Society's accounts. This came after a request by Mrs Deverell, who was Chairman and Treasurer. The audited accounts were not ready in time for the AGM. Both Mrs Deverell and Ms Rowena Buxton, who assisted her, had been travelling extensively at the time, and this delayed the handover to Mr Birnie.

It was not clear if Mr Birnie's work permit would be renewed before it expired in April 2011, but he would continue to audit the accounts if he got the permit by March. The AGM approved for the Council to choose another auditor if Mr Birnie was not able to continue.

New Chairman Peter Paterson 2012, Council Reorganization and Outreach

At the 2011 AGM Mr David Gray presented an honorary life membership to Mrs Sue Deverell for the services she had given the KHS over the years and most recently as Chairman and Treasurer.

She planned to step down the following year after completing her term as Chairman. Mr David Gray, her Vice-Chair did not wish to stand, so Mr Peter Paterson was asked by the Council and he agreed to stand for Chairman at the 2012 AGM. It was also agreed that each Council member would have a particular focus on the new Council. Mr Alan Kangethe decided to resign as his work commitments meant he spent a lot of time outside the country.

As Mr Barry Cameron was also stepping down from the Council, he suggested names for future Council members including Mr Pravin Bowry (lawyer), Mr Roger Steadman (marketing and communication), Mr Vishy Talwar (insurance) and they were all approved to be invited to the AGM. Mr Cameron would continue to chair the “book sub-committee” that was working on the publication of Gardening in East Africa.

David Gray expressed his thanks to Sue Deverell for her years as Chairman and told members at the 2012 AGM at the Kentmere Club that she had agreed to continue as Treasurer. Rowena Buxton also announced that after three years, she would be stepping down at the AGM where she would also take notes for the final time.

Alwyn Smith, Pravin Bowry and Vishy Talwar who had been proposed to fill the three vacancies on the Council were unanimously approved. Also at the AGM, David Gray and Sally Shaw were nominated for honorary life membership and presented with their badges.

Mr Paterson chaired his first meeting in July 2012, which began on an unfortunate note as he relayed news of the passing of Rowena Buxton in a car accident a few weeks before. The Society would now be looking for a new secretary, and in the meantime, Mr Paterson would take the meeting notes, sometimes with assistance from Sue Deverell. At the next meeting, Mrs Julia Hunter was invited in as the acting secretary.

It was felt that the Chairman should aim to attend every one of the district AGM's and the Council should arrange for this in future. Mr John Golds suggested that any member travelling to a district AGM should get a contribution toward travelling and receive

accommodation from one of the members. At this time the return airfare to the coast was Shs20,000. A few months later, the Council approved payments of allowances so that Council members from the Coast would receive Shs8,000 as reimbursement, while those from upcountry would receive Shs4,000.

In 2012 Mr John Golds, now the KHS deputy chairman, again pushed for the KHS to be self-sustaining. He proposed a raffle to raise funds, but the Council felt that while it worked very well in Malindi, it would be difficult to do this. He suggested that they should sell T-shirts and clothing and merchandise which could be popular if attractively designed. Mr Golds said if the Main Society did not want to do this, it was likely that the Malindi district would come up with some items.

Mrs Deverell mentioned that the Government was reviewing the status of all tax exemptions and she would discuss this with their auditor, Mr Jim Birnie. She was also uncertain if they could claim an exemption of withholding tax on its investments.

While Mr Golds wanted the Society to earn more, Mrs Sue Deverell cautioned that they must be careful to avoid tax liabilities and that the Council should not draw attention to the Society's exemption from tax in case it was reversed. She maintained that their current surplus income and reserves would cover the cost of producing the new book and cards.

Mr John Golds continued to push the Council to do more for gardening in Kenya besides the book and website. He proposed there should be more courses for member's gardeners as they had in Malindi and that they should sponsor more people to university. He said that about 275 gardeners had attended courses created by Mr Barry Cameron in the last two years and asked that more districts emulate this. But Mrs Sue Deverell countered that the coast had a large population of retired people who were interested in gardening while other districts had changing populations who were in full-time work.

In July 2012, Mrs Sue Deverell got the approval of the Council to open a savings/money market account at CBA. Its signatories were Mr David Gray, new Council members Mr Pravin Bowry, Mr Vishy Talwar, and herself. They would transfer Shs400,000 from the current account to it. They would also remove Mr Barry Cameron and Mr Alan Kangethe

as signatories as they had both retired from the Council and replace them with Messrs. Bowry and Talwar.

Old Mutual had been querying the lack of signatures and minutes and had not made their funds available. They planned to use money in the Old Mutual fund for the printing of the new edition of Gardening in East Africa.

The Old Mutual account was not earning much interest and Mr Bowry said it was possible to earn 10% elsewhere. They proposed to close the CBA money market fund immediately. But the CBA fund was still open the following year and Mr Vishy Talwar suggested they look at infrastructure bonds, a good investment that was tax-free. He suggested the Old Mutual funds be liquidated and put on call deposit to purchase the bonds.

Later in the year the Old Mutual account was closed and the funds transferred to CBA to be available to invest in bonds. But buying bonds proved lengthy and money was left at CBA earning interest while they waited. However, there was a tax to pay in 2015.

Masterplan for the Society and a Third Proposal to change the KHS name

Soon after becoming Chairman, Peter Paterson presented the Council with a master plan and operational plan that he hoped would guide the Society for years to come. He had prepared it with assistance from Daniel Paterson and Peter Allen, both from Adelaide Australia.

He asked that districts share it with their committees and members and return comments to be discussed at the next Council meeting. Mr Vishy Talwar suggested that they have a professional facilitator to help process the responses and the name of Mr Sunny Bindra was suggested. After receiving some early feedback, Mr Paterson asked for more time to work with Mrs Anna Oburu and produce a newer version of the master plan.

Mr Paterson handed out copies of his master plan in April 2014 to the Council. He asked that, since it was a draft, it be put on the KHS website where feedback could be received and it could be updated for future use as a strategic plan.

Mr Pravin Bowry thought the name of the Society put people off and suggested a change from "Horticulture" to "Gardening" which might interest the urban population who were keen on plants. Mr Gray added that the name horticulture could be confused with the commercial horticultural business in Kenya. It was agreed to raise the suggestion of a change of name from the KHS to the Kenya Gardening Society.

The matter was introduced the next day, during the 2013 AGM which was held at Mr Paterson's home at Tree Lane in Karen, Mr Paterson went over the dictionary definitions of "gardening" and "horticulture" which were almost the same. The meeting with 43 members and the Council present was broadly in favour, but there were some reservations. It was noted that the E A Natural History Society had greatly benefited by changing its name to "Nature Kenya" and there was a suggestion that more should be done to encourage vegetable gardening. Messrs. John Golds and Nigel Hunter said that the districts should have a say, and Mr Pravin Bowry said approval of the Registrar of Companies would be needed.

A possible way forward was identified. It seemed to be a good idea to change the name, without changing the legal name, an idea suggested by Mrs Fleur Ng'weno after Mr John Golds had pointed out that a change of name would also need a change of bank accounts. Mrs Deverell agreed that the name change should not affect their trading name which would remain and Mr Paterson would send a note out to the districts to ask for their feedback. By October, Gardening Kenya was the most popular choice.

Mr Pravin Bowry reported that the Society's file had been mislaid at the Registrar's office and he would get an exemption certificate. Also, the Society did not have a taxpayer PIN number and that would be required.

Mrs Deverell retrieved the Society's certificate of registration exemption and Mr Bowry took a copy of it to the Registrar to see if they could have a new file made. Mrs Deverell noted that the last name change had been in 1965 when the Council had changed their constitution to read that; "The name of the Society is the Kenya Horticultural Society". It was resolved to frame the original certificate after scanning and saving it digitally.

Mr Paterson explained to members at the 2014 AGM that the official and registered name of the Kenya Horticultural Society would not change but the Council had agreed

to a social name of “Gardening Kenya” which had been the most popular one submitted after a questionnaire had been circulated.

Mr Barry Cameron said the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) had gone through a similar issue a few years earlier before deciding to retain the word “horticultural” but Mr Bowry countered that there was another horticultural society that existed which focused on horticulture. Chairman Paterson asked the members present, who were 47 in number plus the Council, to vote on adding the social name of “Gardening Kenya” to the current name of the Society. The vote result had 2 against, and those for the change were the majority.

Mr Pravin Bowry got the Society registered later in 2014 and Mrs Sue Deverell said the new Society registration number of 726 was different from their previous one of 372. She also said the government had closed all exemptions of tax and they would have to apply for this again.

In 2017, there was still no progress on the legal situation of the KHS. Mrs Sue Deverell said in the past the Society had been exempted from requirements of the Societies Act and it was agreed the Nairobi district auditors would lead the effort to reclaim this. Mr Talwar wanted to establish the reason for not having this before they applied for a taxpayer PIN from the Kenya Revenue Authority.

New Book proposal “Gardening in Eastern Africa”

A few months after becoming Chairman David Gray told the Council in November 2006 it was time to consider reprinting ‘Gardening in East Africa’. Mr Gray said the book was ten years old and selling steadily and they would need an updated edition in about five years.

Mr Barry Cameron agreed to lead a committee to look into this and he would seek out Mr Bruce Hobson to help with editing. Districts were asked to discuss with their members and committee on how to improve the book. Already there was a suggestion to include a chapter on organic gardening while new photographs would also be needed.

Mr Cameron started working with Mr Hobson and they soon realized that a few changes were necessary. One would be to insert small colour photographs throughout the book instead of just the middle pages, and another would be to add two new chapters on organic farming and invasive aliens. Also, the chapters on annuals, perennials and herbaceous plants would be combined into one, while the one on pesticides would be updated. A major challenge was that the major contributors of the book were no longer alive. Mr Cameron also proposed to invite Mr Jim Vernon to write one chapter or to help edit the book.

The KHS Secretary had not been able to locate the CD's which had 'Gardening in East Africa' on them. Mrs Sue Deverell said she would check if the printers of the current edition of the book had retained them. Mr Cameron was looking for the diskettes that had the text and photographs. An option was to scan the whole book if they could not find the diskettes.

Then in March 2007, Chairman Gray cautioned that, even with a healthy bank balance, they did not have the resources to re-issue the book, which the Council estimated would cost Shs4-5 million to update. The undertaking would leave little to be availed for their other projects at the Botanic Garden and the Arboretum.

Mrs Sue Deverell found the film that had been used to print the book at English Press, who now wanted to meet and discuss the book, while Cameron said a South African firm had also shown interest. Mr Bruce Hobson and Mrs Jane McKeand offered to provide photographs for the book and the Council agreed that every district be allotted a slot in the book.

Mr Barry Cameron and Mrs Sue Deverell managed to scan the first four chapters of the book. Mr Cameron planned to send copies of these to the respective authors to edit and he put off talks with the South African firm until they had finished this phase.

But by September 2008, there was not much progress and Mr John Golds suggested they should produce a more readable book than the current one. He suggested that for the wider public, perhaps dividing it into smaller books on specific topics such as gardening areas or gardening tasks would make it sell much faster. Mrs Sue Deverell added that smaller books would be cheaper to produce and they could have a lot of colour.

In 2009, while Mrs Sue Deverell was still scanning the book onto CD diskettes, Mrs Liz Lowe agreed to take on editing of 'Gardening in East Africa'. She did not use a computer though.

Mr Cameron had email responses from Ms Sally Share and Mr Len Newton and he drew up a spreadsheet of possible writers of the chapters. It included Mr Jim Vernon, Mr Andrew Cameron, Mrs Dee Roberts, Ms Dee Raymer, Mrs Celia Hardy, Mr Tom Forest, Mr Mark Nicholson, Mrs Gaye Aikman, Mr Josaphat Muinde, Mr Noel Hays, Mrs Ingeborg Gonella, Mrs Heather Campbell, and Ms Joannah Stutchbury.

After Mrs Deverell had scanned eight chapters, she suggested that they be put onto different CD's. Dr Anthony Mwangi Kibe offered to help with the climate chapter and Dr Mariam Mwangi offered to help with the section on fruits and vegetables as she had written a book on that subject. Later they decided to have a new chapter on alien invaders, written by Mr Arne Witt, though Mrs Deverell cautioned that it must be written carefully.

It was decided to ask members at the 2010 AGM for their views on topics to include in the book and whether to split the book. Members discussed producing booklets or e-books and who the publisher would be, but eventually resolved to leave the decision on dividing it into 3 or 4 smaller books to the publisher.

By July 2010, all chapters except three were done by their authors, and Mrs Sue Deverell, who was now the KHS Chairman, asked Mr Cameron to forward the contacts of publishers in Kenya and South Africa. Mr Cameron created a timeline for writing with a deadline of April 2011. This would allow time for editing before the planned publication date. At this time, nearly all the old books of 'Gardening in East Africa' had been sold.

Mr Peter Paterson was added to the book project. He had more expertise, having published a book on beekeeping with Green Ink and he advised that they employ a professional editor and consider getting a good illustrator. Green Ink was ready to consider printing the book but did not have an editor in Kenya.

Mr Cameron, Mrs Lowe and Mr Paterson advised that, as the Society had limited financial resources, they produce a desktop handbook, updating and partially rewriting

the gardening handbook with chapters written by twenty different authors. After getting the authors to complete their chapters, the three would do proofreading and edit the drafts with the authors, then turn them over to a professional editor for editing, layout, and checking scientific and common names.

They all preferred to have the book published locally and early estimates were to print 500 copies by July 2012, which they would sell for Shs3,000 each. Mr Paterson later met with Regal Press who said it was possible to print 200 copies using the offset method and they also considered other local printers of Ramco, English Press, Kul Graphics and Oxford University Press.

Mr Paterson continued to research a way of publishing that would suit the Society's finances and exceed the quality of the previous book while including pictures of some of the most interesting gardens and districts. Mr Bruce Hobson had thousands of pictures in his digital archive that they could use if they specified the ones they wanted. The team decided to use one illustrator for all chapters to give a cohesive look to the book. Later, in October 2011, when visiting Margaret and Don Turner's garden full of succulents, shrubs, bromeliads, ferns and orchids at Kinja on Lake Oloiden in Naivasha, Mr Barry Cameron quickly asked her permission to photograph the garden for possible inclusion in the new edition of the book.

But they got some shocking news when Green Ink gave an estimate of £29,000 to do the printing. Though they would do an excellent job the committee looked at how to reduce that sum by doing most of the editing themselves. They would also hire a layout editor and Mr George Okello who worked part-time at EAWS was appointed as a layout editor.

Regal Press and English Press suggested they change the title of the book from "Gardening in East Africa" to "Gardening in Eastern Africa" as this would be good for marketing in the surrounding countries.

There was concern that some chapters had wording that was too long, too technical and not practical. But Mr Paterson was reluctant to lose valuable material and Mrs Sally Shaw suggested that they include a CD with the book that would contain extra information and colour photographs. This led to discussions about whether to have two editions, one with colour photographs and another with black and white photographs

and a CD. Dr Anthony Mwangi Kibe suggested that they add a chapter on commercial horticulture with an emphasis on the production and economic value of horticulture.

In April 2013, the book committee approved a change of the name to Gardening in Eastern Africa, and to engage English Press for the production of the book. They added Blake Arensen and Shel Arensen of “Old Africa” magazine to assist with the layout, final editing and indexing. Messrs Quentin Luke and Paul Latham were also added to assist with the proper naming of plants.

Mr Cameron said that the book size should emulate ‘Waterwise Gardening’, a South African publication. It had more information than the previous edition and was therefore bigger. It had taken three years to produce this edition, unlike seven years for the previous book and David Gray asked that there be a pre-sale to members.

Mr Paterson recommended they do an e-version of the book and also consider a shortened version of the book to sell at roadside nurseries and Sally Shaw suggested they print different sections in smaller booklets. They hoped to have it published by Christmas 2014, with a print run of 2,000 copies of the book, but some chapters could be printed as separate booklets. Also, they would have an e-book version that would be released sometime after the hard copies had been sold.

But by April as editing and collection of illustrations was still ongoing, this date was unlikely. Paterson put out a request to all districts for coloured photographs for all chapters and of plants, trees and gardens. Members were invited to email originals of high quality. Tim Njoroge joined to assist with some diagrams while Dr John Grimshaw was asked to work on the table of contents and order of chapters.

At the 2015 AGM Mr Barry Cameron handed out draft chapters of the new book. He said it was new in every way including name changes of various trees and plants whose DNA had also changed across the globe. Some new chapters were being added and, with the editing and layout work ongoing, and the need for photographs, Mr Paterson said the 450-page book would not be ready in 2015 and there was no point in rushing it.

Mr Vishy Talwar got a quote from English Press for a 452-page book in A4 size with a laminated gloss jacket. One thousand copies would cost Shs2,128 each plus VAT while 3,000 copies would cost Shs1,407 plus VAT per copy. Mr Paterson suggested they

seek sponsors for the book and Mr Talwar suggested Safaricom and M-Pesa Foundations, both of which supported environmental projects.

Mr Cameron projected that the book could be ready in October or November 2016 as it was proceeding well with the assistance of contributions from professional experts. It was suggested to try and have it out by September, to be available for sale in the Christmas season. Most of the text was completed in early 2016 but photographs were yet to be selected. Mr Talwar requested a letter or write-up on the book be prepared to promote the book to possible sponsors including the Equity Bank Foundation.

At the 2016 AGM, Mr Barry Cameron laid out the final plans for publishing the book to be completed in the last quarter of the year. They were making selections from 5,000 photographs and other chapters had been added including one on High-Rise Horticulture which would appeal to gardeners living in the new apartments in the cities.

But the growing size of the book presented a challenge. It was now over 700 pages long, compared to the previous one of 215 pages. As they proceeded to more proofreading of chapters, Dr John Grimshaw a renowned botanist who had written several books, offered his help and Mrs Liz Lowe said it was worth waiting for the book to be proofread by an expert. But Mr Paterson later reported that another professional proofreader was needed as Dr Grimshaw was too busy.

Mr Cameron told members at the 2017 AGM about the herculean task which had first been proposed in 2007 had resulted in a new book with 34 chapters that was 700 pages long. It was being proof-read by experts in the UK and had new chapters on Gardening in Uganda, Gardening in Tanzania, Coast Gardening, Garden Design, Natural Swimming Pools, High Rise Horticulture, Water Wise Gardening, Organic & Permaculture, and Indigenous Plants & Medicinal Plants. He thanked Liz Lowe, Peter Paterson, and Blake Arensen for their work. Liz asked the AGM attendees to vote on their preferred cover from the nine different cover pictures presented.

The KHS decided to order 2,000 copies with English Press and printing was set to take a month with the books ready by November. The price was Shs2,199 plus VAT and they planned to offer them to members for sale with a discount of 25% based on their placing pre-orders and making upfront payments.

Mr Talwar proposed to have a subcommittee to promote book sales and to have two events, one in Karen and another at Gigiri. Mr John Golds said the book should be launched at the North Coast Garden fair in November, while overseas sales could be made through the RHS and ICIPE.

In October 2017 work on the book was completed and the book committee was disbanded. A book launch committee with Vishy Talwar, Sally Shaw, Peter Paterson and Karen Hoyer was set up to market the book that was to be delivered on 18 October. English Press was donating dust covers. Talwar had negotiated the price down to Shs2,000 + VAT and the 2,000 copies would cost Shs4 million.

After they factored in other costs of writing and preparing the book, this put the price of the book at just under Shs3,000. Thus, they set the price for members who ordered ahead and paid through their districts before 30 November at Shs 3,500. After that, the price would be Shs4,000 per book and they would be on sale at craft fairs from November and in bookshops from December.

An official launch was planned at Karen with a guest of honour followed by a second launch at ICIPE. The launch committee also agreed to express their appreciation to Barry Cameron, Liz Lowe and others by presenting them with complimentary copies of the book, with something extra, perhaps a painting by Franny Simpson or Andrew Kamiti, for Barry Cameron.

Ultimately, the book launch was shelved because of the political situation in Kenya where a repeat Presidential election was held, two months after the general election. And once this moment had passed, the committee decided that a launch was not necessary

The book release contributed to the Nairobi district having one of its best years in 2017, with excellent book sales, and successful flower shows and plant sales. Nairobi district, which had 132 single members and 44 double members managed to sell 71 copies of the new book. At Naivasha, the district sold 32 books before the Christmas fair where they also had a KHS stall with copies of the book.

In 2017 and early in 2018, 662 copies of the book were sold, leaving 1,338 after 21 complimentary copies had been given out. Mr Talwar approached several bookshops

to carry the book in different towns and looked for others in Uganda and Tanzania while Mrs Gail Paul would check in South Africa.

Later, when Vishy Talwar made a trip to the UK, copies of the book were availed at the RHS Library, British Library and the Kew Gardens Library while 'A Novel Idea', which has branches in Arusha and Dar es Salaam offered to sell the book. To increase the sales of the book, they planned to participate in Christmas craft fairs or join with Authors Corners at Brackenhurst Farmers Market and Pembroke House and to put advertisements in Xpat Link and Kenya Buzz. Another target was to approach universities and schools to purchase copies for their libraries. They also tried to place the book on Amazon for sale in the UK but receiving payments to their Kenyan bank account was a challenge and tax implications arose. Sue Deverell proposed selling the book through the Society's website.

The Nairobi District was set to participate in the Homes and Gardens Expo at Sarit Center where they hoped to sign new members and sell copies of the book. But a fire that broke out in the mall on May 4, 2018, brought an early end to the show as the premises were evacuated and closed.

Some errors had been found and these were to be shared with Mr Peter Paterson. Mr Barry Cameron gave Mrs Sally Shaw a USB with the whole book to be backed up onto external drives.

By 2019 1,146 copies remained and they decided to invite newspapers like the Asian Weekly to review the book. Shel Arensen reviewed it for Old Africa and Travel News did a review after a copy was given to the editor. Another review was due to run for the inflight magazine of Air Kenya or Safarilink, but Kenya Airways had turned them down as it was thought not to be of interest to tourists.

The Council proposed to have the book availed to sell at different conferences at venues like the Great Rift Valley Lodge at Naivasha and the UNEP campus in Nairobi. Mall events were ruled out as not being worth the effort

With just over 1,000 books remaining, they distributed copies to Chandarana and Carrefour supermarkets and considered adding hotel bookshops to stock it.

A special offer was made for the districts to purchase books at Shs 3,500 which they could sell to members at Shs 4,000. Shops would also be given a discount if they reordered before 31 December 2019.

The Council was told that 185 books were sold in 2019, and so with 1,100 gone, they were now left with 900 copies. They resolved to market it to the expatriate community and any group with gardeners.

Ahead of the 2018 AGM, it was announced that all costs had been settled with the printers. Nairobi District proposed that Barry Cameron and Liz Lowe be made honorary life members in recognition of their tireless work for the book. An honorary life membership was approved for Peter Paterson.

But Mr Cameron who had been the national chairman for eighteen years already was an honorary life member and holder of the illuminated scroll. Talwar suggested that they put his name to the President's office for a national award, for his contribution to the KHS, while Gail Paul and Sue Deverell suggested they seek membership with the RHS or a royal decoration.

During Covid-19, the council looked at new ways of moving the remaining 800-odd copies of the book. They considered approaching landscaping companies and asking them to give the book to their clients. They reached out to Text Book Centre, which, it turned out, had new ownership and had reduced its book stocks considerably. The book was put for sale online with Greenspoon on their website and was also offered as part of the "black November sale" with the e-commerce company Jumia. Eventually, 77 copies were sold in 2020.

Members continued to help find retail outlets for the book sales the following year. Pravin Bowry introduced the society to the supplier of Carrefour and Chandarana supermarkets, Vishy Talwar found a seller in Tanzania and Sally Shaw found a hotel in Burundi.

Other Books

In 2013, publishers asked about the possibility of bringing out or updating Michael Blundell's "Wildflowers of East Africa" book that had been published in 1987. Mr

Paterson asked them to establish where the copyright was before considering if this could be a new project, and Sue Deverell would follow up with Blundell's descendants.

Messrs Paterson and Golds thought it was a good idea. But the photographs were old and not usable. Mr Paterson asked Blundell's family to submit new photographs. Old slides could also be improved and the Society also had several of John Karmali's and others that John Wright had digitized.

Mrs Liz Coverdale enquired about the copyright and Sue Deverell said it was now out of date as copyrights were legal for 30 years. But ultimately, it was not possible to do a reprint as, in the interim, the names of plants had changed, the photographs were old and unclear and the publisher had destroyed the plates. Also, at the time of this conclusion in 2015, Dr Mark Nicholson was writing a new book on wildflowers and trees.

Reconnect with Partner Organizations

As far back as 2011, the Society under Barry Cameron had talks ongoing between Nature Kenya and the Succulenta Society and it was proposed to ask the Succulenta Society to come under the KHS.

Professor Len Newton planned to leave Kenya in 2015 and it was proposed that they collect all 52 varieties of aloe which existed in Kenya and place them in one centre where they would be protected and have Prof Newton identify and name them individually. Professor Newton had recently published a book on aloes.

Mr Pravin Bowry owned 5 acres in Naivasha and he suggested the KHS use it to plant and protect all aloe varieties. Professor Kibe said Egerton also had many aloes in its botanical garden and there was an aloe garden at Marigat that was useful to the local community

Later Mark Nicholson and Kirsty Shaw proposed that a Tree Society be formed to join the KHS. Miss Shaw worked for Botanic Gardens Conservation International and Mr Nicholson said that Brackenhurst had 600 of the 1,200 indigenous tree species in East Africa. They had 100 members and it was considered whether they could be treated as a district under the main Council.

Mr Peter Paterson was asked to write a paper on Special Interest Groups (SIG's) and the possibility of the KHS holding joint event meetings and advertising in newsletters with SIG's like Succulenta.

This tied in with the need for the Society to seek out new partnerships. At the Council, it was suggested that the KHS facilitate the activities of its members, perhaps with introductions to Kew Gardens and other places of interest in South Africa. This could entail group visits to Kew Gardens, the Garden Route in South Africa, and the Chelsea Flower show in England.

Mr Pravin Bowry said many other societies organized overseas trips and the quality of South African gardens were good. Mr Bowry and Mrs Sally Shaw offered to enquire with local travel agents to see if they could obtain special prices for the KHS. They tried to ascertain how many members would be interested in trips to the Western Cape Province, Namibia and the Garden Route and how many members were needed to make it feasible. Also considered was a trip to Namaqualand as it was one of the best areas to visit in the right flowering season.

Mrs Gail Paul offered to organise garden trips in South Africa the following year if there was sufficient interest. At the April 2014 KHS AGM, she told members that it was possible to make a trip during an Orchid Conference in September 2014 and asked that members decide if they were interested. Other trips could be organized in 2015. A trip would cost about \$3,000 for a week. Members felt that 2015 would be better and Mrs Jane McKeand who had visited South Africa and Namibia offered to assist with more information.

The South Africa trip was set for August 2015. Fifteen members signed on and Sally Shaw suggested that they take photographs during the trip to stimulate future interest. But Liz Coverdale who was going to be on the trip said the schedule was too hectic. It had too much emphasis on wildflowers and on moving around and she would ask Gail Paul about this. Mr Gray thought they should set a deadline for members to sign on as costs would increase.

Because of this mismatch of activities, the members of the North Coast planned their own separate and less vigorous trip, through contacts they had in South Africa that was a more garden-oriented trip.

The KHS trip took place in November 2015 and the travellers were asked to put details on the website, while the North Coast also had their own trip to South Africa.

Mrs Gail Paul explained that the 13 members had greatly enjoyed their trip and she planned to organize another one in 2017. She wanted promotional information sent to the district chairmen as soon as possible to have the payment of deposits made by April 2016. The trip to visit gardens in South Africa for August 2017 was fully booked, thanks to Mrs Gail Paul.

Meanwhile, Mr Golds explained that while some members of the North Coast again wanted to tour gardens in South Africa, they were unlikely to do so because of the Imperial Bank fiasco.

New Outreach with other Societies

As part of the new outreach, the Council considered whether KHS could have an affiliation with both the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and the South African Botanical Society (SABS).

In April 2014, Mr John Golds was asked to follow up on the possibility of re-affiliation with the RHS while Mr David Gray thought it was more useful to become a member of African horticultural or gardening societies. The Council asked Mr Barry Cameron to check on South Africa as he had contacts there.

Mrs Sue Deverell thought the South African association was more appropriate and beneficial as it offered KHS members free access to botanical sites and a magazine while the RHS did not allow free entry to its gardens. Mr John Golds thought the RHS was more beneficial and Mrs Sally Shaw said overseas judges could accompany RHS judges to the Chelsea Flower show. The cost of joining the RHS was Shs7,000 per year while the SABS was Shs4,000.

As the Society planned a visit to South Africa in 2015, the Council thought it better to join the South Africa Botanical Society. Mr Talwar proceeded to apply for membership to the South African Botanical Society, paying the 400 Rand fee on behalf of the KHS and their membership as an affiliate organization for 2015 was confirmed. Individuals

from Kenya would be able to use the membership, and the SABS would also assist with future trips to South Africa.

Mr Quentin Luke asked for support against funding cuts by the UK Government at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and Mr Paterson agreed to draft a letter on behalf of the KHS querying the cuts.

Later Mr David Gray met with Ms Jane Ngige of the Kenya Flower Council to ask about commercial support and she informed him that they had already combined with the Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya to form the Kenya Horticulture Export Council.

Succulenta Declines and BCGI fate

Discussion on the master plan picked up in 2017 and Mr Peter Paterson emailed the paper again along with another on SIG's to the Council. Most of these SIG's were in Nairobi.

Succulenta had been approached and the Orchid Society was interested. So, it was suggested that the chairman of any SIG be invited to join the main KHS Council. But in early 2019, Succulenta declined to join the group. It was then proposed to have them as an associate district

Also in 2019, the Society considered a request by the Tree Group to be a special interest group. But the KHS was concerned that it was a loose formation without officials and if they came with a big donation, it could complicate the accounts.

Later, after meeting with Kirsty Shaw, it was agreed that the Tree Society could set up as a District of the KHS although this never finalized.

Partners on Gardens and Governments 2013-16

A-Rocha

Chairman Paterson told the Council that the property of the late Mrs Daphne Sheppard which once had one of the finest gardens in Karen had been bequeathed to a local

organization - A Rocha Christian Conservation. It had fallen into some neglect but 'A Rocha' intended to develop the property, and preserve and reforest some areas with indigenous trees, shrubs and plants. He proposed that the KHS, which wanted to have more show gardens and centers of interesting vegetation, cooperate with 'A Rocha'.

Mr Paterson introduced Dr Raphael Magambo, the new director of 'A Rocha', to the Council. 'A Rocha' had a field study centre at Karara House which was the Daphne Sheppard property, in addition to Mwamba at Watamu.

Messrs Barry Cameron and Len Newton shared information about the Mutomo Plant sanctuary with Mr Paterson. Mutomo Plant Sanctuary which was on a picturesque ridge between Kibwezi and Kitui. Mr George Classen had written about it. It was suggested that the Nairobi District run a field trip to investigate the current situation there.

Mrs Sue Deverell pointed out that Taita Hills was a protected area and that Kasigau had many different plants. Mrs Susan Church mentioned that Christopher Campbell Clause had a camp in Kasigau and might assist with accommodation. Mr Paterson suggested a note on plant sanctuaries be added to the new book and on the website. They would also coordinate with Nature Kenya and the Kenya Forest Working Group on the ongoing situation in those areas.

Mrs Anna Obura mentioned a new upmarket residential estate near Athi River whose residents had taken a great deal of interest in their gardens and she would try and arrange a visit there with Mrs Sally Shaw.

Engaging with Gardens and Counties

The March 2013 election in Kenya ushered in a devolved system of government with 47 new counties led by governors and managed by county governments and county assemblies. Mr Vishy Talwar suggested that they contact all the new counties with suggestions on how they could create show gardens containing local indigenous plants in every county.

Machakos County was developing a Water Park while at Mombasa, there was Uhuru Gardens, previously a municipal site that was in a state of neglect. Mr Bowry said that it had been sold illegally to a private developer but the KHS Mombasa District and North

Coast District could approach the Mombasa county government, regarding the rehabilitation of Uhuru Gardens and the Mazeras Botanical Gardens.

To engage better with Mombasa, Marion Lady Langham wanted the Council to invite a representative from Mombasa to their meeting. But as Mr Bowry travelled to Mombasa frequently, the Council decided that he would represent them.

Later, Shrena Malde told Mr Bowry that Mazeras Gardens had been taken over and they should try Uhuru Gardens on Moi Avenue. But the garden located by the legendary Elephant Tusks in Mombasa was already undergoing a facelift by the Council with a lot of plant maintenance. The Elephant Tusks had been erected in 1956 to celebrate the arrival of Princess Margaret.

The Nanyuki District was assisting with a project at the Nanyuki crematorium by planting trees. But the County Government had rebuffed their efforts to do a garden at the Nanyuki cemetery.

In Nairobi, Governor Evans Kidero showed little interest in the contact they had made. They held out hope in July 2004 that things might change if Mr John Gakuo returned to the new County Government.

There was also an arboretum at Nakuru and Mr Bowry said the residents there had asked about a small area opposite Stags Head Hotel where indigenous plants could be grown which would stimulate interest for Nakuru branch members. Mr Bowry offered to write a letter on behalf of the KHS to the governor of Nakuru requesting support,

By July 2015, work at the public garden in Nakuru was progressing but without much direction and Mr Bowry felt if the Nakuru district was set up this could be a pet project for them.

Also, Kericho had a nice project sponsored by Unilever and another possibility was at Malindi Museum where there was some unutilized land. Pwani University had no funds to grow their garden, and Naivasha had no more land because of the growing population, while at Kilifi, an area that had been created by the KHS had been grabbed.

Mrs Sally Shaw later met with the owner of Outspan Hotel and suggested that they work with the Mt. Kenya District to help resuscitate their gardens to enhance the connection to Baden Powell, founder of the Scouts movement.

Later, in 2016, it was thought the KHS should have an interest in Nairobi's City Park and that they should meet with Ms Catherine Ngarachu of the Friends of City Park (FoCP) which was trying to restore the park as a recreation facility for Nairobi residents. The Park was having a problem with land-grabbing and the KHS was keen to help.

In February 2019, the Nairobi District worked with the Friends of the Nairobi City Park (FoCP) to rehabilitate the Maze at City Park. The exercise continued in August with a great turnout of members and again in October. A planned exercise for November 2019 was cancelled due to flooding of the Maze in the City Park and there was a delay of a few months as the FoCP came up with a plan to increase the drainage.

One challenge with doing landscaping and gardening was that counties were always expanding and that would be wasted work if the new county infrastructure wiped out the activities of district members as was the case with Nanyuki in Mt. Kenya and Kilifi.

Wasaa is Revived

In 2014, the IUCN wrote to ask the KHS to partner with and maintain the garden at Wasaa. They offered to avail Shs150,000 per month to maintain it and at the time, it was estimated that \$10,000 was needed to bring the garden back to its previous situation and to run the nursery.

A few months later, the nursery was in a sorry state and the trees were dry and dying. It appeared IUCN's funding had been cut and they had to reduce staff. The KHS looked for Josephat Muinde who had worked with Peter Greensmith and used to give garden visits and demonstrations at IUCN. He was very knowledgeable, but by 2015, he had retired and moved to Machakos.

While they did not hear from IUCN, the KHS learnt that Mrs Alex Bell, daughter of Betty Archer, had been contracted to manage the garden at IUCN and had taken over the nursery. Mr Paterson was disappointed that the IUCN did not acknowledge the KHS's

offer of assistance nor did they communicate that they no longer needed help or support.

Things did not improve and they later heard that Alex Bell was closing the plant nursery at Wasaa. Sally Davey of Nairobi District asked if KHS would take it over, but the Council decided to wait for an invitation, given the earlier lack of communication.

It appeared the IUCN had not stood by the stipulations in the sale document and the nursery was closed and the plants had been moved to Naivasha. There was even news that some land would be sold in 2017.

The garden was later reopened under new management by Greenit Decors Nursery as a nursery selling indigenous trees, drought-tolerant shrubs, herbs, and indoor plants. It also contained a large selection of Peter Greensmith's bougainvillea and succulents from Len Newton's collection⁵⁶.

And today, things are somewhat back to the original style. Greenit Decors Nursery took over in 2019 and did a wonderful job restoring the nursery and garden and Josephat Muinde returned as a consultant. Hundreds of unique plants⁵⁷ can be found at Wasaa around its well-tended lawns and gardens. Over 60 unique plants, mainly bougainvillea dot the garden today. The varieties include Isabel Greensmith mutation, Gillian Greensmith, Donyo, Daphne Mason, Double Prince Mahara, Mary Palmer, Joan Waddington, Ralph Sander Sport, Elizabeth Angus, Peter Greensmith Sport, Rosenka, Njora, Nina Mitton and Minyata. One may also spot some special trees like a White Jacaranda and Yellow Nandi flame along with hundreds of succulents and cactus.

Council Changes

In 2013, the KHS decided to invite Prof Anthony Mwangi Kibe, a professor and specialist on climate, to join the Council. They also confirmed Mrs Julia Hunter's

⁵⁶ Xpatlink advertisement, September 2020.

⁵⁷ Plants for sale catalogue at IUCN-Wasaa, Nairobi, January 2021. The author visited Wasaa and was shown round the grounds by Josphat Muinde who is a consultant and caretaker of the gardens. At the time, with COVID-19, most IUCN staff were working at their homes

appointment as Secretary. And at the 2013 AGM Mr Peter Paterson announced the nomination of Mrs Celia Hardy as an honorary life member. This was approved and Mr Barry Cameron received the badge on her behalf.

Prof Kibe thanked the Council and said he would work to support Dr Mariam Mwangi. Mr Paterson said Prof Kibe was the door to future members and congratulated him on his professorship. Mr Paterson said that Dr Mark Nicholson had also agreed to be co-opted onto the Council. Mr John Golds would step down at the end of the year and he requested suggestions for the new vice-chairman.

Mr David Gray suggested adding Dr Dino Martins, an entomologist and life member, to the Council while Mr Paterson proposed Prof Len Newton, who was an authority on succulents. It was agreed to invite both, and they would be notified and receive newsletters until they were approved at the next AGM. Prof Newton and Dr Martins were added to the Council at the 2014 AGM along with Mrs Anna Hern, the new Chairman for Naivasha.

Various names were considered for vice-chairman after Mr John Golds stepped down in 2014. Mrs Sue Deverell suggested Mrs Sally Shaw but Mr Paterson thought that being the Chair of Nairobi was such a big responsibility that she should not be burdened with another post.

Dr Mark Nicholson was working on a book on illustrated plant materials, but later, after he was unable to attend several meetings since he was co-opted, they decided to invite Mr Raphael Magambo (A Rocha) in his personal capacity to join the Council in July 2014.

Chairman Vishy Talwar 2015

In April 2014, the Council realized that both Mr Paterson who intended to step down at the end of his first term as Chairman in 2015, and Mr John Golds who was serving for one year as Vice Chairman, would both be leaving the Council at the same time. Mr Paterson said it was not ideal to have the two events happen at the same time. Mrs Sue Deverell said that the constitution said the Vice Chairman be nominated by the Council and she nominated Mr Vishy Talwar. David Gray seconded and Mr Talwar agreed and thanked them all.

At the 2015 AGM, with no other proposal to replace Peter Paterson who had concluded his three years, Vishy Talwar was confirmed as the new Chairman. Pravin Bowry and David Gray agreed to continue as Council members, while attendees at the AGM also approved Susan Church and Dr Raphael Magambo on to the Council by majority votes, and a vote of thanks was given to Alwyn Smith who had completed his term.

Sally Shaw also wished to stand down as Nairobi District Chairman after seven years but no one who had shown interest in taking over. Members at the AGM suggested that districts follow the main KHS Council example and change their constitutions to require chairpersons to stand down and be replaced after three years.

Council Re-organization: Treasurer and audit issues

As Chairman in 2015, Vishy Talwar urged Council members to communicate over email with requests and not to leave all decisions until the next meeting. The Council also voted to have meetings at 10:30am rather than 12 noon.

Mr Talwar wanted volunteers from the districts to stand as future Council members. Mr John Golds suggested they add more experts but this was a challenge as they were not always willing to serve. The Council decided it was better to have committed members serving, even if they were not experts, and then consult experts when they were required.

It was important to have more members ready to stand as future Council members and also as district chairs. At the time, the KHS had no Vice-Chairman after Mr Talwar had stepped up from that post to become the Chairman. Mr Talwar was concerned as, at the next AGM, Sue Deverell, David Gray, Liz Coverdale and Julia Hunter would all not be seeking re-election in 2016. Sue Deverell also felt that she would not be able to continue as Treasurer and it was suggested that she start to groom someone as an assistant.

Barry Cameron offered to rejoin the Council. Other names floated were Liz Lowe and June Vetch, while Mrs Bowry was proposed as the new treasurer. Sue Deverell would be willing to stay on, but not as treasurer and Arjun Kohli joined for the Nairobi district.

At the 2016 AGM Sanergy was the sponsor who also provided the guest speaker and met the catering cost for guests. Sanergy was the promoter of Evergrow organic fertilizer, and Ani Vallabhanani, the co-founder, gave a talk and showed samples of the company's fertilizer that were on display and available for purchase

At that AGM, Mrs Sue Deverell confirmed she was stepping down. She invited a volunteer to replace her, saying it was not a big or time-consuming job, just over a week a year to do the final accounts. Dr Mark Nicholson offered to come on as honorary treasurer. By the end of the AGM, Mrs Anastasia Mwenda had volunteered to join the Council.

But Dr Nicholson missed the June Council meeting as he was traveling and was also absent at the November 2016 meeting. Mr John Golds said that it was against the constitution to have missed all three meetings and suggested that Mr Peter Derry be asked to be the honorary treasurer.

In that year, North Coast proposed Marion Lady Langham and Chris Betts for honorary life membership.

Vishy Talwar noted that in 2017 membership had grown from 718 to 817, with 317 at the North Coast, 182 at Nairobi 133 at Mr Kenya and 67 at Naivasha. Also, there were 35 members at Mombasa, 39 at Nakuru, and 12 at Egerton while the new Thika district has 32 members.

In 2017, Sally Shaw stepped down as Nairobi District chairman and was replaced by Sally Davey. Shaw became vice-chairman of the KHS and at the 2017 AGM, Sue Deverell was reappointed as honorary treasurer after Mark Nicholson was not able to continue.

Then at the next meeting of the Council, Gail Paul offered to take on the position of honorary treasurer and it was agreed she would start on 1 November 2017. She and Sally Shaw would be added as signatories at the bank while David Gray would be removed. At the same time, the Council asked the audit firm of Nairobi district Rajni Shah & Co to obtain a PIN for the Society as it was now a requirement for opening a bank account. The Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) PIN certificate was obtained in early 2018 and a copy was then shared with all districts.

Then in 2018, Jim Birnie resigned as auditor, as he no longer had a work permit. Rajni Shah & Co took over as Society's auditor. It was also agreed that district finances would be amalgamated into the Council ones in future.

Gail Paul read her report to members at the 2018 AGM and asked districts to use the new reporting forms and also send their subventions in by June. Cautions were raised at the meeting regarding the fact that the KRA would like to charge VAT on subventions and they noted that the use of words like "income" and "levy" should be considered carefully.

Gail Paul remained concerned about the state of the Society's finances and asked all districts to send in their subventions as soon as possible. She also asked Council members to warn her in advance about bills that would have to be paid.

Revert Chairmanship and Rotate AGM's

At the 2017 AGM Barry Cameron suggested that the KHS reverse its rule on requiring Chairmen to retire after just one term. He wanted them to be able to offer themselves for re-election after completing their three-year terms. He said this could be voted on at the next AGM. Mr Talwar said he would be happy to continue as Chairman if the Society desired.

Mr Bowry told the Council that the change of chairman needed to be amended at the AGM with a resolution, that had been approved in July 2017. The wording of this would be clarified in February and be presented to members at the April 2018 AGM.

The issue of holding the AGM at different districts was brought up again, this time by Barry Cameron. Pat Jentz warned this would mean lower attendance, but they voted that in alternate years, the AGM be held in Nairobi and then in one other district.

The North Coast District was then invited to put in a proposal to host, while it was felt that Naivasha, would be an easier venue for an AGM, especially if they could combine it with a flower farm visit.

Chairman Sally Shaw 2018

In February 2018, Vishy Talwar then proposed that Sally Shaw take over as Chairman as he had completed his three-year term, while he would become Vice Chairman and the Council agreed.

In April 2019, the 95th AGM of the main council of the KHS was held at The Pot, in the Flower Business Park at Naivasha. It was a great success and attended by over 70 members, many of whom had travelled from other districts.

Susan Church, the Hon. Secretary, also hosted Chairman Sally Shaw and 20 guests, for dinner.

At the AGM, the new Machakos district, which had ten members, was introduced by its Chairman Monica Kerretts-Makau. Also at the AGM, Rajni Shah & Company, was approved as the Society's new auditors.

Staff Changes

In 2017, all districts, except the North Coast, agreed that they needed to hire a permanent person at the KHS that had been run by volunteers. Desmond Maganga was proposed as a full-time employee in April 2017. He would be an administrative assistant, who would work out of the chairman's office and also spend some days, likely Wednesday, at the KHS office at EAWS sorting files and taking minutes.

Sally Shaw donated a laptop for him to use, and later the KHS bought one from the Text Book Centre while Mr Talwar also obtained a phone, using his Bonga Points, for Desmond.

But in April 2018 Maganga fell ill. He had not disclosed a condition he had when he was employed and was given sick leave twice. Maganga resigned at the end of 2018 and Mariam Maissara Santiago took over the position as the new Administrative Assistant and attended her first Council meeting in January 2019. A communications specialist, Mariam was soon mastering the QuickBooks accounting system and helping to find new markets to sell the Gardening in East Africa book.

They decided to insure the laptop against all risks but insurance firms could not cover the laptop by itself. It was suggested they include the KHS trophies, the value of which had gone up and the Council would ask districts to do an inventory and get quotes from the underwriters. Soon the Nairobi district's insurance policy with Cannon covered the new equipment and by October 2019, all districts except Egerton had sent in an inventory of their cups.

New Districts: Thika, Kisumu, Machakos, Naivasha

In 2011 Naivasha had 52 members though only half had paid up as Susan Church took over from Astrid von Kalckstein.

Naivasha got going slowly under Susan Church. The district was widely spread and membership was small. The committee had no bank account so they handed over their funds, Shs140,000 in 2012, to the KHS Council for safekeeping and this was recorded as a liability. Sue Deverell said this was because it was not owned by the Council and may have to be returned with interest.

Things did not pick up well in the new decade. Naivasha/Gilgil had one meeting that was badly attended and the Gilgil area was inactive. Susan Church informed the Council that she intended to step down at the AGM in January 2014 if she did not get immediate support. She resigned as Chairman of Naivasha at the district AGM and Anna Hern was elected in her place. Mrs Hern, then joined the main KHS Council at the 2014 AGM to represent Naivasha. The district later donated Shs100,000 of their funds towards the KHS website and the book projects.

Thika District

In April 2017, Vishy Talwar proposed a new district at Thika. This was after Lucy Guebels said a WhatsApp group had 20 interested ladies. Mr Talwar proposed that the members from Thika should be invited to attend the Nairobi flower show in September.

Thika District was formed and Lucy Guebels attended her first Council meeting in October 2017. Membership numbers increased from 20 to 32 and they saw interest from commercial farmers to join and who had requested for more social events. 14

members of Thika attended a plant sale in Karen and the new district sold 16 books in the year

The Council also noted that the Botanical Garden at Kenyatta University on Thika Road had received a donation of Shs3 billion from China and it was suggested that they do a garden visit.

Thika District proceeded well and in 2019 its officials set up a bank account and came up with a T-shirt design that was adorned with the Gardening Kenya logo that would be sold to its members for Shs 1,500 each.

Machakos District

Dr Monica Kerretts-Makau contacted Sally Shaw at the end of 2018 to discuss starting a district of the KHS in the Machakos area. In February 2019 Sally Shaw, Vishy Talwar, and Anastasia Mwendwa visited Machakos and met Ndanu Musau and Monica. They found a lot of enthusiasm and energy for gardening there. In the coming days, a WhatsApp group was created, and new members were added.

On 20 April 2019, the newest district Machakos held its first meeting at Kanake Gardens and followed that with a second one in July. Monica Kerretts was elected as Chairman and they agreed to fill other council seats later. They also started a WhatsApp group. The district also received a visit from Thika members at Kanake, the home of their chairman Monica Kerretts where she and her husband had turned a 2.5-acre maize field into a beautiful sustainable garden. Guests heard about planting trees, termite-resistant plants, composting, and using stones common in Machakos for landscaping. Before the end of its first year, Machakos had 33 members⁵⁸.

Kisumu District

In 2015 Vishy Talwar said the future was in growing membership and that the best locations were cities and towns. He suggested that Kisumu and Eldoret should be

⁵⁸ Business Daily, A Perfect Day For A Plant Sale, November 7, 2019

<https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/bd/lifestyle/gardening/a-perfect-day-for-a-plant-sale-2270046>

considered for possible new districts. Also, that the discussion about Nairobi being big enough to divide into two districts should be revived.

He planned to follow up with friends including Raghbir Singh to help set up a Society in Kisumu and Sue Deverell and David Gray were asked to contact people in Kericho who might want to subscribe to the Kisumu proposal.

Mr Talwar visited Kisumu in November 2015 and spoke to several people about the KHS to generate interest to start a district there. He later met with Dr Barbara Magoha who worked in Nairobi but had a farm in Kisumu and was willing to find other people interested in setting up a new district.

Mr Talwar suggested that Plants Galore could take a truckload of plants to Kisumu and initiate a plant sale. It was necessary to identify a prospective Chairman for Kisumu and it was suggested to approach Michael Onyango for brainstorming.

He maintained that with a visit from the council, a district could come alive there as more enquires from Kisumu were received through the KHS website. Then on March 7th 2020, Sally Shaw, Vishy Talwar and Monica Kerretts made a visit to Kisumu that turned out to be fruitful. At a meeting on the same day, the KHS Kisumu district was launched with 18 members as well as 2 corporations and 4 double members.

They had their first committee meeting on March 14 2020, chaired by Dr Diana Karanja but with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic a few days later, Kisumu District operated online and visited each other's gardens on Zoom. Its members did not rush out to have physical events as their county remained a hotspot for the disease. They also sought to raise funds for the district, opened a dedicated M-Pesa account and sold a copy of Gardening in Eastern Africa. They later succeeded in opening a bank account at NCBA, and in October 2021, the district had a get-together. They undertook a beautification project at the Kisumu Law Court.

Accounting and Tax changes at the Districts

In 2019, the Society was in a healthy state, but the Hon. Treasurer Gail Paul still emphasized that it looks to raising new funds to not drain its coffers. In April, she proposed to have the districts pay a part of the audit fee and taxes and set out to work

with the new auditors Rajni Shah & Co. to determine how much each district should contribute.

Before the introduction of the Kenya Revenue Authority taxpayer personal identification number (PIN) districts did their own accounts and audits. The need to have a PIN arose because it was a requirement for the society to operate a bank account. It had then also been used by KRA to weed out some charities that had been evading taxes.

KRA had deemed that society subventions were not taxable but that all income from other member and non-member activities was. With the introduction of the PIN, the Society now had to pay tax on profits and the amount had increased significantly. And, unfortunately, while some districts wished it, going back to the old accounting way was not possible.

Not all districts were in support of this and raised the tax matter with their old auditor, Jim Birnie. More talks were had with the new auditors, the Nairobi District Treasurer, and an account manager at the Kenya Revenue Authority to assist with the complications of the districts and society in complying with the KRA iTax system.

As this went on the Council looked into new fund-raising ideas. The KHS council had no income except subventions from districts and a small markup on items like calendars. Suggestions were made on drawing up tour itineraries for guests that incorporate gardens and other horticultural sites in the different districts as well as in game parks around the country.

The Society had started paying the 1% tax on turnover as recommended by KRA but that had been suspended by an unrelated court case. Gail Paul raised this with the Council and Vishy Talwar said that in future the council will pay the audit fee with the districts to pay a pro-rata share of the tax due from their surplus income to reduce the tax burden.

The state of the Society was not good in October 2019 as Gail Paul laid it out before the Council. This was as she requested to draw Shs400,000 from their money market account at CBA to cover a shortfall.

Some new expenses were the audit bill was of Shs 205,000, and a tax bill of Shs 320,000. The Council invited all district treasurers to contact Gail Paul as they also considered shopping for a less expensive audit firm as they had incurred extra expenses from the change of auditors.

Gail Paul recommended they split the tax equally with all the districts, leaving the council to also pay 10%. Some districts were okay with contributing to reducing the tax amount but not the audit fee. Later, the auditor offered a 20% reduction on their fee for the year 2020 saying that the audit was complicated, and the fee was not unreasonable.

There was also a saving as Vishy Talwar told the council, in that, the individual audits for each district would each be about Shs 60,000 but the consolidated amount for the whole society was about Shs 200,000 for 2019. It was then agreed that the council pays the audit fee, and the districts would pay the tax in a pro-rated portion.

Gail Paul stepped down as Hon. Treasurer in 2021 and, at the request of the council, she agreed to stay on for six months while they looked for a replacement. In September, she recommended that they retain the firm of Rajni Shah & Company for the year 2021 audit and asked the Council to approve their re-appointment.

In November 2021, the council was introduced to Yaksha Shah and Reema Mohindra who were the new joint Honorary Treasurers of the Council and who would take over on November 29. They both worked as finance directors and were members of the Thika District of the KHS. The Council passed a resolution confirming the retirement of Gail Paul as honorary treasurer and confirming that Yaksha & Reema would also be signatories to the bank accounts. Sally Shaw thanked Gail Paul for the huge amount of work done over the years including merging all the district accounts and setting up new systems.

In 2022 the districts submitted subventions of 25% of income to the council. By June 2022, North Coast, Limuru, Machakos, Naivasha & Mombasa Districts had all made timely payments.

In 2022, to improve revenue collection, Nairobi district wanted to activate a service from Pesapal and have all its membership fees and donations come through it. This was after many people had reported it was difficult to buy the Society's Gardening in East

Africa book from the website and they hoped that Pesapal would streamline the process.

The council agreed to get the company activated. It would be a good test of the service ahead of new arrangements with third-party suppliers and sales of merchandise for the KHS centenary celebrations.

Jex Blake Garden Continues

In July 2020, Pravin Bowry brought some great news that the long-running case of the Jex Blake Memorial Garden had been ruled in their favour. This meant that the Society was once again the owner of a small triangle of land in Upper Hill after 11 years in court. While their lawyers at Kaplan & Stratton said the claimants could appeal, the council resolved that the title must be found along with the Trust document, and the plot repossessed to have the beacons surveyed and wall built around it.

They appointed a surveyor to visit the site and Ramani Land Services found that the area that the Society had been bequeathed had been 1956 was halved by the expansion of the road reserve between 1953 and 1990. The lawyers at Kaplan said a shack had been erected on the land and suggested asking the Police to help remove it.

The road plot was further degraded as the roads authorities and the China Road and Bridge Company started construction without informing the Society, cut all the plants and trees, and put a storm drain in the middle of the plot.

They managed to put a pause to this, and the builder offered to remove the storm drain, backfill the garden and restore the plants. They sought a letter from the Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) accepting their responsibility for encroachment and damage to the plot which they had verbally promised to reinstate.

In 2022, Vishy Talwar reported to the Council that he had walked through the site and that the remaining land is too small and had no access to the plot. The KHS would now seek full compensation from KURA and look to buy another piece of land where they can put up a botanical garden and library.

Aside from the uncertainty over the Jex Blake Memorial Garden in 2022, the KHS was also served with a notice by the East African Wildlife Society (EAWS) that it would have to seek a new long-term office space. This came after the EAWS decided to sell its premises on Riara Road and move to Karen.

Overcoming the Covid-19 global pandemic

Ahead of the year 2020, vibrant shows and activities were planned by several districts. They reported to their council on plans including for a Mombasa District Flower show in February 2020, Nakuru District planned a flower show between May 22-24, and Thika Flower show in November 2020 and possibly another with their AGM. The Nairobi district would have its AGM on March 21, and a plant sale on April 4 then a flower show from June 12 to 14, 2020

The Council would meet in February and then in April, with the Society's AGM on the day after the council meeting. The KHS AGM was planned for April 25, 2020 at the Nairobi Botanical Garden at the National Museum where they planned to display the winning designs from a competition to be held to redesign the Memorial Garden. The AGM would also be shortly after receiving a judgment in the long-running Jex Blake Memorial Garden case, that was expected on 23 April 2020.

Thika District had its AGM on February 27, and its members had earlier graced the first-ever AGM of Machakos district. Thika members also planned to take part at the Nairobi flower show in June.

But as corona virus cases spread across the world, health authorities noted that the disease which emerged in China, was steadily spreading across the world, from Asia, then Europe, America and Africa. On March 13, 2020 the Kenyan government announced that the country had confirmed its first case of corona virus, and on March 15, President Uhuru Kenyatta announced the immediate closure of all schools and encouraged people to work from home. In the coming days, more new cases were announced and several leaders disclosed they were in quarantine or had tested positive.

Amid this, Mt. Kenya district managed to have its AGM and a flower sale on March 18, 2020 that raised Shs 11,200. There, the Chairman of Nanyuki Hospital gave an update

on corona virus in area at a time when there was a lot of fake news, rumours and panic about the disease. The AGM was held outdoors in the garden of Sophy Grattan who was one of their members and attended by 22 others. Mt Kenya would not resume physical activities for the next 18 months.

Other districts were not as lucky, and in short order, they had to cancel their activities. This was as the government had stepped up with new stay-at-home and social distancing rules were enforced, closure of social venues, along with evening curfews and prohibition on movements outside Nairobi, and Mombasa. Kenya also cancelled all passenger flights into the country.

Both Nairobi and the North Coast districts cancelled their AGMs. For the large North Coast that population centers at Malindi, Watamu, Kilifi and Vipingo this was at a cost as they usually raised funds through a raffle at the AGM.

The Council met virtually on the morning of April 24, 2020, on Zoom, the online meeting and communication platform that became popular across the world during the pandemic. It was the first time for most participants to try it and some had technical glitches which became the norm as people connected from their homes during the shutdown. One of the people on the call was Dr. Diana Karanja representing the newest district of Kisumu that had been launched just a month before.

Later, Nairobi did an online questionnaire and only 50% wanted Zoom meetings but were comfortable staying in touch on WhatsApp. Sally Shaw said this was an ideal time to try out new ideas. Thika and Kisumu were okay with WhatsApp as was Machakos whose 30 members were comfortable using it for meetings. They had chats on gardens and gardening methods and observed a strict edict to keep their chats on topic.

Partly inspired by Machakos and with the need to stay in touch, North Coast started a WhatsApp group and Nairobi officials offered to help guide them on this. In a few months, the North Coast WhatsApp chat room was active as members posted district and KHS notices and shared plant identifications, flower arrangements, photos, links and websites of relevance.

Later, as they got more comfortable with the online tools, each district was asked to send in content for the website, ideally a monthly story and a picture.

With time, they found that social media was a great tool for keeping each other connected and they had different kinds of interaction. Members got to re-introduce themselves and show their gardens and Sally Shaw said that it had encouraged more interaction between the districts, and they could all benefit from learning each other's styles of gardening. In an odd way Zoom meetings would also save on travel allowances.

Initially, Nairobi members were not keen on Zoom early in the year which had started with heavy rain that disrupted their plans to work on the maze. Facebook was more appealing, but they later settled in well on WhatsApp. Nairobi started WhatsApp group in the second quarter of 2020 and held three events, two quiz competitions and a garden fundamentals talk followed by Q & A with Alice Migwi of Gardenology. The group became more active as members planned for a flower show. It ran from 17 August to 1 September and got participation from other districts with impressive showings by members of Nakuru and Thika.

North Coast brought on 40 new members, and they planned a virtual flower show and Thika added a virtual show. Nakuru also staged a virtual show though they were concerned about leniency in the judging as it was difficult to judge quality from a photograph. Nairobi also later suspended virtual plant shows as it was felt that physical ones were best.

Katy Barnes asked district chairs to encourage their members to follow the society's social media pages and to tag the Kenya Horticultural Society in their posts using hashtags like #gardeningkenya to help the KHS connect with their work and create awareness for the Society. But there was a caution to this. Monica Kerretts said members had security concerns about sharing posts on social media as many of their meetings were held at private residences. It was recommended to only share such information on the members area on the KHS website. The North Coast which has planned to continue producing its quarterly magazine Shamba Times online, offered to have it shared on the Society's website.

As preparation of the accounts was delayed, the Society's AGM was postponed as council officials needed to have accounts to be sent out in time. But holding an AGM remained vital for the districts.

Then, in September 2020, the North Coast district managed a slimmed-down, social-distanced, masked meeting at the Malindi home of their Chairman. It was attended by 41 members, gardeners, and guests. As it was successful gathering, they planned for more meetings in Watamu and Kilifi, as well as a Christmas Day Cruise from Turtle Bay.

In October 2020, just when many in the country thought Coronavirus was fading, a second wave broke out. This put a pause to more physical meetings, and they continued WhatsApp and email.

But even as meetings were disrupted by the covid period, other activities continued at the Society. Sally Shaw and Miriam continued updating the handbook and the first draft has been circulated for members to read and email comments. Eventually, the council approved amendments to the handbook in July 2022 and soft copies were to be availed for download by everyone.

Nairobi did not hold an AGM but resumed in-person meetings late in 2020 hoping that this would bring member numbers back up. Eventually, they held an AGM on Zoom on 7 Nov 2020 with 40 members and this was followed on November 25 with their first in-person event since February. This was a visit to Vertical Gardens Kenya off Waiyaki Way, near Kikuyu, a venture that aimed to show how using hydroponic means could increase farming capacity many times more than traditional farming.

Virtual AGM in 2020

The Council had planned to have a physical AGM on November 21, but because of the disease resurgence, it was done virtually a week later.

Sally Shaw welcomed members to the first, and what she hoped would be the only, virtual AGM of the Society on the morning of November 28, 2020.

During the meeting, members re-appointed the auditor and council. All members of the council had agreed to stand for re-election except for Pravin Bowry. Treasurer Gail Paul gave a brief explanation of the financial changes with the new QuickBooks system and the work of compiling a single central report for the society, which was mandated by KRA. Sally Shaw saluted Gail Paul for her exceptional work in consolidating all district

accounts into one report after numerous conversations with district treasurers and the auditors. In this, she was assisted by Mariam who did a crash course on QuickBooks.

Sally Shaw noted that being virtual had enabled districts to have more meetings and so in future would probably retain a mix of physical and virtual ones. Since their first Zoom in April 2020, the council had three meetings. In 2019, the Society added Machakos district but lost Egerton, and then in March 2020, it added Kisumu that had a very enthusiastic good group of gardeners.

In the next year, Machakos members found that with WhatsApp in place, which all members used, their own website was rather redundant and could use the main KHS website for updates.

Then in April 2021 Nakuru district held an online meeting in which members were invited to create gardens in their homes using waste materials and display the results, and it got a wonderful response.

Mt. Kenya plodded on without a WhatsApp group in 2021. It saw a transition as Ann McConnell resigned after 5 years as Chairman. Liz Coverdale and Maria Epsom both resigned from the Committee due to too many other commitments. And, just before the Covid outbreak, Jane McKeand had stepped down from being their Treasurer after 28 years. The new Chairman elected was Jill Brooke. Also, Jim Birnie donated many botanical books to the branch. The books had been in the custody of his wife, Anne Birnie a long-time member, who had died at age 82 in November 2020. Anne had edited many publications on horticulture in East Africa and was a knowledgeable and enthusiastic member of the Society.

Denise Campbell requested that in these lonely and anxious times it would be refreshing to meet up at various members' homes, simply to interact and have a coffee and some garden gossip. One district member Sarah Withey would represent the district on the KHS Council Centenary committee. As Nanyuki Cottage Hospital was also celebrating a centenary, the district would contribute to an initiative to plant 100 indigenous trees.

The North coast resumed normal activities with the removal of covid-related restrictions, and with the assumption that covid measures would not change. The district now had

246 members and set out to bring its numbers back up to the levels of the years 2018-19. In a welcome move in 2021, Naivasha-Gilgil members purchased T-shirts and caps from the North Coast District for their gardener members.

They ran their garden course and 114 gardeners attended, each paying KSh1,000. The NCD held its 51 AGM in March 2021 which they had skipped in 2020 due to covid. It was staged at the Chairman's home with not more than 15 attendees, and there they combined a review of both years' activities.

Then in October 2021, 35 members made a visit to the Grumbley Garden in Malindi, the house and garden created by the long-serving District and KHS Chairman, the late Tom Grumbley and Joan Grumbley. They were hosted by his son Rob Grumbley who gave an interesting talk on the background of how the garden was created by his parents, both of whom were very keen gardeners. Tom Grumbley had made many overseas trips as a tea executive during which he would gather seeds and seedlings which he then planted at the garden in Malindi. The guests were given a tour of the garden, which was full of aloe, cacti, desert roses, and other dry and rare plants.

North Coast removed members who had not paid the subscriptions and discovered they had lost a lot of friends in Watamu which could have been due to the absence of the recruitment initiatives by the late John Golds and Annie Norton-Griffiths.

It was a large district with population centers at Malindi, Watamu, Kilifi and Vipingo. Nevertheless, Rupert Partridge helped keep the district going even with just 50% of their expected subscription income. Later, Elfried Hoogweegen who had run the district pop-up shop for many years, left Kenya and stepped down from the committee. It was deemed a priority to find a member to run the shop as it made a significant contribution to the district's bottom line.

2021 AGM

The 97th Annual General Meeting of the Kenya Horticultural Society held on the morning of Saturday 24 July 2021 at Living Machines, Miotoni West Road, Karen was a mix of the physical with the virtual

It was limited to 50 guests who were all asked to carry a chair and mug to the venue while other officials signed on to the broadcast shared on Zoom. Sally Shaw said that, while before 2020 many had not heard of Zoom, today were following the AGM from their homes and that generally, attendance was higher on Zoom at the Council, especially with district chairmen from out of town.

It opened with a sad note as they observed a moment of silence in honour of Joanna Stutchbury, a long-time member of the KHS, who had been shot dead the previous week. She had been passionate about protecting the Kiambu Forest and members were later encouraged to plant indigenous trees there in her memory. Dr Manu Chandaria offered to assist the Society in the endeavour.

Sally Shaw's three-year term ended in April 2021 and Vishy Talwar agreed to return as Chairman. The Council felt that this was appropriate as this would coincide with the Society's Centenary celebration. Sally Shaw told the members that Vishy Talwar, with his commercial sense, innovative ideas, and passion for gardening, was the ideal person to be at the helm.

Three council members terms ended in April 2021 and the council felt that was need for a strong enthusiastic team for the centenary. Sally Shaw paid tribute to long-serving council members Pravin Bowry and Sue Deverell who had been on committees for many years at district and council levels and who were now retiring. Bowry had helped the council navigate the legal world while Deverell had taken on the treasurer position in a temporary role that had run for 15 years. Members were invited to send in nominate names of potential new treasurers by WhatsApp as Gail Paul was also stepping down.

New Chairman Vishy Talwar, who had agreed to take over the Chairmanship for one year, thanked Shaw and presented her with a gift.

At the 2021 AGM, treasurer Gail Paul explained that with the resumption of normal activities came the realization of the impact of Covid on the accounts of the society. It had not been easy for districts to retain new members and subventions had suffered. But they had finally managed to transfer the accounts from the districts to the council.

Gail Paul emphasized the need to work to reduce the large inventory amounts that stemmed from the remaining stocks of copies of their Gardening in East Africa book.

Sustainability & Corporate Membership, Membership Strategy

Vishy Talwar was concerned that, after an audit to record the Society's members, the true number was much smaller at about 800 not including life and honorary members.

In 2020, membership subscriptions also went down as people prioritized their spending. As a result, subventions to the Council also went down, and Gail Paul cautioned that the society would reduce activities in line with income. There was no movement on books sales from the 840 remaining and the lack of garden meetings made the sales of the calendar difficult. It was also noted that, in England, members of the RHS had asked for refunds of fees.

Vishy Talwar said the society should be much larger, with double the numbers and that a new membership drive would be a good thing to do with the centenary. He suggested instituting a joining fee for new members of Shs 4,000 and giving them a copy of the book. Profits from the sale would go to the Society's money market fund which had paid for production of the book.

Other activities to drive interest in the society included rehabilitate gardens, a national newsletter, tree planting, national gardening course and gardening tours.

The new districts would also add to the membership that had been stagnant. At the 2021 AGM, after two years of Covid, membership for 2020 was found to be 896, compared to 1,188 in 2019 and 947 in 2018.

Council members planned a strategy session on memberships where they could consult the masterplan done by Peter Paterson in 2017 and other proposals. The meeting to discuss 5-year strategy plan was held on 21 October 2021 via zoom.

While different districts had different member rates, they should be harmonized and The Council also agreed to an increase in the annual subscription rate, with members in all districts paying the same rate. This would enable them to pay for items like the audit. Each district was asked to increase member numbers by 10% and they also hoped that, in the centenary period, they could double membership to 1,500.

In November 2021 the motions of the strategy meeting were approved. There would now be a national subscription fee of Shs 1,500 as the council considered that a membership fee of Shs 1,000 was now too low. While some districts, like Mt. Kenya, wanted to keep the single fee at Shs 1,000 it could not be undone. It was also agreed that membership fees will be uniform across all districts, until after centenary had passed.

While Vishy Talwar wanted to step down at the 2022 AGM, he was persuaded to stay on as he was pivotal to the centenary plans. In preparation for the future, Susan Church moved from being Hon. Secretary to the Vice Chairman seat in preparation to take over when Vishy's term ends. Sally Shaw would also stay on the Council and later, Mansi Kotak became the new honorary secretary.

Planning for the KHS Centenary

Chairman Vishy Talwar reminded the Council that the Society's centenary was coming up in 2023 and suggested a planning committee be set up. Mr John Golds proposed that a special garden be made to commemorate the event. Sue Deverell said that the first flower show had been held at the Norfolk Hotel in 1924.

Mr David Gray suggested that the minute books, which could be fascinating reading be rebound again.

Mr Talwar thought there should be a celebration in every district and suggested that plant sanctuaries be launched in the centenary year. Work could be done to beautify roundabouts such as Karen and at small gardens that could be called centenary gardens. They also considered how they could work closer with the Royal Horticultural Society, Wisley in the future, especially for the centenary.

It was determined that the Centenary should be marked in 2023 rather than 2022, with the Centenary year to run from the 2022 AGM to the 2023 AGM. Districts were asked to check their historical records and a search would also be done at the Kenya National Archives. They also planned to participate in events with other horticultural societies in Africa and the Commonwealth.

At the end of 2019 Vishy Talwar was asked to set up a centenary subcommittee and he as the Centenary Convenor was joined by Sally Shaw and Angela Lyimo. Sarah Withey from Mt Kenya district and Suraj Shah from Thika later volunteered to assist on the Centenary committee. Monica Kerretts offered to organize the archive material research which could include minute books, and Pravin Bowry recommended looking at the East African Standard and the Weekly News records in addition to the National Archives. Later they would contact Laurie Sessions for copies of the Kenya Weekly News.

For the centenary, districts were asked for feedback on ideas. They were also to share their decisions and plans for local activities, such as flower shows in different districts, with the main centenary council. This was for better planning and to avoid having flower shows in different districts on the same day

Enquires were made to see if the Kenya Orchid Society would like to participate and Talwar proposed that they buy land for an office and garden and inform the Royal Horticultural Society about the centenary plans. They decided that the KHS should rejoin the Royal Horticultural Society.

Talwar said they should seek financial support for the centenary celebrations, and one idea proposed was to stage an auction of rare plants to support the centenary budget. A souvenir booklet and commemorative stamps were considered, and the sub-committee proposed the creation of brand and logo, the building of a permanent KHS office and library and the commissioning of centenary branded merchandise to use and sell. They would hire a public relations (PR) agency to create media awareness. Two firms considered were IMG and Yolanda Tavares PR. But after reaching out, they found that PR firms turned out to be too expensive.

Sally Shaw met a referral by Monica for the writing and later, Limo Taboi was hired to write the history of the society. He indicated that it might be 500 pages long. A draft chapter about the Society's participation at the Philadelphia Flower show in 1991 was shared around. It was hoped that the book would be ready by the end of the year.

Limo Taboi had completed a draft version up to the year 2020. It was very detailed and would have to be edited down with the council members wanting to scale it down to a booklet. Now that they had a record of minute details of the society's history, they

needed to add old photos of flower shows, garden meetings and any related to the centenary to include in the publication.

In 2021, the council completed work on the history. It was then suggested they do an art auction to cover the cost of writing. Because of the laborious size and the cost, only a few copies of the book will be produced. It would also mainly be available in soft copy and serialized but they could ask corporates to advertise in it to cover the cost. Crispin Sharp and Vishy Talwar suggested having publications like Old Africa, the Business Daily Africa and Daily Nation to run articles about KHS Centenary. They welcomed links to other affiliate societies they can interact with.

They decided that the KHS should rejoin its affiliation with the Royal Horticultural Society. Besides the Garden magazine and other guidance, they would get one “best in show” medal a year which they could award at a flower show held during the centenary year. A related suggestion was to fly in an overseas judge from South Africa and to have an RHS official attend the centenary flower show. The KHS re-affiliated with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and a cheque payment was made on 22nd May 2020.

The plans narrowed down to each district being asked to plant 100 indigenous trees to signify 100 years, issue commemorative postage stamps and have a new building and office. More were centenary logo, and merchandise like t-shirts designed by Kenyan artists. Another was to introduce kitchen gardens in partnership with primary schools in each district, which would appeal to 8–12-year old's.

The committee had a target to fundraise and identify sponsors for flowers shows in each of the nine districts, publicity around the centenary, a logo design competition, cocktails and a launch event for the festivities and other activities they could leverage on to get new members. More suggestions for income generation were to have gardening courses for non-members, to advertising on the website and for members to offer consulting services.

Also, on a suggestion from the North Coast, a competition was held as to national flower challenge. Districts submitted their preference and desert rose was the preferred choice, quite popular with no dissenting voices, and they would propose this to the government.

In March 2022, the KHS received a donation of Shs 500,000 from NCBA towards the cost of planting indigenous trees countrywide for the Centenary. For this, NCBA would receive corporate membership for 2022 and 2023 and could have their branch staff attend meetings in all districts.

It was hoped the indigenous trees will provide a seed bank in future years as the trees would be labelled and catalogued. The districts are to plant trees when and where they choose but before December 2023.

The Council later decided that the NCBA donation should be evenly distributed at Shs 50,000 per district. But there was also concern that the distributed amount was not enough to cover the cost of planting and maintenance.

The Membership and People behind the KHS today and their Centenary Plans

Main Council 2022/2023

Chairman: Vishy Talwar, Vice Chairman: Susan Church, Hon Treasurer (s): Reema Mohindra and Yaksha Shah, Hon Secretary: Mansi Kotak.

Council Officials: Sally Shaw, Sally Davey, Betty Musau, Angela Lyimo, Nicole Church, Suki Mwendwa, Katy Barnes (Nairobi), Suraj Shah (Thika), Crispin Sharp (North Coast), Sally Share (Naivasha/Gilgil), Margaret Kaseje (Kisumu), Nalini Dodhia (Nakuru), Jill Brooke (Mt Kenya), Monica Kerretts-Makau (Machakos), Cecilia Abwao (Mombasa), Nyambura Githagui (Limuru).

Council Staff: Mariam Maissara (Administrative Assistant).

Kisumu District

Membership: 49 (October 2022)

Officials: Chairman: Margaret Kaseje, Deputy Chair: John Ogutu, Treasurer: Chotu Pabari, Secretary: Muskhani Singh.

Committee Members: Rosa Okwaro, Ruth Abir, Nejla Pabari, Brian Otieno.

For the centenary, members had decided that the district will plant 100 trees alongside other districts at a Kisumu Museum and a memorandum of understanding has been

signed with the institution in September 2022. Members have drawn a list of indigenous trees from the region and the site has been cleared.

Limuru District

Membership: 60

Officials: Chairperson: Dr Nyambura Githagui, Vice Chairperson: Segen Njoroge, Treasurer: Wambui Gichuri, Secretary: Hannah Karanja, Vice Secretary: Muthoni Karanja – Thande.

Committee members: Ms. Mumbi Mathangani, Mr. Jono, Carly Koinange Gilbert, Ms. Kui.

Machakos District

Membership: 123 (June 2022)

Chairman: Monica Kerretts, Hon. Treasurer: Malla Mumo, Hon. Secretary: Jackie Hunja.

For the Centenary, they created a Friends of Iveti Forest group, modelled around the Friends of Karura Forest and will plant ingenious trees there that they are now nurturing in nurseries.

Mombasa District

Officials: Chairman: Cecilia Abwao, Secretary: Vera Achieng, Treasurer: Deena Chaniyara, Assistant Treasurer: Nila Devani.

Committee members: Mumtaz Adam, Vishal Khosla, Jean Elms, John Mwakavura, Zamida Saeed, Shameem Noorani, Vinu Patel.

Mt. Kenya District

Membership: 136 (September 2021)

Chairman: Jill Brooke, Hon. Treasurer: Diana Allen, Hon. Secretary: Denise McMaster.

Committee Members: Dee Roberts, Sophy Grattan, Liz Coverdale, Rowena Gross, Maria Epsom, Di Allen, Celia Behrens.

The district planned to plant 100 centenary trees on a site of public land that was centrally located and properly fenced. After the elections of August 2022, they changed the site plans from the Nanyuki Teaching & Referral Hospital to instead look at the grounds of a public library.

Nairobi District

Membership: 210 and 142 life members (February 2022)

Chairman: Katy Barnes, Treasurer: Elvis Kaburi, Assistant Administrator: Maissara Santiago.

Committee members: Sarita Sheth, Juliet Campbell Clause, Balinder Ahluwalia, Dr. Clara D'Cruz, Sally Davey, Stacey Winston Kohli, Arjun Kohli, Natasha Colaco.

Naivasha/Gilgil District

Membership: 179 members (October 2022)

Chairman: Sally Share, Hon. Secretary: Susan Church, Hon. Treasurer: Neil Coyte.

Committee Members: Lynne Coyte, Liz Tsakiris, Kate Fjatsad, Maartje Rosenstock, Polly Taylor, Alice Murphy, Susie Millar, Reint Rosentstok, Kate Bohnert.

For the Centenary, the district will plant trees at a variety of sites, including Gilgil, Eburru, South Lake and the main street of Naivasha town in conjunction with the municipality.

Nakuru District

Membership: 46

Officials: Chairlady: Nalini Dodhia, Vice Chair: Dr. Alex Kibue, Secretary: Bindu Shah
Treasurer: Mrunalini Patel, Hon. Joint Secretary: Chebet Koitaba.

Committee Members: Nutan Patel, Janet Gathoga, Farzana Sattar, Wamboi Gibson, Nutan Patel, Sushi Shah, Aku Patel, Sneha Shah, Charmi Jakharia.

North Coast District

Membership: 244 (October 2022)

Current Officials: Chairman: Crispin Sharp, Hon. Secretary: Wendy Taylor, Hon Treasurer - Rupert Partridge.

Committee Members: Elfried Hoogeweegen (Stocks), Elizabeth Gregory (Raffles), Holly Pritchett – (Malindi), Annie Norton-Griffiths – (Watamu), Jonathan Baya Karisa – (Watamu), Gail Outram – (Kilifi), Carissa Nightingale – (Vipingo), Dorothy Kamisi – (Vipingo).

Thika District

Membership: 49 (beginning of 2022)

Current officials: Chairperson: Suraj Shah Vice Chair: Janmita Patel Secretary: Wanja Wambugu Treasurer: Wangari Njuguna.

New Committee Members: Tinu Bid, Pauline Kariuki, Nyambura Mogachi, Joseph Kimani.

Thika plans to plant 100 trees in August and have a sustainability plan to manage and care for them. Janmita is chairing the Centenary Celebrations Committee and all members have been asked to contribute 10 indigenous tree or fruit seedlings. A nursery site at Thika Greens has been cleared and has water and a gardener. The site to plant the 100 trees has been identified, through KENHA, on the left and right side of the highway at the Delview exit.