



MICKFIELD HOSTAS



Robin: family man and hosta-holic

This particularly rare species was native to Suffolk, where he, and related types of 'Suffolk Boi', created a unique blend of individuality and inventive creativity.

A proper partnership

Through numerous disasters and challenges, Robin and Yvonne proved a resilient and stubborn partnership, refusing to be bowed by external influences.

Together Robin and Yvonne could be seen at up to 30 shows a season, across the UK and Ireland, in the early days of the business. They worked so hard to build the name and reputation of Mickfield Hostas, whilst building their National Collection of Hosta, both at the nursery and on the road.

Robin and Yvonne often spoke warmly of all the friends they had support from as they started on the show circuit and were only too willing to help new-comers in turn before retiring from exhibiting in 2011.

At the shows, Yvonne was so often left to 'hold the fort' whilst Robin disappeared to help a fellow exhibitor, get into lengthy conversations with customers and friends, or enjoy his pipe. Indeed she would often look after other exhibitors' stands too whilst the fellas were off sorting out problems.



Hosta fabric

A dear friend made us all some waistcoats and bunting for the 2009 season. This is Robin looking pleased with the effect of it wrapped round the sales table at the Harrogate Spring Show. We recently unearthed the bunting and strung it up in the orchard for our annual family get-together in August.

The waistcoats were only worn during the 2009 season because, by the end, we



Exhibitors on the show circuit would often avail themselves of Robin's tool kit, an expansive collection of hand and powered tools he had amassed over time to deal with all the various problems he would face in building a display. Roy followed in his footsteps, packing all manner of equipment, just in case...

Robin's offspring

Mel (the first born)

A proverbial 'chip off the block', somewhat outspoken champion of anyone, or anything, she cares about. Too much like her parent plant for her own good, stubbornly rooted with a low centre of gravity. The last trait is rather important, she doesn't need staking but a few extra inches would have been useful!

Roy (can you improve on perfection?)

A somewhat over-engineered offspring sharing many characteristics of the parent plant. His physical strength and loading capacity is impressive and his sense of the ridiculous is finely tuned. Self-deprecating and dismissive of his value but the business would be lost without him.

Andrew (of course you can ;))

Robin was proud of his seedlings but then the appearance of Andrew, a hybrid of Mel and David, was to add the next generation to the Milton genus.

Andrew accompanied Robin and Yvonne to many shows when he wasn't required to be at the school and when he attended the Hampton Court Flower Show in 2009 show (header photo) for his work experience week, his financial acumen and managerial qualities became apparent. We soon realised who we were working for but we had to train him not to look too avaricious by rubbing his hands together (Fagin-like) when a sale was obviously in the making.

were cheesed off with being asked for them. Everyone wanted to know where they could get them, or the fabric - they didn't want the plants!

Robin was quite a maverick when it came to displaying his plants at shows and was certainly ahead of the game when he decided to display hosta as the Japanese do, bare-rooted in special vases.

Hosta root systems vary across the genus and he wanted to illustrate this. It would have been hard to imagine a less positive reception to the result and the show organiser threatened to ban him from the show if he did anything like it again - expletives removed.

As flower shows try to become more innovative and attempt to deliver new and exciting content for their visitors. That display would probably get a best in show nowadays...



Stone me!

As an ex-Merchant Navy serviceman and sea fisher, Robin's love of the sea was something that drew us to the coast on occasions when we all felt the need to reset ourselves. We did this when Robin's beloved sister Janet died and so the family revisited Felixstowe after we left the hospital on Thursday.

While we were there David saw a white stone on the shore, which looked like it had writing on it. He bent over to pick it up and on the underside was a painted Robin - you just couldn't make it up.



Recent events

On October 10th the family went to Felixstowe for a fish and chip lunch and to watch activity at the port. Seven weeks to the day of that last outing Robin passed away. Rather typically he was on his own schedule and went before we could get to the hospital - he was always in a hurry.

RIP Robin: 24/6/1942 - 28/11/2019

There is a brilliant poem by Linda Ellis, called The Dash and we feel it carries everything we would like to say about the importance of the dash between the two dates:

"For that dash represents all the time they spent alive on earth and now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth."

Team Mickfield Hostas

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