Cambridge Society of Dorset: Why are flowers different colours?

An illustrated talk on 8th May 2018 at 10:30am, by Professor Beverley Glover, Director of the Cambridge University Botanic Garden and Professor of Plant Systematics and Evolution, in the Layard Theatre, Canford School, Wimborne BH21 3AD, followed by lunch and an optional tour of the Canford Arboretum.

Professor Glover will explain that the answer to her question lies in the curious relationship of flowers and pollinators, a subject which has fascinated biologists for centuries and is more important than ever in a world with increasing demand for food. Flowers and the animals that pollinate them interact at a single key point – the epidermis or “skin” of the petal. This single layer of tissue provides (a) the visual advertisement of nectar and pollen rewards, (b) the tactile surface on which pollinators land, gripping or slipping, and (c) the scents that attract pollinators over longer ranges. She takes an integrated approach to understanding the petal epidermis, and her recent research has focused on its optical and tactile properties at the nanoscale and microscale level.

Beverley Glover was appointed to her current posts in 2013. She gives strategic leadership to the 40 acre heritage Botanic Garden which holds a research and teaching collection of 8000 species, hosts 280,000 visitors per year, and offers a vibrant cradle-to-grave education programme, supported by 60 staff and an annual budget of £2 million. She carries a full teaching load in the Cambridge Department of Plant Sciences, has carried out research at Cambridge since 1996, and publishes widely in her field. She has served on numerous University and College committees and boards. She has taken part in many international conferences and research seminars. She has won several prizes and honours, including the Bicentenary Medal of the Linnean Society, and been appointed to the Councils and Boards of a range of relevant societies and publications.

Please follow the signs from the main entrance to the Sports Centre, where parking will be available. The Layard Theatre is a short walk from there. Tea and coffee will be served in the foyer of the Layard Theatre at 10:30, before we move on for the talk in the Theatre, which will start at 11:00. We have invited interested members of staff and students to join us for the talk. After questions to Professor Glover, a finger buffet lunch will be served at about 12:45 in the Long Gallery. Andrew Powell, a biology teacher at the school since 1990 is a graduate of St Catharine’s College, and has been a great help in organizing this day. He is also “Master i/c Trees” and as an optional extra, will lead a party including Professor Glover round the Arboretum in the School’s lovely grounds. This tour is likely to start at 13:45 and last about an hour.

The cost per head for members and guests will be £15 each. Payment can be made by bank transfer to The Cambridge Society of Dorset, or by cheque. Our bank account is with HSBC, sort code 40-17-22, account number 31130641. If you pay electronically, this must be done when you return the slip and please give your surname and ‘Flowers’ as the reference on the bank transfer. Please return your booking slip (and cheque if appropriate) by e-mail or post to: Mrs Bobby Knowles, 62 Floral Farm, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3AU (Tel: 01202 884845) e-m: edward@ebknowles.plus.com by Friday 27 April 2018. Please enclose a SAE if you wish your booking to be acknowledged and note that there may be a delay before your cheque is paid in.