



# British Iris Society Centenary Celebration

RHS Chelsea 2022



Gallery Catalogue

## Sir Michael Foster (1836 - 1907)

This portrait was painted by Hubert von Herkomer (1849-1914), he was a German born British artist.

Foster is known as 'the father of all irises', as it was his breeding work which led the way for many others. He had the ability to inspire and encourage fellow iris growers and was very generous, sharing both his irises and his knowledge. Amos Perry recounts leaving Foster with a sack of irises on his back and one in each hand, making his way to the local station on a very hot June day. There is a National Collection of his iris which is held by Lucy Skellorn, a BIS member.  
[www.fosteririses.com](http://www.fosteririses.com)

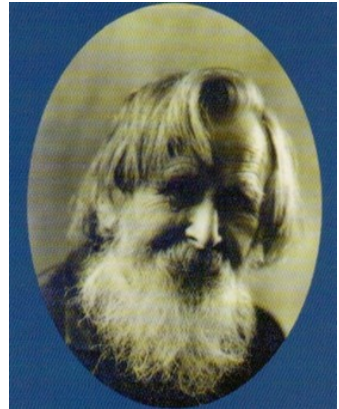


## William John Caparne (1855 - 1944)

Caparne was besotted with iris from an early age and as soon as he could, he started painting



them. It was natural that he would also breed them as well.



Caparne was inspired by Sir Michael Foster and they became firm friends. Foster used Caparne's illustrations for his RHS talk, 'Bulbous Irises'. The illustrated painting is a watercolour of *Iris tolmieana*, which is a synonym for *I. missouriensis*.

## Frank Harold Round (1879 - 1958)

Frank taught at the same school at W R Dykes, Charterhouse, he was the drawing master there. When Dykes was looking for an artist to illustrate his book, *The Genus Iris* (1913) it was Round that



he turned to. The illustrated painting is from that book, *Iris tectorum* and *I. 'Loptec'*, which is a species cross raised by Dykes.

Dykes used to appear at first light in his dressing gown and insist that Frank started illustrating a particular iris whilst it was fresh! The British Iris Society have a number of his paintings in our Image Library which include two self portraits.



## Sir Cedric Morris (1889 - 1982)



Cedric was a member of our Society and in 1949 he was given the Foster Award for his contribution to the advance of the genus *Iris*. His painting of iris species (1972) is used as our Angela Marchant trophy and is awarded annually for most species points at our shows. He raised one of the first tall bearded pink irises, 'Edward Windsor'. Members often enjoyed a visit to his garden to admire his many seedling irises.

Sarah Cook, one of our members holds a National Collection of his iris.

## Rear Admiral John Paul Wellington Furse (1904 - 1978)



Paul Furse, as he was usually known, was an active member of our Society and he contributed greatly to our knowledge of the iris family. He was awarded four RHS Gold Medals for his paintings. Some of his botanical illustrations were given to us including *Iris susiana*, reputedly one of the easiest oncocyclis species to grow. It was the first oncocyclis iris to be cultivated in Northern Europe.

## Sheila Mannes-Abbott (1939 - 2014)

Sheila was a good friend of our Society, she painted many irises and several of our members have her original paintings in their homes. Sheila was a founder member of the Society of Botanical Artists and in 2000 she was elected a fellow of the Linnean Society. She won several RHS medals including three Gold medals. Her paintings are held in all the major collections of botanical art, including the Shirley Sherwood Collection, and the RHS Lindley Library. She was also a regular contributor to Curtis's Botanical Magazine. [www.sheilamannesabbott.com](http://www.sheilamannesabbott.com)



*Iris lutescens* 'Nancy Lindsay'. Sheila painted this iris which was named and registered by Sidney Linnegar, who has been a member for nearly 70 years. Nancy collected it from a roof top in Southern France and Sidney named it in her honour, she was the inspiration for him joining our Society.



## Ruth Kirkby

Ruth came to botanical art work after a varied career but she has always had an interest in art. Working mostly but not exclusively in water colour she likes to paint whatever is in season, working from the real thing whether it is a leaf, a flower or even a vegetable. Ruth has several RHS medals to her name including a Gold Medal in 2014 for her paintings of Siberian irises.

'Wealden Mystery' (2005) was one she illustrated then, it was bred by Olga Wells, a BIS member from Kent.

[ruthkirkbybotanicals.wordpress.com](http://ruthkirkbybotanicals.wordpress.com)

## Fern Harden



Fern has created a 'Fabergé style' egg using an ostrich egg as a base, it opens to reveal an iris bloom.

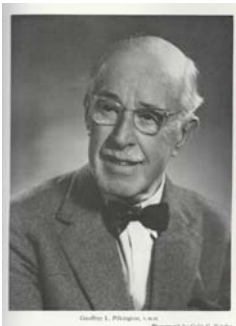


The Dartington Glass candle holder was designed and created by Kate Richardson. It was the idea of two members, Harry & Maureen Foster and was given to the Society as a Photographic trophy in 1984.



The Italian Iris Society presented us with this Ceramic Plaque to mark our Golden Jubilee.

John Moss has created a special iris piece for our Chelsea exhibit. It is made with titanium, copper and stainless steel.  
[www.mossart.co.uk](http://www.mossart.co.uk)



Geoffrey Pilkington, a founder member and ardent supporter of our Society for many years instigated the Pilkington Award for outstanding services to our Society, it is still awarded today. To mark our Centenary, Pilkington Glass, Geoffrey's family firm, have kindly donated an etched glass panel.



Our Centenary Chelsea display also features the new Moorcroft collection which has been specially created by their artists to mark this auspicious occasion in our history. Several of the designs are based on Dykes Medal winning irises, which is the highest award an iris can achieve. The first iris to achieve this in 1927 was 'Margot Holmes' an inter-species cross raised by Amos Perry. This is depicted on a tall elegant vase alongside other iridaceae flowers. The front catalogue image is an Art Deco plaque created by their senior designer Rachel Bishop. To see more of the *British Iris Society Collection* visit [www.moorcroft.com](http://www.moorcroft.com)

The British Iris Society is open to everyone who admires irises, wishes to know more about them and share in the benefits that will enable them to further their interest. Membership entitles you to -

*Year Book*—articles from home and abroad, ranging from practical advice to the more scientific.

*Newsletter*—published twice a year to keep you up to date with forthcoming events and news items.

Other benefits include the seed distribution scheme, access to our Image Library plus much more.

**[www.britishirissociety.org.uk](http://www.britishirissociety.org.uk)**

