



GHS at 50

THE GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

news

11th Annual Essay Prize, 2015 Congratulations

The 2015 annual GHS essay prize has been won by **Josepha Richard** from Sheffield University, for her fascinating essay *Uncovering the Garden of the Richest Man on Earth in Nineteenth-Century Guangzhou: Howqua's Garden in Henan China*. This essay is of particular interest as very little work has been done on early nineteenth century Chinese horticulture by either Western or Eastern garden historians. The merchant's gardens of Canton (Guangzhou) were often the only Chinese gardens encountered by Europeans, as most foreigners at the time were forbidden to travel beyond the port city. While these gardens were described in visitors' diaries, paintings and early photographs, Richard has examined Chinese as well as European sources, to provide a conjectural reconstruction of the grandest and most famous of Canton's merchant gardens. The judges were particularly impressed by Richard's scholarly approach, the range of references she unearthed, and her thoughtful, and convincing, analyses of what is often mere scraps of information.

Melanie Veasey of Buckingham University was also Highly Commended for her essay *The Richest Form of Outdoor Furniture: The Open Air Exhibition of Sculpture at Battersea Park, 1948*. This detailed exploration makes excellent use of primary sources, particularly the archives of the London County Council, to examine the legacy of this seminal outdoor sculpture exhibition which introduced the British public to contemporary art, created a fashion for open air sculpture and established the reputation of Henry Moore.

Other entries addressed such diverse subjects as monastic ruins in eighteenth century gardens, royal parks and war memorials in the urban landscape.

Katie Campbell

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The Society gratefully acknowledges the support of Alan Baxter and Associates

Our cover features an urn in the gardens at Petworth, perhaps symbolising the friendship that binds the Society together. Petworth's ancient Deer Park is just one of the historic landscapes saved by the Garden History Society, in this case from being divided up by an intended by-pass.
Photo by Letitia Yetman.

More Congratulations

Our heartiest congratulations go to our Chairman **Dominic Cole** who has been awarded **OBE** in the latest round of Queen's Birthday Honours.

The award is richly deserved, and is given for his 'services to landscape conservation'.

Hip, hip, huzzah!

New Historic Landscape Project Officer

After 5 busy years with the Historic Landscape Project, Verena McCaig has now left to focus on her role with the Heritage at Risk team in Historic England's London office. Verena made a massive contribution to the conservation of historic designed landscapes through her work building the HLP to support County Gardens Trusts and encouraging a joined-up approach with the Garden History Society, and we are immensely grateful for all her efforts.

Moving on, we are thrilled to have recruited an excellent new Historic Landscape Project Officer, Caroline Ikin. A member of Sussex Gardens Trust for several years, Caroline is delighted to now be getting to know other CGTs too and this promises to be an exciting year for the HLP. Following a rejig, Caroline will be looking after CGTs in the South East, London, South West and West Midlands, and Linden will be 'moving' to the North, East and East Midlands.

Do get in touch with Caroline: carolineikin@agt.org.uk or Linden: lindengroves@agt.org.uk

Fifty Years of Teamwork: here's to many more!

We are delighted that The Garden History Society is celebrating no fewer than 50 years of conserving historic landscapes, be it through research, awareness raising, or involvement in the planning system, writes Linden Groves. Looking through a timeline of its greatest adventures, its biggest successes, one of the most striking things to those of us at the Historic Landscape Project is that such a small band could never have achieved such victories for an often unsung subject without some seriously impressive teamwork, without really pulling together to make sure that limited resources of both time and money have gone a long way.

With this in mind, it seems timely to remind you of some great new resources we now have to grow this teamwork in the 21st century. The key, of course, is to build great communication between us all so that we can learn from each other's experience (all 50 years' worth!) and avoid familiar pitfalls.

Many of you will have had the pleasure of witnessing us launch the new Resource Hub at the AGT Business Meeting back in the spring, complete with party popper by way of celebration! This is a

free online treasure trove, replacing the old HLP Web Forum, packed with downloads to help you in your invaluable work conserving historic parks and gardens, from the complete set of HLP Planning Training handouts and presentations, to Historic England's library of guidance documents, to handy examples of documents produced by County Gardens Trusts (CGTs) for all kinds of things from volunteer recruitment to garden history study days. Documents from the AGT-GHS Joint Conservation Committee are also housed here, including template planning letters and meeting minutes.

(continues on page 32)

Dr Keith Goodway

Members will be sad to hear that Keith Goodway, former GHS chairman, died on 30 April 2015.

Keith worked in the Biology Department at Keele University, from around 1960 to 1995 as a Senior Lecturer and as Head of the Grounds Committee during which time he was responsible for the landscaping of the developing Keele campus.



Charles Boot

Keith Goodway (in terracotta) with members at Keele

Members who attended our Summer Conference at Keele, in 2011, will recall the enthusiasm and depth of knowledge he brought to our tour of a significant part of the site, both the old park and new campus. He was a great exponent of the work of William Emes.

Our condolences go to Keith's family. We will publish a full appreciation in our next **news**.

Interview with Dominic Cole, OBE

by Tim Richardson



Richard Bennett

Dominic Cole steps down as chairman of The Garden History Society in July, having held this post since 2002 (barring a two-year hiatus required by our constitution). It seemed a good moment to ask him to reflect on his time with The Garden History Society. This interview with Dominic was conducted by Tim Richardson (Council member and chair of the Education and Publications Committee) in London in May of this year.

First I wanted to ask you about your own interest in landscape. Do you remember how and where it started?

My dad was very interested in gardens and I used to help him. We moved about three times when I was young and each time we made a new garden together. That included learning how to make brick walls and lay paving, how to dig a planting pit and take cuttings.

What sort of age was this?

From the age of three upwards.

When did you become aware that this could be a job?

For a long time I thought I was going to be a professional, but I didn't know what. And at that time no one told me I could be a gardener. If they had, I think I might have gone into horticulture. My godmother knew a man on the Design Council called Gordon Russell, the famous furniture designer.

She used to take me to visit his garden in Chipping Campden and I would spend the day with Gordon. He had built his own garden and house: it was Arts and Crafts plus Modernist plus completely bonkers. It was lovely. He died aged ninety-something.

How old were you at this point?

That was between the age of about about 10 and 13. My godmother said, "Gordon says there is a profession called landscape architecture and if you're interested in the arts and you like gardening, let's try that." My dad contacted the Landscape Institute who sent me to see Peter Youngman. We went to see Peter in Kings Langley where we chatted. I guess my dad understood but I didn't have a clue. I was 13 or 14 at the time.

It does seem quite young for a serious career chat.

It was really to decide what school to go to and what 'A' levels to take. I took Biology, Geography and Art with the intention of going for landscape architecture.

This was when you were at Stowe.

Yes. I had chats with the careers master and he said, "Do you know what you want to do?" and I said, "Yes I'm looking at landscape architecture", and he said, "Oh, what's that?" Which was interesting, being at Stowe. Say no more.

I got fairly rubbish 'A' levels and applied to three colleges. I didn't get in to any of them. So I applied

to the London College of Furniture on the Holloway Road to do theatre design. I've always loved the theatre. At that interview the guy looked at my portfolio and said, "We'd love to have you, but you are much too talented. Go back and apply to the colleges again."

A week later I got a phone call from Leeds Polytechnic [now Leeds Beckett University] saying, "We are a week in and a couple of students haven't turned up, do you still want the place?" I had missed the first-week induction so I've always said throughout my career that I still don't know what landscape architecture is, because I never got told. Which I think is probably a good thing. And it went on from there.

When did you first become aware of the GHS's existence?

Oh golly, it's got to be very soon after I joined Land Use Consultants (LUC). I'd started to work on historical landscape projects, between about 1987 and 1989. And at that time, if you wanted to know anything about garden history in a wider context, your first port of call would probably be Ray Desmond's bibliography and anything in the GHS bibliography. I gradually started to go to study days and conferences, and at that time, that was it; those were the big events. There was no AGT and people would come from all over the world to the conferences. So I was very lucky at that time, because I met the top people in garden history.

So who were they?

I particularly remember, obviously, Mavis Batey and David Lambert. With Mavis, if you had a question you'd get a little note the next day, a full, proper note with references. Johnny [Phibbs] was also incredibly helpful to me. David because he was connected to all the counties, and I met people like Steffie Shields back then. Also people from around the world: for example there was Giorgio Galetti, from Florence.

So were you aware before that of garden history? Obviously you had trained as a landscape architect and worked in landscape, but up until then, not in the historical arena?

No, absolutely not. I was in central government for a bit. For my year out [at Leeds Polytechnic] I worked for a property services agency in Croydon, dealing with prisons and mental institutions. I then worked for a landscape architect called Gernot Jung, who was just doing car parks and supermarkets.

I taught for a year as a design tutor at Leeds: I used to go up two days a week. And then I joined LUC and after about six months started to work on a couple of historic landscape projects. The first ones I did were Audley End and Wrest Park.

I got into that more and more, and when Liz Banks left LUC I took on the portfolio of historic projects; though part of that portfolio was royal parks, which a colleague kept. So I got interested. I wasn't a historian; I hadn't done history; I wasn't interested in history. But I suddenly realised I kind of needed to know about it.

Continuing professional development?

Yes, except in my case I didn't just want to put back a flower bed or a railing 'because it was there'. I wanted to know why it was there and what it was for. I found quite a lot of the garden historians very, very single-focused; they couldn't contextualise or tell a story in an interesting way.

My history was very much self-taught; I suppose I followed social history and the work of people like Professor Plumb at Cambridge who educated Simon Schama. And there was Roy Porter; whose history of London was absolutely stunning. I was not looking at gardens particularly but trying to understand how everything fits together.

Were there many people at that time who you could call a 'historical landscape consultant'? Was that a recognised job or role at that time, or was what you were doing unusual?

It was very unusual. There were about three companies doing it; LUC, Debois (which is Johnny Phibbs) and Colvin & Moggridge. And later Liz Banks left LUC to set up her own practice.

It was rare, as we discovered later when we went to conferences in Europe; we were seen as brilliant because we were dealing with [landscape history] as a profession, rather than it just going to a planning department.

And then the late Keith Goodway, when he was chairman of the GHS, said the society needed more young blood, and I think he got me, Charles Boot and Richard Bisgrove.

We were three so-called 'young Council members', I was in my late thirties by then, but I'd been a member for 20 years, not very active. If there was a good conference, then you would just jolly well go because they were great fun. But to this day I have never been on a GHS foreign tour.

Is there a reason for that?

Well, partly financial and partly because I didn't want to spend my holidays (because that's what it would have been) doing my day job. And to be honest, in the early days the thought of going on a tour with a lot of garden historians utterly horrified me.

You're often a little ambivalent about these things or else have a challenging view.

Well, I think that what I noticed was that, let's say, there was a study day on a subject I was interested in. Occasionally there could be a bad apple in there

Interview with Dominic Cole, OBE

who would just drone on about a particular subject, slightly ill-informed but terribly pleased with themselves. I felt that there were a couple of areas of the society that were not pulling their weight, and one was the study days and winter lectures. I felt we could do more with them, make them more entertaining and less exclusive.

And then there's the garden party, which I've always seen as a huge opportunity to say thank you to everybody. And also to showcase. You get English Heritage, the RIBA, all the presidents and so on, and it became something on the calendar. So you developed this practice at LUC through the 1990s. When did you join the Council of the GHS? That was in the mid 1990s, when David Jacques was chair. We used to meet in the Society of Antiquaries in the courtyard of Burlington House and it was very peculiar: very hierarchical and formulaic. Various officers would be allowed to speak but it was quite a dreary format. You got the feeling that the actual business of the society, not the garden history, was all kept by the executive, and if you had a question you got slapped down. That was terrible and we all used to fall asleep, because we weren't asked to get involved.

I was invited on to the conservation committee but I couldn't ever think of anything to contribute, partly because David Lambert was so clever and high-powered. I just felt: I'm not a historian, why am I on this committee?

Would you describe yourself as a garden historian now?

No. One of the big drivers for me when I was invited to become chair, was to do with business efficiency and making it a more accessible and entertaining subject. I was fascinated in trying to make this society work on a business level rather than at an academic level. Academically, I thought we were fine. At the time I thought: we're loaded with academics, but we haven't actually got anybody who can do anything practical.

Wasn't conservation quite effective at that time? Forgive me, it was. That was David Lambert.

By practical, you mean in terms of the workings of the society. Making it effective and ... solvent. [For more detail on this turbulent period in the GHS's history and the poor state of finances inherited by Dominic as chair, see the timeline entry for 2000.] Yes, and how to involve people. How to generate money out of the events. Let's say a meeting day of the GHS at the Society of Antiquaries. When I first became chairman I discovered we were paying £900 per day to have those meeting rooms. If you have four meetings a year, that's nearly £4,000; and we didn't have any money. When we had the opportunity of free meeting rooms thanks to Alan

Baxter [GHS vice president] several people said, "Oh it's terribly important we meet at the Royal Academy." It was a snob thing. So I cancelled that.

And I had to cut several salaries as well. I knew that we would start raising money but at that moment we had to stop haemorrhaging money. I cut down the publication of the *newsletter*, we just did one side of A4. I cut the journal down to one per year for a couple of years [though we later caught up again].

You were asked to be chairman in 2002; two years after the financial problem arose, or emerged. It was not instantaneous. There was a finance sub-committee dealing with the problems in that interim period. I think that when I was asked, the idea was that I would be a figurehead. But then I started to ask difficult questions.

You didn't change the essential aims and remits, or the makeup of the sub-committees. The GHS like many organisations is a hydra with many heads doing different things. You think that's a model that works? I probably sat down and rewrote the structure 50 million times and I did tweak it. I got rid of the executive and we started doing the finance in the Council meetings. I thought that was important. But it took up a lot of time. So I formed the Finance and General Purposes Committee with the intent that it would just do the business, it wouldn't be an executive. I did really try to keep Council on their toes about finance. I simplified the accounts so they were legible; that worked for a time.

As far as the other committees go, I did not see any reason for change. Ed and Pubs was always tootling along fine.

I haven't experienced difficulties and rivalries with any of the other committees. There isn't a great deal of physical overlap in what we do.

No, there isn't. The opportunity was to increase awareness of what we do, particularly through the media, and by reaching a wider and younger audience. You set up the Goldsmiths' lectures as part of that. Yes, I talked it through with Pippa Rakussen. She was always interested in education as well and she said she wanted to give the society some money. I had been brewing this idea, because landscape architects are useless at garden history and the people who actually enact the restoration of gardens are generally horticulturists.

My idea was to start giving talks to colleges of horticulture and landscape schools. There would be a free talk on offer and the person from the GHS would be paid a nominal sum. The aim was to set up a register of lecturers. At the end of each lecture students would have the opportunity to join the GHS for a fee of £10 [they still can]. So it was

education and also recruitment. But it fell down in almost all areas.

There were very few people who were willing or able to offer the right kind of lecture, which was a general introduction to garden history. Quite a few of the colleges came back and said they didn't want a free lecture because they were already running garden history courses (when they were running these 6-week courses at half-an-hour a week, which was nothing like what we were offering). I got through to one or two of them. Eventually I just thought, 'I'll do it'. I was doing about six a year. You'd get different disciplines coming in to the lecture, and tutors as well as students. I think in the first year we recruited about 100 members. Obviously quite a few of them faded away.

Have you noticed in your time any change in the status of garden history? And does its continuing low status bother you?

I do get frustrated when art historians present things as mysteries when specialists in our area can answer their questions.

Are you not bothered that garden history has not made great strides in the realm of academia?

I am hugely bothered; in the same way I am bothered that landscape architects don't have any status. Even now?

It's going down I think. The attitude of the profession to landscape and garden history is, well, first of all, it's incredibly ignorant. There's this idea that we are still a nation of gardeners and that we don't need garden history. I'm not surprised that it's still a specialist subject.

Do you think the term 'garden history' is problematic?

Yes.

In what way?

I think it's a good term in some ways, probably because I'm used to it. But because I'm not a historian, as soon as someone says 'motor car history' or something like that, I immediately turn off. So I can imagine other people are doing the same with garden history. Put the two words together and it's actually a slightly disastrous name.

Well, of course we now have the new organisation, The Gardens Trust, and you have been a driver in creating that. The ostensible reason or impetus was the sense that there wasn't enough money from government for both the GHS and the AGT to function...

No, it was more than that. The original impetus I actually started as soon as I became chairman. I went to the AGT, to the Museum of Garden History [now the Garden Museum], to the London Parks and Gardens Trust, the Royal Horticultural Society and the National Trust and I said, 'Look, we are a small

organisation. All of us are doing the same things, how about some coming together?' And of course at that time I was like a leper because everyone knew about the state of the GHS's finances.

So everyone said, 'We like the idea, but we're not interested.' But I never lost that ambition to prevent particularly the AGT and county gardens trusts organising the same events as we had done the previous year. They would look at our speakers and then invite them to do exactly the same thing the following year. When I was running the winter lectures, I always made sure we didn't have people whom the LPGT would want, because of conflict of interest.

So to you it's always been lurking in the background that these two or more organisations exist and overlap with their remit and membership. Recently it's a matter of the funding issues which have arisen from EH, setting off the process. And the people involved accepting the idea.

The process started at least five years ago when we opened formal discussions with the AGT. I've always thought it was blindingly obvious that there shouldn't be all these organisations.

Are you torn at all about the idea of the GHS and its name going? The identity of the GHS will be history itself in July 2015, it seems.

I'm not sentimental about it because there are so many things that need to be updated. We need to be a phoenix. The GHS has to become a new organisation. What are you looking forward to it being able to do? I'd like there to be more members, even if people are members by being affiliated via their county gardens trust. A very long term ambition would be to have the county gardens trusts as regional members of one society rather than existing as individual charities. Not through any kind of grandiose ambition of my own but because I like things to be as simple as possible.

What about the campaigning role?

The way the GHS conservation team is now working, I am fully aware of exactly what is going on. We are going around talking to individual county gardens trusts and helping them understand how to work in the conservation sphere. It's really starting to work. What it means is that if a particular case comes up, the individual county gardens trust has a central organisation it can turn to for advice. There's going to be a firewall. I can go and shout at a local authority without worrying that it's going to affect the day-to-day planning casework undertaken by the county gardens trusts.

I don't want to push my own boat out, but the work I have been doing with the Water Gardens at Hemel Hempstead is an example. Okay, it is a

Interview with Dominic Cole, OBE



Landscape Institute Library, MERL

The then newly laid out Water Gardens, Hemel Hempstead

personal interest as well as garden history, but by shouting about it, getting the press interested, getting myself on to the board, I've helped. That's been one of the more interesting things I've done with garden history, and it wasn't that difficult.

Do you think there is any danger of this new Gardens Trust becoming more bureaucratic? One of the nice things about the GHS is that it's all about the personalities.

I'm hoping that the new organisation will remember that and it will be the right person for the job rather than the bureaucrat who shouts loudest. The new constitution is a little bit scary and bureaucratic, but that's possibly just the way things get written legally. The important thing is to get the right people, many of whom will roll over from the existing set-up.

Looking back at the GHS, what would you characterise as its achievements?

It's definitely put the subject on the map, not necessarily with the general public but certainly within the planning system, where it is understood as something to be taken seriously. I think a 'registered' landscape is now pretty much the same as a listing for a building, the planning officers know they need to take it seriously. And I certainly think that in our garden-history academic world, it has been fantastic. The achievement of the journal has been amazing, and the conferences and foreign tours are incredibly high-powered and important. Any missed opportunities?

Allowing the breakaway of the AGT in the first place. Something we couldn't do was partnering with Parks and Gardens UK early enough, though that's not really a regret because we are now partnering with them. Once the merger with the AGT and GHS is done, the next step is to merge with PGUK.

What about membership?

It's dropped. It was at 1700 at one time and we are

now at 1200. We're not attracting a lot of new members. Part of the reason for that is the various colleges closing their courses. I regret we did not campaign harder within the colleges.

The image of the GHS has arguably been of a scholarly, slightly scary organisation with a lot of eggheads in it, and perhaps not something for 'normal' people. Is that perception a problem, or is it inevitable?

I believe it's inevitable. If you look at the other amenity societies, we are all around the same size and function in the same sort of way. I have tried to make the society more approachable with the garden party and the lectures, and by removing the hierarchy at our events. At our winter lectures it used to be there was a dinner only for the speaker and the chair. I scrapped that. There isn't a speaker's table at lunch at conferences, and so on.

I've always wanted to take away that silly hierarchy and also to meet the members. I have a huge respect for the academics, but they are not always good communicators or hosts. They don't mean to be like that, but that's how it is.

Have you enjoyed dealing with bureaucracy in your role as chairman? The process of getting things done, and not just by being the loudest person in the room. In fact you are often one of the quietest people in meetings.

I will only speak if there is something to be said. I'm comfortable in my skin.

Your famous leather trousers?

My second skin. Probably 80% of what I enjoy is actually the mechanics of how to make our organisation work and how to be effective as the GHS, which means pressing all sort of buttons not just internally but other buttons as well, whether its a local authority or a developer. I've found that absolutely fascinating, finding out how to be a good organiser. How much of your time would you say GHS matters have taken up?

It used to be two to two and half days a week. I've really cut back now; its probably about half a day.

What have you enjoyed and got out of it all?

I've learned a huge amount. I've continued to learn a lot about garden history, though now I don't feel the need take notes as I used to.

It's about how to make a success of an organisation with potential. And it's very much about the people: if we can go to a study day and have a few drinks in the pub afterwards, that's a successful day for me.

The subject has stood me in good stead. Since I left LUC, I've been up and running on my own for three years [as a historic landscape consultant] and I have not had to do any tendering, I've generally been referred. I'm doing what I know and love.

Timeline: 50 years of the GHS

by Tim Richardson, picture research by Charles Boot

1965

The best introduction to the history of the Society is the following account, entitled 'The Early Days', submitted to us in 2004 by the late Kay Sanecki, first Honorary Secretary of The GHS:

'It was in the early 1950s that Peter Hunt and I found an affinity in garden history when we worked together at Collingridge Garden Books in the old *Country Life* (Lutyens) building in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden. When we left, each soon to work freelance, we continued to co-operate on some undertakings and to explore garden history further. Following Peter's work as editor of the *Shell Gardens Book* (1964) historians began to enquire from him as to the whereabouts of source material and we became increasingly frustrated by fragmented deposits, many of them misunderstood. Peter yearned for an informed organisation and protective deposit.

After a particularly trying day in London about September 1965, we met in the tea lounge at Charing Cross Hotel, and it was there that Peter decided to 'do something about it'. After an evening of speaking to such people as Miles Hadfield, Arthur Hellyer, Ken Lemmon and Frank Clark [who had all contributed articles to the book] to seek their support, we formulated a letter which went out to everyone we could think of. The response was most encouraging.

I organised a meeting which took place at RHS Greycoat Street on November 24 1965 when, to our delight, The Garden History Society was formed. Following energetic publicity on the part of Peter Hunt and a sea of paperwork on my desk, we simply hoped that someone would turn up! About 50 people attended. Frank Clark took the Chair and because a draft Constitution had been prepared it meant that a Committee could be elected. Frank Clark became President, Peter Hunt Chairman and because I was the girl with a pen in my

hand I became Secretary (Membership Secretary, Conference and Activities Organiser, PRO, telephone answering service, etc!).

I went home with 37 three-guinea subscriptions and opened a bank account the following day. Oliver Dawson became Treasurer, followed shortly by Denis Wood (of Woods of Taplow Nursery) who managed the Society's fragile accounts for many years.

The first Committee (now Council) meeting followed about three weeks later when Frank Clark drew attention to the threat to the Duncombe Park terraces and as the Fountains Abbey Estate was for sale at the time the President offered the assistance of the Society to the West Yorkshire County Council; there was already work to be done! Early publicity was ensured by two exhibits at RHS fortnightly shows: old garden tools and photographs (in conjunction with Kodak).'

In another letter, Kay added: 'There would have been no more than 40 to 45 members in 1965 as the bulk of "founder members" joined in 1966 following the notification of constitution in January 1966.'

Peter Hunt later recalled that the November 1965 meeting marked the first time he and Frank Clark had met in person, after eight years of correspondence. Arthur Hellyer recalled being invited to this meeting: 'I was unable to attend and expected the whole scheme to collapse for lack of support. I could not have been more wrong.'

It was William Stearn who came up with the name 'The Garden History Society'.

*The Shell Gardens Book, 1964
Editor: Peter Hunt*

This is generally viewed as the first modern work of garden-history scholarship, and the glossary, garden descriptions and other elements remain useful to this day.



Timeline: 50 years of the GHS

1966

The first '*Quarterly Newsletter*' of The GHS, edited by Peter Hunt, appears in spring, 'free to members', '1s.3d. post-free to non-members'. It is 21 pages of typewritten text on A5 paper. The opening statement from the President, H.F. (Frank) Clark, reads:

'All of us welcome this first edition of *The Newsletter* as containing evidence of our Society's activities and intentions. I cannot resist quoting one of the opening stanzas of William Mason's *The English Garden* (edition of 1783):

*"Begin the Song! and ye of Albion's (and Caledonia's) sons
Attend; Ye freeborn, ye ingenuous few,
Who heirs of competence, if not of wealth,
Preserve that vital purity of soul
Whence genius taste proceeds. To you, blest youths,
I sing; whether in Academic groves
Studious ye rove; or fraught with learnings stores,
Visit the Latian plain, fond to transplant
Those arts ...
... that taught a Claude
To grace his canvass with Hyperian hues:"*

Begin the work ... no more need be added. To you, our members, we send this *Newsletter* with the reminder that the growth of the Society and the usefulness and relevance of our publications depends on the collaboration of us all and on the interest, in the aims and objects of The Garden History Society, which we stimulate.

The President'

The first executive committee of The GHS, the 'blest youths' of Mason's poem?, is recorded as elected at the inaugural meeting of the previous year [on November 24, 1965]: H.F. Clark; Oliver Dawson (Treasurer); R.G.C. Desmond (Archivist); Frederic Doerflinger; L.J. Fricker; J.S.L. Gilmour; Miles Hadfield; Roy Hay; Peter Hunt (Chairman and Editor of the Society's Publications); Susan Jellicoe; William T. Stearn; Graham Stuart Thomas; and W.G. Waters. The Honorary Secretary and first organising spirit of the GHS is Kay Sanecki.

The very first item of the *Newsletter* concerns the impending sale of the Fountains Abbey Estate and Studley Royal garden to the County Council of the West Riding. Its planning officer is quoted as saying he will recommend 'some action to further improve them [the gardens] over a period of years as they are a lovely heritage from the past'. It is noted that The GHS President 'has written ... offering the assistance of the Society in any work of restoration.' (Kenneth Lemmon also writes to the local authority to suggest that they save the garden for the nation, which Mavis Batey later describes as 'the first conservation letter' written by a GHS



Hazel Le Rougetel, GHS Collection

Kay Sanecki, first Honorary Secretary of The GHS

representative.) The second item concerns a large Scottish garden building by William Adam: Chatelherault at the ruined Hamilton Palace, Lanarkshire, which is threatened with demolition for gravel works. Elsewhere in the *Newsletter* are appeals for historic and photographic materials, as well as for a photocopying machine, and a record of three books received for the new Society's library.

The first annual conference and general meeting of The GHS is held on June 4: a one-day event held at



GHS Archive, Cowcross Street

Portrait by Rowland Hilder of Peter Hunt, the founder of the GHS, and first *Quarterly Newsletter* editor. The Hilders and Hunts were near neighbours in Kent.

Uplands Conference House and Training Centre near High Wycombe, including a visit to Dropmore in the afternoon, with a tour of the pinetum from Alan Mitchell. Thirty-five members (including one who arrives from Holland) and eight non-members enjoy 'perfect weather' on the day. The first six vice-presidents are confirmed: the Duke of Northumberland; the Earl of Rosse; Sir George Campbell of Succoth; the Hon. Mrs Terence O'Neill; Dr Harold Fletcher; and Dr George H.M. Lawrence.

The second edition of the *Newsletter* includes details of GHS 'excursions', the first of which is a trip to Chiswick House on September 17 (attended by 20 members). The editor, Peter Hunt, adds: 'It is hoped that this will be the first of many such excursions.' His hope is to be borne out magnificently. There is an appeal for donations towards the £35,000 the National Trust needs to take over the freehold, restore and endow Westbury Court Garden. The international dimension of The GHS is noticeable early on, with bulletins from France, Germany, the United States, Russia and South Africa; international membership is a feature from the start. In its first year the Society is also active in soliciting donations and lending support to National Trust campaigns to save Rievaulx Terrace and Gibside Chapel.

1967

Miles Hadfield reports that Studley Royal garden has been 'saved'. Work on a bibliography of books and articles on garden history is started. The second AGM is held at Edinburgh University in July (the month of all subsequent GHS AGMs) and includes lectures and visits to Drummond Castle, the Royal Botanic Garden, Earlshall and Kinross.

There are now GHS regional convenors covering: Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire (Edward Malins); Hampshire (Keith A. Honess); Herefordshire, Worcestershire and South Wales (Mrs M Webber); Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire (Kay Sanecki); Kent (Betty Massingham); London (Miss L.E.M. Cording); Surrey and Sussex (Oliver Dawson); Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire (John Anthony); Suffolk and Norfolk (Mea Allan); the North West (Prof J. Colhoun); and Scotland (L.J. Fricker; J.E. Robson from 1968). The annual subscription for individual members of the GHS is £22.0.

1968

In April the GHS holds a one-day seminar, 'Reconstruction and Renovation', at Stowe comprising four papers on the topic of restoration of gardens and garden buildings. Organised by George Clarke, this is a key event in the Society's

early history. There are GHS visits to Westbury Court, Hartwell House, Melbourne Hall and Sissinghurst, with the AGM held in Cheltenham (including a guided tour of the town's architecture and plan by Geoffrey Jellicoe).



Google earth

J.C. Loudon's home and office, a double villa at nos 3 and 5 Porchester Terrace, Bayswater (*above*), is preserved, as reported in the *Newsletter* by Laurence Fricker, who had been highlighting its plight to the authorities since 1961.

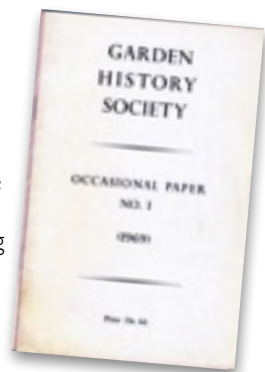
1969

The GHS chooses a 'study theme' this year: water. A spring seminar is held at Chatsworth on April 26, attended by about 80 members. The subject is 'Chatsworth as a Water Garden'. It rains heavily on the day. The theme continues with several lectures, including Christopher Thacker on fountains.

The GHS advertises its first overseas trip: a tour of Mughal gardens for three weeks in April (organised through Cadogan Travel of London). Studley Royal remains the focus of conservation concerns. The Society begins compiling a *Register of Gardens*. The AGM is held at the University of York.

A GHS '*Occasional Paper*' is published, the forerunner of the journal *Garden History*. A 'permanent' GHS kiosk, designed by John Brookes and containing exhibitions of images of garden history, is installed at Syon House garden centre.

On September 23 a small meeting is held in London which leads to the formation of a Painshill study group; Gordon Ballard has already been instrumental in getting the garden buildings listed. The impending sale of Heveningham Hall and its Brown landscape is remarked upon as a cause for concern.



Timeline: 50 years of the GHS

1970

The slow growth of the Society engenders a membership drive instigated by the executive committee.

Notices of historical additions to National Trust gardens include: new herb gardens at Gunby Hall and Acorn Bank; lakes dredged at The Vyne and Farnborough Hall; repairs to waterworks at Westbury Court (not yet open to the public) and Smallhythe Place; and restored summerhouses at Clevedon Court and Peckover.

The tone of comments in the *Newsletter* about such work at this stage refers approvingly to all 'improvements' regardless of historic exactitude, since the emphasis is still chiefly on rescuing gardens from disaster. For example: 'At Arlington Court (Devon) a transformation has taken place: some dilapidated greenhouses in the Victorian garden have been replaced by climbing plants on the back wall, with seats overlooking lavender in front, a good sitting-out place for visitors.' Similarly, a 115ft canal at Athelhampton and an orangery at Mapperton, both newly installed by the owners, are mentioned approvingly with no reference to their impact on the historic context. However, Denis Thornley of Manchester University, collaborating with Diana Uhlman of the GHS (right), undertakes the first conservation action on behalf of the GHS, by presenting evidence at a public enquiry concerning a proposed trunk road through Levens Park. The intervention proves persuasive, the road is re-routed and the Society garners considerable publicity as a result.

The AGM is held at Syon Park, with garden visits in the vicinity of London (including Wanstead Park and Hall Barn). Another '*Occasional Paper*' is published. [All the Society's publications, including the two *Occasional Papers* remain available from our printers and through JSTOR].

1971

For the first time the Society (in the shape of Edward 'Ted' Fawcett) organises and schedules for itself a foreign tour, of French gardens in May, with some 50 members visiting 15 gardens over four days, at a cost of £39 per person. The trip includes visits to Le Bois des Moutiers, Limpville, Versailles and Ermenonville, the latter proving so fascinating that the party overstays and almost misses the return ferry, as Ted Fawcett later recalls: 'As we entered the dock the gangway was swinging up, Michael's [the driver's] klaxon brought it down, and we were up and away, a dramatic end to an eventful trip.'

This year, communications with members are affected by postal strikes. Christopher Thacker takes over as editor of the *Newsletter*. The AGM is held at Wye College, Kent.

1972

The GHS notes that the fine conservatory at Hesketh Park, Southport (by Edward Kemp) has been restored, one of the first examples of restoration of a Victorian kitchen garden. It is reported that the decision to restore was made solely on the basis that a new building would cost £20,000 while the restoration would cost £10,000.

The GHS organises a week-long tour of Italian gardens in May, including Villa Lante, Bomarzo and Ninfa; a GHS day symposium on the subject at Cambridge precedes it by three weeks. The tour is reported as a huge success: 'Actuality overtopped imagination.' The AGM is held at a hotel near Ludlow, with outings to Burford House, Hergest Croft and others. Miles Hadfield is elected President. The Society holds its first annual (winter) dinner in London, at the RHS restaurant in Vincent Square, in conjunction with the Horticultural Club; the cost is £1.90 (drinks extra) and dress is informal.

By this stage the *Newsletter* contains more articles and monographs on gardens, and of an ever more scholarly nature. September sees the first edition of



Diana Uhlman

the long-awaited journal of The GHS: *Garden History*. It is edited by Christopher Thacker and incorporates the



function of the old *Newsletter*. The first number is priced at 75p to non-members and includes an article on medieval plantsmanship by John Harvey. Mavis Batey is appointed Honorary Secretary.

1973

The first GHS conservation committee is set up, with John Anthony as chairman, Mavis Batey as secretary and the other members: Marcus Binney, T Dulake, Ted Fawcett, Peter Goodchild, Peter Hunt, Susan Jellicoe and Dorothy Stroud. This heralds an important shift for the GHS, away from a role as a chiefly academic organisation which also dispenses expert advice on restoration, and towards a new status as a potent campaigning force for the protection and conservation of gardens. The Society becomes involved in the campaign to protect Beckley Park in Oxfordshire (a Tudor house with a fine topiary garden of 1920) from encroachment by the proposed M40.

The GHS organises a tour of gardens in Holland, including Twickel, Roozendaal and the bulb fields. The AGM is held at Merrist Wood, Surrey, the theme is Jekyll and Robinson, and also stages its first display at Chelsea Flower Show.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Edward Malins and the Knight of Glin on



Christopher Thacker, founding editor of Garden History



Hazel Le Rougetel, GHS Collection

Mavis Batey became our Honorary Secretary in 1972

landscape gardening in Ireland by Swift and others, Mavis Batey on William Mason, John Harvey on medieval plantsmanship, Christopher Thacker on Versailles and Louis XIV and Kenneth Lemmon on restoration at Studley Royal.

1974

A key year. Mavis Batey reports on the activities of the conservation committee: 'The main concern of the Committee has been an attempt to secure a national policy for the protection of historic gardens and landscapes. Simultaneous threats to the three Brown parks at Audley End, Chillington and Petworth highlighted the risks to which landscape parks were subject in the increasing pressures on the countryside due to roadbuilding and industrial intrusion. A letter expressing these views was printed in *The Times* on October 21 1973...'

The GHS is heavily involved at Audley End (opposition to proposed new sewage disposal works); Painshill (highlighting the need for single ownership of the estate); Shireoaks, Notts (advice on restoration); Summerhill Park, Bath (representations at the public enquiry over development inside the Repton garden); and at Vanbrugh's Castle at Greenwich (where development affecting the vista is successfully opposed).

A proposed amendment to the impending Town and Country Planning Act is seen as an opportunity

Hazel Le Rougetel, GHS Collection

Timeline: 50 years of the GHS

to secure some legislative protection, statutory or otherwise, for historic landscapes, and on July 31 the Act is passed including provision for the government to make grants for the upkeep of gardens in their own right, 'the first direct reference to historic gardens in British legislation'. The GHS commends the Civic Trust for its leading role in lobbying for this. The idea of a listing system for gardens is also received favourably by the parliamentary committee but not included in the Act as passed. An important clause in the Act rules that public opinion must be tested on planning applications that affect the setting of listed buildings.

The spring symposium includes a lecture on knots and parterres (this year's 'study theme') by Rosemary Verey and Christopher Thacker.



Hazel Le Rougetel

Pitmedden, one of the Scottish gardens visited in 1974

The AGM is held at the University of Aberdeen, including visits to Drummond Castle, Crathes, Pitmedden and Edzell. October sees a visit to Biddulph Grange (in its pre-restored state, at this time), where Peter Hayden of the GHS is such an influence through campaigning and research. The overseas tour is to the great gardens of Spain. A register of garden plants is begun; the aim is to record plants in danger of extinction. The GHS runs a desk in the hall of the V&A to publicise its aims during the exhibition 'The Destruction of the Country House'.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Mavis Batey on Gilpin and Rosemary Verey's bibliography of knots and parterres.

1975

The GHS celebrates its 10th anniversary on November 28 with an evening sherry party and talk from William Stearn at Caxton Hall, Westminster. The GHS winter lecture series begins, with the Purcell Room the venue. The AGM is held at Bristol University and includes visits to Stourhead, Montacute and Hestercombe, where the chief fire

officer for Somerset takes members on a tour of the overgrown 18th-century landscape garden (the house at Hestercombe is the HQ of Somerset's fire service). The overseas excursion is to Sweden, with visits to gardens including Haga, Skaberjo and Drottningholm. The GHS Youth Awards are inaugurated, rewarding practical work in gardens [if any current member received one of these awards it would be good to know what happened to you subsequently, and how this award helped you].

To coincide with European Architectural Heritage Year, a GHS symposium is held at Imperial College in London on the subject of the treatment of the surroundings of historic buildings, and the GHS is also invited to speak at the Schwetzingen Conference on the Conservation of Historic Gardens.

Membership now stands at about 800.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Georgina Masson on restoring Italian gardens, John Sales on National Trust restorations, James Stevens Curl on 19th-century cemeteries and William Stearn on the Chelsea Physic Garden.

1976

The AGM is held in Winchester on the theme of the rose in garden design, with visits to Mottisfont, Hinton Ampner and Wilton. A second GHS symposium, on 'The Treatment of the Surroundings



Hazel Le Rougetel, GHS Collection

William Stearn, who named the Society and gave a talk at Caxton Hall to celebrate our first 10 years, in 1975

of Historic Buildings', is held in Oxford. The conservation committee submits a resolution to the Department of the Environment calling for official recognition of the importance of historic gardens, and also to the select committee on the new Wealth Tax asking for its potential effect on historic gardens to be taken into account.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Alice Coats on Bishop Compton of Fulham, Miles Hadfield on trees and David Jacques on the Scriblerus Club.

1977

The Chairman relates the decision of Council not to seek a larger membership, as this would increase the workload of the Society's voluntary officers to the point where paid staff would be needed!

A heavily over-subscribed tour of Italian gardens is a great success, with 45 members travelling. The 'summer meeting', as the AGM is now named, is held at the University of Nottingham and themed on Victorian gardens. William Stearn is elected President.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Ray Desmond on Victorian gardening magazines and books, Alison Hodges on Edward Milner and Graham Thomas on Jekyll and roses.

1978

The summer meeting is held at Lancaster and there are foreign trips to Portugal and Tuscany. The Society continues to organise regular day or weekend visits to British gardens of interest, as it has done since its inception, as well as a programme of lectures.

Peter Hunt, founder of the GHS, dies on July 25.

Mr Peter Hunt: noted horticultural writer

From *Garden History* 6 (3) Winter 1978, 1–3, by William T. Stearn, then President of the GHS

The Garden History Society, founded in 1965 and now a well-known learned and amenity society zealous for the study and preservation of Britain's rich horticultural heritage, owes its origin to the initiative and enterprise of Mr Peter Hunt, the horticultural editor and author who died suddenly on July 25. This however, was but one of his many contributions to horticulture.

Peter Raymond Slater Hunt was born in Crewe, Cheshire, on July 29 1917, and educated at Worcester Public School. On the declaration of war in 1939 he joined the Royal Engineers, was found unfit for active service and served in military intelligence at the War Office from 1939 to 1945.

He then became a school teacher but, after five years of teaching in a Secondary school, he joined the editorial staff of *Amateur Gardening*. He then moved some years later to the editorial department of the publishers Rainbird and Co, and thence to Marshall Cavendish. Such experience in editing, publishing and writing combined well with his love of gardening and its historical literature, but he preferred the liberty of a free-lance and for many years before his untimely death he worked at home.

As author and editor he produced *The Beginner's Garden* (1953), *Eating and Drinking* (1961), *100 Best Herbaceous Plants* (1963), *100 Best Shrubs* (1963), *The Shell Gardens Book* (1964), *Town Gardening* (1965), *Window-Box Gardening* (1965), *Ilford Book of Herbaceous Plants* (1965), *Perennial Flowers for Small Gardens* (1966), *Garden Shrubs* (1969), *Fruit and Vegetables* (1972), *Garden Shrubs and Trees* (1972), *Greenhouse and*

Indoor Plants (1972), *Roses and their Cultivation* (1972), *The Book of Garden Ornament* (1974), *Gardening for All* (1974), *The Garden Lover's Companion* (1974), *The All Colour Gardening Book* (1976), *The Marshall Cavendish Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (1968–), and he was busily assembling contributions for a big Oxford University Press horticultural *Companion* when he died.

Such a list, with all its items of good quality, speaks for his industry, enthusiasm and competence. Visiting historic gardens and delving in old horticultural literature made him keenly aware of the long and remarkable past of British gardening and led him to conceive the foundation of a society to foster interest in this. He got in touch with a diversity of people likely to promote such a society and gathered together a founding group on November 24, 1965, at the Royal Horticultural Society's New Hall.

The steady growth in membership and influence of the Garden History Society since then has justified Peter Hunt's belief that such a body, concentrating attention on the history of gardens, gardening and gardeners, garden landscapes, garden plants and gardening techniques and tools, could have a significant and useful place among the already existing horticultural societies without competing with them. For some years he kept members in touch by a *Newsletter*, which he produced until 1970.

His death has taken from many of us a kind, genial, enthusiastic friend. He leaves a widow, the artist Cynthia Newsome-Taylor, whom he married in 1955.

Timeline: 50 years of the GHS

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Peter Hayden on Biddulph Grange and Betty Massingham on William Robinson.

1979

The programme of garden visits continues with GHS tours to the South of France (which includes a 'distressing' excursion to a dilapidated Serre de la Madone), the Ile de France and South Wales. The summer meeting is held in Cambridge and includes visits to Anglesey Abbey, Wrest Park and college gardens. The conservation committee intervenes over threats to Castle Hill, Panshanger and Deepdene. The Society was given a set of Gertrude Jekyll's garden plans on microfilm by Berkeley University at the annual Oxford conference, initially given into the care of Richard Bisgrove.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are R.W. King on Joseph Spence, James Sambrook on Woburn Farm and Hazel Le Rougetel on Philip Miller.

1980

There are GHS trips to Leningrad, the East Coast of America, Stirling and the Birmingham area. The AGM (as it is now known again) is held at the University of York and features visits to no fewer than five gardens on the first day, with two after-dinner speakers (including John Dixon Hunt). Allen Paterson is elected Chairman. A two-day joint meeting of the GHS and the Victorian Society on the subject of Victorian conservatories is held in London.

The conservation committee makes representations over the proposed A34 straight through Highclere Park (David Jacques produces a detailed alternative route) and the demolition of buildings at Hardwick Hall Country Park, Co. Durham. The GHS begins its active involvement in the restoration of the garden at Nuneham Courtenay.

The National Heritage Memorial Fund (successor to the obscure and ignored Land Fund) is launched, and Painshill becomes one of the first recipients of grant aid from it.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Timothy Clark on Mrs Earle and M.J. Tooley on Jekyll gardens in the North of England.

1981

Garden History is relaunched as a twice-yearly, fully illustrated and bound academic journal, with the *Newsletter* issued separately. A publicity committee is also set up.

This year sees a weekend meeting at Exeter; a day-visit to Hampshire gardens including the Spring Wood at Hackwood Park, a repeat visit to Leningrad,



The reception of the Jekyll plans at Worcester College, Oxford. In the foreground are Dean Milton Stern, Dr William Stearn, Lord Franks and Mrs Ann Ward, of the 1979 Oxford– Berkeley Summer School



Ken Lemmon and Pippa Rakusen, who organised the 1980 York AGM, at Nun Appleton

a weekend in Northumberland, a weekend at Royal Holloway College, with visits to Painshill, Claremont, Ham House and Hall Barn, and a symposium on Italian gardens held in London. The AGM is at the University of Sussex, with visits to Great Dixter, Standen and many others.

Perhaps the most ambitious foreign excursion yet is the 15-day tour of the gardens of China in the autumn. In Edinburgh on March 14, a one-day meeting



for all Scottish members is held, with the majority of them attending.

An event of significance for the GHS is the acquisition, finally, by Elmbridge Borough Council, of the entire Painshill estate. On behalf of the GHS, Michael Symes produces a compilation of all historical research on the garden for its newly appointed manager. Following representations at public enquiries by the GHS, the demolition of buildings at Hardwick Hall Country Park is prevented, as is the re-opening of Wisley airfield. GHS members begin research on the gardens of the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, and contribute to the restoration plan.

An annual subscription to the GHS at this time is £7.50. Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Peter Goodchild on John Rea, Michael Symes on Oatlands and Peter Willis on Brown.

1982

Another highly active year of activities (the 1980s sees unprecedented levels of participation, with lectures another important element), with tours to Holland and the South of France, weekends in Chester (including a visit to Mawson's Thornton Manor garden) and Stirling, and day-visits to gardens in Devon, Northampton and Hampshire. Jane Brown lectures in London for the GHS on Jekyll. The AGM is held at St Catherine's College, Oxford; John Harvey is elected President. September sees a two-day symposium on knot gardens and herb gardens, with lectures from the Marchioness of Salisbury and Rosemary Verey; October a two-day Repton symposium and garden visits based in Norwich.

A GHS sub-committee devoted to Painshill is set up, with an appeal for help from members with the restoration.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year is an essay by Geoffrey Jellicoe on his work and research at Ditchley Park.

1983

The bicentenary of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown's death is marked by the GHS with a one-day conference in Oxford, focused on Brown's work at Blenheim, and the tercentenary of Stephen Switzer by visits to Lincolnshire gardens.

There are also foreign tours to Germany and Moscow, a visit to Croome Court, a guided tour of Sutton Place with a talk by Geoffrey Jellicoe, a long weekend in Kent (with visits to 15 gardens over three days) and a weekend visiting gardens in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The AGM is held at the University of Sheffield, with the usual full programme of visits.

The GHS advises on the restoration of the grounds of Great Linford Manor, now in Milton Keynes, and begins the task of advising the local authorities on the restoration of Mount Edgcumbe.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Michael Symes on Painshill, Mavis Batey on Rousham and James Stevens Curl on Loudon and cemeteries.

1984

After a period of development in which the GHS's conservation team takes an active part, and following the provisions of the previous year's National Heritage Act, the new Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission (soon to be known as English Heritage) is authorised by parliament to prepare a *Register of Gardens and Other Land of Historic Interest*, with listing Grades I, II* and II, but no statutory powers regarding planning. Government grants may be given for repair and improvement, but not for maintenance.

In Devon, the GHS is involved with efforts to preserve the Repton garden at Endsleigh, and reports that the road threatening Castle Hill has been re-routed after protest from the GHS and others. The Society makes representations to the Director of Kew over the proposal to restore the Palm House using thicker glazing bars than the originals, to rearrange the interior layout and to introduce an under-floor display of marine vegetation.

The conservation committee is also involved in monitoring the uncertain future of Biddulph Grange, a threat to the Pulhamite rockery at The Dell, Egham, the proposed road which still threatens Highclere and a golf course in the offing in the Richard Woods park at Bocket Hall. The Society is actively involved in eight other conservation cases.

The GHS holds an important symposium in London on garden conservation, in collaboration with the Ancient Monuments Society; a small book, *Home is House and Garden*, is produced for the conference. There are also symposia on William Kent, in Oxford, and on the Twickenham gardens, in situ (where it is discovered that Pope's Grotto is used as a subterranean road crossing by pupils at the school on the site). There are weekends in West Sussex and Derbyshire, and the AGM is held at Ayr, with visits to Culzean, Drumlanrig and Castle Kennedy. GHS foreign tours embark to the Loire, India, Madrid and Moscow.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Sally Festing on Pulhamite and Ruth Duthie on florists' societies.

1985

The *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens* issues lists for the first 10 counties, with Mavis Batey of the GHS

Timeline: 50 years of the GHS

having recruited and led the compilation teams for nine of these. Christopher Thacker, founder editor of *Garden History*, is appointed Gardens Inspector for English Heritage.

The Government accepts the GHS's proposed re-route of the A34 threatening Highclere, the first time such a specific re-routing proposal has been adopted.

There are trips to Leningrad, Rome, northern France and the Crimea, weekends at Durham and Plymouth, a day-school at Chiswick and a day visiting London parks. The AGM is at Bath. Mavis Batey is elected president of The GHS. Membership now stands at about 2,000.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year is John Phibbs on Repton at Felbrigg.

1986

The GHS receives, for the first time, a grant (of £5,000 per year for up to three years) from the Department of the Environment, to go towards half the cost of a conservation project.

The Museum of Garden History opens in the former church of St Mary, Lambeth, but there are no formal links with The GHS.

There are GHS tours to Poland (including Arkadia), Vienna and Japan; weekends in the Scottish Borders and on the Isle of Wight; a conference at Nuneham; and a Castle Howard symposium at York. The AGM is at Keele University, with visits to Shugborough and Hawkstone Park.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Sally Festing on the 2nd Duchess of Portland and her rose, and Audrey Le Lievre on Aldenham House.

1987

The Great Storm of October causes widespread devastation across southern England. Consternation at first, followed immediately by the realisation at the GHS that this will be a catalyst to renewal and replanting in many gardens and landscapes. The Society offers advice to landowners.

The GHS leads the campaign to preserve the Thomas Wright garden at Stoke Park, near Bristol, threatened with being flattened for playing fields for a local school. The campaign to protect Castle Hill garden from a new road is successful. GHS members are also closely involved with restoration plans at Biddulph Grange and Castle Bromwich Hall. The GHS holds its first 'conservation workshop' in London, with representatives from many historic gardens present for the day.

The GHS hosts a modern gardens seminar held in London, with talks from John Brookes, Preben Jakobsen and others, and also a conservation



Mavis Batey on her election as GHS President, 1985

workshop themed on garden archaeology. There are foreign tours to Russian country estates, to Hungary and north-west France; and study weekends in Cheshire, Norfolk and Oxford (the latter, in association with Oxford University,) and an annual event. The AGM is held in Edinburgh, reflecting the ever more active Scottish Group of The GHS, which itself holds a weekend a meeting in Edinburgh. Membership is reported at 1,385.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Fiona Cowell on Richard Woods and John Harvey on Henry Daniel.

1988

David Lambert is appointed part-time Conservation Secretary to the GHS. Among the conservation issues pursued by the GHS this year are representations against development in the Brown park at Milton Abbas (subsequently upheld), in land adjacent to the orchard at Munstead Wood, and in the vista of the Long Water at Hampton Court. The GHS is also involved in lobbying the Forestry Commission over its stewardship of the Picturesque garden at Hafod, where most of the features have been neglected. David Jacques, a former Chairman of the Conservation Committee of the GHS, is appointed English Heritage's Gardens Inspector.

The GHS holds an exhibition at Broughton Castle on the gardens described by Celia Fiennes on her travels around England, as well as a symposium on 'The Rococo Garden' in London. September sees a visit to the newly restored hunting lodge at Chatelherault, near Edinburgh (this had been one of the first garden buildings whose plight was highlighted by the GHS), and there are study, or visit,

weekends in Herefordshire, at Hawkstone and Oxford, as well as numerous GHS day-trips. The AGM is held at Exeter. There are foreign trips to the south-east USA (including New Orleans, Charleston and Williamsburg, with visits to Mount Vernon, Monticello and Dumbarton Oaks), Holland (to celebrate the William and Mary tercentenary) and Switzerland.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Alison Kelly on Coade stone and Christina Colvin and Charles Nelson on Maria Edgeworth as gardener.

1989

A packed programme of activities includes tours to Russia and the Ile de France; weekends in Cumbria, Essex and Suffolk; a day of visits focused on the work of William Adam in Scotland; days out to Hertfordshire (Hatfield House and St Paul's Walden Bury) and Birmingham; and a symposium on 'Colour in Gardens' at Kew. The AGM is at Leicester.

Conservation cases include a plan for the walled garden at Painshill to be used as a car park (ultimately shelved), and a proposed new road affecting the parks at Hagley and Burghley (the latter road goes ahead, while the former is ultimately transmuted into an underground tunnel forming part of the Kidderminster bypass).

Following an anonymous donation of £2 million, the landscape at Stowe passes into the ownership of the National Trust.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Robert J.G. Savage on the Goldney grotto, and David Lambert and Stewart Harding on Thomas Wright at Stoke Park.

1990

The GHS celebrates its 25th anniversary; the Silver Jubilee Fund (or 'Jubilee Fund') is launched, and subsequently provides support for a number of garden-history projects. Another 'great storm' ravages large swathes of England, uprooting thousands of trees, and the GHS advises landowners on how to proceed (as it had done in 1987).

Among the conservation cases pursued by The GHS is the proposal for development on the Repton park at Brentry Hospital, Bristol; the proposal of one or two golf courses, plus a new 'temple', on the formal landscape at Burley-on-the-Hill, Rutland; and another golf course (with hotel and leisure complex) across the Brown landscape below Warwick Castle. David Lambert reports that the building of golf courses has emerged as perhaps the single biggest threat to historic gardens. The GHS is also active in opposing development adjacent to Watcombe Park (which

goes ahead regardless), and a road through the middle of the park at Mere Hall, Cheshire.



Betty Thomson

Anne Richards, Basil Williams and William Stearn, with HM Queen Ingrid, Queen Mother of Denmark

There are GHS visits to Turkey and Denmark (where members are surprised and delighted to be greeted personally by HM Queen Ingrid, Queen Mother of Denmark, in her garden at Grasten Castle); an Arts and Crafts conference at Oxford; a week's study course on 18th-century parks and flowers at Keele; symposiums on the future of the royal parks at the V&A, and on American Garden History at Kew; and a Stowe conference. There are weekends in Oxford, Argyllshire (on rhododendron gardens), Northumberland and Gloucestershire, with day trips including a Bloomsbury-themed visit to Sussex and a day at Kenwood, where details of the proposed (and subsequently controversial) restoration scheme are provided. The AGM is held at St Mary's College, Twickenham.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Mark Laird on 18th-century flower gardens and David Jacques 'On the Supposed Chineseness of the English Landscape Garden'.

1991

The Conservation Officer reports on the pernicious creep of the concepts of 'enabling development' and 'planning gain' in historic landscapes: 'In effect this often means that to secure the future of one part of a historic landscape another has to be sacrificed.' The conservation committee opposes a new golf course at Rufford New Hall, Lancashire, and residential developments at Grey Towers (Poole Hospital), Cleveland, and at Oatlands, Surrey. The GHS is also involved early on in opposing a golf course development at Croome Court, a case which turns into a saga with many twists and turns but eventually a happy outcome: the acquisition of the landscape by the National Trust. There are road and building

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threats to Plompton Rocks, North Yorkshire (successfully opposed); also proposed golf courses at Stoneleigh Abbey Deer Park and at The Hendre, Gwent. After GHS intervention a golf course application at Gawsworth Hall, Cheshire, is turned down, as is a motorway service station on the M6 which would spoil views from Arley Hall. By this stage the conservation officers of the GHS are dealing with scores of planning issues in historic gardens. The conservation committee organises a 'golf workshop' for involved professionals.

There are visit and study weekends in Sussex, South Wales, Norwich and Oxford (where the theme is eastern European gardens), a day in Dorset and a visit to Milton Keynes to view the proposed new landscape plan. The summer conference and AGM is at Aberdeen, with visits to 12 gardens, and there are trips to Lombardy and the Veneto, and to northern France and Paris.

This is the year that Biddulph Grange opens to the public. It is one of the gardens (along with others including Painshill, Studley Royal, Nuneham Courtenay, Hawkstone, Brighton Pavilion and Stowe) which have a special place in the history of the GHS.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Peter Hayden on Tsarskoe Selo and Douglas Chambers on Lord Petre.

1992

The GHS reacts immediately on reception of plans for the Stoneaston bypass in Somerset, which runs straight through Repton's park; and a proposal to quarry minerals on land adjacent to Great Fosters, in Surrey. A new golf course at Tyntesfield is also opposed, as is a proposal for a new supermarket, residential and office development within the registered park at Easton Neston. This year the GHS is also active in resisting two threats to Painshill: a new girl guides' camp in adjacent parkland, and a proposal for a new block of flats, in the shape of a castle, visible from the lake (the former is approved; the latter rejected.) The saga at Warwick Castle ends with the comprehensive rejection of golf course plans within the Brown park.

Christopher Dingwall is appointed as GHS Conservation Officer for Scotland.

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Gertrude Jekyll, the GHS publishes a catalogue of the plans and drawings held at Reef Point. There is an appeal for further research and information from GHS members pertaining to the Thames Landscape Strategy.

The AGM is held at Bristol, with a number of visits including Painswick and a tour of Hadspen with Penelope Hobhouse. There are foreign trips to Portugal, Sweden and north-east France; a weekend in

Staffordshire (with the newly opened Biddulph Grange the highlight); a royal parks conference in London; a one-day seminar at Painshill; and a day looking at Span housing schemes, guided by Ivor Cunningham.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Christopher Dingwall on the Hercules Garden at Blair Castle and one of several by Shirley Heriz-Smith on the Veitches.

1993

Foreign trips depart for Israel, Tuscany and the Czech Republic. Among numerous activities, there are weekends in Hampshire and Cornwall; a Picturesque conference at Oxford; a tour to Hafod and Downton; and a visit to Penicuik House. The AGM is at Durham and Ted Fawcett is elected Chairman.

In addition to concerted lobbying by David Lambert and Hazel Conway (author of the first in-depth study of public parks), the GHS publishes (jointly with the Victorian Society) a report, *Public Prospects: Historic Urban Parks Under Threat*, which highlights the crisis and paves the way for establishing parks as landscapes of historic significance in the eyes of Government. As a direct result of this pressure, English Heritage begins to include them on the national Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and later the HLF steps in with its Urban Parks Programme under the Chairmanship of Lord Rothschild. This year's case studies include Leazes Park, Newcastle, where an 8,000 seat arena is proposed (it is withdrawn, although a new car park for Newcastle United is approved) [we will be able to see the results of this long running saga on this year's Summer Conference, from our accommodation!].

Other cases include a proposed caravan park in the walled garden at Highnam Park, Glos; a chalet park in the grounds of Gunton Park (successfully opposed); and two applications affecting Orchardleigh: 25 houses around the walled garden, plus a golf course. The threat of a bypass through Petworth park re-emerges.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Stephanie Dalley on the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and John Phibbs on pleasure grounds in Sweden.

1994

The conservation officers and committee is now working at full tilt. Among the planning proposals dealt with this year are a car park in a corner of Garrick's Villa garden; a new pavilion at Nuneham Courtenay (refused); a new access road through Richmond Old Deer Park; a golf course in Park Place, Berkshire (successfully opposed); the Channel Tunnel

rail link threat to Cobham Park; a golf course and hotel at Combe Abbey, Warks (ultimately the golf was omitted and the hotel was replaced by a housing development); a threat to the follies at Boughton from the rerouted Northampton bypass (a plan eventually abandoned in 1996); pylons though the Repton park at Mulgrave Castle; and residential development inside Pope's garden at Twickenham (later refused). In Scotland, where the Conservation Officer is equally active, among the case studies under discussion are The Whim, Peebleshire (a poultry shed is proposed) and Crichton Royal Hospital, Dumfriesshire (under threat due to the closure of the hospital).

Where owners and developers request expertise from the GHS, it is given. For example, the GHS assists in the production of a restoration proposal for Hawkstone Park. There is concern at the GHS about the 'sub-summation' of the Countryside Commission (which has been a supporter of historic gardens) into English Heritage.

The GHS holds a conference on the conservation of historic gardens in Europe; an illustrative cruise of the Thames Landscape Strategy; and weekends in Derbyshire, Northants, Inverness and the Midlands (the last themed on Brown and led by John Phibbs). There are tours to Ireland (no fewer than 23 gardens visited) and Germany. The AGM is at Bangor.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year is a summary of the Picturesque by Mavis Batey.

1995

This year sees the GHS named for the first time as a statutory consultee on all planning applications affecting registered parks and gardens. David Lambert observes: 'It is amazing just how much development is going on in or around registered gardens. Apart from obvious threats such as roads, golf courses and new residential and commercial buildings, we have been confronted with powerlines, telecommunications towers and gas boreholes; car-parks, lavatories, ticket kiosks and a bizarre 'recreational' tank run (an essential adjunct to a management training centre), lecture halls, sports halls, sports pitches, dormitory blocks, an ice-rink; sewage works, mobile stone-crushers, waste transfer stations and gravel workings, as well as applications to demolish tennis huts, shelters, and even bandstands.'

It is reported that the Heritage Lottery Fund is sounding sympathetic to bids for repair and enhancement of public parks, although to date no grants solely for parks or gardens have been awarded. The HLF begins to consult the GHS on bids affecting landscapes.

The Oxford conference is this year focused on

Regency gardens, and there are study days on Georgian gardens and on gardens and orientalism. Visits include Hawkstone, Osborne House, Greenwich Park and Highgrove. There are tours to North West America, and to Campania and Sicily. The AGM is at the University of Kent, Canterbury.



Commemorative tile presented to members attending the 30th anniversary AGM

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Jan Woudstra on modern Danish design and John Sales on garden restoration.

1996

The HLF announces that its main target is to be urban parks in 1996 and launches the Urban Parks Programme under the aegis of Stewart Harding, who describes the development as 'a triumph for those many bodies, not least The Garden History Society, who campaigned so effectively to draw attention to a sad decline in the quality of care parks were receiving'.

The GHS sets up its first office, at 77 Cowcross Street, London, where it remains thanks to the generosity and support of Alan Baxter [a vice-President of the Society].

The GHS supports the masterplan for Heveningham, which includes restoration of the Brown park, as well as the sweeping away of Victorian gardens to make way for a new design by Kim Wilkie. The small landscape garden at Downe Hall, Bridport, is threatened by 'enabling development' and the GHS intervenes (although opposition to this scheme ultimately fails). The GHS opposes the addition of an arts centre at Powys

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Castle; however, planning permission is granted. Other cases concern the proposal for a new farmhouse near the eyecatcher in the view at Rousham, and a very large development for elderly residents at Thorpe Hall, Essex.

There are trips to Belgium and the French Pyrenees, and closer to home, garden tours and study days in Shropshire, Dorset and Somerset, Huntingdonshire, Northumbria and Worcestershire. There is also a trip to Hestercombe to survey the restoration of the 18th-century garden, which has just begun.

The AGM is held at Reading, with the usual full programme of visits. This year, as in preceding years, GHS members staff a stand at Chelsea Flower Show, organised by Marion Waller.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Christopher Gallagher on The Leasowes, Keith Goodway on William Emes, Ray Desmond on Orleans House and Michael Symes on William Pitt the Elder. One edition of the journal is dedicated to Mavis Batey.

1997

The Heritage Lottery Fund announces that it has now awarded a total of £57 million to 48 urban parks. Among the recipients are The Leasowes, The People's Park, Halifax, Sefton Park and Buxton Pavilion Gardens. The GHS publishes its *Handbook to Parks and Gardens in the Planning System*.

The long-running saga at Leazes Park, Newcastle, takes a new turn with a second proposal for a new stadium for Newcastle United on the site. The GHS appears at the planning enquiry into residential redevelopment at Chantmarle, the Inigo Thomas garden in Dorset, where the owner is suggesting that the large house is impossible to sell as a single unit. The tide has now turned against visitor centres at historic gardens, with the GHS opposing plans at Levens Hall and Harewood. The remains of the *ferme ornée* at Wooburn Farm are threatened by an indoor tennis centre.

There are GHS conferences in Devon (on Repton), Oxford (the High Victorian garden) and Glasgow (parks and gardens of the city). In an experiment which lasts for a few years, the AGM and summer conference are split, with the AGM in London and the conference in York. There are tours to Andalusia and central south Germany, as well as a week-long tour of gardens in south-west Scotland. Warley Place and Brodsworth Hall are among the many gardens visited by GHS groups on day trips.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Prudence Leith-Ross on John Evelyn at Deptford and Jennifer Meir on Sanderson Miller.

1998

The *GHS Newsletter* is again able to report on dozens of grants awarded by the HLF to public parks. The GHS collaborates with the 20th Century Society in organising a ground-breaking two-day conference at Kew on the theme of 20th century gardens (to be the subject of a *Garden History* special in 2000). There is a trip to Harlow Town Centre, where Gibberd's and Crowe's work is threatened with redevelopment, a weekend conference in Oxford themed on the Grand Tour, a study day at Holkham, a Ross-shire weekend, and visits to Mertoun House and gardens around Bath. The summer conference is at Penrith in Cumbria. Major foreign trips are a two-week tour to China, and a three-week tour of Australia.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Anne Wilkinson on Shirley Hibberd and Anthony Beckles Willson on Pope's Grotto.

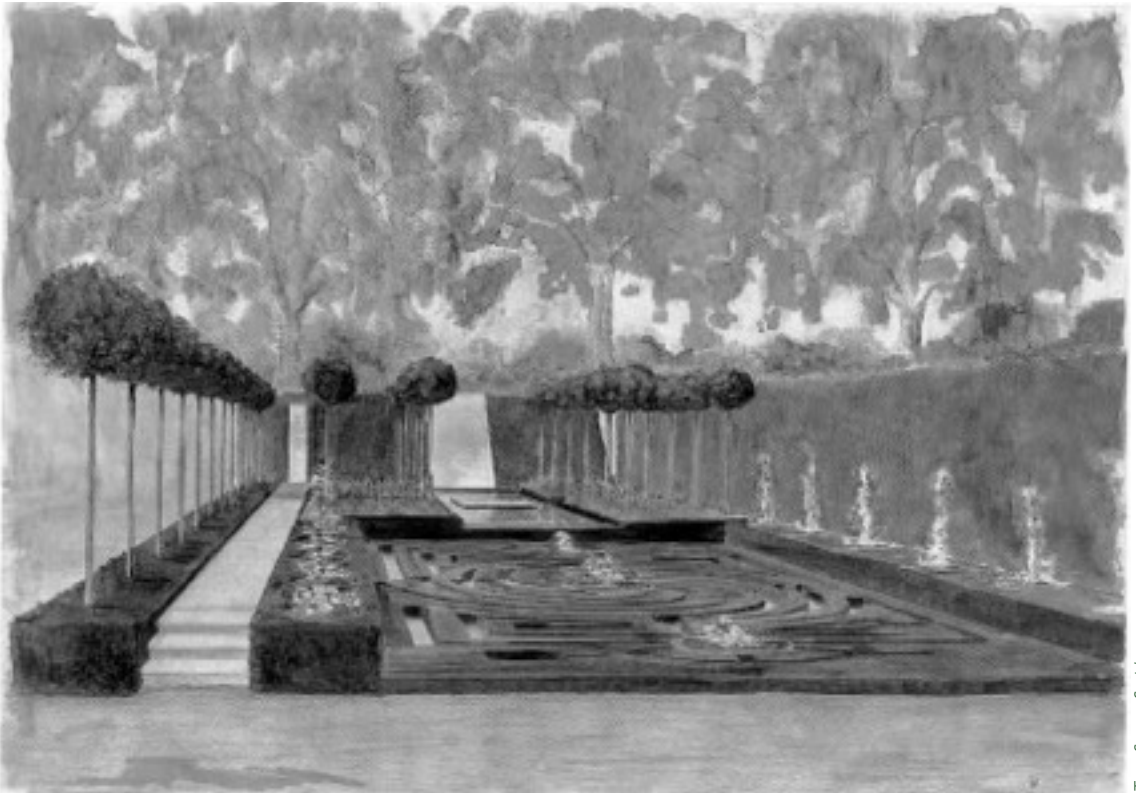
1999

This year sees foreign trips to Austria and South Africa, a study day on garden sculpture, a geology and grottoes conference in Bristol, and one on Morris and Ruskin in Oxford. The summer conference is held at Dundee. In Scotland, among the cases taken up is Loudoun Castle, the ruined 18th-century mansion in Ayrshire, surrounded by a landscape garden; its future is described as 'in increasing doubt', after several years of expansion of leisure facilities by its owners and a new permission for conversion to an amusement park.

English Heritage launches its Contemporary Heritage Gardens scheme, with the intention of creating 10 contemporary gardens at its historic properties. Mavis Batey reports 'general approval' of the initiative. This is symptomatic of the Society's historically benign view of high-quality new design in gardens. The GHS sets up a website.

Sarah Rutherford takes over as editor of the new A4 newsletter from Eileen Stammers-Smith in 1997. The cover showed our Chelsea Flower Show stand designed by Mike Jones for Marion Waller, one in a series of 'garden fantasy' stands they created to encourage members of the RHS to understand garden history...





Tom Stuart-Smith

2000

This year begins in triumph and ends in disaster. The GHS's 'Le Notre garden', undertaken with the support of sponsors Laurent-Perrier and designed by Tom Stuart-Smith, is awarded a gold medal at Chelsea Flower Show (*above*).

However, there is a shock at the AGM at Somerville College, Oxford, where the chairman of the audit group, set up after the resignation of the Society's Treasurer, presents the accounts, which show a substantial net deficit and the Society in crisis and facing liquidation. A Financial Recovery Group is instigated. A report in the Newsletter states, 'One major factor was the failure adequately to collect subscription income for the year; and a large number of other problems have come to light.' The financial crisis is also 'due partly to problems relating to accounting and financial control, and forecasts of subscription income, compounded by unbudgeted expenditure in relation to Chelsea... The fund of over £100,000 that we had in place a few years ago has gone'. There have also been problems in securing promised money from sponsors of the Chelsea garden. It is the GHS's darkest hour. However, measures are swiftly taken to get the Society solvent and back on track, and this is helped in the short term by a large overdraft from

the bank and an anonymous donation of £10,000. Sir Roy Strong is elected president, succeeding Mavis Batey, who steps down after 15 years in the role.

Otherwise, the Society's normal activities continue successfully: tours to Burgundy and to modern gardens around Paris; a trip to the Netherlands in association with the Dutch Garden History Society; a Tudor weekend in Rutland; and visits to Goodwood, Younger Botanic Garden and Falkland Palace. The conservation team deals with the usual barrage of planning applications, including threats to Rowallan and Gean House in Scotland, and in England, plans for road widening adjacent to Piercefield. An office for the conservation team is established in Edinburgh and the name 'The Garden History Society in Scotland' is established.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are David R. Coffin on Venus in the 18th-century garden, Hazel Conway on public parks, Jan Woudstra on the Corbusian landscape and Patrick Eyres on Ian Hamilton Finlay.

2001

The GHS slowly begins to consolidate and recover. There are trips to Madeira, Barcelona and Bavaria, a week of garden visits in south-west Wales, an Oxford weekend on the Rococo Garden and a

Timeline: 50 years of the GHS

study day at Welbeck Abbey. The AGM is at the University of East Anglia.

On the conservation side, plans for 23 executive homes in the gardens at Orchardleigh are finally rejected, and Piercefield (Grade I) is under threat again, from a 'monster application for renewed consent for golf, hotel conversion and an enormous hotel annex'.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Brent Elliott on 19th-century flower shows, Leslie W. Hepple on antiquities in gardens and Tom Williamson on Chatsworth.

2002

Dominic Cole, a practicing landscape architect, is elected as Chairman of Council. An efficient and business-like approach, including a clear budget and five-year plan, is instigated.

The GHS hosts a visit from the Australian Garden History Society, which comprises a tour to the West of England, Wales and southwest Scotland. Activities include a tour of gardens in Northern Ireland, and a visit to Alnwick. The AGM is at Southampton University. Membership stands at 1,800.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Linda Cabe Halpern on Wrest Park and Patrick Bowe on Charles Maries.

2003

Among this year's activities is a successful trip to the gardens of Kyoto and Tokyo, a tour to modern landscapes in the Ruhr Valley, and garden visits in north-east Scotland and around Ludlow. The GHS is also involved with a seminar on Joseph Paxton, a study day at Tatton Park and a conference celebrating Humphry Repton. The ever popular winter lecture series continues, with an impressive roster of speakers; this has become an increasingly important part of the GHS's activities programme. The AGM is held at Sheffield. David Lambert steps down as Conservation Officer.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are John Phibbs on Brown, Andrew Eburne on Bridgeman and Anne Meredith on female garden education.

2004

Sir Roy Strong returns as president, after a brief hiatus since 2001 as a vice-president. The chairman is able to report in the *GHS news* that: 'day-to-day financial matters are now stable, and we have moved from the hand-to-mouth existence of the last couple of years'. A fundraising appeal is launched which aims to raise £50,000 as a Fighting Fund for the GHS. An annual GHS essay prize is announced, to celebrate 40 years

of the GHS. Among our activities are a study day on Regency gardens held at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton; a Loudon study day; and a weekend school held in Oxford on 'the Gilpin Picturesque'. There are tours to Brittany and Ireland, and visits to gardens including Claremont and Penshurst Place. The AGM is held at the University of Bristol.

The Goldsmiths' lecture series begins: funded by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, this initiative aims to promote garden history to a younger audience through a programme of lectures in educational establishments. Dominic Cole gives the lectures, which attract approximately 50 new members.

The conservation team is involved in the major proposal to build a new Liverpool FC stadium on part of Stanley Park (which is subsequently given permission). Christopher Dingwall steps down as Conservation Officer for Scotland. Jonathan Lovie is now Principal Conservation Officer and Policy Advisor for the GHS.

Among the articles of note in *Garden History* this year are Timothy Mowl on Lord Shaftesbury and John Harris on 'Is Chiswick a 'Palladian' Garden?'

2005

The GHS celebrates its 40th anniversary with parties at The British Library, to coincide with the opening of its 'Art of the Garden' exhibition; at the Geffrye Museum; and at Inverleith House in Edinburgh. President Sir Roy Strong opens his garden, The Laskett, to GHS members as a fundraising event, and also delivers the 3rd annual GHS lecture, on the subject of 'Horticultural Anglicanism: The Country Cleric and his Garden'.



Sir Roy Strong, president, with Dominic Cole, chairman, together once again in 2004

In conservation, development proposals in the grounds of Ticehurst House, Sussex, a 19th-century lunatic asylum, were seen off. Tottenham House in Wiltshire, an important Brown landscape, is under threat from golf course and hotel development.

There are tours to the gardens of Sweden and northwest Wales, a weekend visit to Enville and Hagley, and a tour of no fewer than 13 Yorkshire gardens, most of them not normally open to the public. Day trips include tours to Great Fosters and Runnymede. The GHS organises a conference on 'Women Garden Designers of the Early 20th Century' at the Architectural Association in London.

The AGM is held at the University of Lincoln, where detailed and satisfactory accounts are presented which show the GHS with a healthy bank balance. There is general agreement that, to quote one member speaking at the AGM, 'this is a much happier Society now than it has been for a number of years'. The conservation team also presents its Planning and Conservation Advice Notes (PCANs). These are comprehensive guidelines for local authorities and other garden custodians regarding all aspects of planning and good practice in conservation. With regard to 'e-planning', the change from on-paper submissions and communication to all-electronic, the conservation team has secured new computer equipment (thanks to a Government grant) and training.

2006

This year the AGM is held at Exeter, where Dominic Cole steps down as chair, promising to be back (the Society's constitution requires a two-year sabbatical), and Sir Roy Strong ends his term as president. Colin Treen is elected chairman, suggesting in his opening letter to members that the society ought to be more regionally focused.

One of the most important GHS events held this

year is "A Celebration of John Evelyn, A Renaissance Man, and His Gardens", a one and a half day conference, organised by the Surrey Gardens Trust in association with the GHS, held at Wotton House, Surrey, in April. As Mavis Batey reflects in the GHS news: 'The new approach was that, as the Wotton Conference took place in Evelyn's home, we also looked at garden history through the context of historical geography and local history. We concentrated on the influence of his 'sweet and native county' on Evelyn and how the legacy of Evelyn's ideas 'that our gardens speak proper English' was fulfilled by his grandson.'

There is a tour to The Midlands of Ireland in July, while in October the Annual weekend conference run jointly by the GHS and Oxford University Department of Continuing Education takes as its theme the 20th-century garden.

The poet and garden-maker Ian Hamilton Finlay died at the age of 80 on March 27, prompting this reflection from Patrick Eyres of the recently formed Little Sparta Trust: 'Anyone who has visited Little Sparta will appreciate that the planting is crucial, even though horticulture is not the garden's prime concern. Hardy trees and shrubs have been used pragmatically to form the skeleton and provide shelter from the elements. Within each glade the plantings complement inscribed stone to complete Finlay's environmental sculpture. The key to this fusion of nature and culture lies in his use of inscriptions. As Finlay familiarised himself with the history of garden design he became aware that the terse economy of text favoured by concrete poetry was evident in the classical use of inscriptions. Thus he came to appreciate that the inscription had the possibility, through the resonances invoked by association, of transforming a site through the poetics of metaphor. Finlay's inscriptions invite us to appreciate that the sculpture is made up of the



Charles Boot

Living in grand style on the GHS visit to the Garden House, Devon

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planting as well as the inscribed object.' Finlay's death heralds an uncertain period for Little Sparta.

Pippa Rakusen, a long-time supporter and benefactor of the GHS, died in October of this year, leaving a substantial legacy to the Society in her will.

2007

Lady Lucinda Lambton is elected president at the AGM in Edinburgh, where delegates enjoyed visits to Newhailes and Penicuik among other gardens.



Alison Allighan

The GHS conservation team in an Edinburgh garden

The conservation team responds to two major proposed developments at important gardens. After much debate and without unanimous agreement, Council endorses the conservation team's decision to endorse changes at Chiswick House, which includes proposals to build a new café on the site of the stable and outbuildings, and to place a hospitality marquee in an area of ground south-east of Lord Burlington's Villa, on the site of a wing of the Jacobean mansion. The second decision concerns the Holburne Museum in Bath, where the GHS opposes the scheme for the construction of a glass-walled extension because of its effect on the Grade II registered Sydney Gardens and the designed setting of that part of the city. Both schemes go ahead.

The conservation team is also spending time at this period in responding to the various drafts of the government's White Paper concerning heritage, which 'sets out proposals for a new protection regime but does not address in any detail how this is to be integrated into and enforced through the planning system.' Of particular concern at this time is the advent of 'certificates of immunity' for developers.

The *GHS news* reports on the proposed destruction of Manor Garden Allotments to make way for the 2012 London Olympics park, urging members to sign an online petition (the allotments were doomed.) Barbara Simms continues in her role as editor of the Society's journal, *Garden History*. This

year proves exceptionally productive, with four journals produced (two more than usual). Two general issues of *Garden History* were published on a wide range of subjects, from the history of individual landscapes to marketing historic gardens. In addition there were two special issues of the journal, *Hagley Park* and *Cultural and Historical Geographies of the Arboretum*, both fully funded by external sources.

In terms of events, the year begins with an evening at the Linnean Society in January celebrating the life and work of Carl Linnaeus, the great taxonomist, on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of his birth. Speakers included Dr Asa Ahrlund, a founding member of The Garden History Forum in Sweden, and Per Axell, gardener at the Linnaeus Garden in Uppsala. There is a tour of the royal gardens of Denmark led by Peter Hayden (June), a tour of mid Wales (August) while the Oxford conference takes as its theme the Oxford college gardens.

But for many the highlight of the year in terms of events is a sparkling winter lecture given by Anthony du Gard Pasley in March, in which he reminisces about a career in landscape design and his memories of figures such as Sylvia Crowe and Brenda Colvin.

The winner of the GHS Essay Prize is Paige Johnson, whose essay 'Proof of the Heavenly Iris: The Fountain of the Three Rainbows at Wilton House' is described by the judges as 'an exceptional piece of research which tackles a long-standing mystery of garden history'.

2008

The revamped *GHS news* is launched under the editorship of Charles Boot, with more pages, more photographs and the introduction of short essays on vital subjects which do not require a full article in the journal. Dominic Cole is re-elected as chairman.

The AGM is held at Liverpool, with memorable visits to Port Sunlight and Tirley Garth, and an evening reception in the restored palmhouse in Sefton Park.

The GHS comes out against the proposal that the 2012 London Olympics should stage equestrian events in the Grade I listed Greenwich Park (to no avail: the political impetus proves too strong to withstand).

In June the GHS obtains a special preview visit to the 'restored' Elizabethan garden at Kenilworth Castle, one of the major historic garden projects of the decade, and perhaps the one best known to the public (it is to open in 2009). There is a trip to gardens in Belgium in September.

Two general issues of the journal *Garden History* are produced. The first has a 17th-century theme and included essays on the gardens of Francis

Bacon and Sir Thomas Tresham; the second contains several essays arising from the conference on Aesthetic Gardens, as well as several on French themes. The Editor re-introduces the 'Queries' section of the journal, enabling readers to raise matters of interest or debate which do not warrant full-length articles.

2009

The GHS expresses concern at plans to alter the landscape designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe around Exeter Cathedral, including the proposed removal of Jellicoe's steps and reduction of the area of hardstand below the West Front. Also troubling is the announcement from the Landscape Institute that, due to a 'financial crisis', it is closing its library and dispersing its contents. This leads to a furore in the landscape and gardens world which was perhaps not anticipated by the Institute (in the event the Garden Museum agrees to house the LI's important archive of drawings[they are now at the Museum of English Rural Life, reading as the Landscape Library & Archive]). The conservation team reports on the continuing largesse of the Heritage Lottery Fund towards historic public parks, welcoming substantial awards to Clissold Park, London (£4.46m) and South Hill Park, Bracknell (£2.3m), among several others. GHS conservation officers are engaged in fighting proposals for ball-clay extraction at Creech Grange, Dorset, a well-preserved small early-18th-century landscape garden.



Charles Boot

The AGM is based at Robinson College, Cambridge, and blessed with sunny weather and a revelatory visit to The Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial at Madingley, on the 4 July (above).

In March a GHS group embarks on 'A Brazilian Odyssey: Gardens and Landscapes of Roberto Burle Marx'. In the *GHS news* Jill Raggett reports: 'At the Sitio [Burle Marx's own garden] large trees gave dramatic performances, with vast trunks and

buttresses, whilst providing shade for the lower storey. Beneath the trees' canopies, abstract patterns were created in groundcover plants with tiers of foliage of other species rising through them'. May sees a Gardens of the Two Rivas study tour; in and around Menton and Genoa, and September a Gardens of the Isle of Wight study tour. There is a Graham Stuart Thomas Day at Romsey and Mottisfont in June and a visit to Highgrove in the same month. The Oxford conference has 'Capability Brown and the Brownians' as its theme. This truly is a golden age of GHS events, under the steerage of committee chair Robert Peel.

The journal, *Garden History*, continues to broaden its readership by the inclusion of articles on garden-related topics, such as the Victorian obsession for scientific experimentation and the language of flowers, and with contributions from Pakistan and Ireland as well as many parts of the UK. The November issue comprised a collection of papers on historic planting and included recommendations on the effective long-term conservation of the flower garden, as proposed at a 2008 conference supported by the Garden History Society, English Heritage and the Great Dixter Trust.

The death of Anthony du Gard Pasley in October is announced. In the *GHS news* Charles Boot writes: 'Anthony was an instantly recognisable figure, whether in thorn-proof plus-fours, cape and deerstalker complete with monocle, or in the smartest kilt and jacket, his signature upward pointing moustache 'giving a pleasant countenance'; always immaculate, but never aloof. A twinkle in his eye revealed his mischievous sense of humour, which always outshone his military bearing.'

2010

Members are informed via the *GHS news* of the discussions around a 'Working Together Feasibility Study' with partners the Association of Gardens Trusts, the Parks and Gardens UK website and the Garden Museum (this paves the way towards the eventual vote for a merger with the AGT in 2015.)

The Historic Landscape Project is launched, with the aim of promoting the idea of conservation management of designed landscapes and gardens in the counties of England, as part of a strategy of gradual devolution of much of this vital activity into the regions.

Play and playgrounds loom large this year, in part because of the particular interest of conservation officer Linden Groves. The 15th Planning Conservation Advice Note (PCAN) to be issued by the GHS concerns play facilities in historic landscapes, and is devised 'to help planning

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applicants and professionals to assess and mitigate the potential damage that their proposal may have on a historic designed landscape. The 'Play Facilities' PCAN addresses issues such as the siting and appearance of equipment, as well as ways in which children could be accommodated without formal play equipment.' Further to this, the GHS publishes Linden's booklet 'Beyond the Playground', which encourages more imaginative engagement with children, with a lighter touch on the landscape: 'We may notice a fountain that would be perfect for sailing boats in, if only a little stash of them was left ready on the edge; a Broad Walk that is calling to have a hoop rolled along it; a pond perfect for fishing were there a row of nets; a hill on which a kite could be flown; a hermitage that would be a thousand times more entertaining were there a hermit in it.'

Consent is granted for the use of Greenwich Park as a venue for equestrian events in the 2012 London Olympics, which the GHS had opposed.

The AGM and summer conference is held at the University of Nottingham in July, with visits to Wollaton Hall and Newstead Abbey. There are study days at Chiswick House, at Hampton Court (on landscape ecology in designed settings), and in Fife (on the development of deer parks). The Oxford conference, 'A Panorama of Parks', boasts a high-powered roster of speakers, while an international conference at Wentworth Castle, 'Jacobites and Tories, Whigs and True Whigs', involves an 18th-century banquet, with pike on the menu. There is a tour the gardens of the Channel Islands and a trip to the gardens of Persia, including the cities of Shiraz, Yazd, Isfahan and Kashan.

2011

This year sees several highly successful study days take place. First of all, in April, is 'The Water Gardens of Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe' held in Hemel Hempstead, which kickstarts the campaign for the conservation of this unique threatened landscape in the town centre (which ultimately leads on to a substantial restoration grant from the HLF). Second is a study day in June on the Tudor and Stuart gardens at Wilton House, which is an instant sellout and inspires a 'part two' held later in the year at the Linnean Society.

But for most within the Society, the highlight of 2011 is the 90th birthday party given for Mavis Batey on 5 May at Petworth House, which takes the place of the usual summer party and is a happy event indeed. In the GHS news David Lambert paid tribute to Mavis: 'Her delightability has always been the counterweight to her indignation. Whether

making connections that illuminated a garden's history (her memory is far more capacious even than the magic wardrobe where she files the carrier bags of notes) or writing the next letter of protest, the giggle at something that has tickled her is never far away.'



Steffie Shields

And she knew how to work an audience...

In line with the policy of keeping members fully informed and up-to-date, the chairman lays out the basic aspirations of the proposed merger with the AGT in the summer **GHS news**:

1. GHS and AGT to plan how the two could become one and, in the process, actively involve County Garden Trusts (CGT) so that we become a single strong voice, albeit recognising CGTs are individually constructed and will have particular priorities.
2. Not to be overly driven by Government ('Big Society' etc) but to promote a single, independent, strong and informed conservation and learning voice under one 'banner'.
3. To plan how to transfer responding to case work (statutory referrals) to CGTs whilst maintaining standards of professional responses. This will involve deciding lines of communication, who does what, training, maintaining records and where ultimate responsibilities lie for quality and effect of responses.'

In conservation, the GHS signals its opposition to the revised route of the High Speed Rail Link between London and Birmingham 'on the grounds of its unacceptable impact on a significant number of nationally important designed landscapes ... While some welcome amendments have been made, such as moving the line further from vulnerable sites such as Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire (Grade I), at least two major designed landscapes, Hartwell House, Buckinghamshire (II*) and Stoneleigh Abbey,

Warwickshire (II*) will see the line passing directly through the registered landscape.' The winter *micro-news* reveals the story of Sayes Court, John Evelyn's Deptford Garden, the site of which is set to be buried by a new housing development, which local campaigners are trying to mitigate by securing a promise that part of the site will become green space. As part of a reorganisation of the conservation team three of the GHS's existing conservation officers are later made redundant.

The AGM is held at the University of Keele in Staffordshire and includes the first Graduate Symposium, an event held on the Friday morning of the conference and designed for scholars of all disciplines who are unpublished in the field of garden history. It is well attended and adjudged a success. The essay prize is won by Karin Seeber for her impressive piece about the Mount at New College, Oxford, entitled: 'Ye Making of ye Mount'.

Topics in *Garden History* range from historic gardens and gardening in Australia, India, Medieval Persia, Egypt and Mexico to the suburban gardens of interwar housing estates in England. Both of this year's journals contain detailed statements on conservation issues and the content of future issues of the journal will also aim to promote the relevance of the subject to practitioners as well as researchers in garden history and its related disciplines. Healthy revenues continue to accrue from JSTOR, the online archiving service, which enables users to download whole issues or individual articles from *Garden History*.

GHS members enjoy a special preview tour of the Olympic Park which is under construction. Charles Boot captures the sheer glamour of the day with an evocative if lengthy description in the *GHS news*: 'Approaching the Hockey Centre the bus turned around and luckily got stuck behind a bin lorry, which slowed our progress...'



But the tea afterwards was good...

There is a study day on 'Brookwood Cemetery: London's Necropolis, a Perfect Place of Rest' in September and tours to Cumbria, Turin and Mexico (including Edward James's fabled Las Pozas garden).

2012

The Society's long-standing interest in John Evelyn and Sayes Court is reflected in the study day held in April: 'Rediscovering Elysium: John Evelyn's Garden at Sayes Court', which begins at the Linnean Society and ends at the riverside site of the garden, delegates having been transported there by boat. There are further study days at Studley Royal (May), at the Caldwell estate in Scotland (June) and at the Bretton Hall estate (now Yorkshire Sculpture Park) in September. There is a study tour to the gardens of Bohemia and Moravia, and the GHS also takes part in the first edition of the Chelsea Fringe Festival in May, with a walking tour in Hyde Park which attracts some 80 people.

The AGM and conference, to have been held in Reading, is cancelled due to a lack of bookings. It was felt that the problem lay in the choice of location and the proposed garden visits rather than any general lack of enthusiasm among members. The AGM is relocated to the Garden Museum and held as a well-attended one-day event instead, with the second graduate symposium held in the morning. The Society's second library Collection, formerly at the University of Bristol (where the MA course in garden history has closed), is resettled at the University of Bath, where a new course has opened.

The conservation team spearheads a project to create a reference list of Conservation Management Plans (CMPs); invaluable documents created by consultants at different historic gardens, but all too often left shelved and out of reach of researchers. English Heritage provides some funding for this. In the *GHS news*, Steffie Shields outlines early plans and meetings concerning the 'Capability' Brown tercentenary in 2016.

The *GHS news* reports the successful re-introduction of otters to the River Cherwell and therefore to the waters of Rousham. Readers are reminded of the memorial in the garden to:

RINGWOOD

an OTTER-HOUND of extraordinary Sagacity

*Tyrant of the Cherwell's Flood
Come not near this sacred Gloom,
Nor, with thy insulting Brood,
Dare pollute my RINGWOOD'S Tomb*

The note continues: 'The cascade grotto bearing the memorial inscription lies immediately below a large hexagonal pond, full of fish for as long as

Timeline: 50 years of the GHS

anyone could remember. By May of this year, the pond was still. All fish have been exterminated by the now flourishing otter population.'

2013



Mavis and Ted at the Petworth party

The winter *micro-news* leads with the sad news of the deaths of both Mavis Batey and Ted Fawcett in the autumn. Mavis served as honorary secretary to the GHS from 1971 to 1985, and was our president from 1985 to 2000. Ted served several terms as chairman, and was elected a vice president of the GHS in 2010.

The AGM and graduate symposium is once again held at the Garden Museum in London, following the GHS's decision to promote the regional Annual Conference of the Association of Garden Trusts this year (part of the 'working together' strategy which continues to be developed).

There are successful foreign tours to California and to North Bohemia, Silesia & Saxony, and study days

at Lowther Castle, at Hopetoun House, and one in London celebrating the work of pioneering garden historian Alicia Amherst.

Two general issues of the journal, *Garden History*, are published during the year. The first provides a broad range of scholarly new research on topics as diverse as visitor perceptions through the ages at Vaux le Vicomte (timely as 2013 was the 400th anniversary of Le Notre's birth) to the third and final article on the history of Ditchley Park. The second issue of the year has a strong international flavour, with contributions from South Korea, the United States and France as well as the UK, and on a variety of gardens and landscapes in the Netherlands, Slovakia and England. The issue also includes Johnny Phibbs's list of sites attributed to 'Capability' Brown.

2014

Steffie Shields

The collaborative Historic Landscape Project continues its good works in the regions, introducing or re-inforcing the principles of active conservation management in the counties, prior to the proposed merger.

The AGM is held at Cardiff, and includes a final-day visit to William Randolph Hearst's St Donat's Castle. There is a study tours to the gardens of the Italian Lakes, as well as an exceptionally rich roster of study days including a celebration of George London at Melbourne Hall, a research day at Hagley Hall in association with the AGT, and an autumn study day on 'Memorial Landscapes of the First World War', held at the Garden Museum. Conferences include a day on the public gardens and squares of Edinburgh, and a weekend conference celebrating the tercentenary of William Shenstone, held at Pembroke College, Oxford.

Otherwise much of the Society's time and energy is taken up in preparing for the proposed merger with the AGT. The name agreed for the new organisation is **The Gardens Trust**.



Robert Peel, with megaphone in hand, attempts to bring GHS members to order at St Donat's Castle

Letitia Yetman



Letitia Yetman

2015

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the GHS and the year of the proposed merger with the AGT to become The Gardens Trust. The chairman tells members that there must be no regrets and that the values and objectives of the GHS will be served better by the new organisation, which will have the benefit of all the knowledge and enthusiasm of the county and country gardens trusts. The plan is for the new organisation to continue regular publication of the journal *Garden History*. It will also inherit the committee structure of the old GHS and most of the personnel, who are now drawn from both the GHS and the AGT. At a joint AGM (with graduate symposium) in Newcastle in July, members of the GHS and AGT vote on the proposed merger; and on whether to elect a slate of 12 members of Council of the new Gardens Trust; six associated primarily with the GHS, and six from the AGT.

In May the Society's Scottish group (The Garden History Society in Scotland) reforms itself as **Scotland's Garden and Landscape Heritage**, a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), thereby breaking formal links with the GHS. This move is taken with the blessing of the GHS's Council of Trustees. Both organisations pledge to work together in a spirit of mutual support and co-operation.

Otherwise the Society's programme of events continues and is as busy as ever. May sees a study day at St Giles, Wimborne, in May, and also a Chelsea Fringe Festival event (the fourth annual

entry): a continuation of the Arcadian Thames walk begun in last year's festival. There are some 60 people on the walk, the vast majority newcomers to the GHS. Potentially one of the last events connected with the GHS is held at the Linnean Society at Burlington House: a seminar on 'Imagery for Garden History' followed by an evening guided tour of the 'Paradise Preserved' exhibition at the Queens Gallery, Buckingham Palace. A special celebratory cake is unveiled and shared at the Linnean Society, in the form of Vita Sackville-West's tower at Sissinghurst (*above*).

In conservation, enthusiastic supporters have now provided 1,400 entries for a second edition of the GHS's list of Conservation Management Plans. An article by the chairman in the *GHS news* decries the destruction of Sylvia Crowe's landscape at the Commonwelath Institute as part of its transformation into a new home for the Design Museum. The first issue of the journal *Garden History* has an 18th-century theme, with articles on Shugborough, Croome Park, Stourhead and the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury.

Chairman Dominic Cole is awarded an OBE in the June Birthday Honours list, to the delight of colleagues in the GHS. It is announced that he is to be nominated as president of the new Gardens Trust, should members vote in favour of the merger and a new chapter for all those who care about gardens and designed landscapes, both contemporary and historic.

GHS Events Diary 2015

Friday 24 July	5th GHS Graduate Symposium, Newcastle
24 to 26 July	GHS and AGT Annual AGMs and Summer Conference, Newcastle
Saturday 8 August	<i>Little Sparta Under Attack</i> Fund Raising Gala Opening
10 to 16 September	Study Tour to Gardens of Normandy
Tuesday 22 September	Study Day at Kings Weston, Bristol
Saturday 31 October	Autumn Study Day on <i>Masonic Symbolism in Gardens</i> at the Freemason's Hall, London

Details and booking information for all GHS events can be found on our website: www.gardenhistorysociety.org/events

Fifty Years of Teamwork: here's to many more!

(continues from page 3)

Perhaps you will be particularly pleased to learn that from this month the Hub will house regular Casework Log Notes in which the Garden History Society's conservation team will pull together written responses to planning applications by themselves and CGTs. We think you will find these invaluable as a way of getting a national picture of planning activity being undertaken by CGTs, and of course as a great way of picking up comment writing tips! The Resource Hub is hosted at Parks and Gardens UK and you can access it through a link on the HLP web page: www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/hlp.html

Next, spending so much time talking to different Trusts and GHS members across the country, it is clear to us that there's not much you haven't covered! We get so many questions along the lines of 'do you know a Trust doing ...' or 'has anyone tried this...?! It would definitely be much better if

you could share all these ideas and experiences directly with each other, so we have set up a new Email Group, to replace the old discussion group on the HLP Web Forum.

Do please join the group and start bombarding it with questions:

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/leapthehaha/join>

Those of you who use Facebook and Twitter will know how quickly and easily you can reach a huge audience. The Historic Landscape Project has a Facebook page and Twitter account which you can 'like' and 'follow' to keep up-to-date with events and news: www.facebook.com/historiclandscapeproject and <https://twitter.com/leapthehaha>

If you're interested in using social media yourself, there are user-friendly instructions on the Hub if you want to give it a go.

*Caroline Ikin & Linden Groves,
Historic Landscape Project Officers*

GHS news correspondence and items to the GHS head office

or email the editor Charles Boot: news@gardenhistorysociety.org

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