

GHS and the Chelsea Fringe 2013

For the second year, the GHS organised a free guided walk as its contribution to the burgeoning Chelsea Fringe, founded in 2012 by Council member Tim Richardson.

This year, aptly enough, we set off around a small area of Chelsea itself, starting at the now green-flagged St Luke's Gardens and finishing up at the Battersea and Albert Bridge Gardens. Led by Sally Williams, Keeper of the *Inventary* for the London Parks & Gardens Trust, a group of over thirty were led through historic public spaces large and small. Thanks to Sally Williams, and organisers Robert Peel, David Foreman and Sophie Seifalian, and to Sophie for her photographs on the day.

The picture at right, shows Sally (standing left) and the group at Roper's Gardens, [Roper's Orchard], Chelsea Embankment SW3.

More information on the *Inventary* can be found at www.londongardensonline.org.uk



Sophie Seifalian

GHS Essay Prize 2013

Katie Campbell, Chair of Judges

The 2013 GHS Essay Prize has been won by **Jane Whitaker**, a PhD student at Bristol University, for her fascinating essay, *The Old Arcadia, The Garden of the First Earl of Pembroke at Wilton*. While much is known about the later garden at Wilton, this essay takes a fresh look at the site and unearths a forgotten Renaissance garden. Whitaker has placed her subject well within the cultural context of the time, with frequent references to contemporary poetry and politics, while the garden itself is convincingly analysed against the framework of Elizabethan rural estates. The essay is well researched and well argued, making excellent use of archival

and cartographic sources; what most impressed the judges, however, is the way Whitaker challenges accepted wisdom and breaks new ground, making a real contribution to our knowledge of Renaissance horticulture in general and of Wilton in particular.

This year's entries covered an impressive range of subjects, from Victorian artists' gardens, through classical iconography in C18 landscape parks to a study of the role of the Thompson family in English horticulture, but despite such riches, the judges' choice was unanimous.

Details of next year's GHS Essay Prize will be published this autumn.

Working Together — an update

Dr Marion Harney, Chair of the newly formed Joint Conservation Committee

It has long been acknowledged that there is insufficient Government funding to protect and promote historic gardens, parks and designed landscapes efficiently and effectively. Currently English Heritage formally responds to planning applications that affect the relatively few gardens and landscapes designated Grade I or II* on the *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England*. However, the Garden History Society, as statutory consultee, must be consulted by local authorities for planning applications that affect sites on the *Register*, or the setting of such sites, and this applies to *all Grades*. In addition, the GHS receives some consultations relating to sites which are not included on the *Register*. The Society also continues to respond to policy issues affecting parks and gardens and to major cases which raise points of principle which matter to all our members.

The Society has reviewed its casework management strategy and, due to lack of funding, now no longer employs regional conservation officers to deal with routine casework, although, when required, a panel of experienced and appropriately qualified professionals is available to deal with specific conservation issues

in each region. That said, the Society's capacity to respond to all planning issues and threats, and provide appropriate evaluation of the heritage value of the assets under consideration for development is severely limited by recent austerity measures.

Clearly, a situation where important historic parks, gardens and landscapes are at risk is totally unacceptable. The cooperation of all heritage sector bodies with an interest in historic landscapes is vital if we are to realise our core objective of conserving and protecting them for future generations to enjoy. To achieve this key purpose we are working closely with colleagues in the County Gardens Trusts (CGTs) to ensure that 'working together' we remain able to provide authoritative specialist advice on planning and other conservation matters.

Moving forward

With these difficulties in mind 'The Working Together Feasibility Study Group', comprising the Society, the Association of Gardens Trusts (AGT), the Garden Museum and the Parks & Gardens Database (P&GUK), discussed possible ways forward towards closer co-operation between their members to help establish where opportunities for collaboration may exist.

The study, funded by English Heritage, looked critically at how the various organisations operated and how they might better work together to avoid duplication of effort and expenditure. Discussions ensued as to how the bodies involved might work more effectively:

- to promote sector-wide collaboration;
- to ensure the coordination of scarce resources;
- to ensure that issues are clearly identified and that the necessary skills are in place for us to be able to continue with our valuable work of protecting the parks, gardens and landscapes we all cherish.

The first positive outcome of these deliberations is that there is agreement that great efficiencies and benefits are to be gained from the Society, the CGTs and their umbrella organisation the AGT working together to achieve a shared core purpose and to establish us as the influential 'leader in the field' for the key objectives of conserving and protecting historic landscapes. Closer collaboration, building on the synergy and respective strengths of these organisations, will enhance effective and efficient communication of issues and activities, maximise our grant-aid and research-funding potential, give us greater capability to monitor outcomes and publish the results and allow stakeholders and the public to participate in our work.

These pro-active measures will have the additional advantage of reaching a larger constituency, attract a younger demographic, including students such as the PhD and Master's degree students attached to the unique Conservation of Historic Gardens and Landscapes programme at the University of Bath, and those studying elsewhere. Stronger links with the university sector will enable closer engagement with the research community, inform best practice and the ability to commission or promote research activities that are of reciprocal benefit.

Collectively, the pooling of resources and expertise combined with a consolidation of efforts means we will speak with one, strong, more effective voice for the protection and conservation of historic parks, gardens and landscapes.

Setting up the Joint Conservation Committee

In January 2013 the Council of the Garden History Society and the Committee of Management of the Association of Gardens Trusts agreed to establish a Joint Conservation Committee (JCC) which would replace the current GHS Conservation Committee, and the AGT Conservation Sub-Committee. It is now up and running.

The JCC will report on its business and activities to both the GHS and AGT Trustees and through them to GHS members and to the County Gardens Trusts (CGT).

The JCC will act as a Joint Advisory Board and will be responsible for advising GHS and AGT Trustees on matters relating to the conservation of historic parks and gardens and designed landscapes and related matters at an international, national, regional and local level and on particular planning applications where the impact of the proposed development may be nationally significant. It will also make joint representations and work with other amenity societies, government agencies and NGOs and any other relevant bodies to promote the wider understanding and conservation of historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes.

It will be the responsibility of the JCC to advise the Trustees of both bodies on appropriate action over important issues such as statements of significance, enabling development, conditions sought to be attached to planning permission or listed building consent, and the aesthetic response to proposals. This alliance will be of mutual benefit for the conservation and protection of all those landscapes that we value, and enable our membership to join forces to help evaluate and respond to damaging planning proposals and other issues that threaten registered historic

landscapes. The JCC will also advise the Trustees when research concludes that important unregistered landscapes should be included in the *Register*.

A primary objective of the JCC is to set out a new strategy to ensure that the protection of historic parks and gardens happens more efficiently and effectively. The JCC membership is drawn equally from both bodies and its initial task will be in setting firm foundations for their respective work, and the strong membership of the Society, AGT, and individual County Gardens Trusts have a crucial role to play in this new joint working arrangement. The latter in particular can play an important part as they represent an essential resource, possessing a largely untapped wealth of expertise, knowledge, specialisms and experience at regional and local level.

Many CGTs have already established conservation, planning, research and recording and educational groups and have developed excellent relationships with their local planning authorities, and are involved in providing valuable regional and national support highlighting historic designed landscapes and issues of concern. We must actively encourage and engage the help of all of our respective members if we are to meet the challenges we face in providing an appropriate level of protection to sites under threat, registered or not. Supporting the CGTs in their responses to local conservation issues and planning casework is a priority for the JCC. The committee will share information, providing guidance, workshops, training and support to those members who wish to be actively involved in the protection and conservation of historic parks, gardens and landscapes.

The JCC intends to take a pro-active role and an agreed procedure and *pro-forma* document endorsed by the GHS as statutory consultee for implementation by appropriately qualified CGT members will be drawn up by August 2013. This will enable trained members of the 'Working Together' initiative to respond appropriately and comment concisely, consistently and professionally on all relevant planning proposals and other significant issues that affect sites in their locality. There is strength in numbers and with the combined efforts of the GHS and AGT professional officers and our respective members we will prove a force to be reckoned with, equipped to deal with the majority of development proposals that threaten those designed landscapes we must protect.

Using our Existing Resources

Access will also be arranged (by appointment) to the GHS Library, which is held at the universities of Bath and York, for the benefit of GHS, AGT and CGT members and for the research community, students studying at Bath, and at other academic institutions.

Care and maintenance of heritage assets have widely been delivered both by private owners and through voluntary organisations, and there remains a wider public interest in heritage protection. We need to work together to enlist these resources to a greater degree and utilise the expert advice of the GHS, AGT and CGTs; vital when changes to the historic environment are being considered. This is where the CGTs in particular can make a substantial difference; with their expert local and regional knowledge, they need to intervene to ensure high-quality outcomes and minimise irreversible loss to the historic designed environment.

The GHS in Scotland too has a strong emphasis on working with local organisations and authorities to identify locally and regionally significant sites which the JCC would wish to emulate. By including a range of partners and collaborators we will help ensure that the appropriate level of intervention occurs in a timely manner. The CGTs with assistance from the JCC, and national and local expert organisations when required, can effectively protect their historic environment by engaging with key conservation activities,

researching and collecting information on landscapes at risk (particularly where significant landscapes have been overlooked or are poorly understood). They can provide expert views on the values of heritage assets, identifying how such assets might best be protected, and giving an input into local plan-making and local lists, which will help inform the decision-making processes that are part of the planning system.

Information gathered by organisations such as English Heritage and the GHS and AGT can guide local decisions by setting site-specific issues in a wider context. Active members of the CGTs can help educate local communities and individuals to become involved and take more responsibility for the management of their local historic assets. The CGTs are best placed to provide efficient and effective protection responses and engage in pre-emptive activities, such as instigating discussions at local level to include sites on local historic environment records (HER), and to contact the GHS and AGT officers when research indicates that a particular site should be designated. Working together to ensure strong measures and a robust system of protection means we effectively minimise irreparable change, damage or irreversible loss of important sites and landscapes.

Enhanced Role in Training

The JCC will work closely with the Historic Landscape Project Officers, Verena McCaig and Linden Groves, who are employed by the AGT with additional EH and GHS funding to support capacity building work with the CGTs to conserve the historic environment by empowering their members, and arranging specialist training for those who wish to help protect the historic environment by actively being involved with responses to planning proposals, assessments and the decision-making processes of the planning system.

Other proposed workshops available to CGT members, which feed into issues of policy and practice, include research and recording, survey techniques, understanding conservation management plans and understanding historic parkland. This training will be delivered by the Historic Landscape Project Officers guided by the Principal Conservation Officer.

In addition, CGTs may benefit from national expert advice and technical support from the JCC and associated officers, where changes are proposed to designated heritage assets at a national level.

Advice Notes, old and new

The JCC will engage with capacity-building initiatives by ensuring that the right skills exist and that the right tools and advice are available to those engaged in looking after our landscapes by activities such as training and the development of advice and guidelines. The JCC will continue to update the series of *Planning and Conservation Advice Notes (PCANS)* which provide information about the general planning framework in relation to historic designed landscapes, as well as more specific advice relating to the planning and conservation considerations when particular forms of development or change of use are being considered.

New advice notes agreed at the inaugural meeting of the JCC include advice on Memorials in the Royal Parks and the publication of a JCC policy statement on Photo Voltaic Arrays or Systems. All existing, updated and new advice notes and policy statements will be freely available on GHS and AGT websites.

Casework Log

We will continue to compile the unique Casework Log of all relevant information from National and Local Government concerning planning issues relating to parks and gardens and circulate this to English Heritage Landscape Architects, CGTs and the AGT, and some of the national amenity societies so that all of those wishing to be involved with conservation and planning matters are kept fully informed.

In order to make the Log a more comprehensive record of activity affecting historic designed landscapes, we invite the CGTs to use it to record their conservation activities alongside those of the GHS. This data will help demonstrate to the wider world that we, collectively, are taking our responsibilities seriously; it will also assist English Heritage to compile *Heritage Counts* each year, and monitor challenges faced by historic landscapes across the regions.

Statements of Significance

Significance sets apart the most important buildings and landscapes and identifying that significance is at the core of our work. The JCC will propose that a well-written statement of significance is fundamental for every historic asset to identify the values and real issues in order of priority to help promote and protect the site. Providing a statement of significance for all nationally and locally designated landscapes will improve public and professional access to information about the significance of gardens and landscapes and has the potential to attract funding for conservation and maintenance.

The Working Together initiative will demonstrate to professionals and volunteer organisations alike how working in collaborative partnerships is beneficial for all those concerned.

With the recognition that there is little spare capacity in the historic environment sector, the joint strengths of the collective bodies may help to persuade government to take a more proactive role and give clear policy guidance on the importance of the historic environment.

The Long Term Outlook

In the longer term we would envisage that focusing resources and research on the most threatened parts of the historic environment will help to increase understanding and appreciation of historic landscapes and protect their significance.

The academic sector has an important role to play in the interpretation, identification, assessment and recording of the historic environment. Substantial research is, and has been, undertaken by students from the Conservation of Historic Gardens and Landscapes programme at the University of Bath and other academic institutions. But there is considerably more that needs to be done and it is essential to identify further work in certain areas. There are large areas of the country where even basic identification of what heritage we have is poor and thus where there is a real risk of losing nationally significant landscapes and assets before we even know what is at risk.

Enhanced levels of engagement between the JCC and universities will be mutually beneficial to all those organisations and institutions interested in the conservation and protection of the historic environment. The identification of potential areas of research and the practical impact of results will be of considerable interest to academic researchers in order to obtain funding, only available to universities, from, for example the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Collaboration with universities on conservation and/or research projects is also often a pre-requisite or positive attribute for accessing other funding streams such as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Big Lottery Fund (BLF).

Enhanced coordination of activity and joint working is particularly important in times of cutbacks in public spending and we must all work together to facilitate greater engagement in the protection of historic gardens, parks and landscapes by local communities and to consider specifically how public interest can best be stimulated and, where appropriate, engaged with directly.

Together we seek to play to the strengths of our organisations and provide a basis for creating new dialogues, new partnerships and new collaborations where real, tangible protection outcomes are likely to be realised.

This is at the heart of the Working Together initiative; it will enable us to speak with one authoritative, collective voice.



In 2010 the GHS published *Beyond the Playground*, to encourage thinking outside the box for approaches to child visitors. We have since received 2000 requests for copies, from property staff, education providers, local authorities and more. And as *Beyond the Playground's* author, I now practise what it preaches! Under the name **Hahahopscotch**, I run play sessions that take inspiration from our heritage and are ideal for historic environments. Tugs of war, sack races, egg and spoon ... fun!

Most recently, the GHS and Timberplay have kindly supported the creation of a special **Hahahopscotch** game to introduce children to garden history.

The *Garden History Galavant* is a unique medley of a wheelbarrow relay, cuddly sheep, miniature topiary, 'roman statues' and bunting of archive illustrations. And the best bit is me talking to chest-high visitors about historic gardens! This game is a great opportunity to engage a new generation so if you'd like me to come and run it at your property, do email: linden@hahahopscotch.co.uk. Prices are disgustingly reasonable, and I can tweak the game to make it bespoke to your site. Details: www.hahahopscotch.co.uk **Linden Groves**



Hahahopscotch Traditional Garden Game session at Ardkinglas in Argyll

GHS Events 2013

for full details of our events please see **GHS news 91** or: www.gardenhistorysociety.org/events

Gardens and Art

GHS/OUCE Weekend School

at Rewley House, Oxford

Friday 7 to Sunday 9 June

Non-residential places remain available, from £120. For further information contact Rewley House: ppdayweek@conted.ox.ac.uk or: 01865 270 380 or check the website.

Visit to Arniston House

Gorebridge, nr Edinburgh

1pm, Sunday 16 June

A guided tour of the House, together with an exhibition of facsimiles of historical maps in the Orangery, afternoon tea and guided tours of the gardens to follow.

Arniston House has been the home of the Dundas Family for over 400 years. The magnificent mansion house, set in acres of beautiful parkland, is located just 11 miles from Edinburgh.

Cost: £15. Contact: Grace Ellis: graceellis@virgin.net or phone: 0131 447 4124 Please download the Booking Form and return it with your payment by **3 June**.

Myddleton House and Forty Hall, Enfield

with the London Parks & Gardens Trust

10.45am, Tuesday 2 July

Price: £30, to include lunch and coffee/tea on arrival. Please contact Robert Peel: rma.peel@btopenworld.com or: 020 7121 8938

3rd GHS Graduate Symposium and Annual General Meeting

at The Garden Museum, London

Symposium at 10.30am,

AGM at 3pm, Friday 12 July

Voting Form and Booking Form enclosed.

Please return it by 4 July latest.

Hopetoun House

Late Summer Study Day

The GHSS with the Architectural

Heritage Society of Scotland

9.45am, Sunday 1 September

The Study Day includes a welcome from the Earl and Countess of Hopetoun, and a series of tours on: the Architecture with Andrew Martindale; the State Rooms, including furniture and decoration, with Earl of Hopetoun and David Jones; the Archives, to see some key documents relevant to the Study Day with Peter Burman.

To be followed by lectures on further Aspects of Hopetoun House: Professor James Macaulay on *The evolution of Hopetoun House from 1699 to 1750*; Christopher Dingwall and Professor Marcus Koehler on *The Garden Landscape*; and short talks including *The Conservation Management Plan*; *Buildings in the Landscape* and *The Hopetoun Hahas*. To be followed by tours of the gardens led by Peter Burman, Christopher Dingwall and Peter Stevens.

The day includes Lunch and Tea, and concludes with a glass of wine, and an optional guided walk to the Estate Village of Abercorn.

Cost: £35, including coffee, lunch and tea. Full details of the event are included on the Booking Form, see the website.

Eastern Promise:

Transforming London's Landscapes, from Abercrombie to the Olympics AGT Annual Conference

Queen Mary College, University of

London, Mile End, London

Friday 6 to Sunday 8 September

For details see **news 91** or check the website.

Cost: twin shared room: £296, single room: £312. Non-residential: £213.50.

Contact: office@londongardenstrust.org or phone: 0207 8393 969.

Bohemia/Silesia/Saxony

GHS Study Tour

Saturday 21 to Friday 27 September

FULLY BOOKED

Invercauld: Autumn Colour

2pm, Saturday 19 October

A short history of the Farquharsons at Invercauld, & a talk on the trees and forests of Invercauld, Aberdeenshire, to be followed by a guided walk through the landscape.

Email Grace Ellis: graceellis@virgin.net for information pack, or phone: 0131 447 4124

Blooming Sepulchres:

the Art and Architecture of Scotland's Garden Cemeteries lecture by Christopher Dingwall

6.30pm, Monday 4 November

A joint lecture with the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland by Christopher Dingwall, with glass of wine and nibbles.

Booking form and cost to be confirmed.

Alicia Amherst

GHS Autumn Study Day

Friends House, Euston, London

Saturday 9 November

More details in the next edition...

For further information contact Gwenneth Raybould: garden@gbz.demon.co.uk

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micro-news 91a

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news 92 copy deadline: **31 July**