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NEWS  
13 Summer 2020

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**Front cover image:**  
 Fiona Brockhoff's garden at Sorrento, Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, Australia. For twenty years her garden has coped with the salt, the sand and the wind, lack of summer rain and scant topsoil. She took inspiration from "the wind tortured plants along the edge of the coast."  
 Photo by Robert Peel.  
 See the report of our Australian Gardens Study Tour on p.28.

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# GT NEWS

## 13 Summer 2020

### Join Us

If you or someone you know is not a member, please join us!

Your support is vital in helping the Gardens Trust to protect and campaign for historic designed landscapes. Benefits include *GT News*, our journal *Garden History*, and access to exclusive member events. A special rate is available to County Garden Trust members. Join today at: [thegardenstrust.org/support-us/](http://thegardenstrust.org/support-us/)



[www.thegardenstrust.org](http://www.thegardenstrust.org)

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### Copy deadline for Autumn 2020

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# David Marsh

## back in his shed — or not

There's nothing like a pandemic for giving one time to think. Gardeners no exception. I had a busy spring, teaching a couple of mornings a week, talking to garden clubs and horticultural societies a few evenings each month, continuing writing the Gardens Trust blog and trying to arrange some new out-of-London venues for garden history courses.

The summer looked to be eventful too. My garden in France was going to open to the public fairly regularly, with visitors coming to stay and GT business to arrange. In March I took a trip to Sheffield to run a course with the Friends of the Botanic Garden, at their lovely education centre, but the signs were already there of what was about to hit us. Attendance was low even if enthusiasm was high so we plotted what we'd do later in the year when it was all over. I got home that evening and until the last few days, like so many of us, I have hardly been out of the house since. [mid-June 2020]

Here in London I have a tiny back garden, just 20m<sup>2</sup>, and a miniscule front patch. It's a modern house on the site of a former warehouse, so in the best tradition of builders the old concrete base wasn't broken up and removed but simply covered with decking. There is no soil at all so we filled cattle troughs with bulbs and tough non-summer interest plants and added a watering system for when we're away over the summer. So unlike most GT members I'd guess my gardening opportunities here are limited, and certainly not the same

challenge as dealing with the five acres I have over in France.

Normally I'd leave the UK around the end of March and as usual I had the tickets booked when the travel ban was imposed. At first I wasn't worried. After all this virus would soon pass, and if I could get there I could very happily self-isolate. But then as April ticked away I began to get messages from friends and neighbours asking when we were arriving. Photos arrived showing the grass getting longer, and the weeds getting higher. Of course there were also photos of the flowers in season... the spring bulbs, especially the 500 giant-bloomed orange tulips I'd planted in containers. I've missed the magnolias, the lilac, the buckeyes, and the paulownia. More recently we got photos of the thousands of flag iris in the gravel garden, and the roses which cover the pergola and many of the walls.

When it became clear that for both the UK and France this was going to be a long haul we discovered how much our garden meant to other people. Friends volunteered to feed the fish in the four ponds, take the pots of cacti and succulents out of the poly tunnel, and uncover the gunnera from their winter protection. It was good that we could respond by suggesting they help themselves to the rhubarb, the raspberries and no doubt soon the blackcurrants and gooseberries. I just hope I can get there in time for the peaches! Of course they were under lockdown too and had to fill in a form every time they left home, but for at least one family our garden became their place of daily exercise. A neighbouring farmer, who could travel more freely to reach fields not near her farm, volunteered herself and her children to bring a tractor round and cut the grass,



A corner of the iris garden, but please don't look too closely at the edging.

apologising that she didn't have time to cut all the edges quite as neatly as we would. Others have planted the dahlia tubers, picked fruit and made it into jam for us. It's all been a real eye-opener.

And it gave us time to think. Not about how we recover lost time but how we deal with the immediate problems, but more importantly is this a sign of what things will be like when we're older and can't cope with all the physical work? Gardens are ephemeral, transient and ever-changing, and no-one is ever satisfied with what it looks like now. I should think seven or eight months neglect will have given the weeds a head start. We all know that apologetic phrase "you should have been last week when the [insert the name of your favourite flower] was out." This year I'll be able to say with a clear conscience "I'm so glad you weren't here last week." And if you want to see what the garden was like last year, I'm giving an on-line lecture about it for the GT on Tuesday 28th July repeated on Wednesday 29th [see box below].

The crisis has also meant that I've not had the distraction of sowing, transplanting, watering, tidying and weeding to keep away from



Views of our garden from our French friends, flourishing but careful with the close-ups.

GT work, and have been able to help put us on-line to face the uncertain future in new ways.

David managed to return to his garden as we went to press.

For more about David's garden see his recent blog on 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle, or Mr Wemmick and Me', 13 June 2020: <https://thegardenstrust.blog/>

### Garden history in the making? The story of my garden

**Dr David Marsh shares the joys (and problems) of creating his own five-acre garden in France**

GT on-line lecture series: 10am, Tuesday 28 July and/or 6pm Wednesday 29 July

David says: 'My partner and I have had a house in France for around 25 years, and for the last ten have lived there for about half the year. We moved house in 2006, buying a rambling ruin with mediaeval foundations, two overgrown fields and a lake.

Since then we have been designing, clearing and planting a garden of about five acres. Almost everything, apart from the hedging and some of the trees, is home grown from seed or cuttings, and this is the story of how it was done...and how

our French friends, neighbours and the local press reacted! The garden was opened to the public for the first time in 2015.'

This lecture is free and Dr David Marsh is giving his time *pro bono*. We would welcome donations to aid in the Gardens Trust's campaigning to protect historic parks and gardens.

<https://bit.ly/DonateGardensTrust>

Further details about the on-line lecture series can be found on p.36 and on our website.

# news & campaigns

## Unforgettable Gardens in an unforgettable time

Our **Unforgettable Gardens** theme for 2020 to 2022 is swinging into motion and the threats of Covid-19 make it even more important that we all work creatively to highlight the three Vs of historic parks and gardens '**Value, Vulnerability and Volunteering**'.

Inevitably during the pandemic, we have so far focussed these initiatives on on-line activity. The upside of this is that it is a great way to engage new people. Thanks to the generosity of Lottery players, the National Lottery Heritage Fund agreed to a small extension of the **Sharing Repton** project to carry out a social media campaign this summer to highlight how much we all love historic parks and

gardens, the threats they face now more than ever, and how we can all get involved to help. This has enabled us to run a weekly **#guessthegarden** competition and also posts focussing on **#sharinglandscapes** to trigger local discussions on sites important to people, the issues they struggle with, and the volunteer groups that support them. To complement our @thegardenstrust Twitter and existing Gardens Trust Facebook group, run by volunteer Letitia Yetman, we now also have a Facebook page The Gardens Trust Sharing Landscapes and Instagram @thegardenstrust.

Planning for the 'new normal' is hard, but our experience has shown us that **Unforgettable Gardens** does not need to wait

for business as usual to return. Do get in touch to discuss how you might like to get involved, there are support materials from briefing notes to activity ideas to a logo all available at:

[www.thegardenstrust.org/conservation/hlp-hub/campaigns-and-celebrations/unforgettable-gardens/](http://www.thegardenstrust.org/conservation/hlp-hub/campaigns-and-celebrations/unforgettable-gardens/)

Linden Groves



Charles Boot

HLP officer Tamsin McMillan at Exeter's Devonport Park which Devon Gardens Trust put forward to focus in our social media work earlier this spring. She is standing in front of a rare Plymouth Pear tree planted in 2013 by Celia Sullivan.



SAVE OUR HERITAGE WITH  
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## The Gardens Trust Annual General Meeting 2020

Saturday 5th September 2020

### Your vote is important to us

In light of the current COVID-19 measures in the UK and the ban on large gatherings, and in accordance with special legislation relating to AGMs in this period, the AGM will be run as a closed meeting.

Members will not be able to attend in person or appoint a proxy, other than the Chairman, to attend and vote on their behalf.

Instead of attending this AGM, members are asked to exercise their votes by submitting their proxy electronically or by post.

See the enclosed Notice of Annual General Meeting 2020 and Annual Report 2019 for information and the Proxy Voting Form for the addresses to send proxies to, which must be received **by noon on Tuesday 1st September 2020.**

Dr James Bartos, Chairman

# Historic Landscape Project Update

Tamsin McMillan, HLP Officer

While the Historic Landscape Project cannot host its usual training and networking events at the moment, and we're missing our regular contact with County Gardens Trusts, we really want to carry on supporting them. We know it has taken them many years of effort to nurture their volunteer groups into dedicated and productive teams, and want to help, if we can, to make sure that this enthusiasm does not dwindle away whilst you are unable to meet up.

To this end, in April the HLP slotted under the **Unforgettable Gardens** theme of conservation and volunteering, to launch a programme of remote training packages, emailed once a week or so to the CGTs. These bite-size posts include refreshed and updated training presentations and handouts, as well as new material, covering a range of subjects which we hope you will find useful, either to help your volunteers to update their skills, or perhaps to discover a new area of interest.

Topics include introductions to online communications and social media; online resources for research, and suggestions

for online repositories for completed research; understanding a landscape's setting and significances; conservation and planning training; and suggestions for ways to get involved with **Unforgettable Gardens** in 2020 to 2022. You can find the full programme here: [thegardenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/GT-Remote-Learning-Packages-2020-Schedule-.pdf](https://thegardenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/GT-Remote-Learning-Packages-2020-Schedule-.pdf)

We intend to continue offering this kind of training, even after we are able to meet up physically, as we recognise that attending our events isn't possible for everyone, so this is a really valuable way of reaching more of you. In addition, we will start to run some of our training workshops online, by the end of the summer. Anyone can access our training packages by either emailing me: [tamsinmcmillan@thegardenstrust.org](mailto:tamsinmcmillan@thegardenstrust.org) so that I can add you to the HLP's mailing list, or by finding them on our online resource hub at: [thegardenstrust.org/conservation/hlp-hub/](https://thegardenstrust.org/conservation/hlp-hub/)

Do please stay in touch. We're really interested to hear how

each CGT, and other sites and organisations in your county, are managing during the pandemic, and whether you've developed any strategies for coping, or perhaps even thriving!, which might inspire others, as we get used to a new way of living and working.

## Volunteer for the Gardens Trust

If you might have an interest in further supporting the work of the Gardens Trust by volunteering to help, we would love to hear from you.

This need not be time consuming, the amount of time you spend will be up to you. We can always use help in our communications efforts, organising events in different parts of the country, or indeed worldwide, tracking our planning successes or developing news stories.

If you would like to learn more, please contact our Administrator, Louise Cooper: [enquiries@thegardenstrust.org](mailto:enquiries@thegardenstrust.org)

# London GT launch appeal to protect Victoria Tower Gardens



Victoria Tower Gardens during lockdown



... and after the proposed development

The Gardens Trust wholeheartedly supports the London Gardens Trust (LGT) in their efforts to protect the Grade-II listed Victoria Tower Gardens. LGT have now launched a judicial review of the Government's decision to call in the planning application to build a large National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre on this public park next to the Houses of Parliament.

As the Government have already publicly committed to going ahead with the project we agree with LGT's director Dr Helen Monger that this creates a massive conflict of interest. Both LGT and the Gardens Trust fully support the creation of the Memorial and Learning Centre, but we believe that Victoria Tower Gardens is not the right site.

It is unlawful for planning decisions like this to be taken without institutional separation so that the decision-maker has complete independence from any influence by the project's promoter. How can any Minister adjudicate impartially on a planning application when his own Government has already publicly committed to the project

going ahead?

Helen and her colleagues have been working tirelessly to put together the documentation required to take this action. She has secured appropriate legal support and has now launched a Crowdfunder funding campaign towards the potential costs of around £20,000. To support them you can find full details and pledge a sum on their Crowdfunder page: <https://www.crowdfunder.com/case/victoria-tower-gardens/>

LGT says of the effects:

- The Gardens will suffer a loss of their intrinsic character from the reduction in green space, overwhelming numbers of visitors, and the security required around the gardens as well as the Memorial itself.
- A reduction in the grass area of about 30% (and 36% if the steep slopes of the mound over the 'underground' Learning Centre are included).
- A reduction in the size of the children's playground.
- Damage to, or death of the 100-year-old London Plane trees due to severing the roots and hydrological changes.
- The Gardens will be divided visually and functionally by the Memorial and mound.
- The Gardens, which are the largest open space for a big local population, will be mainly inaccessible for the thirty month duration of construction.



The Gardens now (left), as proposed (middle) and an analysis of the changes (right). The grass area in the illustration has been made to look more spacious by mis-representing the actual size of the trees. Also note the large area of the existing green space that will be excavated and lost to the mound covering of the Learning Centre.



# OASIS home for the Gardens Trust's bibliography of Conservation Management Plans

In 2012 one of the Gardens Trust's predecessors, the Garden History Society, compiled a bibliography of Conservation Management Plans, with details gratefully received from landscape architect practices, English Heritage, the National Trust and others. You can see this bibliography at: [thegardenstrust.org/conservation/conservation-management-plan-project/](https://www.thegardenstrust.org/conservation/conservation-management-plan-project/)

We are now working to transfer the list to OASIS, a UK-wide online database through which heritage practitioners can provide information and submit reports on their work to heritage

bodies including local Historic Environment Records (HERs).

OASIS is an important database for archaeologists and has been expanded to include historic buildings, parks and garden records. It brings together a number of strategic partners: the Archaeology Data Service, Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland, and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales under the umbrella of the University of York.

We are excited to give our CMP list a long-term home at this accredited open archive,

particularly for the opportunity it creates of feeding this important material directly and simply into the planning system via the HERs. This work is supported by a Heritage Protection Commission grant from Historic England.

If you hold details for CMPs that you would like us to add to the OASIS project in addition to those already on our list, please contact [lindengroves@thegardenstrust.org](mailto:lindengroves@thegardenstrust.org) before 27th July.

The Hestercombe Gardens Trust is also continuing to build its archive of copies of CMPs and welcomes new donations: [benwhitworth@hestercombe.com](mailto:benwhitworth@hestercombe.com)

# Gardeners under lock down

**Linden Groves** has been in touch with gardeners to hear their stories

As Covid-19 hit, historic parks and gardens found themselves forced to shut their gates just at the start of the Spring season. This has made for a spring and now summer like no other. Many gardeners were furloughed as their employers struggled to make ends meet without visitor income, while others were still at work but in rather unusual circumstances. Now that sites are carefully starting to open once more, they face a whole new set of challenges.

Linden asked Head Gardeners

to share their experiences of these odd times.

Many gardens had to furlough their staff, not because they were short of work, but because budgets were dramatically threatened by the loss of visitor income in peak garden season.

**many garden staff have been furloughed**

One such person was **Luke Bartle**, Head Gardener at the National Trust's Sudbury Hall, who writes:

'In mid-March we were told that Sudbury (along with every property up and down the country) was to go into full closure to both visitors and staff apart from those completing essential on-property tasks. As gardeners we were very limited in what we could do working from home – it didn't take us long to get on top of all the paperwork! Then in early April the



The Bartle family

Luke and Oliver Bartle, furloughed.

gardens team at Sudbury, myself included, were all put on furlough.

I had a rather different experience in being furloughed than most other people. My partner and I were fortunate enough to welcome our first child, Oliver, into the world in mid-April. The length and timing of such leave from work proved rather handy as my role changed from Head Gardener to Head Nappy Changer! This kept me preoccupied, but I still missed work.

In the meantime, the gardens at Sudbury were being managed by property staff who were not furloughed. They did a great job in keeping on top of things by working through a task list that was left. Whilst the hot dry spring was a blessing, it did mean that unfortunately we lost some winter plantings. Due to the rules of the furlough scheme, I was not able to help at all with anything work related. This was quite hard to deal with, and my partner certainly borne the brunt of my frustrations: “If only I could... Shall I tell them this... I do hope that this got done... Oh, I forgot to mention that before I left... Shall I email the volunteers...?”

In mid-June, I was the first member of Sudbury to come back from furlough leave. Whilst it was great spending time with my partner and baby Oliver, I was missing work and the normality that it brings. I write this a week into return. It's been great to be back on the tools mowing,

weeding and strimming again – the phrase ‘back to basics’ sums it up. The weather has taken a turn too and the heavy thundery showers are proving very welcome for the parched ground.

It's great to see many National Trust properties are starting to reopen in new ways and what is now known as the ‘new norm’. Sudbury is not yet open. I am currently maintaining the grounds as best as possible with limited resources and am really looking forward to reuniting with the team and welcoming visitors back to the property.

Not everyone can have the benefit of a newborn to distract them through a pandemic, and for other dedicated garden staff, the furlough experience has been a more mixed one.



The Swiss Garden, Bedfordshire

Corrine Price and her team at the Swiss Garden earlier in the year

**C**orinne Price, Garden and Grounds Manager at the Swiss Garden in Bedfordshire gives a frank account:

‘You would think that a ‘gift’ of time away from work would be gratefully received; an opportunity to be super-productive and achieve all the things we wish we had time for when fully immersed in the rat race. It turns out however that it's actually a little bit soul-destroying, possibly because of concerns about longer term job security, along with a sense of despondency around not feeling

needed and being out of the loop when decisions are being made about ‘your’ garden. Having said all of that, on a positive note my employer has been very good about updating me with progress around the re-opening of the garden, and keeping in touch with furloughed staff and managing expectations around the scheme in what has been a very challenging time for all visitor attractions.

I've also managed to complete an aromatherapy diploma – a welcome distraction during the early days of lockdown – which will help with the garden's wellbeing programme, as I help to run an Essential Oils workshop that we launched last year. I've kept in touch with some of our volunteers throughout lockdown too, and have also maintained contact with some of our external networks, such as the RHS (we became a partner garden in January 2020) and as many members of the Bedfordshire Head Gardeners network as I can, though some are also furloughed at the moment.’

## some gardeners remained on site

**O**ther gardeners were able to stay at work, such as **Mark Bobin**, Head Gardener at Minterne Gardens, in Dorset. The secluded location of Minterne, and the fact that its small garden team live close by, meant that work could carry on through the pandemic. With no visitors or events, the garden team could get stuck into tasks normally not possible in this season, albeit with social distancing, separating and cleaning tools for a safe working environment.

‘Having no visitors throughout an extremely floriferous season



Minterne House and Gardens

A drone's-eye-view of the collection of Rhododendrons and Magnolias from the Wilson, Forrest, Rock & Kingdon Ward expeditions to the Himalayas at Minterne.

has been disheartening at times. However, not to be defeated, we actioned a plan to share the garden through social media. Videos and photos posted on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube showing the development of the garden throughout the pandemic have received a huge response from viewers far and wide and was even picked up by BBC News. We have also made new videos showing the house and gardens as they have never been seen before – including drone footage of the beautiful plants and landscape, which you can still see on YouTube.

**John Hawley** at English Heritage's Belsay Hall in Northumberland describes his experience as 'an interesting one', perhaps something of an understatement: 'On the day we went into lockdown, many of the plants which we ordered as part of our NLHF project were arriving. I had to make a quick decision and ask the nursery to halt the delivery of the remaining plants until we had established whether I was going to have anyone left to plant them. The original plan had been to put the plants into their approximate positions so our designer, Dan Pearson, could

come and arrange them over a three day period, for the garden team to then plant within a week or so. Instead, as they hit site that morning I quickly asked the person delivering the plants to drop them off all together in a convenient location rather than us dispersing them around the garden and risk them being sat there for the summer for us to water. Everything was very much up in the air.

For a while it was just myself attending work to keep things ticking. Then furloughing kicked in and once we had found out who was being furloughed, two of the other gardeners returned. However, two thirds have been furloughed and none of our volunteers have attended. The three of us took on bite-sized pieces of the planting project, interpreting Dan's plan as best we could and taking images as we positioned the plants for Dan Pearson to approve. It took us around six weeks to do this. This was very challenging and the drought was extremely unfortunate timing. Simultaneously, we had to also maintain the garden, prioritising key tasks such as watering, and weeding the most pernicious weeds and those which

were on the verge of setting seed.

Two members of my team have returned from furlough this week, which is a great relief [June]. The rest of the team are due to return slightly later in the summer with some of the volunteers, we hope, returning later on. I would sum up this experience by saying that although it has been extremely challenging to take on a large planting project, maintain a Grade I Registered garden, and deal with a drought all whilst on a skeleton staff, it has been a satisfying achievement.'

Similar workload challenges were felt at the National Trust, who furloughed 80% of their staff. Pam Smith, Garden and Parks Consultant for the NT Midlands Region, says: 'Reduced staffing and a halt on spending meant we were unable to take advantage of the quieter time to carry out any project work, path renewal or much turf care. However many Head Gardeners enjoyed the fact that they could garden more and be out of their office.'

**Martin Gee**, Head Gardener at Weston Park on the Staffordshire-Shropshire borders reports that the furloughing of most of Weston Park's staff and volunteers 'leaves me, working five days and covering weekends looking after the glass houses, and one other working four days.

The fine weather has certainly been a help; it has created more watering in the glasshouses but it has helped with the weeds. We go all around once a week with a hoe and the sun does kill the weeds, so no hand weeding is required. It helped that most of the flower beds had been mulched before lockdown and all the footpaths have been sprayed with a residual spray. Formal lawns are mown every ten days rather than every seven days which gave us time to

complete all the spring pruning and propagation for the summer bedding displays.

The vegetable garden has been planted with brassicas and onions these were planted or sown in pots before lockdown. We have recently sown beans and courgettes in pots to be planted in June. We had hoped to expand the veg plots this year but this has been put on hold until next year, as have all our projects.

The plan I put together does seem to be working at the moment but as times goes on it will get more difficult. The pleasure grounds are looking after themselves at the moment but this will change as time goes by. Most of the work in these areas comes in from July onwards, and we start the hedge cutting in August. Let's hope things start to improve by that point.'

### volunteers have had to stay away too

**M**any gardens rely heavily on the generous help of volunteer gardeners, and these too have had to stand down. **Enid Vallery**, one of the Swiss Garden volunteers, describes her experience: 'Volunteering at the Swiss Garden is such a pleasure. It has brought together my love for plants and gardening with the opportunity to meet people with the same interests who over a period of time have become friends.

The open space of the Garden creates a feeling of freedom accompanied by a tranquillity and peacefulness that contribute so much to positive mental health. Its beauty for me is not only in the plants and trees but in the variety of historic buildings, ornaments and structures that accompany



Martin Gee at Weston Park

them. The waters of the ponds and lake reflect their impressive surroundings, supporting families of ducks, coots, geese and swans – and who can forget the attraction of the three peacocks.

During lockdown I am fortunate that I have my own garden to tend, but it does not provide the same serenity nor the variety of settings that the garden possesses. The companionship of my Swiss Garden colleagues has been sorely missed. Whilst a number of us have stayed in touch by email and text this does not compare with personal contact and interaction. This is especially important when you are, like me, a single person.'

Volunteers came back to the Swiss Garden in mid-June, and despite the many uncertainties, Enid comments that 'what we do know is that we are so glad to be back'. Rotas are very different however, with only two volunteers in during the morning for a two-hour shift, and two in the afternoon, so as to reduce time on site and minimise the use of facilities. They are not using the staff tea-room and are asked to bring their own flasks, gloves and other equipment so as to reduce the sharing of equipment. Tools

are cleaned down after use.

The Swiss Garden and many others are now open again, but Corinne reports that so far the garden has been relatively quiet, though with reasonable weekend numbers. This may be due to the weather having changed just as the garden re-opened. They are offering pre-booked tickets. As it hasn't been especially busy, they are also letting people turn up without tickets, within a strict maximum capacity of 500.

### reopening brings its own problems

A new entrance and exit route has been implemented, utilising entry points normally used for much larger activities (the Swiss Garden is part of a wider landscape that hosts events such as air shows), and there is plenty of parking space. This avoids using the usual narrow entry points. As the visitor centre is currently closed, this is not posing any problems with the flow of visitors into and out of the garden. External catering units are being used during this first phase of re-opening in the absence of the usual restaurant facilities. They hope to begin using their own catering pods soon, which will be based in the garden. Another area of parkland, North Park, has been opened to create more space and spread out visitor footfall. It also offers visitors an opportunity to see more of the historic parkland, which is usually closed to the public, as it is the site of a college. All buildings in the garden – the Grotto and Fernery, Swiss Cottage and Chapel – are closed to the public at the moment, as there is little room for social distancing in any of them.

There are signs everywhere to remind people about their social distancing responsibilities, and hand sanitiser at entry and exit points as well as in toilets. Additional portaloos are in place around site to minimise the use of the usual garden loo block, and cleaning regimes are in place to make sure they are all cleaned more regularly than usual and checked throughout the day. Handrails on bridges and other high-risk areas are cleaned down daily too. Staff have separate toilet facilities which aren't used by visitors. Outdoor picnic facilities are available, and benches haven't been cleared away or taped off, but are wiped down every day. Feedback from visitors so far suggests that they are happy with the new measures and feel safe in the garden.

At Minterne too the gardens are now again open to visitors. Mark says: 'The layout, with a one-way system around the garden and with plenty of space to socially distance, has made this possible. The delight from all our visitors and the chance to lift everyone's spirits is extremely rewarding. Takeaway food and drink are available, and we are also encouraging everyone to share their photos of Minterne Gardens onto social media.

We have noticed that half of our visitors were experiencing the garden for the first-time and of those, a large proportion have bought Season Tickets already. Our hope is that due to the Covid-19 lockdown our visitor numbers next year could double.'

We would like to thank all those who responded to our call for information and wish gardening teams strength and energy for the challenging months ahead.

Linden Groves

## How to manage a large garden during Lockdown

Another remarkable and frank account of a garden under 'lockdown' comes from **Claire Greenslade**, Hestercombe's Head Gardener. We hope someone is compiling a record of all these accounts, just as happened following the Great Storm, which had an equally, though very different effect on our parks and gardens. The furlough scheme has been encouraging, it will be interesting to see what if any further response comes from government at this time, as gardening life begins to normalise, assuming it does.

Who knew that this would ever be a question I would have to ask myself. This virus is something that none of us had been able to prepare for.

Since March 23rd 2020 Hestercombe has had to close its gates. Really big decisions had to be made, really quickly, and it was decided that nearly all of the staff at Hestercombe would be furloughed. The few remaining were the Chief Executive and General Manager (on reduced wages), the Finance Manager (we still had bills to pay and we needed him to work on a financial plan), the part-time Membership Secretary (we knew members would need help and advice), and the Art Gallery Director (part-funded by the Arts Council).

Additionally, we needed our Wedding Coordinator (we had a lot of weddings booked for the spring which would need rescheduling); and Ben and myself from the gardens team were challenged to try and keep some of the garden alive!

### Adapting to the first few weeks

My team of seven full-time gardeners was slashed to only two, and our 30-ish garden volunteer team were grounded.

I have to admit the first two weeks were completely overwhelming and disorientating. Ben and I have worked together for over twelve years, so we know each other well enough to keep each other buoyant and recognised when we needed each others emotional support.

The first step was figuring out how we could work safely, and we had to change some of our normal practises for simple practical reasons. Having to keep two metres apart meant that we couldn't lift anything together, work had to be achievable as individuals instead of as a team. We had separate tools and machinery so that we could avoid the possibility of transferring the virus via touch. We ate lunch outside to avoid being in a building together. Then came the question, what do we do first!



West Rill garden, mowing can wait?

Our main priority had to be the protection of the historic gardens. This meant that other areas of the estate were mothballed. Woodlands, meadows, car parks,



The 'Daisy Steps' one of the first sights seen by visitors to the gardens.

anything that it wasn't completely necessary to deal with now, was put on hold. We left any grass areas that we thought we could get away without mowing, as we thought we could sort those out later. Some of the annual seeds we had sown were just thrown away because there was no way we'd have time to prick them all out. We also ditched the idea of doing any softwood cutting thinking we could put it off until August and do semi ripe cuttings instead. The barley straw that Ben normally dons waders for and carefully submerges in the ponds to help slow down algae build up was this year literally just chucked in.

### Having ups and downs

One of my toughest days was seeing all the pots of tulips that we had planted out in full flower. I couldn't bare the idea that no one would be able to enjoy them so Ben and I filled our cars and dropped the pots off at a couple of local nursing homes and then to any friends, volunteers or staff houses that were on our journeys home.

We also knew that we wouldn't have time to keep watering all

the plants in the plant centre. We planted anything relevant in the gardens at Hestercombe, and our General Manager took the rest to the hospice for them to use in their gardens or for the staff to take home. The Easter eggs that we had bought in ready for the Easter egg trail were delivered to the food bank. The idea of sharing all of this made us feel so much better and that it wasn't a waste.

## thousands of bulbs - hundreds of chocolate eggs

A few decisions were made for our own well-being. Ben wanted to leaf blow the paths, even though no one would see, but so that he felt better himself. He didn't like it looking untidy and didn't want to feel that he'd let standards slip. I took the decision to stake the peonies with woven hazel even though it was time consuming and I was pretty sure no one would see them bloom. But I compromised

on the delphiniums and used a quicker technique of canes and string to just get it done. I decided that with no one to see the garden the aim of staking was to keep the plant healthy and so the aesthetic didn't matter as much.

### A new way of life

Slowly we got into a rhythm. Some jobs had to be done. We'd had over 1,000 gladioli corms delivered before the lockdown so they had to go in the ground; we presumed that we might be open by late summer so that helped us to decide to plant the Cannas. But with just two of us we also had to find ways to speed up. We made the most of the hot weather and carried out speed weeding with the hoe, allowing the sun to kill off the weeds as they lay on the surface. With no visitors around we just chucked any larger weeds on the path and left them there to clear up at the end of the week.

Then the bedding plants arrived for the Victorian terrace – all 3,500 of them – in baking hot conditions. This is normally quite a big job that we carry out with the entire Gardens team and lots of volunteers. This year was due to be a big celebration year for us as it was Coplestone Bampfylde's 300th birthday (Bampfylde was a previous Hestercombe owner and designer of the landscape garden). In recognition of this, we had used his family's coat of arms as the inspiration of the design for the planting. But now that the team was down to just two, we decided it would be too time consuming to lay out a complicated pattern, so we sidelined the design and went with a random pattern. It actually looks ok, and we got it done in record time.

The dry weather has made our jobs a seven day a week affair just to make sure all the new planting can stay alive. We're lucky that we

both love our jobs and that there is nothing else going on anyway!

### Seeing the positives

There have been lots of positives along the way. The wildlife is definitely being braver. We've seen deer rutting in the car park, a black kite flying over head, weasels playing in the orchard, a pair of ducks join us for a cuppa every day and we have a robin that sits with us too. The longer grass areas have meant extra pollinators and insect life. With no one else on site we have been totally absorbed in our work and had a chance to really observe what is going on around us. I'm sure all of us lucky enough to have gardens have found solace in them during these odd times.

Of course life at Hestercombe won't be back to normal for some time and social distancing could be the norm for a while. However, we're now reopening both to members and non-members

through pre booked tickets only (so you won't be able to visit the garden without pre booking). This will just help us to keep everyone safe by limiting numbers, and staffing will remain at an absolute minimum to help keep costs down. The shop, house, gallery, Column Room restaurant, Stables cafe and play area will all remain closed but you can pre-order takeaway picnic lunches and cream teas. Garden paths will be open but one way systems will be in place to enable visitors the space for distancing.

The gardens are looking great, perhaps a bit shabby round the edges, but nothing that can't be put right over time. Let's not forget that this garden has suffered much, much worse neglect than this over the years!

We look forward to being able to welcome you all back, albeit in a slightly different way!

### Can you help us keep Hestercombe's gardens open?

Hestercombe's closure due to the coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating impact on the Hestercombe Gardens Trust's finances. We're an independent charity, without the safety net of larger organisations, and there is a very real possibility that we may not survive beyond 2020 unless we can raise substantial funds.

Over the last thirty years Hestercombe's historic landscape and its unique, world famous gardens have been lovingly restored. We are now open again, but you will need to pre-book a timed slot and bring your booking confirmation email with you.

Claire Greenslade

All parks and gardens worldwide have taken a massive financial hit in the last few months and we wish our colleagues well in the coming months and years. Ed.

# Mavis Batey Essay Prize 2020

The winner of this year's Mavis Batey Essay Prize is Nuard Tadevosyan, an MA [Art History] student at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario Canada, for her work on the use of the colour green in Della Robbia ceramics. Della Robbia's workshop in Renaissance Florence worked almost exclusively in blue and white but introduced green as an unusual highlight for natural imagery. Nuard examined the history of green, its use in bucolic and pastoral poetry, and its use in these ceramics — whether for botanically precise garlands and flowers which helped emphasise the sacred nature of a particular subject, or its use in representing the sinister side of nature. The judges were impressed by her scholarship and the way that she took what

seemed at first to be a very narrowly focused subject and gave it a broad treatment in a readable way.

The judges were also impressed by the painstaking scholarship of Stephanie Drew an MA student in Mediaeval Studies at

the University of York who was highly commended for "Chasing the Dragon". She took on the challenge of tracing the identity of a single plant – 'dragaunce' – in a medieval herbal, outlining the problems of both pre- and post-Linnean nomenclature.

She showed how changes in terminology and methodology demonstrate the need for critical re-examination of historical sources and a review of editorial practices. It was a very impressive piece of work about a subject unfamiliar to many, but crucially important to anyone working in the field of plant history.

Both Nuard and Stephanie have been invited to submit their work for publication in *Garden History*.

Dr David Marsh



Roundel with Head of a Youth, c.1470

# The Gardens Trust Remote Learning 2020: Learning Packages Schedule for CGTs

Throughout the spring and summer we have been/will be emailing many of you with regular re/releases of our training packages (all appropriate to life under Covid-19) refreshed, updated and

with new additions that we hope you will find useful. We hope very much that these will help you keep your volunteers engaged, enthusiastic and purposeful.

Our schedule for the release of

these packages is below, but if you just can't wait, versions of many of these materials are already on our Resource Hub:

<http://thegardenstrust.org/conservation/hlp-hub/>

Month	Title	Content
April	Introduction to Online Communications	A summary of the most popular digital discussion platforms your County Gardens Trust (CGT) could use to stay connected; and how to register and use them.
April	Maximising <b>Unforgettable Gardens</b>	Suggestions of initiatives you could take for the <b>Unforgettable Gardens</b> theme 2020/22 (even during Covid- 19!)
April	Social media	An introduction to the most popular platforms, and how they could benefit your CGT.
May	Online Resources for Researching Parks and Gardens	Ways to continue your research when you can't visit the archives, using a wide range of free online resources.
May	Statements of Significance	How to determine a site's key significances and write a clear and concise description of these to aid their conservation.
May	Where to Put Your Research v.1	Regional and national online databases enabling you to make your research available to all. Including Historic Environment Records, Parks and Gardens UK, Enriching the List.
May	Understanding the Setting of Historic Parks and Gardens	Thinking about all types of setting and how and why they should be protected from development.
June	Planning 1. Introduction to Planning Threats and Conservation	Understanding the many and varied ways in which historic designed landscapes may be threatened, and how planning policy can help to protect them.
June	Planning 2. Responding to Planning Applications affecting Historic Parks and Gardens	Learning how to use a variety of resources to write a well-informed and persuasive planning response letter, to help influence a planning decision.
July	Planning 3. Understanding the finer points of planning	Taking you through the finer points of planning, appeals and national and local policy.
July	Garden History Workshops for Schools	Introducing a simple series of workshops and activities to introduce schoolchildren to garden history and heritage values.
July	Audience Development Made Easy	Achievable initiatives to make your work engaging for new people and build sustainability for your CGT.
August	MOVES: Setting Up Volunteer Projects	A step-by-step guide to setting up a project which will appeal to volunteers.
October	Where to Put Your Research v2	Regional and national online databases enabling you to make your research available to all. Including Historic Environment Records, Parks and Gardens UK, Enriching the List and OASIS – a new archive for historic parks and gardens research ( <b>see p.9</b> ).

# from our Contributors

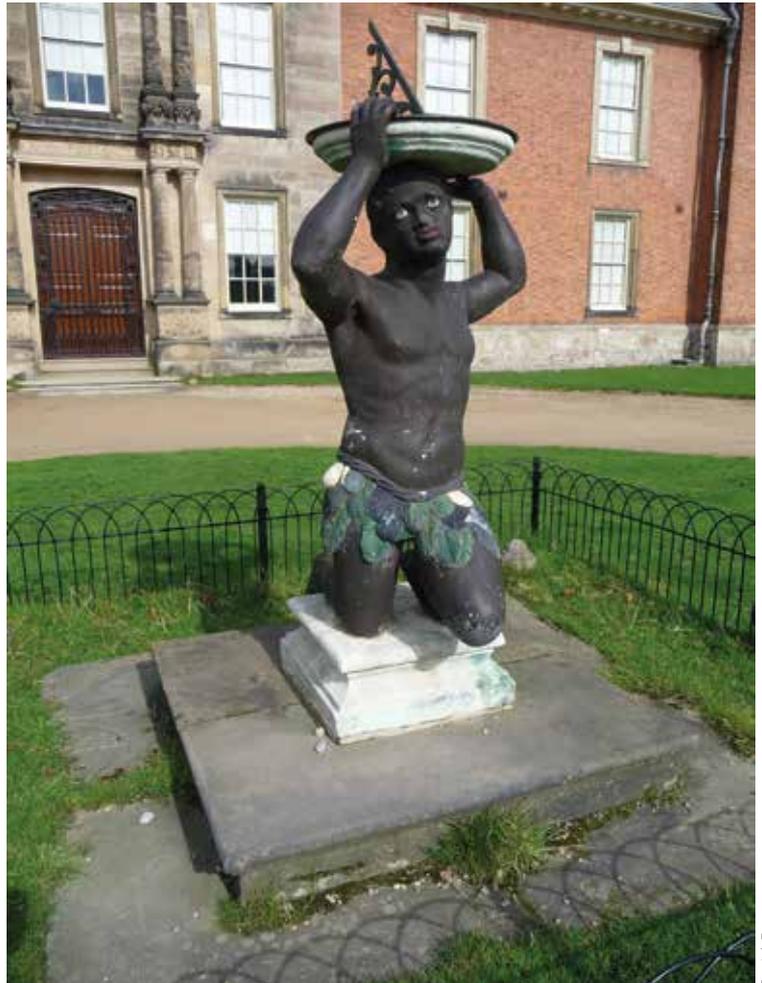
## Learning from *The Blackamoor*

Dr Patrick Eyres

The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on 25 May 2020 sent shock waves around the world. In Britain, one consequence of the Black Lives Matter demonstrations has been a lesson about the shifting perceptions of history that are embodied by statuary. For example, the toppled statue of a Bristol slave trader, Edward Colston, had been erected in 1895 – 174 years after his death and 62 years after the abolition of slavery in the British colonies. The intention was to celebrate his philanthropy, while drawing a veil of silence over the source of his wealth. However, by 2020, his slave trading had been public knowledge for thirty years and the Victorian agenda of commemoration had become repugnant. Since then, the National Trust has sensed a similar repugnance at the presence of *The Blackamoor* statue at Dunham Massey, Greater Manchester, and has removed it into storage.

The National Trust asserts that the decision was taken because of the upset and distress caused by the way the statue depicts a black person, and because of its prominence at the front of the mansion.

Apparently, there is no intention “to censor or deny the way colonial histories are woven into the fabric of our buildings”. On the contrary, the Trust “plans to address it in a way that fully acknowledges the



The Blackamoor, Dunham Massey, photo by Patrick Eyres, 2010.

appalling histories of slavery and the slave trade”.<sup>1</sup> This commendable aspiration has been reinforced by a further statement, confirming that

many National Trust properties have direct and indirect links to slavery and colonialism, and that the Trust is “responsible for

making sure their stories are fully explored and shared”.<sup>2</sup>

Subsequently, the National Trust has acknowledged that the Black Lives Matter campaign has created a “pivotal” moment in public expectations, and that the Trust needs “to move at a quicker pace” to highlight colonial and slavery connections.<sup>3</sup> So it is to be hoped that the National Trust will be able to reappraise the contradictory description that has stood adjacent to the Dunham Massey *Blackamoor* for the past decade: “This sundial is in the style of one commissioned by King William III. It represents Africa, one of four continents known at the time. The figure depicts a Moor, not a slave.”

By addressing the historical context of *The Blackamoor*, the National Trust has the opportunity to demonstrate that this garden statue embodies specific ways that the Atlantic slave economy was embedded in the culture of Georgian Britain, and particularly within the fabric of our country house and garden heritage.

The term *Blackamoor* was used to describe Africans and, especially, sculptural representations of Africans. The version of a *Blackamoor* at Dunham Massey exemplifies the genre of lead garden statuary first created in 1701 for King William III and the royal gardens at Hampton Court Palace. This genre is characterised by the figure of a kneeling African male supporting a sundial. King William was already the longstanding owner of slave plantations and, in 1701, he responded to the lobbying of British slave traders to take control of the Spanish *Asiento de Negros*, which was the monopoly contract to transport enslaved Africans to the Spanish empire in the Americas and Caribbean. This

was the King’s principal economic motive when, in 1702, he took Britain into the War of Spanish Succession.

It is clear is that the sculptor, John Nost I, understood the subject the King had commissioned because the terms ‘blackamoor’ and ‘slave’ were synonymous at that time – and it was as *The Kneeling Slave* that Nost I and subsequent sculptors, as well as garden visitors, described the statue, which, in 1815, was reported as the most popular of all the lead statues created for British gardens in the 18th century. This description has been reiterated by garden writers and sculpture historians from the 1890s to the present day.

In 1711, once peace negotiations had begun at Utrecht, the South Sea Company was established to transport the *Asiento* slaves, and Britain’s acquisition of the monopoly was ratified in 1713. It is startling to appreciate that statues of *The Blackamoor*, a.k.a. *The Kneeling Slave* were perceived as representations of the commercial bounty of the *Asiento* in particular, and the Atlantic slave economy in general. Indeed, the popularity of this genre almost exactly spanned the years between King William’s demand for the *Asiento* in 1702, and Britain’s renunciation of its tenure in 1750. Moreover, the usual equation between the presence of *The Kneeling Slave* in a Georgian garden and the commercial and political interests of the proprietor is exemplified by the commissioning of these statues by directors of the South Sea Company. Historians of the British empire have regarded the Peace of Utrecht as the catalyst that enabled British dominance of the Atlantic slave trade. In 2007, during the bicentenary

of the Slave Trade Abolition Act, the government’s website acknowledged that probably half of the twelve million enslaved Africans were transported in British merchant ships.

*The Blackamoor* at Dunham Massey is attributed to Andrew Carpenter and is thought to have been installed in 1735, when the mansion was completed. In 1694, James Booth, 2nd Earl of Warrington, had inherited a rundown and indebted estate. This predicament was resolved by the injection of commercial wealth won through marriage to Mary Oldbury, the heiress of John Oldbury, a successful London merchant. It is hoped that the National Trust will investigate the nature of Oldbury’s business activities and thus identify the sources of his fortune. John Oldbury was a contemporary of that other London merchant, the Bristolian Edward Colston, and inhabited the same commercial milieu. Perhaps, like Colston, he traded with Spain, Portugal, Italy and West Africa. Maybe he was also a director of the Royal Africa Company. During the dozen years that Colston was on this company’s board, he and his fellow directors were responsible for the transportation of 84,000 enslaved Africans.

The inventory of these statues in *The Blackamoor & The Georgian Garden* identifies twenty-three *Blackamoors*, of which eleven are extant and, of these, two are in the care of the National Trust. It is expected that these figures will be enlarged by future research. The decision to restore *The Blackamoor* at Wentworth Castle, South Yorkshire, prompted the research that is published in *The Blackamoor & The Georgian Garden*.<sup>4</sup> While the National Trust is yet to reveal the sources of the wealth that might account for the presence of *The Blackamoor*

at Dunham Massey, it has been established that country house building and landscape gardening at Wentworth Castle were substantially funded by profits from the Atlantic slave economy. The gardens and park have subsequently been acquired by the National Trust, and the new website and guide to Wentworth Castle Gardens are both upfront in acknowledging the connections between Thomas Wentworth's diplomacy, the sources of his income and *The Blackamoor* statue.<sup>5</sup>

It was Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford (2nd creation), who, with John Robinson, Bishop of Bristol, co-negotiated the Peace of Utrecht and won the *Asiento de Negros* for Britain. Strafford commissioned John Nost II to sculpt his *Blackamoor*, which was installed at Wentworth Castle c.1725, and experimented in growing sugar cane in his walled garden. Strafford benefited from investments in companies that traded in enslaved Africans and the produce made by their labour, namely the South Sea Company, the East India Company and the



*The Blackamoor & The Georgian Garden*, New Arcadian Press, 2011. Cover illustration by Howard Eaglestone.



*The Blackamoor*, painted white, in storage at Cannon Hall Museum, 2006.

French Mississippi Company. In addition, Anne Lady Strafford was the heiress of Sir Henry Johnson, who had amassed his fortune through ship building and slave trading. He was a contemporary of Edward Colston and, like Colston, had been involved in the Royal Africa Company and was also a director of the East India Company.

The source of Strafford's income was not unique to him. Rather, he was a representative of his culture. For two and a half centuries, British merchants, as well as Britons from the diverse strata of polite society, benefited from the profits and produce of the Atlantic slave economy. Nowhere is this better appreciated than through *Legacies of British Slave Ownership*. This online database was established by University College London to record the beneficiaries of financial compensation by the government, from 1838 into the 1840s, for the loss of slaves following emancipation in the British colonies.<sup>6</sup>



*The Blackamoor*, in the restored Victorian Conservatory, Wentworth Castle, 2013.

By coincidence, *The Blackamoors* at Dunham Massey and Wentworth Castle were restored by the same sculpture conservators. In the mid-1980s, when work on the Dunham Massey statue was underway, the similarly jet black body of its companion at Wentworth Castle was painted gloss white by students – in a role reversal that, in the context of the Great Miners' Strike, was intended to emphasise that the working class had been enslaved by capitalism. When restored in 2010, the conservators decided to paint the body with a naturalistic colour in an attempt to provide the figure with a semblance of humanity.

The statue had spent a quarter century in storage at the nearby Cannon Hall Museum. In the mid-18th century, the owning family gave the name of this country house to its purpose-built slave ship. The voyage of the *Cannon Hall* is also documented in *The Blackamoor & The Georgian Garden*. Coincidentally, on the

same day that the National Trust announced removal of *The Blackamoor* at Dunham Massey, the New Arcadian Press agreed to the request from Cannon Hall for permission to upload this account to the museum's website in order to complement the updating of the display about the slave ship.

Today, garden statues of the genre known as *The Blackamoor*, a.k.a. *The Kneeling Slave*, are in the guardianship of the National Trust and also private owners. Through generating public interest in statuary relating to colonialism

and slavery, the Black Lives Matter campaign has created the opportunity for these guardians to invest in the research and contextual interpretation that will help us to understand the legacy of Atlantic slavery that permeates Britain's country house and garden heritage.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> John Fitzpatrick, *The Telegraph*, 12 June 2020.

<sup>2</sup> The National Trust, 20 June 2020: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/addressing-the-histories-of-slavery-and-colonialism-at-the-national-trust>

<sup>3</sup> John Orna-Orstein, the National Trust's Director of Cultural Engagement, quoted by Caroline Davies, *The Guardian*, 22 June 2020.

<sup>4</sup> *The Blackamoor & The Georgian Garden: New Arcadian Journal* 69/70 (2011). The principal case studies focus on the royal gardens of Hampton Court Palace, Surrey, and the aristocratic gardens at Melbourne Hall, Derbyshire, and Wentworth Castle, South Yorkshire.

<sup>5</sup> Wentworth Castle Gardens: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wentworth-castle-gardens/features/political-gardening-at-wentworth-castle-gardens>

<sup>6</sup> *Legacies of British Slave Ownership*: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>

# Visual Representations of the Annesley Gardens

Ailie O'Hagan

As both technological invention and chemical process, photography became detached from historical discourses surrounding the artist/ maker, instead focusing on its ability to capture the real. William Henry Fox Talbot, reinforced photography as a scientific aid when he described the medium's potential for perfection through nature's laws: the mimetic quality of his photogenic botanical drawings emphasized the capability of the photograph for authentic representation of nature.<sup>1</sup> This interpretation has remained through much of photography's history. Susan Sontag repeated this tenet when she referred to photography as a trace; "something directly stencilled off the real."<sup>2</sup> More recently, Geoffrey Batchen called it a "deposit of a real."<sup>3</sup>

By ascribing agency to nature, the use of photography for horticultural documentation

enabled a new mode of seeing that moved away from structural knowledge of the plant,<sup>4</sup> to iconic encounter. Publications of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries demonstrated this shift via formation of new compositional conventions. Informed by *gardenesque* philosophy, central subject composition and framing showcased the garden as an exhibit of horticulture.<sup>5</sup> The photographs, taken from standing height, reinforced the photographer as a constant variable in a scientific process, whilst simultaneously projecting the viewer's encounter with the plant. For instance, low lying shrubs were communicated by downward angled camera, such as the ground cover depiction of *Great Funkia* in *A Gloucestershire Wild Garden* (by 'Curator', Elliot Stock, 1903), whilst height was often indicated by context or filling the frame of view.<sup>6</sup>

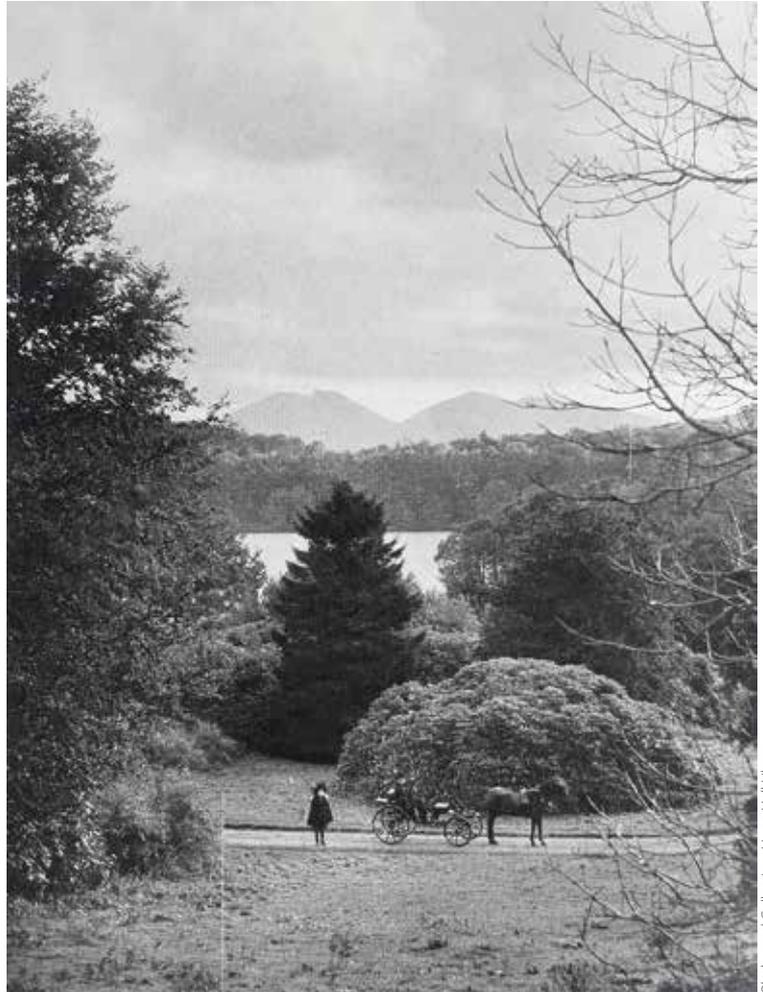
The gardenesque features of

the grounds at the Annesley estate in Castlewellan were reflected in the focus on plant recognition in 5th Earl Hugh Annesley's photography. Hugh Annesley (1831–1908), among the first people in Ireland to own a camera,<sup>7</sup> was as meticulous in his photographic process as he was in the cultivation of exotic plants.<sup>8</sup> Deferring to the spiritual composition<sup>9</sup> of the natural "sun picture",<sup>10</sup> he was careful to record the shrubs and trees as he encountered them, to maintain an accurate representation. Many of his photographs, taken over the course of a 30-year project to develop the gardens and arboretum from the 1870s were disseminated in a limited run, bound volume of *Beautiful and Rare Trees and Plants*, published in 1903. This was one of the first books to use photography as a visual catalogue (previous publications were predominantly typographic, with only a few select

plates). The portrait-style images included framing, cropping, and figures to convey the immediate visual identifiers of shape and scale. *Wellingtonia Gigantea*, shows a single trunk in the central third of the composition, with a figure for scale. The immensity of the “cinnamon brown” Californian species is documented via encountered composition; the trunk as wide as three men at the base, and so tall, it cannot fit into the frame.<sup>11</sup>

Whereas photography was considered an imprint or a rubbing of nature, that reflected recognition, the hewing of wood<sup>12</sup> enacted by wood engravers conjoined the expressive sight of touch and inner vision. Lady Mabel Annesley (1881–1959), Hugh’s first daughter, was an accomplished printmaker, who trained at the London School of Arts and Crafts.<sup>13</sup> Unlike her father’s precise photographic gaze of the gardens, Mabel Annesley captured her impressions of Castlewellan with an abstract, spiritual, eye. She believed that knowledge was more meaningful when inspired, declaring, “too much may have been said about objects seen, and perhaps not enough about the impact of visual things on the mind.”<sup>14</sup>

The limitations of working with the hard material and small surface area of end grain boxwood made wood block printing particularly appropriate for symbolic representation. This is perhaps best observed in the comparison of two images by father and daughter, of a scene from the same vantage point overlooking the lake. Hugh Annesley’s photograph, *Picea Orientalis*, was one of his few images to diverge from informative focus on the specimen. Instead, his garden, the “monument to horticulture”



*Picea Orientalis*, photograph by Hugh Annesley, from *Beautiful and Rare Trees and Plants* by The Earl Annesley, (Country Life, 1903).

praised by his cousin Hugh Armytage Moore,<sup>15</sup> merged in a stretching landscape that aspired towards the mountains. Barthes reflected that the mountain related to ideas of morality,<sup>16</sup> and it is not hard to connect this with the bifold composition of the Mourne Mountains above and the gardens below. Mabel Annesley frequently alluded to the powerful rhythm of the Mourne Mountains; a rhythm she felt compelled to echo in her engravings. As in her father’s photograph, *Broken Mountain*,

made use of the horizon line as a pivot contrasting the silhouetted manmade garden and the highlighted natural landscape. The Mourne are given equal weighting with the landscape below – their impression so dominant in the mind’s eye of the artist, that distance is overcome. In both representations, the lake divides the image, and the reflective quality of water connotes the sublimity of the mountains reflected in the garden’s design.

The visuals created by Hugh

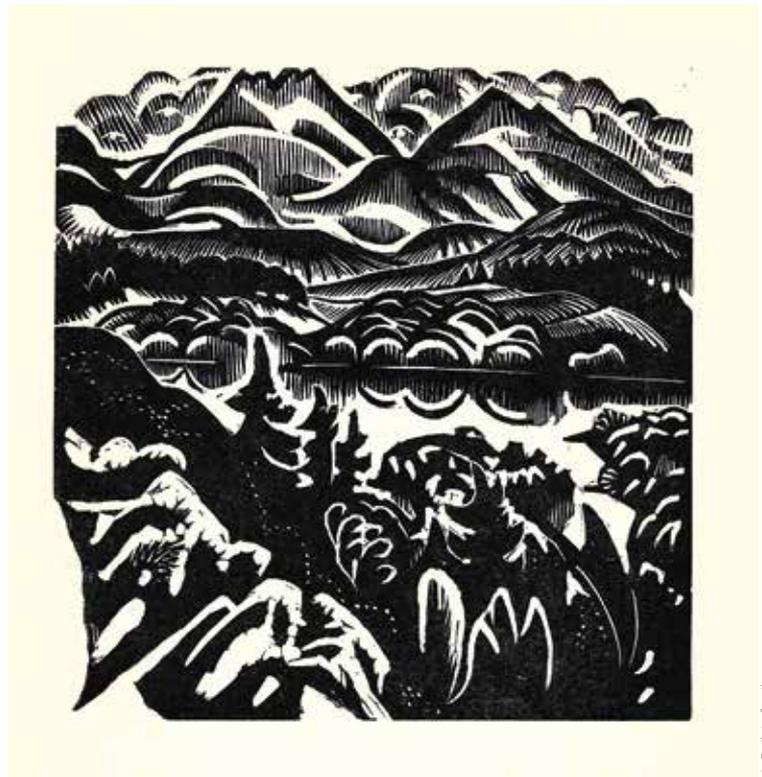
## National Playing Fields Association

and Mabel Annesley offer a complimentary paradox of garden representation. One, an indexical display of horticultural achievement; the other, expressive symbolic representation drawing on the “mind’s eye ... that sees perfection.” Together, their works demonstrate that individual interpretations and differing ways of seeing can be combined to develop a richer understanding of the relationships held with a garden.

**Acknowledgements:** Thanks to Wink Ogilvie, the Linen Hall Library, Robert Trotter and Dr Sally Montgomery for their kind advice and support with the image reproductions.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> H.F. Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature* (1844), 1.
- <sup>2</sup> S. Sontag, *A Susan Sontag Reader* (1983), 350.
- <sup>3</sup> G. Batchen, *Burning with Desire: the conception of photography* (1997).
- <sup>4</sup> Traditionally, watercolour or wood engraved illustrations conveyed scientific “truth” via dissection and linear composition. P.G. Hamerton, *The Portfolio*, 19 (January 1888), 135.
- <sup>5</sup> The uniformity of photographic approach mirrored the “unity of expression and character” recorded by J.C. Loudon, *Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the late Humphrey Repton, Esq.*, viii-ix.
- <sup>6</sup> “Curator”, *A Gloucestershire Wild Garden* (1903), 90.
- <sup>7</sup> J. Hannavy, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Nineteenth Century Photography* (2008), 750.



© Ogilvie family

*Broken Mountain*, wood engraving by Mabel Annesley from *As the Sight is Bent* by Mabel Annesley, (Museum Press, published posthumously in 1964).

- <sup>8</sup> Hugh Annesley constructed an outdoor photographic tent and often documented his photography equipment. M. Kelly and Dr S. Montgomery, *Lady Mabel Annesley*, 3.
- <sup>9</sup> D.R. Nickel, “Talbot’s natural magic,” *History of Photography*, 26 (2) (Summer, 2002) 132-140.
- <sup>10</sup> The Earl Annesley, *Beautiful and Rare Trees and Plants* (1903), 3.
- <sup>11</sup> The Earl Annesley, “Sequoia Gigantea” in *Beautiful and Rare Trees and Plants* (1903), 78-79.
- <sup>12</sup> In a speech to the Belfast Art Society, titled “Hewers of Wood” R. Rowley proposed that wood crafts were intrinsically connected with primitive art. Belfast Art Society, ‘The History of Wood Engravings,’ *Belfast Newsletter*, (February 24, 1925) 10.
- <sup>13</sup> A. Liesching, *Making her Mark* (2019) 17; D.A. Egerton, *Artist and Aristocrat* (2010) 14.
- <sup>14</sup> M. Annesley, *As the Sight is Bent* (1964) 6.
- <sup>15</sup> H.A. Moore, ‘Castlewellan,’ *Irish Gardening*, VII (78) (August, 1912) 113-117.
- <sup>16</sup> R. Barthes, ‘The Blue Guide,’ in *Mythologies* (1973) 74-77.
- <sup>17</sup> M. Annesley, *As the Sight is Bent* (1964).
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

# National Playing Fields Association

Joanne Mirzoeff

During the First World War, the lack of fitness of the average British Tommy had caused great concern and the aftermath of the War saw the return of many injured, blind and disabled ex-

servicemen. Urban areas had seen massive population expansion, unemployment levels reached over a million and there was only one children’s playground for every 11,263 of the population.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, the government were urged to establish and fund open spaces where “every man, woman and



child in Great Britain should have the opportunity of participating in outdoor recreational activity within a reasonable distance of home during leisure hours.”

So, in 1925, the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) was launched by Brigadier-General Reginald Kentish with the Duke of York as its first President. In 1927, they launched a national appeal, in conjunction with local authorities, to raise £1 million to secure the necessary land and a Committee was established to consider applications for grants.

Kentish had recommended an ‘Open Spaces Standard’ to ensure that a minimum of five acres per 1,000 people<sup>2</sup> of which no more than one acre could be used for ornamental gardens or seating areas. The other four acres being dedicated to sport and physical recreation and should include facilities for team games such as football and cricket pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens and children’s playgrounds.

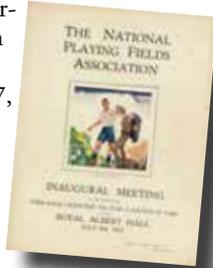
Councils and Corporations around Britain embraced the idea and many hired large numbers

of the unemployed and former servicemen to create these parks, sometimes even training them in horticulture to ensure park maintenance.

The charity was granted a Royal Charter in 1932 and subsequently became known as ‘Fields in Trust’. A further boost came in 1936 with the establishment of the King George’s Fields Foundation (see below). More recently, the Centenary Fields programme was launched

in 2014 to honour the memory of the millions who lost their lives in World War I. Through this landowners could dedicate war memorial playing fields and recreation grounds, memorial gardens, parks or recreation grounds that contain a war memorial and other valued green spaces that have some significance to WW I as Centenary Fields.

Fields in Trust now protects over 2,852 parks and green spaces across the UK covering around 30,000 acres. They can protect any type of outdoor recreational space providing it has public access, including playing fields,



1920s poster to promote the NPFA.

recreation grounds, playgrounds and play areas, parks and nature reserves. The land is ‘protected in perpetuity’ either through ownership, Deeds of Covenant or through the use of their own unique legal instrument called a Deed of Dedication (in Scotland, a Minute of Agreement).

With nearly 3,000 Fields in Trust countrywide, why not see if any are near you? <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/fields/>

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> ‘Play-time’ *Daily Herald*, 1 June 1927.

<sup>2</sup> Since revised to 6 acres per 1,000 people.

# King George’s Fields

Joanne Mirzoeff

Following the death of King George V in January 1936, a committee was established by Sir Percy Vincent (Lord Mayor of London) to decide on a national memorial to the late king. There was, of course, the obligatory statue but they wanted to create something more lasting that would benefit the entire country and settled on the King George’s

Fields Foundation which would promote playing fields for ‘the use and enjoyment of the people’ throughout the UK.

Clement Attlee MP, when Chairman of the Foundation stated, “Every child in this country should have the opportunity of getting to a place where it can play games in safety. It is indeed a terrible commentary on our

modern civilization that in the richest country in Europe there should be thousands of children who have no opportunity of playing except in the streets”<sup>1</sup>

The Foundation itself made funds available, a national appeal was launched in June 1936 and £557,436 was raised by 1939.<sup>2</sup> It was decided that “the maximum results might best be achieved by



Wikipedia commons.

The Royal Lion and Unicorn panels, used in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

A gate, with its panels, to King George's Fields at Hadley Common, Barnet.

distributing the funds by way of grants-in-aid towards the capital costs of as many fields as possible, the balance of the capital required for each scheme being raised by the local authority or other body undertaking the construction of the field and accepting responsibility for its maintenance as a 'King George's Field'.<sup>3</sup>

Although initially separate bodies, it was decided that the National Playing Fields Association would consider all applications in order to avoid duplication of their endeavors. Only nineteen of the completed number of sites that exist today did not receive grant aid.

Once selected, each playing field

would feature "a standard gateway of suitably-imposing design, and they will thus be recognized at a glance."<sup>4</sup> It was widely believed that more prosperous areas would rise to the challenge of supporting those areas less well-equipped and, for parks where no grant aid was required, they would still qualify to be in the scheme and would receive the heraldic panels which were specially designed to mark a 'King George's Playing Field'. One panel portrays the Royal Lion and was inscribed 'George V 1910–1936', the other panel featured a Unicorn and the inscription 'King George's Field', in Scotland the similar plaques were reversed.

By the start of WW2, 462 schemes

had been approved although work stopped during the war and some schemes were abandoned. Land was still being acquired up to the early 1960s and, by the time the Foundation was dissolved in 1965, there were 471 King George Playing Fields across the UK, all managed locally and legally protected by Fields in Trust.<sup>5</sup>

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Right Hon, Clement Attlee MP quoted in the *Daily Mail* on January 14th 1937.
- <sup>2</sup> Wikipedia.
- <sup>3</sup> Final Report of the Foundation, 1965.
- <sup>4</sup> 'King George's Fields' Coventry *Evening Telegraph* Wednesday 3 June 1936.
- <sup>5</sup> [www.fieldsintrust.org/News/protect-80-years-on-from-the-first-king-georges-field](http://www.fieldsintrust.org/News/protect-80-years-on-from-the-first-king-georges-field)

# Case study: King George V Park, Wellington Avenue, Princes Risborough

Joanne Mirzoeff

In my previous articles, I discussed the establishment of the Fields in Trust campaign and the King George's Fields Foundation to promote playing

fields for 'the use and enjoyment of the people' throughout the UK.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Fields In Trust website, the 'first field' was in Sonning, Berkshire which received

formal protection on July 16th 1938.<sup>2</sup> However recent research has discovered contemporary newspaper articles which reveal that the King George V

Memorial Playing Field in Princes Risborough [pleasingly also for many years the home of Shire Publications, Ed.], the small town between High Wycombe and Aylesbury was the first.<sup>3</sup>

In 1936, Mr Ernest Turner purchased five acres of land for £1,000 and presented it to the Princes Risborough Parish Council as a gift for use as a recreation ground.<sup>4</sup> Some residents from outlying villages objected to contributing to the park if they were not local enough to use the facilities. However, once the King George's Foundation launched their national campaign, Turner offered the land again and this time it was accepted.

In addition to donating the land, Mr Turner engaged architect George Langley-Taylor<sup>5</sup> to design a pavilion with elm boarded walls under a thatched roof which Turner described as a "suitable resting place for the elderly folk whose playing days are over".<sup>6</sup> Internally it featured a large central room, two dressing rooms, kitchen and store room, with a separate shed for a mower. The pavilion was set in front of a shelter

plantation of over 400 trees and shrubs selected following advice from Arthur Le Sueur.<sup>7</sup> One of the local papers speculated whether the use of timber on the pavilion was very effective and might 'greatly improve the appearance of small houses if more timber was used'.<sup>8</sup>

In one corner of the field, a "broad smooth concrete pavement sandpit surrounds a paddling pool and a sandpit where those children who do not go to the seaside can at least make sandcastles and splash about bare-footed to their heart's content. In another part of the field there are mechanical amusements such as a chute and swings."<sup>9</sup>

There was a timbered gateway fronted by a semi-circular sweep of pavement. The KGV Foundation had approved the entrance gates and the heraldic panels were to be mounted on the gates once they were ready.

The county branch of the National Playing Fields Association contributed £30 and the CPRE and an anonymous donor also contributed funds which helped towards the equipment. Mr Langley-Taylor's wife had also



The Bucks Free Press, June 25th 1937.

'Lord Derby addressing the gathering...'

been instrumental in raising funds through her flag days.

So on Saturday 19th June 1937, hundreds of people from all over the county gathered in the rain at to see the Rt Hon Earl of Derby announce "I declare this playing field, the first in the country, now open and I hope that all the donor could wish for it, in bringing health and happiness to the children may be fulfilled to the highest degree". He warned the town though "Don't let the playing of children be entirely unsupervised... If you do that it will simply develop into what is called at school, a 'rag'."



The Bucks Free Press, June 25th 1937.



Gwen Miles.

Presumably the original wrought iron gates never acquired their supporting masonry piers and celebratory Lion and Unicorn panels?



Joanne Mizoeff.

Despite Lord Derby's qualms, play equipment was an important feature both in the 1930s and today.

## Rescued for £18

Unfortunately, by the mid-1950s the Pavilion was derelict due to vandalism so the remaining structure was demolished and sold off for £170. It was intended that these funds would create a new structure although it appears that this was nothing more than a rather depressing concrete bunker. Contemporary photos show that much of the play equipment had also been lost by this point and it is back to being a field.

Mid-20th century development has since wrapped around the park so that it now sits at the heart of the community and makes for a pleasant thoroughfare for people walking in to town. The 21st century has finally seen a revival in the park's condition. Over the last twenty years, the children's play area has been upgraded, a zip wire and skateboard area for the teenagers have been created. The park is now regularly used by

both the local primary school and weekend running groups as well as being a pleasant place to sit or to wander down the path which crosses the park and brings you into the town. However, there is no sign of the heraldic plaques – I wonder what happened to them?

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Bucks Gardens Trust newsletter*, June 2020.
- <sup>2</sup> As identified by the *Final Report of King George's Foundation*, 1965.
- <sup>3</sup> *The Bucks Advertiser and Aylesbury News/Bucks Examiner/Bucks Free Press*, all dated Friday June 25th 1937.
- <sup>4</sup> Previously in 1927, Ernest Turner J.P. had originally purchased 38 acres of the same land for £3,000 and appears to have resold much of it possibly for housing development.
- <sup>5</sup> Became Sir George Langley-Taylor, Chairman of the CPRE.
- <sup>6</sup> *Bucks Free Press*, Friday June 25th 1937
- <sup>7</sup> A.D.C. Le Sueur, author of *Hedges, Shelterbelts and Screens* (1951) as well as a guide to Burnham Beeches.



Gwen Milles

Detail of the gate post and rather fine wrought iron gate, but no panels?

- <sup>8</sup> *The Bucks Advertiser and Aylesbury News*, Friday June 25th 1937.
  - <sup>9</sup> *Bucks Free Press*, Friday June 25th 1937.
- This series of articles first appeared in the newsletter of the Bucks Gardens Trust, in June and July 2020.

# Rescued for £18

## David Gedye

Gardens Trust members may recall a visit in July 2016 to see the restoration work being undertaken by Dropmore's current owner to restore its famous pinetum (*GT News* 1 Spring, p.24, 2016). Some may even recall that, during an earlier Dropmore visit in September 2008, the GHS member John Rotheroe produced a painting from the boot of his car. Attracted more by its title 'Garden at Dropmore', than the subject itself (a Monkey Puzzle tree) John came across the picture while rummaging through pictures in a Cornish art dealer's in 1977. John's knowledge of Lord Grenville's Buckinghamshire estate made him decide, on a whim, to spend £18.

He was unsure of the picture's provenance, but we now know he had just rescued the earliest image of the most famous Monkey Puzzle of the 19th century (right).

I first heard of my great-great-grandfather Philip Frost, Dropmore's head gardener from 1832–1887, in the mid-1950s. So when, in 1969, I started my working life in High Wycombe, barely five miles from Dropmore, I thought it would be simple to drive there, knock on the door and learn first-hand about its pinetum and trees, but the gates were locked. It was nearly forty years later that I gained access when I attended a Dropmore open day in July 2007 to see the

progress of the renovations taking place on the house and grounds. I attended several further open days but was unable to attend on the day John produced his picture. The first I knew of its existence was when Charles Boot included a photograph of the painting on p.12 of the Autumn 2009 edition of the Bucks Garden Trust's newsletter, *The Bucks Gardener*.

I determined to see the painting and made contact with John who generously felt he couldn't think of a better home for his rescued work. He kindly made me a gift of it on condition I made a donation to one of his favourite charities, which is how I became a life member of The Garden History





David Geayle

I obtained a copy of the Dropmore pinetum book. Put together by Philip Frost, the information contained in it confirmed that I had inherited from my grandmother the only known photograph of an original Archibald Menzies Monkey Puzzle, one of the six trees that survived his voyage home from Chile in 1795. In February this year, I donated the photograph to Kew Garden's archive for use by future researchers.

The more I researched Dropmore's Monkey Puzzles, the more I realised that much that was written about this iconic tree's introduction was based on myth, was misleading and, more significantly, exaggerated the role of the Veitch nursery in the tree's introduction. There was also a failure to give credit to those who truly kick-started what would eventually become the Victorian craze for the tree. Rectifying this shortcoming became my motivation to write and publish "Araucaria the Monkey Puzzle", the only book entirely devoted to the Araucariaceae and the Monkey Puzzle tree.

John's painting is reproduced on the book's front cover, inside which is revealed the true story of how the Monkey Puzzle came to Europe and the significance of the Dropmore trees. A myriad of other information about the species and its wider family, the Araucariaceae, is also narrated across the book's pages which are illustrated with over 100 plates, including the only photograph of the Pencarrow



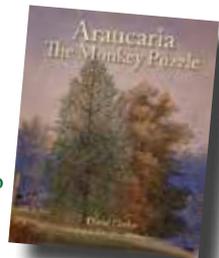
David Geayle

Dropmore, the King William IV tree: its story is told in the book.

*Araucaria imbricata* from which the tree received its common name. Costing £25 + £5 P&P (UK only), copies of the book can be ordered by contacting David at: [orakariapress@gmail.com](mailto:orakariapress@gmail.com)

Please supply your address and telephone number. All money made after printing and distribution costs is being donated to the International Conifer Conservation

Programme for their work with the Monkey Puzzle, a species that through climate change and other factors is endangered in its home habitat in Chile. Buying a book helps support their work.



Society, now merged with the Association of Garden Trusts to form The Gardens Trust.

John's painting was a watercolour of Dropmore's most feted tree. Commissioned by Lady Grenville in 1850, my ownership of it added to my accumulation of information about Dropmore and the trees Philip Frost had under his care (see *GT News* 1 pp.24–26). However, my research turned up much more than the history surrounding John's picture. In the 19th century, if you wanted a picture of a Monkey Puzzle tree to illustrate your work, you went to Dropmore to paint or photograph this tree which was brought to England by the Horticultural Society's collector James Macrae in March 1826 and given to Dropmore in October 1826. In the fullness of time, I intend donating John's picture to the RHS. Then, thanks to GT member Min Wood's help,

# Australia on Fire

## Report on the Garden Trust Garden Tour, November 2019

Thirteen members of the Gardens Trust visited Australia in November 2019. We arrived in

Perth, Western Australia (WA), to experience the plant wealth of this tip of the continent. 75% of the

11,000 species recorded from WA grow in the southwest corner and most are endemic. Caroline Grant

ensured that we were introduced to this biodiversity by including in the programme visits to the gardens of Marion Blackwell, respected plant explorer, designer and teacher, and of author Professor Pate, who accompanied us around his impressive collection of plants. We even did some tree climbing in the forests of WA's trio of giant endemic eucalypts: Tingle (*E.jacksonii*), Karri (*E.diversicolor*) and Jarrah (*E.marginata*).

Crossing the continent to Sydney, Craig Burton showed us public parks and private gardens, in both the city and inner suburbs, along the harbour shoreline and in the Blue Mountains to the west of the city, many designed by him. Already the smell of smoke could be detected in the city centre, depending upon the wind's direction, and in the Blue Mountains the borrowed landscape from some of the gardens we viewed was blurred by the smoky atmosphere. We learned that one of them was severely damaged by the fires that later swept through the Blue Mountains.

In Victoria (Vic.), with Trisha Dixon, we saw evidence of controlled burning on our walk to see wildflowers with Peter and Simone Shaw. Surrounding their garden, as well as those of its neighbours, was an absence of the middle canopy of bush, selectively removed to make the surrounds more fire resilient. Across the mouth of Port Philip Bay is the seaside home of Fiona Brockoff (our cover). For twenty years her garden has coped with the salt, the sand and the wind, lack of summer rain and scant topsoil. She took inspiration from "the wind tortured plants along the edge of the coast": sea box (*Alyxia buxifolia*), moonah (*Melaleuca lanceolata*), coastal rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa*) and casuarina. "As the garden merges



Helen Burrluck on her way up a giant Tingle, *Eucalyptus jacksonii*, in WA.

into the bush, the gardening becomes less obvious and the boundary becomes invisible".

Sam Cox has been designing naturalistic gardens for almost twenty years, from urban courtyards to bush acreages, having been a pupil of the celebrated Gordon Ford who, perhaps more than anyone, reoriented landscape designers towards an appreciation of Australia's natural flora and the way the different layers integrate.

We visited Sam's own garden. He will only take on commissions if the client allows him to create a naturalistic relationship between the various levels of the canopy of the bush. He declines those who, for reasons of fire security, are reluctant to allow those middle layers of vegetation to be planted.



Sam Cox's naturalistic garden, Victoria.



The red heart of the Australian Garden, Cranbourne Botanic Garden near Melbourne.

The Australian Garden at Cranbourne is a synthesis of plants from much of the continent to replicate representative Australian plant associations, including that of the scorched red heart of the continent. As Melbourne's second but contemporary botanic garden, it is in counterbalance to the undulating lush landscape of the 19th-century designed city centre botanic garden. That was where we attended a smoking ceremony, an interpretation of the relationship with the natural environment, which the Aborigines have had for many thousands of years.

The first Europeans, who landed in Australia from 1788 onwards, described verbally and pictorially a land of varying woodland and glade, forest and

open grass. James Cook on HMS Endeavour, that landed at Botany Bay on the east coast in 1770, observed that the trees had 'no under wood'. Joseph Banks, his passenger, wrote that: 'The country, though in general well enough clothed, appeared in some places bare'. Banks' draughtsman, Sydney Parkinson, agreed. 'The country looked very pleasant and fertile; and the trees, quite free from underwood, appeared like plantations in a gentleman's park.' Early observers recognised that the Aboriginal people fired grass to attract game but not until the 1960's did researchers begin to sense system and purpose in Aboriginal burning. It is now known that burning bush every two to four years promotes perennial grasslands.

The tubers and bulbs forming part of their diet would be killed by hot fires but needed ash and 'cool' fires every two to three years to open the perennial canopy. The native peoples may not have sown seeds but managed the land to promote the right conditions for growing plant foods and encouraging game, all of which relied on controlled burning. Regular burning removes the accumulation of underwood that can cause fires to become fierce and out of control.

The eucalyptus, with its 900 different species that most strongly define the Australian landscape, adapted from original rainforest trees to suit the increasingly arid climate as the continent drifted north after the break-up of Gondwanaland. Eucalypts vary from the short mallee types with multi-stems, identified with drier parts, to the giants of the south-west tip of WA or the confusingly named Mountain Ash of Vic. and New South Wales (*E. regnans*), the second tallest tree in the world, needing rainfall over 1000mm per year. Eucalypts have adapted to all but the driest parts of the interior of the country; the River Red Gum (*E. camaldulensis*) thrives in the flooded plains along the Murray River.

With the exception of a few, like the Karri and Mountain Ash, eucalypts have lignotubers, underground systems for allowing them to regrow after fire. Their trunks can grow from remnants spared by fires. Some regenerate from 'beards' – branches sprouting from epicormic buds under stress from drought, fire, poison or axe. Blackbutts (*E. pilularis*), have smooth trunks above a fibrous and rough bark that take the brunt of fires while allowing the upper parts to escape damage. Species, known as stringy barks, shed their bark in shreds and litter the woodland floor; almost all species have the

Robert Peel

precarious distinction of dropping branches without any prior notice; their leaves contain oil glands which increase the flammability of the vegetation. A constant accumulation of inflammable plant litter inherently exposes stands of eucalypts to fire, but they have developed admirable techniques of survival and re-establishment.

Eucalypts belong to the family Myrtaceae, which include Paperbarks, Callistemon and Tea trees, almost all of which have leaves of a thick and leathery texture and bark which falls off in shreds. By occupying the middle canopy of the 'bush', these characteristics can exacerbate fires and allow flames to rise to the tree canopy. The avoidance of letting damaged or fallen timber linger in and around gardens is perceived as good practice. However, in parts of the National Parks, the needs of small marsupials, reptiles and insects has tended to encourage the retention of this canopy and of the accumulation of fallen timber, illustrating conflicting interests of micro and macro conservation.

Firefighters now combat fire with fire, and a general appreciation of how the Aborigines managed the landscape and reduced



Kangaroo Paw (Anigozanthus) in Kings Park, Perth, backed by Eucalypts.

damaging fires emphasise how much wisdom was overlooked by the settlers from Europe. There are still conflicts about methods of managing fires, but the recent conflagration may lead to more constructive use of controlled fire in reducing the risk of destructive fires in the Australian bush. The fear of growing desiccation, after the removal of so much

vegetation, which acts as agent in the amplification of moisture spreading westwards across the Great Dividing Range, makes ever more urgent the need for creative solutions. However, much of the bush will recover, thanks to its inherent adaptability to fire, but the destruction to human and animal life is profound.

Robert Peel

## One Man Went to Mow... a point of view

Judy Rossiter, Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust

Many of us, conjuring up images of past times in a bucolic countryside. Those pictures of hay wains and straw-sucking yokels resting beneath a hedge in a flower-strewn meadow immediately spring to mind. Most would agree that this a vanished view of our countryside today.

The glories and virtues of

flower meadows have been well recognised for many years and there are now a number of organisations set up to promote and protect them, such as 'Save our Magnificent Meadows', an initiative led by Plantlife and supported by the National Trust. There is even a National Meadows Day [on or around the first Saturday of July each year]

although I have to confess, I was unaware of this until I started to browse the web for information. Perhaps this is because there is a dearth of named sites in our part of the country where intensive cereal cropping has resulted in our county having fewest trees and very little uncultivated land.

Our mechanised world has resulted in an increasingly tidy



Clark Art Institute, Wikipedia commons.

John Constable's *Wheat Field*: aside from the allusion to mowing, to what extent are our ideas of the ideal landscape conditioned by images such as this?

landscape which has now led to our landowners being paid to relax standards of maintenance in a quest for a more sustainable environment. New buzz-words are emerging; conservation and preservation are no longer enough; we must move on and encompass concepts such as re-wilding. Our naturalists are convinced this is the way forward but are we really ready to accept the consequences of such an approach in our historic landscapes? The acres of vapid green eulogised by our great landscape designers of the past would once have been a far richer mix without recourse to mechanised mowing but are we ready and willing to appreciate a return to what some may see as untidy and unkept?

Fifty years ago, I wrote a PhD thesis on the *Public Use of Private Land for Outdoor Recreation* and at the end I concluded that in fifty years' time our children would have to visit a nature reserve to see native wildflowers that were commonplace then. I am sad to say that my forecast has a ring of truth. I was researching at a time

when Government was paying big grants to landowners for drainage schemes and hedgerow removal despite outcries about these policies at the time. Seventy-five thousand miles of hedgerow were grubbed, and drainage with plastic pipes improved the productivity of poorly drained land but which we now appreciate was previously slowing down the rate at which heavy rainfall was reaching water courses.

The economies of scale offered by the widespread introduction of large machinery could not be maximised in small hedged fields and it was argued that removing the hedgerows would restore the landscape to its pre-enclosure appearance. Naturalists deplored the loss of corridors for the migration of insects and nesting sites for birds. The late Professor Max Hooper campaigned vigorously for the retention of the species-rich, pre-enclosure hedges but to little avail. Others warned about these policies at the time, but they were largely ignored: the deep-seated promises to protect our agricultural industry following the war were too ingrained to be

over-ridden.

Is the current outcry about our sterile landscape the backlash? Are we willing to accept that ring-fencing a few areas of countryside devoted to maintaining diversity of wildflowers is a good enough solution? Are there not many more opportunities to relax incessant mowing so that the daisies, buttercups, cornflowers and a host of other wildflowers could re-emerge and sustain our much-needed insect populations?

I was intrigued to read of the National Trust proudly promoting their contribution to the meadow heritage, but I suspect this may well be on areas of agricultural land they own rather than the immediate environs of so many of the great historic landscapes of which they are custodians. How would we feel, as visitors to these sites, to find the grass uncut and possibly looking rather untidy? Presumably these areas would previously have been grazed rather than immaculately mown. Certainly, there are little hooks on the pillars in front of Mogerhanger where chains were attached to keep the cattle from taking shelter under the portico (and leaving the inevitable mess behind). A great feature of Brown's designs was to grass right up to the stately home. There was sometimes a ha-ha to prevent cattle and deer from coming too close, so presumably these areas would have been mown rather than grazed. The access required by today's visitors to these sites would make it difficult to utilise animals as they were in the past but is mechanical mowing the only alternative? I would like to suggest that in future we must consider relaxing our attitudes to being tidy and embrace a more ragged look to the landscape.

As garden historians we are all well aware that many of the

historic landscapes we treasure today come to us as a result of the great leap in the 18th century when Walpole saw that all nature was a garden. Where would he and his followers stand in this debate if they were here today? Did they anticipate that the grounds they designed to look natural (but we all know how contrived that was) would be so carefully manicured 300 hundred years later? Just how 'natural' did they want them to look? The Knepp Castle Estate experiment, run by Isabella Tree author of *Wilding: The Return of Nature to a British Farm*, has shown us where re-wilding can lead. It is an exciting prospect but, just as in the past we were

reluctant to lose our enclosure hedges to return to a landscape with open fields in an albeit more wooded countryside, are we now willing to encompass the equally radical changes that less grass-cutting would bring?

The fascinating talk by Sue France at the recent Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust *Study Day 2020: How Green Was My City* has fully explored the new concept of Pictorial Meadows. We have yet to discover just what the plans for a 'Meadow' in front of The Gibbs building in King's College, Cambridge will entail. Will it be a pictorial meadow, with its attendant complex management, or merely a relaxation of mowing

to see what emerges, a step to encourage pollinating insects but not a reversal to re-wilding? It will be an opportunity for visitors to Cambridge to see the effect of such a regime alongside a classical building and perhaps re-educate our accustomed view of historic landscape management. The question is should we, as an organisation with a vested interest in this issue, have a policy about it?

Judy's article originally appeared in the recent edition of Cambridgeshire GT's *Newsletter* No. 48 for May 2020, p.5–6. The newsletter also features a full article on the work of Pictorial Meadows, one of our advertisers in this issue, Ed.

## Vale Park, Aylesbury

Claire de Carle

Prior to the twentieth century, Aylesbury, the county town of Buckinghamshire, was a rural market town, with a small population and it was not until the twentieth century, that it warranted its first dedicated public park. It opened on 1 July 1937 at a time of recession and social concern about public health, fresh air and exercise, there was also a pending threat of another war looming. The Ministry of Health was providing grants for the creation of public parks at this time in an effort to improve the nation's health.

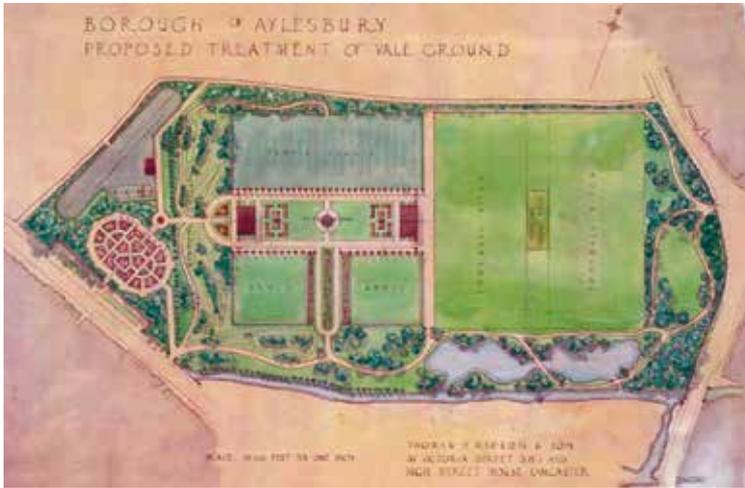
The landscape architect, Thomas Hayton Mawson was born in 1861 in Lancashire, however by the 1930's, he was suffering from Parkinson's disease and was at the end of his career (he died in 1933). Thomas Mawson & Son (Edward joined the firm in 1910) were the most well-known and highly

regarded park design company of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Among their other commissions were Burslem Park, Stoke on Trent (1894), Broomfield Park, Enfield (1903) and Barrow Public Park (1908). Stanley Park in Blackpool (1926) [voted Best Park 2019, in the most recent Fields in Trust awards] is the most significant municipal park of its day, due to its fine examples of Arts & Craft architecture, Thomas Mawson had a great affinity with the movement.

The land for the Aylesbury park, was purchased by the Borough Council in 1928, it had previously been used as a meadow. The 1800 Enclosure Map for the hamlet of Walton (Bucks Archives), shows that the owner was William Rickford Esq, a distinguished local citizen, magistrate, and investor in the Aylesbury Bank. By 1884 (OS 6" Map, Bucks Archive), the

Vale site was in use for sporting activities (cricket, athletics and cycling). Part of the area was marshland, which was used to grow willow in osier beds, this was used locally for making baskets and fencing.

Following a competition to find a winning design, Edward Mawson created several plans for the Vale Park in 1930 (now held by Buckinghamshire Archive). They were executed by the Borough Engineer, William Taylor over the following six years, following a number of cost cutting alterations. The layout provided a logical structure of paths leading through the site creating focal points and separating the quiet garden area from the active sports areas. The main pavilion (formerly used for cricket) was refurbished for the park opening but has since been removed and the tennis courts and bowling greens were laid out as a



One of Mawson's plans for Vale Park, Aylesbury.

mirror image to Mawson's plan.

The following description appeared in *The Buckinghamshire Advertiser* on 2 January 1932:

'...the main entrance will be in the High Street nearer the L.M.S. than the present entrance. A rose garden is planned on what was formerly the osier bed, with the children's playground running parallel with the High street end of Lover's Walk.

Putting greens will divide this portion of the ground from the central lawn, where it is proposed to erect a bandstand, and a pavilion at each end. This, it is proposed, will be flanked on what may be termed the northern side of the tennis courts and on the southern by two bowling greens.

The other half of the ground it is proposed to lay-out as two football pitches, with a centre portion turfed for a cricket pitch. A small lake, paths and shrubberies complete the plan'.

An open-air swimming pool or bathing pond did not feature on Mawson's plans however it was built before the start of World War II. Today, the contemporary indoor swimming facilities occupy

the north east corner of the site.

The layout of The Vale site is well described in the opening speech given by Mayor Adkins on 1 July 1937. A précis of the speech is recorded in the *Bucks Herald* article 'Aylesbury's new attraction' 2 July 1937:

'... carried out with the object of obtaining simplicity of design in order to keep the cost within reasonable limits, yet to produce a lay-out which gives facilities for various sports, so that both young and old are able to partake of rest and recreation amidst pleasant surroundings'. The contract is stated at having cost £3988 and the total area of 10 1/7 acres included: children's conveniences, two tennis courts alongside the stream, gardens adjoining the High Street with a central lily pond, putting green, one public bowling green with potential for one more, shelters, bandstand 'of simple but effective design'.

The extent to which the overall layout remains today is due to the simplicity of the design formulated by Edward Prentice Mawson and still provides an effective division of the site. Several elements of Mawson's layout could be



Formal layout of Vale Park in the 1950s.

reinstated into the site including the meandering walks along the Bear Brook and seasonal horticultural displays. There are opportunities along the vistas to recreate focal points but with a more contemporary feel, whilst restoring and recreating those which have been lost or altered.

In 1999, Aylesbury Vale Park was fortunate to have Chris Parsons, a former art school student working as a groundsman. He used a broom to trace magnificent designs in the heavy autumn dew that he found on the bowling green. His designs feature in *Gardens of Obsession* (G. Taylor & G. Cooper, 1999) which includes this quote 'You need a clear night for the dew to form, followed by a clear morning with full sun and no clouds. You brush away the dew in parts and you're left with a design from the millions of droplets – until the sun gets hot and burns it away'.



One of Chris Parson's 'dew designs'.

# GT events

Lectures  
Conferences  
Study Tours

We so regret that our planned programme of events for summer and autumn 2020 has had to be either cancelled, or in some cases postponed. We have been working very hard to provide a full range of lectures and courses to take their place.

Our second **Sicily Study Tour** had to be postponed at the last minute, but has been rearranged, and will be taking place in April 2021, probably starting after Easter, Sunday 11th or 18th April (TBC), and our planned **Conference** and AGM weekend in North Yorkshire will now take place in September 2021 (see p.41), though the planned **New Research Symposium 2020** has moved online.

Plans for the ever popular **Rewley House Weekend Conference** are in abeyance, though we are exploring the possibility of taking it online as well. All Oxford Continuing Education residential courses are currently on hold until autumn 2021 at the earliest.

So where does that leave us? As you may be aware **Dr David Marsh** has already started a series of free **Online Lectures** on Tuesday mornings, repeating on Wednesday evenings, and continuing as detailed **overleaf**. These have already attracted a good online audience.

This weekly format will continue on into August, mornings only, initially with a series of four lectures under the heading **Tales from the Fruit Bowl** on the history and culture of some of our favourite fruits given by **Michael**

**Holland**, formerly of Chelsea Physic Garden (see **overleaf**).

Also in August, this time on Thursdays, we begin an 8-week course titled **A Brief Introduction to Garden History**, led by **Dr Jill Francis & Advolly Richmond**, now of *Gardeners World* fame (p.37).

As already mentioned we have taken the bold step of preparing to run our ever popular **New Research Symposium** online too. It will take place as a Zoom Webinar at 2 pm on Saturday 5th September as planned (see p.38). The Symposium will be streamed live and also recorded and available for a limited period for those unable to attend the Webinar.

Our lecture series will continue on Wednesday afternoons, from 9th September, with a 12-week course, on the evolution and origins of plants, **Where did the plants in my garden come from?** led by **Dr Mark Spencer**, Honorary Curator of the Linnean Society.

Lastly we have entered into a **joint series of lectures** with the London Gardens Trust for this autumn, winter and spring, again

online and saving the need to come up to Cowcross Street. We hope this will be able to reach the broadest possible audience, full details to follow.

All of our visit based events have been cancelled or postponed, and although the Welwyn Garden City Study Day will probably not be deferred (we've missed the anniversary), we still hope that some of the other planned events will resume in 2021. And of course **Virginia Hinze** would be delighted to hear from you if you would like to take on the organisation of further site visits in 2021 and beyond:

[vchinze99@gmail.com](mailto:vchinze99@gmail.com)  
or: 01273 844 819

Finally, please note that many of these programmes were coming together as we approached our printing deadline so may be subject to further change. Please check for full details on our website, and see event updates in our monthly **e-news** with the very latest information; if you haven't already signed up for it, please do.

Charles Boot, Editor



Just where do the contents of our fruit bowls come from? See **overleaf**.

### **The Elephant in the Garden and other Beastly Encounters** **Dr David Marsh**

Online lecture

10am, Tuesday 21 July  
and 6pm, Wednesday 22 July

**A** talk by Dr David Marsh about the elephants that have been kept in gardens in Britain since at least 1255.

‘Forget about the elephant in the room and think about the elephant in the garden instead... Believe it or not there have been elephants in gardens in Britain since at least 1255. Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth I and James I also had pachyderms but kept them in a menagerie in the Tower of London. The Tower menagerie remained open until 1831 when the few remaining animals were moved to Regent Park. There was no elephant so the new zoo quickly bought two as an attraction.

Meanwhile from the mid-18th-century menageries became a ‘must-have’ feature on many landed estates the length and breadth of the country, although elephants were still a rarity. Perhaps the best known example was at Chiswick House where the Duke of Devonshire was given Sadi the elephant by a friend in India, and kept her along with many other exotic animals, in the grounds. He even introduced her to the Tsar of Russia.



And if you thought it was a bit eccentric to keep an elephant in the garden how would feel about having a mechanical one, like the one in the photo above, instead? This talk is about the real and the mechanical and is designed to

both inform and amuse... you’ll never think of Jumbo in the same way again.’

This lecture is free, but you do need to Register to take part. Though David is giving his time *pro bono*, we do welcome donations to the Gardens Trust’s campaigning to protect historic parks and gardens:  
<https://bit.ly/DonateGardensTrust>

**Welwyn Garden City 100 Study Day**  
Saturday 25 July  
**CANCELLED**

### **Garden history in the making? The story of my garden** **Dr David Marsh**

Online lecture

10am, Tuesday 28 July  
and 6pm, Wednesday 29 July

**I**n this talk Dr David Marsh shares the joys (and problems) of creating his own five-acre garden in France. He writes, ‘My partner and I have had a house in France for around 25 years, and for the last 10 have lived there for about half the year. We moved house in 2006, buying a rambling ruin with mediaeval foundations, two overgrown fields and a lake.

Since then we have been designing, clearing and planting a garden of about five acres. Almost

everything, apart from the hedging and some of the trees, is home grown from seed or cuttings, and this is the story of how it was done...and how our French friends, neighbours and the local press reacted! The garden was opened to the public for the first time in 2015.’ (See also p.4)

This lecture is free, but you do need to Register to take part. Though David is giving his time *pro bono*, we do welcome donations to the Gardens Trust’s campaigning to protect historic parks and gardens:  
<https://bit.ly/DonateGardensTrust>



### **Summer Lecture Series Tales from the Fruit Bowl**

10am, Tuesdays 4 to 25 August

**D**iscover the history, folklore, botany [and more!] behind your favourite fruit. The Gardens Trust is delighted to welcome Michael Holland as our first guest lecturer in our new regular weekly lecture series.

Michael had a 25-year career at the eminent Chelsea Physic Garden in London, and for the last 17 years



Creating a new garden in France, its story and how to do it.

Dr David Marsh

was their Head of Education. He has taught tens of thousands of people, aged from 2 to 92, about the natural world. He has appeared on a number of television and radio shows and podcasts about plants and history (including Channel 4's *Sunday Brunch*, Channel 5's *The Thames: Britain's Great River* series with Tony Robinson and *Mr Plant Geek's Plant-Based Podcast* to name a few). He is the author of *I Ate*

*Sunshine for Breakfast.*

These illustrated talks will bring to life some of the many stories of some of our best-loved fruits, including aspects of their historical and geographical roots, folklore, symbolism botany, nutrition, chemistry and more. Each of the four talks will zoom into a different plant family and highlight some of its most notable members, siblings and cousins.

**Programme**

- 10am Tuesday 4 August  
*Apples and Pears*
- 10am Tuesday 11 August  
*Oranges and Lemons*
- 10am Tuesday 18 August  
*Chillies and Tomatoes*
- 10am Tuesday 25 August  
*'Gourd Almighty'  
the Cucumber family*

Full details and prices should now be on our website.

## Online Course: A Brief Introduction to Garden History

11am to 12.30pm Thursdays, from 6 August to 24 September

An eight week on-line course, with tutors: Jill Francis & Advolly Richmond.  
Full course details to follow, see our Events pages and *e-news* for more.

**Programme**

- Thursday 6 August Introduction to the course: Jill Francis  
What is garden history? How do we 'do' it?
- Thursday 13 August The Gardens of the Italian Renaissance: Advolly Richmond
- Thursday 20 August Elizabethan Gardens: Jill Francis
- Thursday 27 August Jacobean Gardens: Jill Francis
- Thursday 3 September Gardens of the later Seventeenth Century: Jill Francis
- Thursday 10 September The landscape garden and its precursors: Advolly Richmond
- Thursday 17 September Regency and Victorian gardens: Advolly Richmond
- Thursday 25 September Edwardian and Post War gardens: Advolly Richmond

**Jill Francis** is an early modern historian, specialising in gardens and gardening in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. She teaches history at the University of Birmingham and the University of Worcester and contributes to the MA programme on West Midlands History at Birmingham.



Jill is an occasional lecturer on the IHR Garden and Landscape History programme and is becoming increasingly involved with the Gardens Trust online provision. She also works at the Shakespeare Institute Library in Stratford-upon-Avon. Her first book *Gardens and Gardening in Early Modern England and Wales* was published by Yale University Press in June 2018.

**Advolly Richmond** is an independent researcher in Garden, Landscape and Social History, based in Shrewsbury. She is a trustee of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust and she sits on the Gardens Trust Events Committee. Through her Royal Horticultural Society training and qualifications she went on to achieve an MA in Garden History from the University of Bristol.



A member of the Garden Media Guild, she contributes articles to relevant publications and gives talks on a variety of 16th to 20th century subjects as well as providing *Introduction to Garden History* courses to the National Trust. Advolly is currently researching the life and achievements of Victorian botanist the Reverend Thomas Birch Freeman (1809–1890).

Course information, contact details and booking: <https://introductiontogardenhistory.eventbrite.co.uk>  
The course costs £40 including Eventbrite booking fees.

**The Gardens Trust Annual Conference 2020**

Friday 4 to Sunday 6 September

**CANCELLED**

But fear not, we will now run the same programme in 2021 See p.41 for Annual Conference 2021...

**The Gardens Trust Annual General Meeting 2020**

Saturday 5 September

See enclosed materials for details of the Annual General Meeting and how to vote; and panel on p.7.

# The 10th New Research Symposium 2020

**Zoom Webinar**

2pm, Saturday 5 September and thereafter online

As our Annual Conference has had to be cancelled because of Covid-19 restrictions, the New Research Symposium will take place as a Webinar this year.

**Dr Patrick Eyres** writes: ‘Launched in 2011, the nine previous symposia have hosted papers from thirty-eight researchers, many of whom are members of County Gardens Trusts and a third have been scholars from overseas. The full list of researchers and their subjects can be seen on the website of The Gardens Trust. Last year, I noted that the 9th symposium was our first all-female line-up. Indeed, the record shows that our speakers have been predominantly female. This had set me wondering whether male researchers are too shy to offer proposals? However, this year the balance has been restored.

In 2020 our four speakers are based in Brussels, Gothenburg, London and Sheffield. Their subjects tickle our anticipation by engaging with historical themes as contexts to contemporary issues – and thus encompass craft practices, biodiversity and sustainability, movement and visual perception, horticultural mysticism and environmental thinking.

It is worth remembering that each paper represents the speaker’s work-in-progress – and that, by providing a forum for the presentation of new research in the field of Garden History, the symposium has consistently



Dr Patrick Eyres, who has now run the GHS/GT Symposium for ten years...

encouraged researchers whose subject is as yet unpublished.

Guided by these aims, the Symposium is open to researchers in all fields of activity, regardless of whether they are independent or attached to an academic institution – and any subject relating to Garden History is considered, providing that it is unpublished. The New Research Symposium also continues to generate potential scholarly articles for inclusion in the Gardens Trust’s journal *Garden History*, and potential submissions for the Mavis Batey Essay Prize.”

Dr Patrick Eyres is editor/publisher of the unique *New Arcadian Journal*, and is busily engaged with preparing *NAJ* 77/78 for publication in 2021. Patrick initiated the New Research

Symposium in 2011 and, after convening and chairing it since its launch in 2011, he will be passing it on to capable hands for 2021.

**Our Speakers in 2020**

**Camilla Allen**, PhD candidate, Department of Landscape, University of Sheffield.

*The forester who saw the world as a garden: the impact of practical faith and practical horticulture on the visionary forester and conservationist, Richard St. Barbe Baker.*

The forester Richard St. Barbe Baker (1889–1982) sought to inculcate in his followers the instinct to plant and protect trees. This, he felt, was something that constituted a ‘tree-sense’, and which was manifest as a sense of connection and responsibility to the natural world. Baker espoused this doctrine in his work as founder of the Men of the Trees, a society which furthered

this vision of a world made peaceful and plentiful through an understanding of the interwoven fates of humanity and trees. Although trained as a forester in the aftermath of the First World War, Baker cut an unusual figure within the discipline, bringing a social and spiritual activism to a role which in other guises was inherently practical and beyond the interest and engagement of ordinary people. What made Baker unusual was an inherited and embodied horticultural approach which had been honed in his father's nursery alongside his involvement with the family's evangelical mission hall. This combination of practical faith and practical cultivation led to a synthesis of forestry and agriculture, which he encapsulated in the vision of the world as a garden, and that constituted a significant and previously unexplored aspect of his contribution to environmental thought.

Camilla is a PhD candidate in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Sheffield where she is writing a biography of Richard St. Barbe Baker. Her research focusses broadly on the relationship that humans have with trees, explored using different events, places and persons as the foci.



**Rory Hutchings**, Independent researcher working at the London Metropolitan Archives.  
*Virginia Woolf's mystic garden(s)*

In her autobiographical writings, Virginia Woolf describes a walk around her garden at Monk's House in Lewes:

'The buzz, the croon, the smell, all seemed to press voluptuously against some membrane; not to burst it; but to hum round one such a complete rapture of pleasure that I stopped, smelt; looked.' from *Moments of Being*.

This description, and many like it throughout her writings, captures Woolf's mystical ecstasies, what she called her "moments of being", which came on most fervently in her experiences of the natural world – primarily within the garden – and intimately shaped her fiction.

Proceeding from Woolf's writings on gardens, both real and imagined, this paper will explore how the mystical tendencies of her work manifest in the garden space. And how the horticultural theories of Woolf's contemporaries, including William Robinson and Reginald Farrer, are transmitted and absorbed into Woolf's own horticultural and mystical sensibility.

Whilst both Woolf's ecologies and her mystical tendencies have been widely studied, there has been less attention paid to the meeting place between these two interests, despite their frequent convergence in Woolf's writings. This paper will chiefly reference the following texts: *Moments of Being* (2002), *The Waves* (1931) and *Between The Acts* (1941).

Rory is an independent researcher based in London and working at the London Metropolitan Archives. He gained his BA and MA in English and Literary Studies respectively from Goldsmiths, University of London. His research interests include modernist animals, the regional modernisms in Beckett and Woolf, and the works of Hilary Mantel.



**Joakim Seiler**, PhD candidate in the Department of Conservation at the University of Gothenburg; Head Gardener at the eighteenth-century estate of Gunnebo House, Sweden.  
*Management regimes for lawns and hedges in historic gardens*

The historic garden at Gunnebo House in Sweden is the case study for my comparison between gardening methods for lawns and hedges in the eighteenth-century and contemporary practice. My investigation asks two questions – not only how did they do it back then?, but also how shall we do the work now in historic gardens? The research has travelled in a hermeneutical circle, from historical precedents to craft experiments in historical gardening and onwards, towards an enhanced understanding of the historical methods through the discoveries made about traditional craft practices.

The study concludes with a proposal for a new management regime appropriate to the Anthropocene, a.k.a. the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment. This regime is not only focused on craft as a traditional means to preserve historic gardens, but also on craft as meaningful activity in its own right for today's society. My proposal encourages the quality

and sustainability that combines good practice from different eras with contemporary concerns for biodiversity and sustainability – as well as encouraging a sense of heritage and an interest in learning from the past.

Joakim has been Head Gardener since 2004 at the eighteenth-century estate of Gunnebo House, Sweden. He has been working all his adult life with historic gardens and his main interest is in traditional gardening craft. He is also a PhD candidate in the Department of Conservation at the University of Gothenburg.



**Rebecca J. Squires**, Researcher in the Faculty of Architecture at KU Leuven University, Brussels.

***The Evocative Parcours: The Eighteenth-Century Picturesque Garden as Instrument of Evocation and Locus of Sensation.***

The Seventh Prince de Ligne's gardens of Belœil in Belgium exemplified the eighteenth-century picturesque garden as a sensual and evocative place. The term 'picturesque' derives from the Italian 'pittresco', meaning both a landscape resembling a painting and a painterly quality or style. Designed to evoke nuances of these characteristics, this kind of landscape conjured up a plethora

of imagery that immersed the spectator in the subjective privacy of the garden experience.

In the course of the spectator's meanderings, or 'parcours', the promeneur encountered the sensuous potential of the painterly landscape. By moving through the sequence of views that, like a tableau, opened up myriad and tantalizing prospects, the promeneur was surprised by peephole glimpses and unexpected vistas. Movement revealed and obscured, so that the continually interrupted parcours created a sense of space and time outside of the expected. In the perception of the promeneur, the parcours took on the irregular

rhythm of astonishment and personal discovery that enabled a singular re-imagining in the mind of the spectator. This re-imagining will be explored through the case study of Belœil, along with other picturesque exemplars in France and the United Kingdom.

Rebecca is an exhibition curator and researcher at KU Leuven University, Brussels. She is researching the parcours through the eighteenth-century garden and its role in the development of modern visual perception. With a background in art, design, and curation, Squires has been a curatorial invitee to the Biennale di Venezia in 2017 and 2019.

## The Gardens Trust and London Gardens Trust Joint Online Winter Lecture Series

We are really delighted to announce that The Gardens Trust has joined forces this year with the London Gardens Trust to present a joint series of Winter Lectures. These will be presented online as part of the Gardens Trust's broader range of online events, since it is impossible in the present circumstances to hold lectures in The Gallery, Cowcross Street. They will run fortnightly on Monday evenings (6 to 7pm) starting on 5 October through to 22 March. We already have an exciting line-up of potential speakers.

The series will begin on Monday 5 October with **Greg Packman** on *'Hyde Park: A History of Trees'* and continue until 14 December, resuming after the new year on Mondays again, from 11 January to 22 March. Among the other speakers will be, **Dr Sally Jeffery** on *'George London and the Brompton Park Nursery'* on 19 October, **Margaret Willes**

on *'The Domestic Herbal'*, the subject of her new book, on 2 November, **Professor Jordan Goodman** of University College London (who has also just published a book, *Planting the World – Joseph Banks and his Collectors*) on *'Joseph Banks and his Global Botanical Projects'* on 16 November (replacing his lectures originally planned for June and July), **Valerie Christman** on *'Pulhamite in London, 1820–2020'* on 30 November and **Dr Patrick Eyres** on *'Wentworth Castle and Wentworth Woodhouse'* on Monday 14 December.

Speakers after Christmas will include **Kim Wilkie** on *'What is Wild?'*

Full details of ticket prices, dates, speakers and titles will be given in our monthly *e-news*, on our social media and on the website as they become available and also with the next *GT News*. Booking will be online from our website.

# Return to Sicily, Gardens Trust Study Tour 2021

A Sunday after Easter, April 2021

**FULLY BOOKED, but...**

Following our successful study tour to Western Sicily in Spring 2019 (see p.38, *GT news* 10), Robert Peel and Cassandra Funsten prepared another one for members of the Gardens Trust there in Spring 2020 – alas this had to be postponed. It has now been rearranged for 2021 to begin on one of the Sundays after Easter and again lasting for a week. The same programme of visits will be included, with five nights in Palermo, a day in Bagheria, and two nights in Trapani, from where to visit Segesta, Mozia, Marsala, Mazara and Selinunte.

The aim is to give a full appreciation of the range of landscapes and gardens in western Sicily and the architectural heritage in its varied manifestations through the centuries, from classical Greek, through Norman, medieval, baroque, neo-classical and Liberty style.

Sicily's climate permits a hedonistic mix of Mediterranean and exotic plants from temperate and tropical parts of other



Robert Peel

Gardens Trust members take this studying business very seriously.

continents, as well as a rich range of wild flowers, especially prominent in the archaeological sites we visit.

Cassandra is based in Palermo and her knowledge of the gardens and plants of the city allows a thorough appreciation of the art and botany of its designed landscapes.

Although **FULLY BOOKED** at the time we published our last issue, a very limited number of places may become available.

For further information and costs, contact Robert Peel:

**rma.peel@btopenworld.com**

# The Gardens Trust Annual Conference New Research Symposium and AGM 2021

**in and around Richmond and Wensleydale, North Yorkshire**

Mid-day, Friday 3 September to Sunday 5 September 2021

This year's Conference in North Yorkshire has been postponed due to the current uncertainty. Arrangements for the AGM are contained in the enclosed booklet.

Given the huge amount of organisation undertaken to set up this year's event it is with some relief, and many thanks to all involved, that we are able, at least provisionally, to make a similar offering for next year, when we

hope you will be able to join us, "same time, same place".

So as a reminder to add the date to your diary, here is an outline of the programme, again. We are now aiming to meet up in the Yorkshire Dales at the beginning of September next year (2021), in partnership with Val Hepworth and the Yorkshire County Gardens Trust, centring on Wensleydale and the picturesque Georgian

town of Richmond. All our visits are to privately-owned and run historic listed or registered estates. We will have access to many areas not normally open to the public.

## Outline programme Friday 3 September

Arrive at hotel mid-day, lunch available. Afternoon excursions, by coach, to Richmond. Two alternative visits are offered:

- A. Tour of **Temple Grounds** and its *Picturesque* landscape.
- B. Tour of Richmond's **Georgian Theatre**, followed by **Millgate House** plantsman's garden tour. Return to hotels for bar and dinner and lecture on the inspiration behind the designed landscapes of North Yorkshire.
- Saturday 4 September**  
Morning visit to **Aske Hall**, with elements by Kent and Brown, lunch at the hotel followed by the **New Research Symposium 2021** and **AGM**. Conference Dinner at **The Station**, housed in Richmond's

Victorian Railway Station.

**Sunday 5 September**  
Morning visit to **Constable Burton**, lunchtime visit to **Bolton Castle** and final afternoon visit to **Bolton Hall**. Return to Hotel.

The full Conference programme plus a request for any dietary requirements and CGT affiliations will be sent to delegates nearer the time. We will be based at the Holiday Inn just off the A1(M)/A66 at Scotch Corner (DL10 6NR) which has been attractively refurbished and updated (with efficient double glazing) and offers

ample conference facilities and on-site parking. Darlington station is 20 minutes away by frequent local express bus or taxi to the hotel. Final confirmation of the event and full details and prices will appear in next year's spring issue of **GT News** and, of course, on the website. We hope to be able to hold prices as advertised for 2020, see **GT News** issue 12. Booking will probably close in early August 2021. Contact Virginia Hinze: [vchinze99@gmail.com](mailto:vchinze99@gmail.com) or: 01273 844 819 with any queries.

## Study Tour to France

### *Jardins à la Française: origins, variations, reinventions*

Friday 25 to Monday 28 September 2020 or (perhaps) September 2021

#### Important update

The situation with our Study Tour of French gardens is rather more complicated. Because the Tour was originally planned for and advertised in our Spring issue very few people took up the offer, for a variety of reasons. The newsletter hit door-mats in mid-March just as lockdown was about to be declared, and with a very short lead in for deposits to be paid. Consequently, and understandably, although a few bookings were made the Tour is not currently viable. Both our organisers, Robert Peel and Dr Gabriel Wick have secured agreements with the venues to run the Study Tour in September next year 2021, but so far our travel agent has been unable to change the arrangements. So the situation stands at an impasse, unlikely to go forward this year due to lack of numbers because of understandable uncertainty medically, and unable to set a date for next year. So...

We have organised a long-weekend study trip to central France from 25 to 28 September 2020, led by landscape historian, author and curator, **Dr Gabriel Wick**. The plan was to meet our coach in central Paris on Friday morning and drive to **Fontainebleau**, a key site in the development of the classical French gardens in the late-16th and early-17th centuries. From there to **Chateau de Courances**, home of the Ganay family, with its renaissance water-gardens, reinterpreted by Henri and Achille Duchêne in the early-20th century, and restored by the family in the post-war period.

We will then spend the night in Orléans, before travelling along the River Loire, to the newly reconstituted early 18th-century garden at the **Chateau de Chambord**, and the **Chateau de Chaumont** with its long-running International Garden Festival. We will also visit the **Pagoda of**

**Chanteloup**, a poignant fragment of one of France's lost 18th-century gardens (see the **GT Blog**, 29 February 2020 for more on the pagoda at Chanteloup).

We shall overnight in Tours, which is conveniently located to tour the gardens of three other chateaux, **Lude**, **Lathan** and **Grand Lucé**, each significant for their history as well as their pragmatic and ecologically driven approaches to planting and maintenance.

Finally, on Monday we shall visit **Chateau de Valmer** with its terraced-gardens, vineyards and potager, and enjoy a wine tasting before heading back to Paris to connect with the evening **Eurostar** to London.

Full details in our last issue, but at the moment it is all rather uncertain. Robert will inform all those who are booked as soon as the future of the trip is known. All enquiries to Robert Peel: [rma.peel@btopenworld.com](mailto:rma.peel@btopenworld.com)



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# other events & news in brief



## The Garden Museum – Sponsored swim and Derek Jarman exhibition update

Exhibition now runs until Sunday 20 September 2020

The Garden Museum in London is far more than its collections, devoted to the history of British gardens and gardening. It lives very much in the present day, with its newly revamped gardens, delicious meals in its café and a tempting shop. And it is a good friend and colleague to us at the Gardens Trust providing us with an occasional venue for Conferences and Lectures, as well as having let us have some beautiful images to use for some of our GHS and GT newsletter covers over the years.

It offers other courses on plants, food and health, hosts exhibitions about trends in gardening, and maintains links with the local schools and people.

During the current lockdown the Museum has been closed and so has lost its income. To help make up the £270,000 deficit the Museum's director Christopher Woodward is undertaking yet another sponsored swim from Newlyn in Cornwall to Tresco Abbey Gardens on the Isle of Scilly – 50 miles (80km) along a difficult coast and across the sea; so much for “never again.”

*[And I know from personal experience how cold and turbulent that stretch of coastline is, let alone the open sea. Ed.]*

The Museum reopened on 4th July, with its Derek Jarman ‘My Garden’s Boundaries are the Horizon’ exhibition extended until Sunday 20th September. We are hoping we will be able to rearrange our proposed lecture with Michael Charlesworth, originally planned for 12 May. See their website: [gardenmuseum.org.uk](http://gardenmuseum.org.uk) where you will also find a ‘Donate’ button to help sponsor Christopher’s swim.

**MERL/FOLAR  
lunchtime Seminars**  
available on YouTube

A MERL series on ‘Designing Landscapes for the People’, co-hosted with FOLAR (Friends of the Landscape Archive at Reading) spanning the early 20th century UK approach to city planning, civic design, parks and gardens it encompasses the formation of the UK professional body of landscape architects, the evolving Royal Parks and the impact of corporate landscapes; and profiles a contemporary example of the Green Business Park in Reading. The Archive of the Landscape Institute is held at The MERL, Reading.

Topics covered so far include: Michael Gilson on *Richard Sudell: Suburban Garden Pioneer and Forgotten Man of Landscape Architecture*; Tom Turner on *Geddes, McHarg and Urbanism*; Richard Flenley on *Succession and Survival – The Royal Parks in 100 Years of Change*; Colin Moore on *Michael Brown Landscapes –*

*Detailed Delight*; and Helena Chance on *Chocolate Heaven to Tech Nirvana: Corporate Landscapes from Bournville to Google*.

There are quite a number of other Talks and Presentations on their channel, well worth seeking out: ‘The Museum of English Rural Life’, on YouTube.

**A new work by Richard Long**

Richard Long’s newly installed artwork Jackdaw Line is set in Hestercombe’s Georgian Landscape Garden. The piece has been commissioned as part of Bampfylde 300, a year of exhibitions and events celebrating the life and work of Hestercombe’s former owner and landscape designer, Coplestone Warre Bampfylde, 1720–1791.

Made using local Morte Slate, Jackdaw Line snakes through the landscape below the Box Pond at Hestercombe, and uses stone sourced from a quarry in the same valley. This new stone work is Long’s first since the easing of the lockdown.

**European Symposium on the Conservation of Historic Fruit and Vegetable Gardens**

Château du Chambord, France  
Thursday 15 October 2020

With the strong revival of interest in historic fruit, vegetable and kitchen gardens, this event offers the opportunity to reflect on the specific issues and challenges posed by such gardens



Richard Long creating his ‘Jackdaw Line’.

## Your Support

Your ongoing support is invaluable to us to continue our vital work protecting historic parks and gardens.

Enclosed with this mailing are our Legacy and Membership leaflets. If you might consider leaving a legacy to the Trust, the leaflet explains how.

Please do pass on the Membership leaflet to anyone who you think might consider joining. Or had you thought of membership as a gift for a friend or family member? Ring 01787 249286 and our team at Lavenham can help you organise this over the phone.

We have now added the facility to easily make donations from our website, at <http://thegardenstrust.org/support-us/>

This promises to be a vital fund-raising tool now and for the future. We deeply appreciate all levels of support.

@thegardenstrust  
#unforgettablegardens

Dr James Bartos, Chairman



today – from across Europe. The Walled Kitchen Gardens Network and the Amis du Potager du Roi are working in co-operation with the Domaine de Chambord to organise this European Symposium. [Booking and event details via the GT Events pages on our website.](#)

**Coplestone Warre Bampfylde: New Perspectives Conference Hestercombe House & Gardens, Taunton, Somerset**  
**Friday 6 to Sunday 8 November**

Coplestone Warre Bampfylde (1720–1791) constitutes one of the most distinct, yet largely overlooked cultural figures of 18th-century Britain. As an artist, architect and landscape designer, he epitomised the qualities of a polymath who did not hesitate to put his knowledge and vision into practice. This major international conference aims to shed new light on Bampfylde's multifaceted work and legacy, on the 300th anniversary of his birth. [Booking and event details via the GT Events pages on our website.](#)

**Study day on Charles Bridgeman in Hertfordshire**  
**Saturday 19 June 2021**

Charles Bridgeman designed seven landscapes in Hertfordshire ranging from formal avenues and canals at Tring Park and Briggens to the softer 'naturalistic' design at Brocket Park. Recent research, both on Bridgeman and these Hertfordshire landscapes, will feature in this Study Day. Speakers will include Tom Williamson, Sue Haynes...

Charles Bridgeman was one of the great landscape designers of the early 18th century. He trained under Henry Wise and George London at the great Brompton Nurseries in London. In 1726 he was appointed partner to Wise and in 1728 Queen Caroline and George II appointed him Royal Gardener. One of London's previous partners (till 1689) had been Moses Cook, gardener to the Earl of Essex, who laid out the great forest garden at Cassiobury. Whilst at Brompton, Bridgeman was employed at Blenheim Palace when



An Exact Survey of Tring in the County of Hertford ... by J. Colbeck 1719.

the great avenues were planted. He is best known for his work at Stowe which covered the years 1711 to 1740 (he died in 1738 but work continued), in 4 phases. However, on his death his widow was obliged to apply to the Treasury for settlement of unpaid salary and expenses as Royal Gardener, and also prepared her husband's plans for Stowe for publication. Towards the end of his career he softened his designs from strictly geometrical to reflect the new ideas of 'natural' landscape and one of these is found at Brocket Park. [Booking and event details via the GT Events pages on our website.](#)

# in memoriam

**Kirsty McLeod**  
**1947–2020**

Kirsty McLeod, who has died aged 72, was a historian and biographer, and a newspaper columnist with a passion for gardens.

Margaret Kirsty McLeod was born on December 23 1947 in Colombo, Ceylon, the second of three children of Alexander Drummond McLeod, a tea-planter, and Elizabeth Margaret McLeod. Before the family

returned home to Wadhurst in East Sussex she was sent to board at St Leonard's School, St Andrews. "Eat up yurr porridge, Kerrsty McLude!" became a refrain of her friend Michele.

In 1978 she married the journalist and novelist Christopher Hudson, who had been working for Faber. They were a symbiotically well-matched couple, both obtained First-class degrees, and Hudson's Cambridge thesis had been on Paradise represented by a garden, each was intent on authorship.



Kirsty would accompany Alexander on research trips to America, Africa and Sri Lanka.

## officers

Her books include *A Passion for Friendship: Sibyl Colefax and her Circle* (1991), and *The Last Summer: May to September 1914*, a portrait of English society and culture during the last summer before the First World War.

Her magnum opus was *The Best Gardens in Italy: A Traveller's Guide* (2013) featuring photographs by her friend Primrose Bell and with a preface by Robin Lane Fox, who found the whole enterprise "outstanding, a masterpiece of clarity, compression and accuracy" putting to shame the earlier writings of Georgina Masson and Edith Wharton. McLeod and Bell travelled "for five glorious springs and summers the length and breadth of Italy" in a small Fiat Panda.

They met the owners and guardians of palazzi and villas in terracotta and tawny yellow with marble portals, symmetrical staircases, frescoed rooms, baroque

sculpture, often set in olive groves, forests of ilex and oak, orchards of cypresses and yew, featuring clipped box enclosures, intricate geometrical parterres, visual caprices, hanging gardens, wildflower meadows with self-seeded poppies, banks of lavender and roses.

"Kirsty was a wonderful travelling companion, loved by everyone we met," Bell recalled. Several gardens were cared for by third or fourth-generation retainers "who spoke in very strong dialects which neither of us could understand. But of course both they and Kirsty knew the Latin names. So with not a word of a language in common they communicated perfectly, with gestures and Latin."

The book's launch party, packed with Italian grandees, was at the celebrated Florentine villa of Sir Harold Acton, La Pietra.

Her own gardens were not as formal as the Italian model, but

her last home was close to the late Christopher Lloyd's at Great Dixter, and she would recommend to friends such abundant plantings as the white-flowering *Exochorda macrantha* "The Bride".

She went on to chair English Heritage's Parks and Gardens advisory panel, and also judged the Koestler awards for prisoners' writing. John Watkins, of English Heritage says, "I always felt that Kirsty was the right person at the right time heading the committee managing to negotiate between the volcanic Sir Jocelyn Stevens and EH staff. She was critical in setting up and chairing the Contemporary Heritage Garden competition and was always a great champion for gardens and their conservation."

Kirsty was for many years a well loved columnist for *The Daily Telegraph* and we are very grateful to them for the extensive extracts from their affectionate obituary.

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# GT events diary 2020

- 21/22 July *The Elephant in the Garden...* lecture with Dr David Marsh  
Saturday 25 July Welwyn Garden City Study Day **CANCELLED**  
28/29 July *Garden history in the making? The story of my garden* lecture with Dr David Marsh  
Tuesdays 4 to 25 Aug Summer Lecture Series: *Tales from the Fruit Bowl* with Michael Holland  
Thursdays from 6 Aug Course: *A Brief Introduction to Garden History* (8 weeks)  
4 to 6 September Summer Conference and AGM 2020, North Yorkshire **POSTPONED**  
Saturday 5 September **New Research Symposium 2020**  
Saturday 5 September **The Gardens Trust Annual General Meeting**  
Wednesdays from 9 Sept *Where did the plants in my garden come from?* with Dr Mark Spencer (12 weeks)  
25 to 28 September Study Tour to France, *Jardins à la Française: origins, variations, reinventions*  
Possibly **POSTPONED**

## **The Gardens Trust and London Gardens Trust Joint Winter Lecture Series**

Programme details for the new year still to be confirmed, please check our website and **e-news**

- Monday 5 October Greg Packman on *Hyde Park: A History of Trees*  
and thereafter fortnightly – some subjects and speakers still to be confirmed  
Monday 19 October Dr Sally Jeffery on *George London and the Brompton Park Nursery*  
Monday 2 November Margaret Willes on *The Domestic Herbal*  
Monday 16 November Professor Jordan Goodman on *Joseph Banks and his Global Botanical Projects*  
Monday 30 November Valerie Christman on *Pulhamite in London, 1820–2020*  
Monday 14 December Dr Patrick Eyres on *Wentworth Castle and Wentworth Woodhouse*

## **2021**

- Monday evenings **More lectures to come...** details in our Autumn 2020 issue  
April 2021 Return to Sicily, Gardens Trust Study Tour  
3 to 5 September Summer Conference NRS and AGM 2021, North Yorkshire  
September Study Tour to France, *Jardins à la Française: possibly re-booted*

Details and booking information for all these events can be found inside on pages 35 to 42,  
or look at our website for updates: [thegardenstrust.org/events](http://thegardenstrust.org/events) for updates

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**GT News** correspondence and items to The Gardens Trust head office, headed: GT news  
or email the editor Charles Boot: [news@thegardenstrust.org](mailto:news@thegardenstrust.org)

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# EXPERTS IN HISTORIC LANDSCAPES



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