

Sussex Gardens Trust

Encouraging the protection, conservation and evolution of the local garden heritage

Newsletter No. 76 Spring 2020

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High Beeches, Handcross, West Sussex. SGT Visit April 2020
(see Events page for full details)

From the Editor

Welcome to the spring edition of the newsletter. This is the time of year when gardeners are impatient to be out of doors, looking for early signs of snowdrops and crocus and the promise of what is to come in the garden. The SGT events programme for the year ahead holds promises of an enticing range of enjoyable gardens from the very east to the far west of the county. In April we have a guided tour of the extensive woodland and water gardens of High Beeches and in May a visit to the splendid gardens at Aldsworth House and Rymans in West Sussex. In mid summer there is an opportunity to visit the renowned garden of the late John Brookes and then in July for something very different – a unique garden on the beach on the Dungeness peninsula. On the east of the county this whole day visit will include the extensive private gardens at Poplar Hall in Romney Marsh. The full programme can be found on pages 20 and 21 with dates for your 2020 diary.

The latest research project for SGT, examining the digitised documents from the Gertrude Jekyll collection, got off to a good start at the beginning of this year with volunteer researchers planning an audit of her sites in Sussex. It will be interesting to discover more about the planting designs for her clients in the county and perhaps to make new discoveries. In this newsletter we share some findings about her involvement at West Dean Gardens.

On-going research into seaside gardens on the South Coast continues to develop with a group of committed SGT members examining the significance of these green spaces in the east and the west of the county. In his fascinating article Marcus Batty explores the rich garden history of the parks and gardens along the seafront of Worthing, considering the development of early park movement in the town while newer projects with more sustainable planting point to the way forward.

Finally, we plan to hold an event later in the summer to welcome new members who have joined recently. This will be an opportunity to visit a garden, meet other members and find out about our work. Whether you are new to SGT or a long-term member we look forward to seeing you at our events and lectures in the coming year.

Sally Ingram

From the Chair

At the time of writing I have just returned from a memorable visit with Susi to a garden in West Sussex which will form a visit this year, memorable for the house, the garden, the historical associations and the friendliness and charm of our hosts – something which so many garden owners generously exhibit. I do hope that we can all view the film record of life at that house in the pre-WWII period. But this is just one of the gardens that the team charged with putting together the programme of visits has been busy researching. A very varied series of visits has emerged.

Accompanying this newsletter are the papers for the AGM to be held in March after the last lecture of this winter's series on Water in the Garden. There you will find a resume of our activities over the last year but I would be remiss if I did not return to a constant theme. Whilst we have been lucky in having a stable Council for over five years, change brings renewed energy and new approaches but, to realise them, often volunteers are needed. As you will see from the AGM papers, several Council members are retiring after a year of overlap with the new members elected last year. Next year further members will be retiring. So, again, please come forward. You all have something to offer, whether supporting an initiative on the ground or as a Council member.

Preparing our Annual Review provides an opportunity to take stock of where we are and the issues facing us. How to hold research records is a current national issue. A number of County Garden Trusts have digitised some or all of their records, ourselves included as you can see from our website. Parks & Gardens UK, based at Hestercombe in Somerset, is, as it describes itself, "the leading on-line resource for historic parks and gardens". The intention was that all CGTs could migrate their research data onto their database which would be available for all researchers freely to consult. Since late 2016 when it moved to its new home with new funding, it has been meeting and gradually overcoming a number of teething problems but that aim has still to be achieved and the terms on which such migration will be based are still being explored. As charities, county garden trusts must be seen to be providing public benefit: easy access for all to our research is one way in which we can fulfil that duty. Looking at other County Garden Trust websites, different approaches are adopted, for instance Essex Gardens Trust now deposit their records at their Records Office. This will no doubt be a subject for discussion at the next Chairs Meet-up organised for County Gardens Trust chairs by the Gardens Trust.

Finally, by the time you receive this we will be at least halfway through our Winter Lecture Series on Water in the Garden. We have had a most interesting first lecture on the Islamic use of water: I am really looking forward to the remaining three.

Marcus Batty

The Rathfinny Wine Estate, Alfriston. SGT Christmas Event 5 December 2019

By Sally Ingram

'rath' – from the Celtic word for a circular enclosure for a dwelling

'finny' – the original farming family dating back to the 1920s

Our members have enjoyed the annual SGT Christmas event for a number of years now, and during this time the 'dwelling' has included a country house, a hotel by the sea, even a garden marquee. In December we gathered together at the historic Flint Barns on the Rathfinny Wine Estate in the heart of the beautiful Sussex Downs near Alfriston, a few miles from the sea.

The owners, Mark and Sarah Driver, have two hundred and twenty acres planted with vines and their aim is to be an international wine seller, producing over a million bottles of Sussex sparkling wine each year from a vineyard of three hundred and fifty acres. But they also want to contribute to the unique setting of the South Downs and to work in harmony with land that has been farmed since medieval times. Our first lecture of the day was by Richard James, the regional sales director at Rathfinny, who before joining the estate was an ecologist with the South Downs National Park; his appreciation of the Sussex landscape has clearly influenced the evolution of the vineyard.

Richard explained that Rathfinny was originally an arable farm growing wheat and barley but, for vines to grow successfully, the land must be of poor soil (vines like to be stressed) and so mustard was grown for a year to use up the nutrients before the vines could be planted. Using organic and conventional practices the estate sources local materials as well as labour. Chemicals are not used at all and thirty-two acres of land have been sown with wildflowers to benefit the insects which will in turn help protect the vines. Hawthorn and blackthorn trees are part of the natural landscape, and thirty-eight thousand new trees have been planted, encouraging birds of prey which keep smaller birds away from the vines. Windbreaks have been installed which will then be removed as the trees grow. All harvesting and pruning is done by hand and the four to five hundred tons of clippings are then turned into mulch to suppress weed growth. It is hoped that sheep will be soon grazing on the land, removing the need for tractors. The buildings too blend into the habitat: wildflowers are grown on the roof of the vinery, there are insect and bee homes. The Adonis Blue butterfly is now breeding and there is a large population of the solitary bee.

We had an opportunity to follow part of the trail around the estate and to enjoy the stunning views across the Cradle Valley before meeting together for lunch in the Flint Barn.

Sculpture in the Garden
Marcus Batty



The Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Photo Marcus Batty

In the afternoon Marcus Batty, SGT Chair, took us on a whistle-stop tour of sculpture in the garden, illustrating the unique ways in which sculpture can be interpreted, whether a parade of garden gnomes in a private garden in Notting Hill, a wicker work deer in a garden beneath the old city walls in Chichester, or an art work sculpture cut into the landscape as at Boughton in Northamptonshire. Through his inspiring collection of images Marcus showed how, in the last forty years, garden sculpture has become a major art form using striking forms and a variety of materials including wire mesh and mirrors. Sculpture can be quirky such as the poses at Charleston, interact with the landscape as at Chatsworth or reflect, as at Champs Hill, the music making in the building behind.

One of Susi Batty's favourite gardens (perhaps more a landscape) is Plaz Metaxu in Devon, designed by Alasdair Forbes. This is a garden which needs reading as much as walking, where the sculptures and planting have been designed



Champs Hill. Photo Marcus Batty

to represent classical stories, as well as simply giving pleasure to the visitor.

On a larger scale sculpture parks present an amazing juxtaposition of landscape and oversize sculptures such as those at Perry Green, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and Snape Maltings.

This was certainly an enticing taster for a possible series of lectures in the future.

The Lost Gardens of Locarno
Victoria Fritz, BBC News presenter and business correspondent

The title of our final lecture suggested a journey to Lake Maggiore in Switzerland, but we remained in the familiar landscape of Sussex for a fascinating story of a garden once the home of Austen Chamberlain, Foreign Secretary, and now owned by Victoria Fritz.

Chamberlain was involved in devising the Locarno Pact of 1925 which was signed in the lakeside town, but Victoria suggested that it was in the garden in Sussex where the planning for the important peace treaty originated. She moved here fourteen months ago, and in the archives at the University of Birmingham has studied Chamberlain's correspondence, where he wrote about his love for gardening, to help a restoration



Perry Green. Photo Marcus Batty

that captures the heart of the Chamberlain family. Illustrating her talk with recent photographs of the renovation and contemporary pictures of the garden, Victoria explained that Chamberlain was passionate about alpine gardening, hunting down particular plants for his garden and becoming an expert on the subject. In his letters from Geneva the politician-gardener writes about his love for this rock garden.

Victoria has been finding connections with the past as she uncovers the bones of the garden from beneath overgrown rhododendrons and twisted old apple trees from the original orchard. In the rockery created from large pieces of tufa she has found about a hundred old plant labels and, in the flower borders, a tiny glass scent bottle from the 1920s, possibly belonging to Chamberlain's wife, Ivy. This is a lost and found garden: the stone terraces have been recreated from Wealden sandstone found in the garden. In the woodland garden, beneath brambles of thirty or forty years growth, thousands of bluebells and snowdrops are now emerging.

There was a poignant ending to Victoria's lecture. One of Chamberlain's sons had been photographed enjoying the garden, but in 1929 Chamberlain was forced to sell the house and move to a very small garden. From the archives Victoria had discovered that he began to plan a single flower-bed. Then, six weeks later, his brother became Prime Minister, shortly to declare the start of the Second World War.

Now, almost a hundred years after Austen Chamberlain signed the Peace Treaty, the garden is being lovingly brought back to life.

Afternoon tea and raffle prizes ended our day. We journeyed home in the late afternoon sun, refreshed in body and soul.

THE CHARMS OF WORTHING

By Marcus Batty

"Worthing is an exasperating town" wrote Ian Nairn in the Sussex volume of Pevsner's *The Buildings of England* series. His architecturally biased criticism goes further but, from a garden perspective, he commented that "the chance for a coherent town centre was lost when the gardens between Portland Road and Chapel Road were built over" in the 1870s. Actually, by the 1820s, these gardens were already cut off from the sea by the buildings of Montague Place, so central Worthing had already lost the opportunity for an uplifting sea-facing garden surrounded by white stucco terraces as in Brighton. Another seaside square had been laid out for development, Victoria Square, running off Marine Parade just short of Heene Terrace, but this potential adornment of the townscape was lost to the unremarkable development of Queens Road and Thorn Road by 1896.



J Tidey, probably c.1820-30 – the gardens referred to are just left of centre

The sense of a resort gone wrong (in part attributable to its lack of growth for fifty years in the mid nineteenth century) is underlined by the, to my mind, soulless and dull off-centre Steyne gardens where the terraces of different periods to east and west glower at each other rather than celebrate any "seasideness". Having said that, there are designed open spaces in Worthing which deserve attention.

Marine Gardens to the west have a wonderfully period feel similar to Marine Park Gardens in Bognor Regis. They were officially opened in 1931, the year after the sea front road, West Parade, had been extended westwards making the gardens easily accessible from the town. The one-hectare site was gifted to the Council in 1928 for use as a pleasure ground or for public walks and plans were immediately drawn up for its development costed at £9,002. Whilst it is difficult to translate that into today's money, £9,002 equates to £1,742,000 using a simple labour cost measure table (www.measuringworth.com) but probably to a significantly higher figure when materials are taken into account.



The gardens are centred on the pavilion which is essentially still in its original form. In front on its south side is a green putting lawn surrounded by symmetrical borders and planting. To the rear, is a central bowling green flanked to the west by ornamental gardens with a pergola and pool and to the east by a 1960s/70s structure housing the café behind which remain a part of the original building. This introduces the only discordant note to the harmony of the rest of the site and the surrounding three blocks of flats in Art Deco style for which planning permission was allowed on appeal in 1935.



Marine Gardens. Photo © Marcus Batty

This postcard (found on auction site www.delcampe.net), dated to about 1938, shows the view east across the ornamental garden to the central pavilion.



The three main changes between 1938 and today are that there is now a line of trees separating the ornamental garden from the bowling green instead of the low hedging depicted, the building on the left hand edge beyond the bowling green has been replaced by the 1960s/70s café building and a pergola rises above the semi-circular path in the near foreground. What is delightful is the symmetry of the site, the green-glazed capping of the boundary walling and this detailed brickwork feature in the walling on the seaward side of the pavilion, the feature photographed being repeated several times.



Brickwork in Marine Gardens. Photo © Marcus Batty

The second public space of note to the west of the centre is the strip of garden, between Heene Terrace and Marine Parade, which was redesigned by Worthing Borough Council's Parks Section. Such was the perceived quality that the gardens reached the finals of a national Amenity and Landscaping Awards 2009 programme organised by '*Horticulture Week*'. The project was initiated to save money and to produce a more sustainable planting scheme in a tough seafront location. This hitherto splendid example of traditional seaside colour, relying on seasonal bedding, was becoming too expensive but completely grassing over the existing beds was considered to be unfair to local residents. That Worthing should have spent the thought and money on a site over half a mile from the central pierhead is admirable.



Heene Terrace, Worthing. Photo © Marcus Batty

Approximately 165 metres in length with a width tapering from c.20 metres wide at the west end to c.12 metres at the east, it is bounded by a low-capped retaining stone wall on three sides with modern cast iron railings on the north side. A broad stone-paved pathway which runs across the garden from Heene Terrace to Marine Parade, curiously offset slightly east of centre of the garden, encircles a round planted bed in which stands a sculptural form.

The only other hard landscaping comprises six semi-circular generous paved areas in the curve of each of which stands a cast-iron bench and a waste basket. The semicircles are angled, so that the benches of the three to the west of the central circle face south east and the three to the east face south west, presumably to face the morning and afternoon sun. There is a pleasing rhythm to the design.



Shrubs and succulents are planted along the Heene Terrace (north) side in "wedges" to embrace but not enclose the six seating areas, leaving the seated person uninterrupted views to south east and south west. The rest of the gardens are laid to lawn. The plants used are shown below.

Herbaceous Planting

Acanthus mollis
Anaphalis margaritacea
Anthemis hybrida 'Kelwayi'
Armeria maritime 'Splendens'
Artemisia ludoviciana "Silver Queen'
Bergenia cordifolia 'Purpurea'
Crocosmia 'Lucifer'
Doronicum orientale
Echinacea purpurea (Rudbeckia)
Echinops ritro
Erigeron 'Azurfee'
Euphorbia myrsinites
Fuchia 'Riccartonii'
Geranium pratense 'Kashmir White'
Gypsophila paniculata 'Bristol Fairy'
Hemerocallis 'Sammy Russell'
Hemerocallis 'Frans Hals'
Heuchera 'Palace Purple'
Heuchera brizoides 'Pluie de Fue'
Heucherella alba 'Bridget Bloom'
Hypericum olympicum
Iris 'Bright White'
Kniphofia 'Royal Standard'
Linaria purpurea 'Canon J Went'
Ophiopogon planiscapus 'Nigrescens'
Penstemon 'Garnet'
Senecio 'Sunshine'
Stipa tenuissima
Verbascum olympicum

Heene Terrace was built in 1865 and was unique in Worthing in being able to look out to sea over a private lawn, the gardens being encircled by a wall which was dismantled in the mid twentieth century.

Before we leave the western end of town, let me draw attention to the seemingly unnecessary diversion of the coast road in a crescent shape between Sea Lane and Sea Place leaving a large expanse of green space between it and the beach. Worthing Corporation displayed considerable foresight in the 1930s in purchasing this land to be laid out "as parks and pleasure grounds". Whether plans for its development as a park ever existed requires further research – perhaps post-war there was just no money.

East of the centre is a trio of parks which were the subject of philanthropy. Most of the land for what is now Homefield Park was given in 1876 and opened in 1881 as The People's Park, the first park in Worthing. The Steyne Gardens were donated by Lady Loder (members of the Loder family developed Leonardslee, High Beeches and Wakehurst Place) in 1900 and Denton Gardens in 1922 by Alderman Loder. The Town bought Beach House Park in 1923 for £8,250 and the separate Beach House grounds in 1927. Whilst Homefield Park is separated by the hospital from the other parks, the other four form a green lung in excess of six hectares, albeit bisected by the Brighton Road. Each has a different character.

Homefield Park comprises light woodland and open space in broadly equal proportions with a series of tennis courts on the western side. Originally there was an ornamental lake in the south-eastern corner north of the hospital terminating in a rustic bridge. The lake was fed by the Teville Stream, now culverted underground, until it was filled in in 1930 because of silting problems.



Homefield Park. Postcard c.1900-10 www.delcampe.net



Postcard dated 1910 – www.Sussex-opc.org

This park was home to cricket and bowls for many years and now hosts a small community garden, a skateboard park, a children's playground and a measured, red walk route which has been marked out along its paths in a bid to encourage people to walk regularly to improve their fitness. The Hearty Walk is the brainchild of "Cardiac Rehabilitation Support (CRS)" a local registered charity. There is a friends group promoting this well-used park.

Whilst Denton Gardens are a little forlorn with a hard-surfaced putting course and slightly rough grassed areas, they are interesting for the sunken garden at its northern end dating to 1923 which originally had a lily pond at its heart and, for its period buildings, two small kiosks and an open pavilion built in 1925 which separates the gardens from the pedestrian footway above the beach.

To its east, across an attractive high flint and brick wall pierced by two sets of three arches added in the late 1930s, are the grounds of Beach House.

Whilst the Regency villa built in 1820 is in separate occupation, the grounds on its flanks and to its south comprise a public park with small woodland areas but otherwise grassed with sand courts and a play area. Interest is confined to the



Denton Gardens. Site of the original lily pond. Photo © Marcus Batty



The open pavilion, Denton Gardens. Photo © Marcus Batty



Ordnance Survey 25″, Surv.1932, Publ.1934 – courtesy National Library of Scotland

modern Splash Pad at the Gap. Up to the early 1930s, a watchtower built before 1875 was the only building on the southern boundary with the beach. Following Council approval in 1936, a row of permanent beach cabins with a sun promenade above was built with a further tower at the western end to balance that at the eastern. In 2015 a water play area was completed, involving the removal of the central portion of the sun promenade.



Splash Point at the Gap from the north. Photo © Marcus Batty

Two further projects have enhanced the area between the east end of Marine Parade and Splash Point at the Gap. In 2009, Worthing won £500,000 from CABE'S Sea Change programme for a re-landscaping scheme re-invigorating this neglected area of the promenade.



Splash Point from east. Photo © Marcus Batty

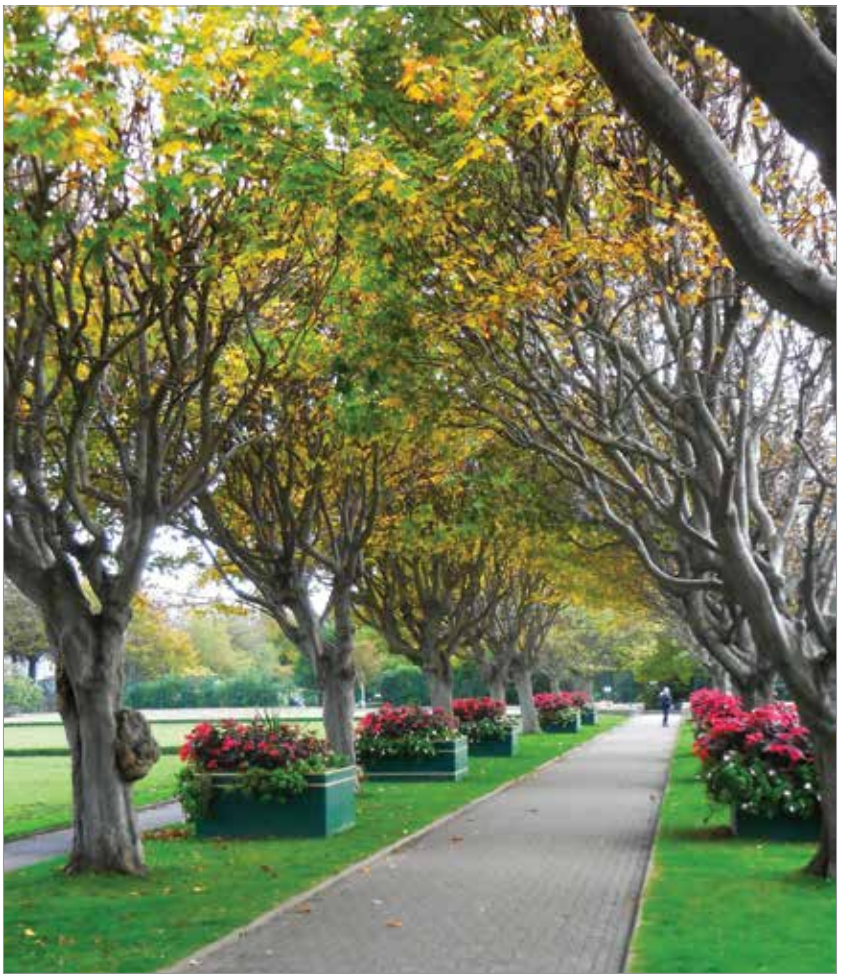
As well as trees, seating and lighting, the rejuvenated Splash Point includes more than forty Welsh Slate boulders, several of which have been inscribed and sandblasted with intricate designs and, as a centrepiece, a water feature comprised of misting jets, which splits light rays, and casts sun-generated rainbows across the area. With its grove of tamarisk trees, engraved slate boulders, imaginative seating and water

feature, Splash Point forms an imaginative terminus to Marine Parade. Just over the wall, in 2002, a landscaping scheme created two planting areas from old groynes and rocks to blend with the existing seaside features. The beds were planted with salt-resistant maritime plants, wildflowers providing colour and giving a naturalistic feel.

Away from the sea to the north is Beach House Park, a rectangle of just under four hectares running from Brighton Road north to Lyndhurst Road. It has been described as the "Bowls Capital of England". Divided broadly into thirds, the southernmost is laid out in traditional ornamental style with symmetrical pathways, trees and shrubberies, the middle contains four bowling greens two to each side of an axial path and the northernmost, originally mainly tennis courts, is now largely a car park. It is separated from the middle section by a modern bowls club building and a pavilion built in 1925.

Whilst the Park is unexciting, it is very urban English and unexpectedly pleasant to be in. A unique feature fills the central circular bed in the ornamental third. It is a memorial to the carrier pigeons of the Second World War, unveiled in 1951. Of naturalistic design, a circular mound of stone quarried in the Forest of Dean, originally with running streams and small pools, is planted with shrubs. There are two large flat faced blocks of stone which bear commemorative inscriptions. A comment on today's society, it is surrounded by an iron fence with a padlocked gate, denying public access. Elsewhere there is a small community garden incorporating recycled materials. Its scruffiness, in the middle of a well-kept park, adds to its charm.

Perhaps that sums up Worthing for me. It is not a beautiful town but the gardens and parks have served its people well and deserve recognition for that. There is interest if you delve as I hope I have shown – I have not even mentioned serpentine Park Crescent overlooking Amelia Park entered through a triumphal arch decorated with caryatids. Nor the displacement of the nursery businesses. Up to 1896, there were still nurseries as close to town as just east of Heene Road and, even in 1909, on Homefield Road. My growing familiarity with Worthing has created a little affection alongside Nairn's exasperation.



Beach House Park. Central path in middle section looking south. Photo ©Marcus Batty

Warren Wood at Borde Hill Rejuvenation and Access Project

By Sally Ingram

In November 2019 SGT were invited to send a representative to a meeting at Borde Hill to discuss a new project for an area of the garden known as Warren Wood. Mr Andrewjohn Stephenson Clarke presented the context and scope of the project to a group representing a number of community organisations.



Warren Wood, Borde Hill Garden. Photo Andrewjohn Stephenson Clarke

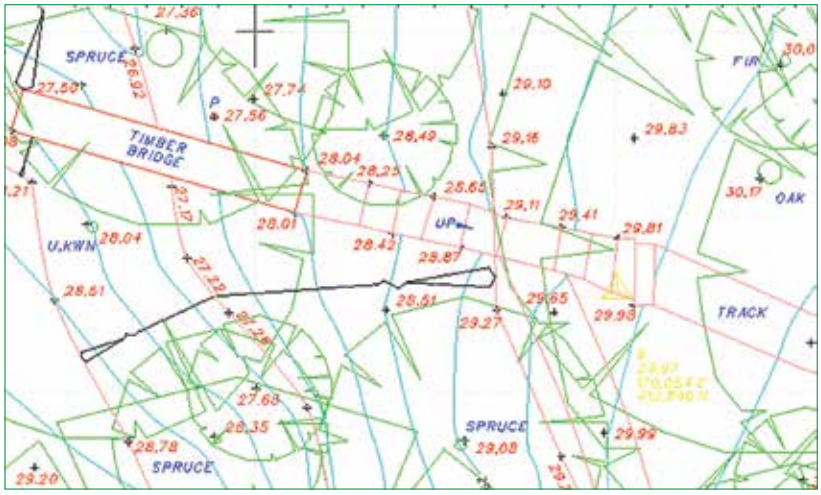
Warren Wood is situated north east of the main garden at Borde Hill on the High Weald. Its ancient woodland is home to a specimen tree collection, with native oak and ash and as many as thirteen Champion trees. It is a rich haven for birds, flora and fungi and is a peaceful relaxing space full of seasonal interest. The owners of Borde Hill, Mr & Mrs Stephenson Clarke, would like to encourage more visitors to this area.

In the extensive archive at Borde Hill there are letters to and from the Victorian plant hunters, records of what was planted and when, as well as photographic records. A detailed map which shows the location of trees, conifers and shrubs, has been translated into computer format with the trees tagged for identification.

The aim of the project is to enhance the experience of visiting Warren Wood by improving access, with all-weather surfaces and disabled routes, and to use new technology to provide information. There is a Victorian dam and stream that could be restored; the plantings can be renovated with a new scheme. A Forest School building is seen as the key part of the woodland experience, with opportunities for community engagement, wellbeing and health.

This will be a three-year plan, working in the first year with local communities and schools to gather feedback in order to inform the project bid. Volunteer support is also sought for historic research and practical assistance. An outdoor learning programme will be formalized and an application for Lottery Heritage Funding made.

SGT is pleased to be a part of this project, and for the opportunities that it will provide for recognising a valuable botanical collection in a family owned garden. The archive of letters, journals and planting plans gives a unique insight into the context of this garden which is part of the historic triangle – Nymans, Borde Hill and Leonardslee. Two of our council members have met previously with Borde Hill to advise on the collation of the archive and we hope to offer further support in the presentation of the important historic legacy relating to Warren Wood. We are also keen to encourage a young generation to have the hands-on experience of outdoor learning, and the establishment of a Forest School building presents opportunities to engage with the schools in the community.



Postcard views

By Sally Ingram

Jennie Starr recently came across these charming old postcards of two gardens familiar to SGT members: the Sunk Garden at Great Dixter and the American gardens at Leonardslee. They are undated but the style of the clothes would suggest the 1930s. The Sunk Garden at Great Dixter was designed by Christopher Lloyd's father in 1921 after the lawn had been dug over during the war to make a vegetable garden.





Picture postcards are used increasingly by historians and researchers as a unique source of garden history. From its introduction in the late 1890s the postcard quickly became popular with visitors to parks and gardens and the black-and-white images, sometimes hand-tinted, reveal favourite views. In 1902 a postcard was developed with a divided back so that the message as well as the address could be written on one side, leaving the front for an entire image to be printed. For the garden researcher postcards can provide a record of the lost gardens of old country houses or reveal changes in planting styles, such as the elaborate formal bedding popular in seaside gardens. Municipal parks were a popular theme for postcard images and the RHS Lindley Library holds a collection of over 5,000 postcards of parks, a valuable archive of the social history of gardens.

As much information about garden styles can be found as in a journal of the time such as the *Gardeners' Chronicle*. Garden historian Brent Elliot considers that picture postcards are important because they tell us what the public enjoyed at the time, rather than what appeared in the gardening magazines. For example, historians believe garden bedding had declined by the time of William Robinson but the evidence from postcards tells a different story.

There was a time when a collector had to rely on a lucky find in a second-hand shop, but now there are several on-line sites to help with searching as well as the vintage postcard fairs. Member Anthony Capo Bianco has a splendid collection of postcards (researchers had a wonderful visit there in 2017). Anthony, very generously, is very open to allowing research members access if they would find it helpful. His email is: acb@biancoteam.com

(Brent Elliott's essay on the use of picture postcards in garden history can be found in *Garden History*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Winter, 2003), pp. 218-224.)

SGT Research: Gertrude Jekyll in Sussex

Gertrude Jekyll died in 1931 and, following the sale of Munstead Wood in 1947, the entire contents of her house including furniture designed by Lutyens, books, paintings, photo albums and her camera, were put into a sale held by Alfred Savill & Sons. Her papers had been donated to a RHS Red Cross Sale in 1940. The garden plans and correspondence were acquired for Beatrix Farrand, an American garden designer and Jekyll enthusiast, who made her purchase from a London dealer.[1] She stored these at the library at Reef Point in Maine and then in 1956 the plans and six photograph albums were moved to the University of California in Berkeley. SGT has recently taken part in a project to digitize the documents relating to Sussex held in the Environmental Design Archives (EDA) at Berkeley. This significant archive can now be accessed online. In 2020 the SGT research group will begin an exciting new project, using the documents to create an audit of the Jekyll sites and provide a snapshot of what remains of her commissions in the county. To celebrate this important plantswoman the researchers will look at other ways to share information about her designs and her legacy, through articles, lectures or garden visits.

The online database can be accessed at https://calisphere.org/collections/26864/

One of the lines of enquiry by the research group will be to ascertain Gertrude Jekyll's involvement with particular gardens. In some cases designs may have been drawn up but it is not always certain that the commission was carried out. West Dean Gardens near Chichester, for example, is thought to have a connection with Jekyll but opinion is divided as to how much was created. Plans and maps of the garden held in their archives suggest a spring garden was designed while the EDA collection contains planting plans by Jekyll of summer borders (Figure 1). The EDA collection together with Jekyll's notebooks and plans held by the Godalming Museum may help to throw light on some of these uncertainties as will the help from archivists at sites such as West Dean.

Sarah Hughes is the archivist at West Dean Gardens and she highlights below some of the intriguing aspects of this garden.

The Spring Garden at West Dean

By Sarah Hughes

Source material in the Edward James Foundation Archive suggests that an area of the garden at West Dean was designed by Gertrude Jekyll in 1898.

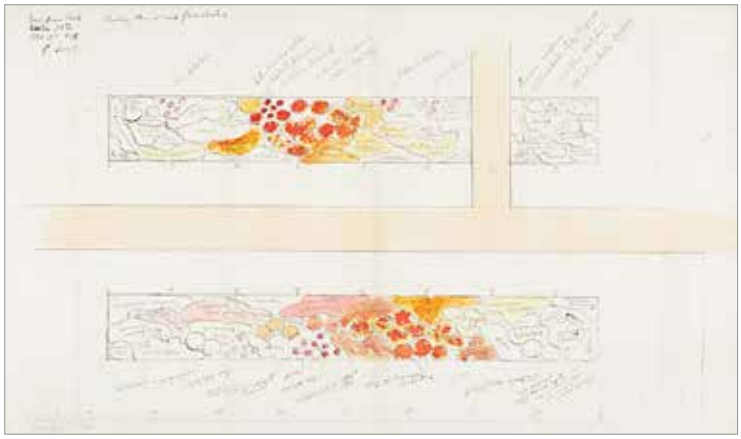


Figure 1. Planting plan for new flower borders at West Dean Park by Gertrude Jekyll, 1898. The plan shows two long borders planted with dahlias, geraniums, maize and African marigolds. © Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

West Dean House was undergoing extensive redevelopment work at this time, with architects Ernest George and Harold Peto overseeing the work. A document by Ivan Hicks (Head Gardener at West Dean 1974-1984) states that Gertrude Jekyll was commissioned by the James in 1895 to landscape what was then known as the 'water garden'.[2] We can therefore assume that Jekyll's hand in the gardens was better understood in the past and this knowledge has been lost over time. Plans of the gardens from 1807 (Figure 2) and 1898 (Figure 3) show how this part of the landscape has changed and allow us gain a better understanding of its history.

The official Gertrude Jekyll website states that she gave advice on West Dean Gardens.[3] However, the annotated garden map suggests that Jekyll had more involvement and that the design was created in full.

Examination of the documents in the EDA collection reveals a curious anomaly. Figure 4 shows the plan that was incorporated into the garden and appears on the 1898 map. But there is a different plan (Figure 5) drawn by Jekyll that does not appear on any of the maps in the West



Figure 2. West Dean Gardens 1807. The area south west of the house was originally planted with bamboos around the tributary of the River Lavant. © West Dean Garden



Figure 3. West Dean Gardens 1898. Detail from annotated map showing Jekyll's design in the south west area of the garden. © West Dean Garden

Dean collection. Interestingly, this plan notes a number of species of spring flowers: daffodils, snowdrops and iris, so whether the owners rejected this plan remains a puzzle for the researchers.

Whilst much of this landscaping has since been lost, the 'skeleton' of her design is still visible in the West Dean Gardens today.

1 Sally Festing, *Gertrude Jekyll*, Viking Press, 1991, p266.

2 West Dean Gardens pamphlet 1979

3 https://gertrudejekyll.co.uk/gardens_one_hour_or_more_from_london/

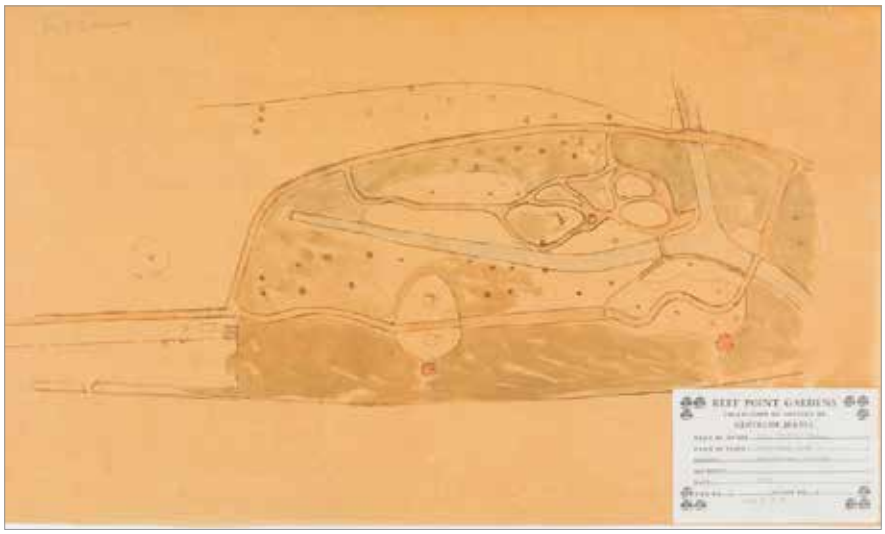


Figure 4. West Dean Park. Plan created by Gertrude Jekyll 1898. Note: this plan would appear to be reversed. © Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

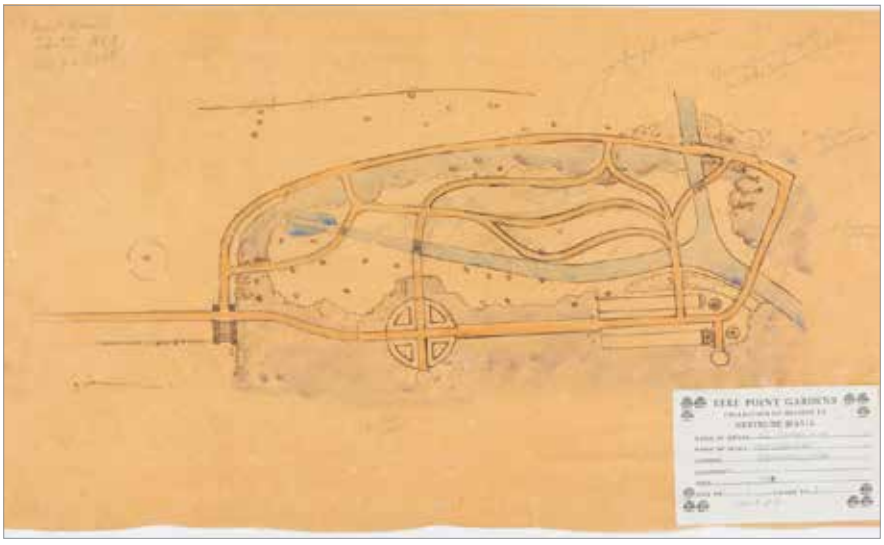


Figure 5. West Dean Park. Plan created by Gertrude Jekyll October 24 1898. The planting for this design includes snowdrops, iris and daffodils. © Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

Growing minds: SGT members developing their knowledge of garden history

In this article three members of SGT describe their recent experience of studying garden history and their enjoyment in academic learning. Paul Tosey is new to the Trust and as well as tending to his own garden he volunteers at the Sussex Prairie Garden, near Henfield, and at Wiston House, near Steyning. Penny Vasey is a member of SGT Council and the Events Committee and Pat Dauncey has been our Treasurer while at the same time completing a Master's Degree in Garden History.

The History of English Landscape Gardens

By Paul Tosey

After taking early retirement in 2015 I set out to learn more about gardening, initially by taking the RHS Level 2 Diploma at Brinsbury College. Then, seeking a further course, I took the plunge and signed up for a ten-week online course: 'English Landscape Gardens: 1650 to the Present Day', provided by Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education.

The course is open to all, there being no pre-requisites other than access to the IT equipment needed for online study. It is offered twice a year, typically starting in January or in September, and has been delivered several times to date. Originally devised by Tim Richardson, it is now tutored by Jill Sinclair, a director of the Historical Gardens Foundation.

Each of the ten weekly Units has a written guide and links to numerous relevant texts, websites and videos. The content explores movements such as the Baroque, Anglo-Dutch, the Picturesque, Arts and Crafts and Modernism, investigating classic gardens such as Stowe, Stourhead and Sissinghurst as well as new (to me) delights such as the unique 'Garden of Cosmic Speculation' in Scotland. The designers covered include Bridgeman, Vanbrugh, Pope, Kent, Jekyll and, not surprisingly, Capability Brown and Humphry Repton; the discovery of Sussex Gardens Trust's publications on Brown and Repton led me to join SGT.

The course takes a historical approach which emphasises how garden designs were influenced by and enmeshed with society and politics. The course is enriched by the online discussions and we benefited from participants who had inside knowledge (as volunteers or employees) of some of the gardens we were studying and from the diverse international perspectives of people based in the USA, the Netherlands and elsewhere.

A significant feature was the excellent tutoring. A risk with online courses can be that 'self-study' means study in isolation, being left to work through materials alone. No such risk exists here. Jill Sinclair was fully engaged and encouraging with participants from the start, helping to create a safe and enquiring learning environment. She monitored the online discussions, contributed thought-provoking questions and pointers to additional information and even compiled a very useful weekly summary of those discussions for each Unit.

Jill also provided helpful, specific feedback on the two assignments. These are fairly short (500 words and 1500 words respectively), though note that an academic style, with referencing, is expected (it is an official Oxford University programme). Detailed guidance about the referencing format is provided.

While the assignments can probably be completed using the provided resources alone, I found that they provided hugely rewarding opportunities for mini-research projects. The first was an evaluation of one of three gardens (Rousham, Castle Howard or Studley Royal) in the context of its time. The second was an enquiry into any landscaper/garden designer of your choice from throughout the course. As I liked what I had seen of his work, I chose Harold Peto of West Dean pergola fame. The pergola seems to be Peto's only work in Sussex though historian Robin Whalley suggests that Peto might also have contributed to Sedgwick Park, near Horsham – if any SGT member has more information about this I would be very interested to hear from them.

This course has left me with a far greater understanding of how and why landscape gardens were designed and how to 'read' them. It has also furnished me with a very long list of gardens to visit in 2020 and beyond! Last but not least, it has sparked a passion for garden history which I now hope to pursue through Sussex Garden Trust.

Full details can be found at: https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/english-landscape-gardens-1650-to-the-present-day-online.

Introduction to Garden History: a course run by The Gardens Trust in conjunction with the Garden Museum

By Penny Vasey

I have recently taken advantage of a series of lectures run on a weekday morning at the Garden Museum. My knowledge of garden history has been somewhat sketchy, and limited to those periods that have sparked my interest in the past: plant introductions, plant hunters and particularly well-known gardens. Therefore I looked forward to this series of lectures which were advertised as: 'designed for those with no previous knowledge, the introduction to garden history course will give you an overview of the fascinating history of landscapes, parks and garden design'. The programme includes the development of garden history from medieval and Tudor gardens through to the twentieth and twenty-first century – 'tomorrow's history in the making.'

The individual speakers had a thorough knowledge of the period they presented and succeeded in giving far more than an overview of the subject. However, while the majority of sessions were both informative and entertaining, on a few occasions the use of modern technology to enhance a presentation and enable listeners to better grasp the concepts being explained would have been helpful. I was not alone in this audience to feel that content alone, however interesting and erudite is insufficient, particularly when meeting the challenge of condensing an entire period in garden history into a two-hour slot.

One or two of the lectures assumed some previous knowledge, and demanded full and sustained concentration. This brings me to a concern about the repeat course starting shortly on three Sundays, for a longer period. Acknowledging that this arrangement took into account feedback on the most favourable days and times for the lectures, including the needs of those living outside the London area, participants will have their brains and concentration stretched by so much information in a single session! But in whatever way this introduction to garden history is arranged, I would thoroughly recommend the course to anyone who, like me, has significant gaps in their knowledge. The series of lectures provided us with a good understanding of the progression of garden making throughout history, together with the interplay of the economy, culture and politics of the time.

Garden and Landscape History at the Institute of Historical Research, School of Advanced Studies, London University.

By Pat Dauncey

My dissertation title for my Master's Degree at the Institute of Historical Research was 'Rockwork features in British gardens 1710-1911 – how were they built?'

The scope included grottoes, cascades, re-creations of natural landscapes and rockeries for growing alpine plants and the timeframe spanned two hundred years against the backdrop of the Industrial Revolution. Much has been written about the history, aesthetics and iconography of rockwork in gardens but very little has focused on how they were built. My key questions were about where the rock came from, how it was transported, moved and handled, how rocks were held in position, what tools and machines were used and what skills were leant or copied from other industries. Watch this space for snippets from the stories I found.

Obituary

With sadness we record that Carolyn McCutchan, one of our members died just before Christmas on 22 December after a seven-year fight against a form of cancer. Carolyn was a self-taught plantswoman of repute who created the garden at Bates Green and started the Arlington Bluebell Walk. Her idea almost fifty years ago, it has since raised over £1 million for local charities. Our deep sympathy goes out to John, her husband, and their family.

Arlington Bluebell Walk is open daily from 9 April until 17 May 2020. See page 23 for details.



Carolyn, pictured in her garden at Bates Green

EPHRUSSI DE ROTHSCHILD VILLA & GARDENS CAPE FERRAT

By Elaine Tyler



The Rothschild Villa and gardens. Photo © Elaine Tyler

A few kilometres from Nice, on the famous Côte d'Azur, lies the harbour of Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, filled with a variety of ships and boats, ranging from the swanky gin-palaces of their multi-millionaire owners to smaller less ostentatious crafts.

High on the hill overlooking the bay there are many prestigious villas, including those owned by long established families, aristocrats and the rich and famous. Tucked in amongst the towering pine trees, on the crest of the hill, it is just possible to glimpse one especially impressive rose-pink mansion, the Rothschild Villa.

This beautiful villa and the gardens were the creation of Baroness Beatrix (Beatrice) Ephrussi de Rothschild, granddaughter of James de Rothschild, one of the five brothers who created the famous banking dynasty and who were made barons by the Emperor of Austria. Born in 1864, Charlotte Beatrix de Rothschild was accustomed to beautiful and luxurious homes from an early age. The family country mansion was the huge nineteenth century chateau of *'Ferrières'* in the region of Seine et Marne and built by her grand-father James. Surrounded by extensive parkland and gardens, Beatrice particularly loved this home and retained her own apartments here for the rest of her life.

At nineteen years old she married Baron Maurice Ephrussi (1849-1916) part of a Jewish family from Odessa who had also made a fortune from banking and dealing in wheat. In spite of all the trappings of wealth, it was not to be a happy marriage and they spent most of their marriage living apart, until her husband died in 1916 at the age of sixty-seven. Beatrice never remarried and continued to focus the rest of her life around travel and collecting art, as well as planning and over-seeing various building projects. One of these, and probably her most well known, was her passion for the Villa Ile-de-France, which became known as the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild. Built between 1905 and 1912 on the rocky promontory overlooking Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, with the deep blue of the Mediterranean on both sides, the land was acquired, some say 'pinched', from King Leopold II of the Belgians who owned a nearby villa, Les Cedres, where his mistress lived with her children.

Many of the best and well known architects of the today were consulted, and dismissed, during the seven-year building and landscaping project, including Achille Duchene (1866-1947) and Harold Peto (1854-1933), settling finally on a local builder, Aaron Messiah, who had worked on other villas in the area for wealthy clients.

The garden was tackled with great passion. The Baroness took as a template for her garden the deck and bow of a ship, the nine acres of land being long and narrow and perched as it was on the rocky promontory and frequently buffeted by strong winds and with the sea on either side. It proved to be well suited for this plan. But first a great deal of time, together with huge amounts money, was poured into the project. Dynamite was used to break the rocky arid land, enabling the levelling of the ground to create an area that would not only take the foundations of the house but also make it possible to landscape and establish a garden where trees, shrubs and flowers would eventually flourish in this most inhospitable ground.

In the beginning the work of transforming the wild landscape was concentrated on the area most visible from the villa and in particular the view from the upper loggia, and an area that became known as the **French Garden**. The areas to the sides were planted with native pines and cypress, olives, lavender and other drought tolerant plants.

Using props such as cardboard cut-outs and pyramids, strips of coloured paper and cloths and with sticks and wooden poles all to replicate flowers beds, water courses and topiary evergreens, Beatrice, with her teams of garden workers, and who were now often ordered to dress in a French sailor-type uniform, moved and sited things until perfection prevailed.

Where once only sturdy pine trees grew on this wind swept stretch of land, now a beautiful, acclaimed garden complete with parterres, immaculate lawns, water features and an abundance of trees, shrubs and flowers extend southwards from the walls of the striking pink and white villa.

At the main entrance a gravelled courtyard welcomes the visitors, with ancient architectural pieces displayed among the clipped topiary and evergreen shrubs, and including an old stone well as a central feature. A wide rill leads the eye down the centre of the area, past a small cascade, towards the 'prow' of the ship, with a white marble 'Temple of Love' complete with a scantily draped maiden acting as a figurehead. On the western side of the house is the ***Sèvres Garden*** which would once have been reached directly from the dining room. Here a scenic viewpoint looks down onto Villefranche-sur Mer and the harbour. Steps lead down to a lower area known nowadays as the **Spanish Garden**. Here Beatrice fulfilled another passion and had her aviaries filled with exotic birds and allowed white ibises to wander freely, with just basic nets hung between the pergolas and a retaining wall to restrict their total freedom.

What we see today however is not the complete creation of the Baroness, but the work of Louis Marchant (1902-2000), a botanist and part-time painter who signed himself Louis Marchant des Raux. With a reputation for his garden designs and having worked at nearby Villa les Cèdres, when Beatrice died in 1934 and the property and gardens were bequeathed to the Institute de France, he was given the task of restoring the gardens, which were now very overgrown. He took on the project and worked tirelessly for over a three-year period getting the garden back into shape and replanting and would, over the years, be responsible for creating the nine themed gardens that now occupy the western side of the promontory.

The Spanish garden today is a tranquil shaded area, with architectural columns and arches, a grotto and a water filled basin. *Strelitzia*, arum lilies and *Datura*, along with scented jasmine and honeysuckle grow abundantly. On the patio area, pomegranate trees are planted, their striking red fruit ripening beautifully during the autumn. All that remains as a past reminder is the ochre yellow of the retaining walls that echoes the original colour of the villa.

Leaving the French Garden one enters the **Florentine Garden** by a pretty horse-shoe shaped stairway, where tucked below the steps is a rocky grotto with dripping ferns and complete with a marble angel. *Datura* hang overhead, their blooms like large upturned cones.

In the **Stone Garden**, the *Jardin Lapidaire*, Merchant established a home for the many architectural pieces collected by the Baroness and for which there was no room in the house. Creeping fig knits together the parade of arches. Gargoyles and blocks of carved masonry peep out from amongst the foliage. Hydrangeas, fuchsias and delicately scented azaleas flourish here in the shade.

Next on the walk one comes to the **Japanese Garden**, restored in 2003 and sponsored by a Japanese television company. A small stream runs through and with a pool of Golden Carp lazily swimming beneath the overhanging canopy. The **Exotic Garden** was almost destroyed in the big freeze of 1985 but in the sheltered rocky outcrop *Agave*, *Cacti*, prickly pear and many other tender plants have re-established themselves.

Finally, at the very end of the promontory is the **Rose Garden**, and from the scenic view point one can look down and back along this rocky stretch of inhospitable cliff-side from which



The Spanish Garden. Photo © Elaine Tyler

the whole landscape has been carved. From the rose garden it is possible to pass back through the **Provençal Garden** with olive trees, pines, japonica all contributing to the dense planting. In season, azaleas and rhododendrons add bursts of colour and in spring lavenders and wild ginger scent the air.

We are now back at the **Temple of Love** from where we can once again gaze down and along the length of the French garden and back towards the villa. The impressive symmetry of the garden is striking viewed from this vantage point. The many citrus trees that produce fruit during the winter months blend with the various palms; the linear water-way, the dancing fountains and the shaped water-pools; the carpet planting and the architectural additions all contribute to this most interesting and memorable garden. I do hope to visit again.

www. villa-ephrussi.com. Open all year round. Popular as a corporate venue, so check before visiting.

The Gardens Trust Historic Landscapes Assembly 19 November 2019

Pat Dauncey reports

In November seven SGT members attended the fourth annual Historic Landscapes Assembly, organised by The Gardens Trust at the Linnean Society's historic meeting room at Burlington House, Piccadilly. Coffee and lunch were served in the library, a venue not to be missed, with its fine collection of natural history texts. There were representatives from twenty of the thirty-six county Gardens Trusts, with our contingent being the second largest, alongside nineteen external organisations such as Historic England and the Ancient Tree Forum.



The Library at Burlington House. © The Linnean Society

The day provided opportunities to network with a wide range of people, to share common problems and to be inspired by the speakers. Representatives from Essex and Bedfordshire Gardens Trusts gave accounts of their projects aimed at involving more people in their work. In Essex two Historic Environment Consultants were up-skilling a volunteer research group to enable them to produce the Colchester Garden Inventory. This was very similar to our own efforts in Sussex to provide those new to garden and landscape research with appropriate skills and knowledge. In Bedfordshire a volunteer had set up the Bedfordshire's Head Gardeners' Network to provide support for local head gardeners whose work is often solitary. The group now has fourteen members, a sign of its success.

We had updates from Historic England, Natural England, The Gardens Trust and a progress report from Philip White of Hestercombe Gardens Trust about the Parks & Gardens UK database, which disappointingly did not provide any news about how to enter data. Clearly there have been a lot of teething problems migrating the data from the old database setup.

The day ended with an inspirational and very amusing talk from Fiona Davison, Head of RHS Libraries and Exhibitions about how she came to write a book called *The Hidden Horticulturists*. Starting her new job at the Lindley Library without a horticultural or librarian background, she discovered an intriguing book on the shelf in her office containing hand-written accounts by gardeners who trained at the RHS Gardens at Chiswick during the 1820s before its demise in 1829. She was so engrossed that she decided to research further and write her book – a very entertaining read if you have not yet come across it. Overall the day was good value with a mix of news and discussion as well as ideas to take away.

SURREY GARDENS TRUST

Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe

Study Day at RHS Wisley, Surrey, Thursday 19 March 2020, 10.00 am – 4.30 pm



Surrey Gardens Trust will be exploring the profound influence that Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe had on twentieth century landscape design and how his sensitivity to purpose and the environment are still relevant for modern town planning and landscape design.

Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe (1900-1996) was one of the twentieth century's leading landscape architects with a career spanning almost seventy years. Jellicoe trained as an architect and was also an accomplished town planner, landscape architect and garden designer, but arguably his strongest interest was in landscape design, which he described as "the mother of all arts". In his final year of studies at the Architectural Association, Jellicoe travelled to Italy and there he recognised the significant impact that landscape has on people.

Speakers for the day will explore his pivotal role in post-modernist landscape design and town planning, focusing on his Master Plan for Hemel Hempstead New Town and Water Gardens, the JFK Memorial at Runnymede and the Cadbury Bros. Factory at Moreton.

TICKETS

£48 (SGT member) £52 (non-SGT member) Cost includes garden entry, refreshments upon arrival, buffet lunch, lectures, tour and afternoon tea.

For further information and a booking form see the Surrey GT website: www.surreygardenstrust.co.uk

SGT Garden Visits 2020

Friday 17 April 2020
Guided Tour of High Beeches, Handcross, West Sussex RH17 6HQ
Time: 10.30 am for tea and coffee. 11.00 am – 12.30 pm for guided tour.



Photo ©High Beeches

A guided tour by the owners of **High Beeches**, explaining the history of this extensive, enchanting landscaped woodland and water gardens abundant with daffodils, bluebells, azalea and early rhododendrons in spring. Bought by Sir Robert Loder in 1849, the large formal gardens were laid out and his grandson, Colonel Giles Loder planted the present renowned woodland over the first half of the twentieth century, utilising trees imported from his cousin's garden at Leonardslee, and his friends Arthur Soames of Sheffield Park and Colonel Messel of Nymans. The garden boasts the National Collection of *Stewartia*. The tour will be followed by tea in the café on site.

Thursday 21 May 2020
OUR WEST SUSSEX BORDERS VISIT
All day – two gardens:
Aldsworth House, Aldsworth,
West Sussex, PO10 8QT
Rymans, Chichester, PO20 7EG



Aldsworth House and garden has been in Tom Williams's family for over a hundred years. He and his wife, Sarah, are plantaholics and garden with passion. Their six acres are crammed with rare trees and shrubs. Sarah has collected – and been given, on every possible anniversary – rare and interesting peonies which we anticipate will be in flower for our visit. Do not miss the charming DVD from the 1930s of Tom's family disporting themselves in the garden. Morning tea/coffee and biscuits provided.

Lunch: a picnic or a local pub.

In the afternoon we shall visit the early/mid twentieth century garden of **Rymans**, eight miles away in Apuldram, near Chichester. Rymans was well known in West Sussex, but since then, and working with English Heritage, the current owners, Suzanna and Martin Gayford, have created something quite special. A formal approach to the fifteenth century house leads to delightful five-acre gardens with roses, borders, walks, topiary, ponds, a potager and walled spaces. Unusual plants abound and in May we should hope that the *Wisteria* and early-flowering roses will be spectacular. Tea/coffee and cake will be provided.

Monday 8 June 2020
Garden visit to Denmans, Denmans Lane, Fontwell, BN18 0SU



Photo © Denmans Garden

This delightful four-acre garden is the former home of the late **John Brookes**, one of the most influential garden designers of the twentieth century. It features a large range of plants, including plants that suit warmer climates. The spaces in the garden are characteristic of Brookes' style, with strong inter-connected shapes and a series of serpentine paths that he designed to give a sense of continuity.

The new owner, Gwendolyn van Paasschen, will give a talk on the history of the garden and a tour. SGT member, Barbara Simms, who knew John well and has written a comprehensive book about him, will put his work in an international context.

Before the garden tour begins there will be an opportunity for **New SGT Members** to meet other members and find out about the work of the Trust.

Wednesday 15 July 2020
OUR EAST SUSSEX BORDERS VISIT
All day – two gardens:
Prospect Cottage, Dungeness, Romney Marsh, TN29 9NE
Poplar Hall, Brookfield, Romney Marsh, TN29 9TD



Prospect Cottage, Dungeness.
The garden with beach sculpture.
Photo © Sally Ingram

The film director and keen gardener Derek Jarman bought **Prospect Cottage** on the enticing bleak expanse of shingle beach that is Dungeness in 1986. He had no intention of making a garden there, but with driftwood and pebbles Jarman turned found objects from the shore into sculpture, and then began planting: gorse, buckthorn, santolinas, sea kale, plants that thrive on the Ness, all overlooked by the imposing nuclear power station. Since his death in 1994 the site has become a place of inspiration for artists and gardeners and the exhibition at the Garden Museum later this year celebrates the role of the garden in Jarman's life and work. In July the garden should be full of the scent of herbs and the startling colours of marigolds, blue viper's bugloss and red valerian, a tiny but magical garden full of surprises.



The gardens at Poplar Hall.
Photos © Jennifer Parsons

In the afternoon we leave the shingle of Dungeness and move fourteen miles along the coast to Romney Marsh for **Poplar Hall**. This is a private property situated in the countryside not far from the village of Brookland. The Hall itself is an imposing house built in the style of a Sussex farmhouse. It has extensive grounds flowing into a variety of garden areas, such as a rose garden, an Italian garden, a hot garden, water plants around a pool and a vegetable garden.

Tours of the garden will be given by the gardening staff. Refreshment to be provided after the tours in the barn area.

Times and costs for the visits will be confirmed together with booking arrangements on the SGT website and by updates to members. As the newsletter goes print the Events Committee are busy arranging visits for the late summer and early autumn. Full details will appear in the summer issue and on the website.

A New Exhibition at the Garden Museum 24 April – 12 July 2020

Derek Jarman: My garden's boundaries are the horizon

The story of Derek Jarman's garden at Prospect Cottage, Dungeness will be told in a new exhibition at the Garden Museum in London, the first exhibition to focus on the role of the garden in Jarman's life and work.



Photograph of Prospect Cottage, 1990. © Howard Sooley

For the first time, this exhibition will display works of art and film alongside personal artefacts including diaries, sketchbooks, his 'Garden Notebooks', tools and furniture borrowed from inside the cottage. Owing to the size and fragility of the cottage, which is not open to the public, **'My garden's boundaries are the horizon'** will be a rare opportunity to experience this precious work of art, garden, and life.

Exploring the impact of Jarman's love of nature and gardening on his filmmaking, the exhibition will include films and archival material recorded by Jarman on his hand-held Super 8 camera at Prospect Cottage, which was the location for films including *The Last of England* (1987) and *The Garden* (1990).

The exhibition will display paintings and sculptures from throughout Jarman's career, on loan from The Keith Collins Memorial Will Trust. Gardens and plants spilled into all elements of Jarman's creative output, and when nominated for the Turner Prize in 1986 he described painting as 'my secret garden … an escape'. His black paintings of the 1980s, covered with tar and found objects from the beach and garden, are an emotive response to his HIV diagnosis; while his colourful landscapes from the early 1990s evoke the joy and beauty experienced in the garden at Prospect Cottage.

Prospect Cottage

Jarman acquired Prospect Cottage, a fisherman's shack on the shingle at Dungeness, for £32,000, when he came across the building with a 'For Sale' sign while filming on the beach with Tilda Swinton and his partner Keith Collins. Having been diagnosed with HIV on 22 December 1986, Jarman had resolved 'to get as much out of life as possible' and started creating a garden.

The only contemporary garden to be made without a boundary, Jarman's garden is potent in its environmental context: it stands beside a nuclear power station; the shingles, wind and salt from the sea provide an extreme version of gardening with the 'right plant for the right place' philosophy. It evokes resilience and an uplifting sense that if a garden can be made here – that is, on a stony beach, overlooked menacingly by a power station – it can be made on any site, however small and vulnerable.

Christopher Woodward, Garden Museum Director, said: 'Prospect Cottage – as a combination of building, garden and landscape and as an inspiration to Jarman's own writing, films and painting – is the great work of art of modern times.'

Jarman's garden became inseparable from illness but in his writings, in particular Modern Nature (1989), he described how gardening became a resolution:

I have never been happier than last week. I look up and see the deep azure sea outside my window in the February sun, and today I saw my first bumble bee. Planted lavender and clumps of red hot poker.

Derek Jarman, *Modern Nature*, 28 February 1989

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue written by Howard Sooley, a photographer and close friend of Jarman's who gardened alongside him at Prospect Cottage

for many years. Sooley worked with Jarman on the book *Derek Jarman's Garden*, which was published posthumously and was described by Monty Don in *The Guardian* as 'the single most inspirational and best produced book on gardening of any kind. It is the benchmark by which to measure all other illustrated gardening books.'

Editor's note

Members might have seen the recent articles in the national press regarding the fundraising campaign that has been launched to preserve the home and garden. A deadline of **31 March** has been set to save Prospect Cottage from being sold privately. The crowdfunding page can be found at artfund.org/prospect



Events elsewhere in the county

Plant Heritage: Sussex Group

Two lectures in 2020

Saturday 14 March:
'A garden of change in Essex'
By Lou Nicholl, Head Gardener at 'Ulting Wick' in Essex.

Saturday 17 October:
'Lessons from the Great Gardeners'
By Matt Biggs.

The lectures are held at Haywards Heath Town Hall, 40 Boltro Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 1BA

Non members: £5 on the door.

Arlington Bluebell Walk & Farm Trails

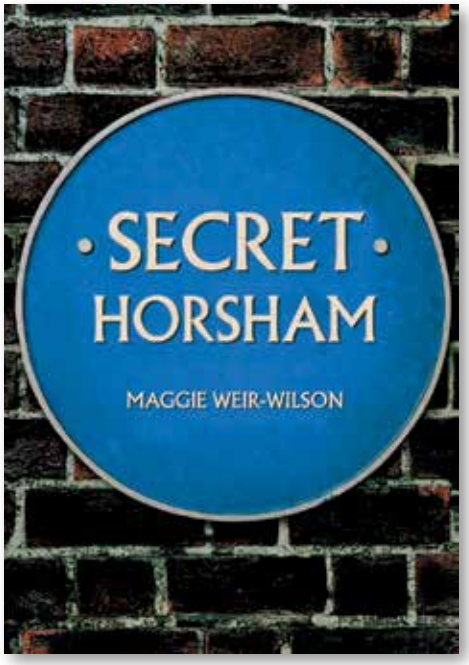
Open Daily from 9 April – 17 May, 10.00 am – 5.00 pm

Adults £6.00, Children £2.50, Seniors £3.50.

More information at www.bluebellwalk.co.uk

Book Reviews

Secret Horsham
Maggie Weir-Wilson,
Amberley Publishing, 2019,
ISBN 9781445686455, paperback, £14.99



This fascinating book by Sussex Gardens Trust's own Maggie Weir-Wilson is part of a series exploring what lies behind the historical surface of a selection of small English towns (Crawley and Gatwick, Gillingham, Frome, St Helens). Beginning, sensibly, with a geological context and local examples such as the famous Horsham stone roof tiles (characteristically and attractively laid from ridge to gutter in increasing size), ripple stone paths (which do indeed resemble ripples on a sandy beach) and rare Petworth marble (crammed with freshwater fossil shells), she then chronicles intriguing tales of eccentric and quarrelsome Victorian palaeontologists who discovered evidence of hitherto unknown dinosaurs: 'large lizards', pterodactyl, amphibious reptiles, insects and a rare iguanodon. These facts are brought vividly to life in a brief sentence describing a grand banquet at the Crystal Palace served inside the belly of a model of the Horsham iguanodon.

Archaeological evidence shows that this part of Sussex was inhabited from the Stone and Iron Ages, with later Roman, Saxon and Norman occupation leading to the rise of Horsham as a prosperous borough with markets and fairs from 1233. So far, so factual, but then we learn that in the nineteenth century Horsham's market fairs included, strangely, black Welsh cattle and, occasionally, the buying and selling of wives. Regular fairs today include, apparently, an Italian Festival, Piazza Italia (the Market Square is filled with scarlet and black fast cars), Ameri-car-na (cars, food and music), Plum Jam (VW cars), and an English Day of Dance.

There is a useful chapter on the industries that helped build such a prosperous Sussex town: iron, stone quarrying, brick making, wind, water and steam mills in addition to brewing, tanning and latterly viticulture and gin-making. This is followed by one on the history of the Common and St Leonard's Forest, once important aristocratic hunting ground, and the subject of Dr Weir-Wilson's DPhil. An examination of the world of arts and culture in Horsham reveals a surprisingly vigorous scene, albeit one inhabited by relatively minor artists and writers such as the nineteenth century feminist and Chartist, Eliza Cook. Horsham's most famous resident, Shelley, was brought up there but was disinherited and banished by his father because of his controversial views on atheism and pacifism. As a result, until recently one of England's most important poets was commemorated by a plain plaque in the parish church and gingerbread still sold today and said to be made to a recipe of his aunt; but Horsham Museum now holds an important collection of his work. Horsham's local military significance and strong judicial history (it was an assizes town) is covered in some detail: there are gruesome records of murders and the odd witch, of hangings from the Horsham Drop, whippings, brandings, transportation and an account of the trial of John Haigh, the Acid Bath murderer.

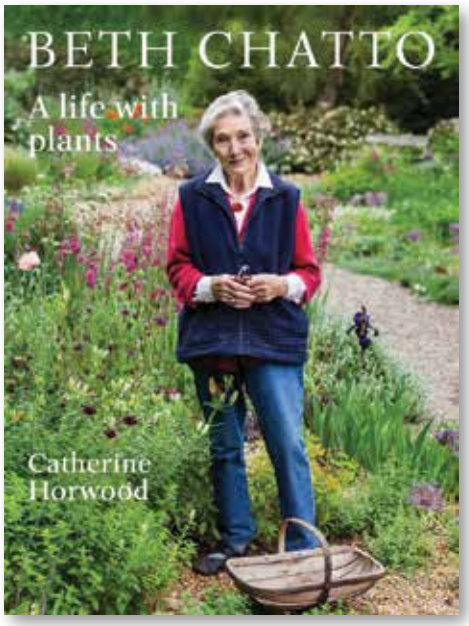
'Myths and Legends' is my favourite chapter though. It contains tales of a headless horseman and an abandoned Indian princess but the most intriguing story is of the Horsham dragon. In 1614 a pamphlet was published in London describing a serpent or dragon living half a mile from Horsham in St Leonard's Forest. Two local inhabitants claimed they had seen a scaly, venomous red, black and white creature, about nine feet long with large feet and rudimentary wings that had killed a man, a woman and two large dogs. It had not eaten its victims though, choosing instead to feed on rabbits in a nearby warren. Needless to say, St Leonard, a hermit manqué, slew the dragon and the forest floor was

carpeted with blood-stained lilies of the valley, but how could one not warm to a rabbit-eating dragon, Sussex's answer to *The Essex Serpent*?

Short and often quirky facts are highlighted throughout this informative book, a 'trick' that holds the reader's attention – that Horsham holds the record for the heaviest hailstone ever to fall in the UK and that in 1956 Marilyn Monroe visited Horsham with Arthur Miller whilst filming *The Prince and the Showgirl* and bought a full length tweed coat from a local shop, for example. I could have wished for more maps and certainly for an index; but *Secret Horsham* is a well-researched and informative read.

Susi Batty

Beth Chatto: a life with plants
Catherine Horwood
Pimpernel Press Ltd. £30.00
ISBN 9781910258828



The horticulturist, Beth Chatto, has inspired gardeners the world over and is justly admired for her original planting styles, exhibiting and winning medals at Chelsea, writing and lecturing and, more recently, setting up an Education Trust. As her granddaughter writes in the foreword to this new biography by Catherine Horwood, 'Beth left a large footprint' and her passion for ecological planting is a continuing legacy.

Chatto's life with plants is especially notable for the accolades: ten Chelsea gold medals, numerous books that have become gardening classics, RHS Victoria Medal of Honour, OBE, television appearances and, to mark her eighty-fifth birthday, an edition of Radio 4's Woman's Hour – the only gardener to date to be given an entire programme. She was the subject of a retrospective exhibition at the Garden Museum in 2008 and this prompted the transfer of her archive to the Museum. Horwood was invited to write Chatto's biography, having access to the vast collection of press cuttings, photographs, plant lists, notebooks, and her private diaries. Excerpts from her travel notebooks are interspersed throughout the book. Horwood interviewed friends, family and colleagues, creating a revealing memoir in which Beth Chatto's individual voice comes through the pages.

Her parents were keen gardeners and she enjoyed a childhood of 'reading, play and gardening' but it was her marriage in 1943 to Andrew Chatto, an Essex fruit farmer, that sparked her early interest in ecology. He had studied how plants adapt to their situation and with his advice she started to grow plants such as artemisias and santolinas which survived on the dry Essex soil, then selling them through their nursery, Ramparts. As well as gardening she began flower arranging and made her first television appearance in 1952 to demonstrate an autumn flower arrangement. Complimented for her use of wildflowers and even weeds from the hedgerow she quickly began to win awards locally and, in 1956, designed a stand at Chelsea, composed of wood purge, guelder rose, berberis and sycamore.

A meeting with the artist-gardener, Cedric Morris, led to an interest in unusual perennials and, following a move to Elstead Market because of the possibilities of the light, sandy soil, her life focused increasingly on the garden. She began publishing catalogues, making money from the nursery and winning medals at RHS shows. A meeting with *The Sunday Times* journalist Graham Rose led to an article recommending drought-loving plants and, according to Chatto, turned her small nursery business into a nationally known name. Gardeners began to admire her unusual planting plans – George Harrison wanted to buy the entire stand exhibited at Chelsea in 1980; the Gold Medals increased and her creative skills became recognised by influential garden designers such as Piet Oudolf.

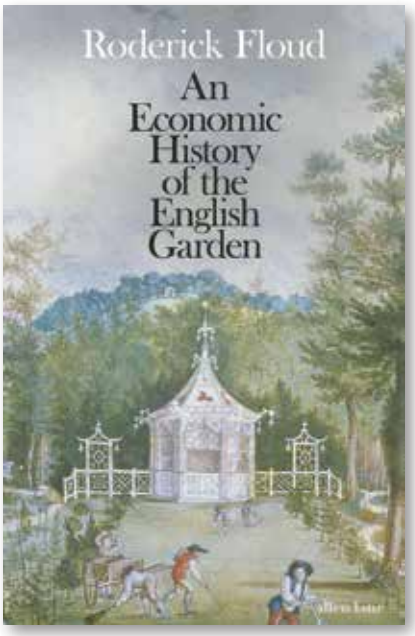
Even at the height of this fame Chatto recognised in herself the urge for new ideas, admitting that she found it difficult to relax. She always 'had to

do something': lecture tours in the US, writing articles and publishing her books, designing for Chelsea, looking after her own garden. A disappointing marriage may have influenced her need for escape from problems at home. Andrew was fourteen years her senior and, although they shared a love of plants, she felt frustrated that he was often negative about the opportunities presented to her. He became reclusive in his later years and Chatto herself had periods of depression. Unsurprisingly, her life focused on the garden and on influential friendships, particularly Cedric Morris, until his death in 1982, and Christopher Lloyd who she met in the 1970s. From their first meeting Chatto made regular visits to Great Dixter, exchanging plants and plant knowledge, travelling the world with Lloyd, sharing his many friends, and writing the much-loved *Dear Friend and Gardener*: an exchange of letters about their lives and gardens. It was whilst staying with Lloyd in 1990 to escape from home that he took her to the shingle beach of Dungeness where she discovered the garden of flotsam and jetsam created by the film director Derek Jarman. Jarman invited them into his home where they took photos and made notes about his garden, and he later sent her a list of plants that grew around Prospect Cottage. Inspired by his ideas and enthusiastic for a new garden she wrote to Jarman, 'I am planning to make a Gravel Garden in front of my house ... to help my visitors to learn what they might grow where hosepipe watering is banned.'

One of the highlights of the Hampton Court Palace Flower Festival in 2019 was a drought resistant garden using plants adaptable to an unpredictable climate, celebrating the legendary plantswoman and taking inspiration from her gardens. Visitors walked through the mixture of silver-grey foliage, the low-growing tufts of thymes and santolinas, picking up a planting list, taking photographs, making notes, perhaps with ideas stirring for a new project of their own. Beth Chatto died in 2018 but her life with plants, respecting their native habitat and inspiring others to create more naturalistic planting, will continue to resonate with generations of gardeners.

Sally Ingram

An Economic History of the English Garden
Roderick Floud
Allen Lane, 2019
ISBN 9780241235577
Hardback, £25. 00



This book shows how a knowledge of economics can be used to shed new light on a familiar subject, and it is surprising that it has taken until now for an eminent economist to apply his expertise and own personal experience to the history of gardens, and English gardens in particular. Roderick Floud and his arguments will already be familiar to SGT members who attended his lecture at the beginning of last year since when I am sure I will not have been alone in eagerly awaiting the publication of this book.

Some economic historical garden facts are already well-known, such as Repton's daily rate (five guineas a day, quoted in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*), but, when attempting to compare this with today's values, Floud shows how our ideas of spending in history fall short. Using his measure of average earnings instead of the historical researcher's usual retail price index, the five guineas become £3,800 in today's values, and the average annual wage of £12.8s in 1700 becomes a modern £25,609. Combined with the unpaid labour which takes place in most gardens, either by amateur designer proprietors, owner-occupier, and lawn mowers or friendly seed swappers, Floud shows us how under-valued the whole business of garden-making has been, and still is. It remains a 'hobby' which registers no economic significance, excluded as it is from GDP. This is without mentioning the commercial value of the land taken up by gardens.

Continuous comparison throughout the book of then and now puts many apparently extravagant projects into perspective, for example the millions spent by bodies such as the National Trust and English Heritage on restoring historical sites. It is revealed that the recent restoration of the Hampton Court privy garden cost about twice as much, relatively, as it had originally, even taking into account the lowering of the garden (twice!) to enable William III to enjoy the view of the Thames from the first floor of his newly-constructed wing of the palace. This very useful comparison of modern and historical garden creation results in Rosemary Verey being found on the same page as Brown, Repton and Paxton. The Heseltines's Thenford and Prince Charles's Highgrove feature as examples of modern grand gardens and garden makers which rival those of previous centuries, and Floud is even astounded at his own annual garden expenditure.

Floud hooks his economic argument from the start onto two key eighteenth-century texts: *Britannia Illustrata* and Brown's account book. From these he gleans plenty of information concerning garden spending, at that time (as it ever was and is) primarily designed to demonstrate wealth and status. The demand for expertise in design, ground management and the supply of goods such as trees, which were supplied by the new commercial nurseries, was stimulated as a consequence of this desire for garden one-upmanship, and we are asked to consider the origin and meaning of the phrase 'conspicuous consumption'. From the Restoration, ambitious courtiers and the growing middle class followed where royalty led. Much of gardening is just showing off, after all, and the dictates of fashion which drive forward changes in taste have always caused more money to be spent. A garden may represent luxury but it is at the same time a measure of the state of the national economy and we learn that productivity (and so money spent on gardens) flourished during the period following the English Civil War, even surpassing that of Holland.

Prices do not always rise. They will be affected by supply and demand, as Floud's personal database of 5000 plant prices through the ages shows. The popularity of fashionable exotic plants led to a reduction in the price as rare specimens were propagated. For example, we learn that a tulip tree in 1734 cost the equivalent of £7,624, in 1777 £220 and, by 1892, £33. The author claims that a small one can now be purchased for £5. However, he draws our attention to the fact that our choice of varieties is now more limited, dictated as it is by principally commercial concerns. Statistics from other sources more familiar to us are quoted throughout, such as John Harvey on early nursery men and Christianson on the Tudor riverside gardens.

The book does not follow a strict chronological plan but its chosen topics mean that we are gently led through 350 years of English history from the Restoration of the monarchy in the late seventeenth century via the nursery trade and its customers, through technological advances in materials, construction and machinery, via Victorian walled gardens (apparently more for show than sustenance) to the modest allotments and suburban patches of the twentieth century. Detours forward and backwards in time occur as the topic requires. The author's previously published research on nutrition and human growth (*Height, Health and History: Nutritional Status in the United Kingdom 1750-1980*, pub. 1990 and *The Changing Body: Health, Nutrition and Human Development in the Western World since 1700*, pub. 2011) is used to support information about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century food production and consumption in society generally.

A humorous note is struck in the useful 'List of Gardens' appendix by the inclusion of Lord Emsworth's Blandings Castle, whose gardener McAllister appears alongside Beatrix Potter's Mr McGregor in the text, two examples of the Victorian phenomenon of the skilled Scottish emigrants being resented by the possibly less well-educated English gardeners.

The book's new look at familiar topics and places is both pleasing and informative, giving a broad sweep of an alternative view of garden history. The author's passion for gardens in history and the economic impact on the lives of the people who created them will give us plenty of food for thought as we wander round the garden centre, credit card in hand.

Footnote: I groaned at the clumsy illustration (not taken from the book) used by *The Times* to accompany the very positive review by Ann Treneman (November 2, 2019). Castle Howard was described in the caption as 'landscaped by Capability Brown', but the illustration showed the elaborate Victorian parterre on the terrace!

Judy Tarling

IN BOX





Seeking a new Editor

I have had an enormously enjoyable time over the last few years editing the Newsletter for SGT. Suggestions for articles have come from so many members and I would like to thank all of you for your enthusiasm and support in putting words to paper. There is also the brilliant backroom organisation in creating the finished lay-out and the printing. But I believe that, to keep the newsletter fresh and forward-looking, it is now time to turn this particular page and we are therefore seeking a new editor to take on the role from 2021. If you are interested, but unsure as to what is involved please get in touch and have a chat with me. Email: sallyatcoast@aol.com

High Beeches request for volunteers

Would you like to volunteer part-time at High Beeches Woodland and Water Garden and enjoy the garden through the seasons? Sarah Bray is looking for one or two volunteers who might be interested in working at the Gate Lodge from 1-5pm on Saturdays – it would not be every Saturday, and sometimes you might like to fill in for someone on a weekday or a Sunday? The group of volunteers is a friendly team and work out the rotas between them.

High Beeches https://www.highbeeches.com/ opens on 1 April, near Handcross, and is a wonderful woodland and water garden known for its outstanding collection of trees and shrubs. It holds the National Collection of *Stewartia*, and has a beautiful four-acre ancient wild flower meadow. If you are interested do please contact Sarah Bray at gardens@highbeeches.com or 01444 400589.

Articles for the Newsletter

If you would like to contribute an article for the Newsletter, perhaps on an aspect of garden history or on research that you have been conducting, or if you have a recent gardening book that you would like to review we would love to hear from you. Please contact the editor: sallyatcoast@aol.com

The deadline for the summer edition is Friday 5 June 2020.

Sussex Gardens Trust

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