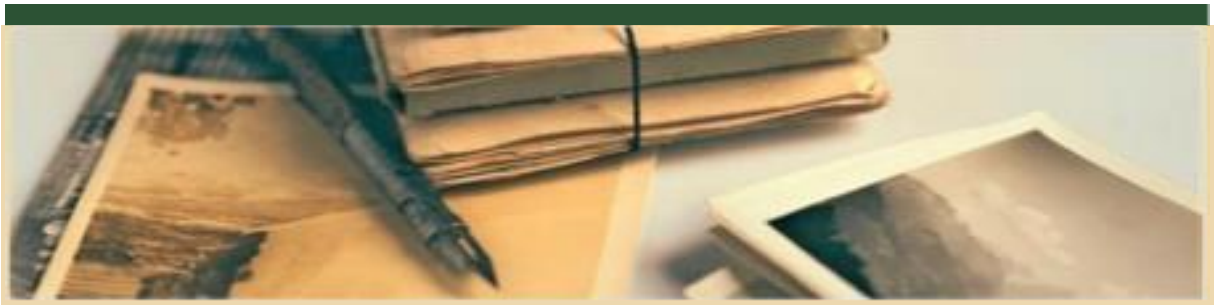
SUSSEX GARDENS TRUST



Jottings

Edition No. 5 October 2022

October is really under way and the days are shortening, but in this edition of Jottings we invite you to experience some of the gardens visited by SGT members during their summer holidays. Step across the border into Wales to read about a historic garden rescued from neglect, and then travel to the coast of south west Ireland to discover a garden with a touch of Italy. Even further afield, one of our contributors found a hidden gem of a garden in Barbados full of tropical plants as well as unusual artifacts collected by its owner.

Since January 2021 the Gardens Trust has been featuring an Unforgettable Garden of the Month as a part of their project to share the story of our historic parks and gardens and the importance of open space in our lives. We are thrilled that Sedgwick Park has been chosen for the month of October. You can read about the history of the garden and what makes it unforgettable here: https://thegardenstrust.org/sedgwick-park-sussex/

We hope you enjoy the October edition of Jottings.

Things to do, places to be

Sussex Gardens Trust Christmas Event – hold the date

Tuesday 13 December 2022. 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm.
The White Hart Hotel, Lewes.

Join us at the White Hart Hotel in the centre of Lewes for a lecture from the garden history author Caroline Holmes and a traditional afternoon tea. More details of ticket price and how to book will follow soon, but please put the date in your diary and we look forward to seeing you for our Christmas celebration.

Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens: a study day and a chance to learn new skills

Photography Workshop
Saturday 15 October 2022, 9.30 am – 15.00 pm.
This autumn learn the skill of landscape photography or refresh your skills with local landscape photographer Matt Goddard.

Events at the Garden Museum

The Garden Museum Houseplant Festival returns with the theme of propagation
Saturday 22 – Sunday 23 October 2022

The Garden Museum's annual Houseplant Festival is back, and this year the festival is delving into the world of propagation; with workshops, talks and more so visitors can master the knack for growing new houseplants on a budget.

Whether you're a cactus collector, an alocasia admirer, a fern fan or a succulent supporter, you'll find something special to add to your houseplant hoard at this weekend-long celebration of the indoor jungle.
Book tickets: Houseplant Festival 2022
£7 Standard, £6 Friends / Young Fronds (free under 35s membership scheme)

Lucian Freud: Plant Portraits
14 October 2022 - 5 March 2023

This autumn the Garden Museum will present the first exhibition to delve into Lucian Freud's paintings of plants and gardens.
The undisputed master of the modern nude, Lucian Freud was also a prolific painter of plants. This exhibition will show how integral plants were to Freud's work, exploring his ability to capture their elusive essence in original ways while giving them the same life as his human subjects.
https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/exhibitions/lucian-freud-plant-portraits/



Research: notes and queries

A request from the Gardens Trust

Can you help with these two requests from parks and gardens researchers?

Parks historian Paul Rabbitts is currently updating and expanding Hazel Conway's 1991 book on People's Parks and one aspect he is lacking information on is paddling pools. If members have any good images or case studies of when paddling pools were introduced and used, it would be really helpful.

And Linden Groves, GT Head of Operations and Strategy, is writing a book on the history of playgrounds. Inspired by Paul's initiative she asks whether you might possibly have information on playgrounds in your area, including personal memory? Any time up until the start of the twenty-first century would count as history, in her eyes!

Please email Paul (prabbitts@hotmail.co.uk) and Linden (lindengroves@thegardenstrust.org) if you have any research or memories you're happy to share. Or pass on this message to anyone else you think may be able to help – we have great faith in the amassed knowledge of CGT researchers!

The 'Horse Mound' – a footnote from Marcus Batty

Prompted by Pat Dauncey's enquiry into the Horse Mound (June's Jottings *Tales from the Research Group: How art helped solve a mystery*), I recalled a similar memorial in Hampshire. *A Lincolnshire Story* in the March edition of the Bulletin touched on trees along the A272, exclaves of Sussex, the Greenwood's of Brockwood House and a stone circle. I could have extended that story.

Across the A272 road from the stone circle east of Bramdean is a headstone atop a mound. One story, supported by a letter framed in the Bramdean pub from a great-great nephew of Colonel Greenwood (remember- tree lifters and subaerialism) is that he had buried his favourite horse here. Greenwood was a famous horseman and author of a book called *Hints on Horsemanship*. The headstone however commemorates a horse named Melksham, owned by a Colonel R Meinertzhagen, which died here and was buried on the spot in 1910, years after Greenwood's death in 1875. Meinertzhagen, a keen ornithologist, was a very colourful character but stories of fraud and even possible murder cast shadows on his character. They make a good read on Wikipedia.

The puzzle of the 'cayoudles' – do we have an answer?

When Loyal Johnson and Sam Brewster arrived at Sedgwick Park in Sussex on 14 August 1928 the pair were nearly eaten up by 'the bunch of cayoudles' while waiting for the gardener to show them around. Wondering if these might be biting insects, SGT put out a request to see if anyone could throw a light on what sort of creature this might be. One of our discerning researchers, **Paul Tosey**, has now uncovered a possible solution to the puzzle.

Searching on the word `cayoudle' (which suddenly seemed preferable one morning to attempting some hard-to-reach hedge-trimming) resulted in just one useful but extremely obscure hit. An issue of the *Adventist Review*, June 27 1985, had this advice for delegates attending a forthcoming conference in New Orleans:

`New Orleans accents range from soft Southern to something akin to a Brooklyn or New Jersey accent. Just so you don't miss anything, let me be the first to inform you that a banquette is a sidewalk; bayou, a stream; cayoudel, a mutt; and choich is a church.'

This suggested that the term might be a form of slang found in the USA. Searching online dictionaries yielded nothing further, though, until trying variants of the spelling I found several sources for `kiyoodle' or `kyoodle'. For example:

Kiyoodle: (in the Gulf States) a worthless dog; mongrel. https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/kiyoodle

Kyoodle: A mutt, dog of mixed breed of little value; noisy dog. https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/kyoodle

Or, as a verb, `to make loud useless noises'; https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kyoodle

Why two young me who had travelled from Massachusetts would be using a term apparently from the Gulf States, and spelt in that distinctive way, is still to be explained. Nor is it clear why they should have feared being `eaten up'. Nevertheless, this suggests that what the Bicycle Boys encountered may have been a pack of barking dogs, perhaps not an unusual feature of an estate such as Sedgwick at that time.

A South Wales Garden – Aberglasney

By Maggie Weir-Wilson

In mid-August this year, in all that hot weather, I set out with my good friend, Ceinwen, on a week's visit to South Wales. We based ourselves in Carmarthen town and from there went out on day trips to St David's, Tenby, the Gower coast and any gardens we could find. A very beautiful garden, one of the finest in Wales they say, is Aberglasney Gardens, only twenty minutes by car from Carmarthen at Llangathen, and set in the lovely Tywi valley.

I have to admit to not knowing about Aberglasney; it is neither RHS nor National Trust but was rescued from terrible neglect, vandalism and dereliction by the Aberglasney Restoration Trust who purchased it in 1999, and began renovation of both the house and the gardens. The final major restoration were the old cowsheds and piggeries which was completed in 2016.

The estate dates from the 1600s when it was owned by Bishop Rudd of St. David's. Subsequently, it went through many hands with some of the land sold off and finally the estate was abandoned. The earliest of the nine green gardens at Aberglasney is a unique Cloister Garden dating from the time of Bishop Rudd. On three sides of this garden are solid stone walls with a parapet walk above and deep archways below. The fourth side is filled by the house, albeit set back and above the Cloister Garden. Currently, this garden is laid out in geometric patterns of mown grass with clipped trees and paths. Excavations have shown that in the Victorian era there was a circular pool and fountain in the centre of this garden.



The Cloister Garden. © Maggie Weir-Wilson.

Rather delightfully, in the mansion itself, is what is called a Ninfarium, named after Ninfa, near Rome, where decorative plants have been grown amongst ruins. Here, within the ruined central rooms and courtyard, have been planted a collection of sub-tropical plants which look healthy and dramatic in this unusual setting.



The Ninfarium. © Maggie Weir-Wilson.

Outside again there is an Upper and Lower Walled Garden, the lower being the kitchen garden although originally both areas would have been used for producing fruit and vegetables. On the wall that separates the two areas are espalier apples and pears. A most striking feature in the kitchen garden is a wonderful crab apple arbour which is apparently stunning at blossom time and full of bees. The upper garden was designed by Penelope Hobhouse and loosely based on a Celtic cross, with trimmed Yew trees growing in concentric circles of herbaceous beds.

Walking away from the house and through the Cloister Garden arches one comes to the Pool Garden and Melon House. The pool is large and rectangular, almost filling this whole garden space, and is fed by rills of underground water. There is a small tearoom to one side, which uses produce grown in the kitchen garden as ingredients in their dishes. This is where the farm building begins and it is said that these walls used to support a huge vine. The view of the Pool Garden from the parapet walk is lovely, especially in the sunshine.

Beyond these formal gardens, on both sides of the house are more gardens: the Sunken Garden, Stream Garden and Jubilee Woodland Garden on one side of the house and on the other the Bishop Rudd's Walk, Asiatic Garden and Summer Meadow. I saw some of these but not all of them in the afternoon; well, we had

to stop and sample the tea and cake in the tearoom. However, it is a house with a fascinating history, wonderful restoration and a truly lovely and interesting garden. It has two little five-star cottages on the estate for holiday lets - which is a very tempting thought.



The Upper walled garden. © Maggie Weir-Wilson

All photos by permission of Aberglasney Gardens.

Aberglasney featured as The Gardens Trust Unforgettable Garden of the Month in April 2021. Read more here: https://thegardenstrust.org/aberglasney-garden-carmarthenshire-wales/

Ilnacullin – an Italian garden in Ireland

By Pat Dauncey

Ilnacullin, a fifteen hectare (37 acre) island garden, is located in the sheltered harbour of Glengarriff in Bantry Bay, south west Ireland. It is not straight-forward getting there. From the small ship on which we were circumnavigating Ireland, it involved a zodiac ride from the anchored ship to Bantry, then a coach drive to Glengarriff, followed by a local ferry to get out to the island, passing a group of common seals en route and a sea eagle's nest in a tall tree. Expectations were rising. I had failed to do any homework before arriving, having never been to the south or west of Ireland before. The sun was shining and this was Ireland in August – already this was not quite what I expected.

When we got off the ferry we were all given a guide book with an image of the Italian sunken garden on the cover. This looked vaguely familiar … Sedgwick Park came to mind, followed by West Dean Gardens, both in Sussex. Then I realised that the common denominator was Harold Peto, the arts and crafts architect, turned garden designer who hugely admired the Italian Renaissance. Most of our group were not avid garden historians so I had to keep my excitement to myself.

Our first port of call had to be the sunken Italian garden with its casita (Italian tea-house) made from Bath stone, colonnades, flights of steps and the pool surrounded by carefully positioned potted plants. How well it fits into the natural setting with views of the Caha mountains (An Cheacha in Irish) and the sea in the distance.



The Italian Garden with views of the mountains. © Pat & Chris Dauncey

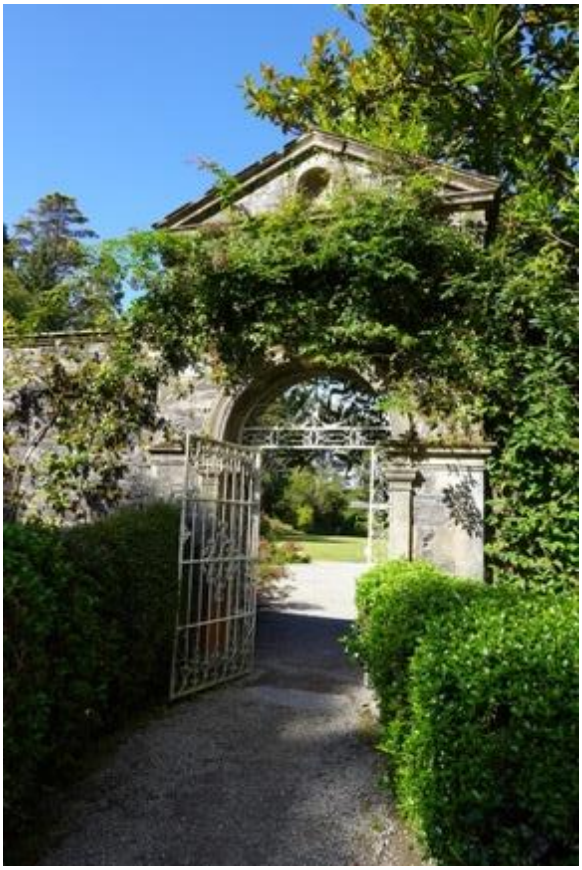


One of the many carefully positioned plants around the pool. © Pat & Chris Dauncey

A gardener was pruning the wisteria which climbs on the casita columns – this must have been a wonderful site earlier in the year. The walled garden contains the nurseries for the whole island with stone and brickwork walls supporting a collection of climbing plants including climbing roses, just coming to an end. The ironwork gates gave intriguing glimpses of what might be on the other side.



The wisteria growing on the columns of the casita. © Pat & Chris Dauncey



One of the iron gates in the walled garden. © Pat & Chris Dauncey

As an island garden, it naturally lends itself to borrowed views out to the harbour, the wider sea and the surrounding hills and mountains. Not far from

the Italian garden an avenue of Italian cypress leads up to the Grecian Temple with magnificent views of the sea and mountains. Another fine view was from the top of the Martello Tower complete with a pod of dolphins playing in the bay. This is the oldest building on the island and looks slightly out of place with the rest of the garden. I wondered what its history was….



The Grecian Temple with views beyond. © Pat & Chris Dauncey



The sign next to the Martello Tower. © Pat & Chris Dauncey

There was no garden on the island before 1910, only the Martello Tower. This was built by the British around 1815 in response to an attempted French

invasion in 1796 led by the Irish patriot Wolfe Tone, which had only been thwarted by the weather. By 1910 the tower was deemed unnecessary and the War Office sold the island to a Belfast born Scottish MP called Annan Bryce, who acquired an island which was largely bare rock and peat bog. Bryce, who was interested in both horticulture and architecture, commissioned Harold Peto to design a mansion and a garden for him. The mansion was never built but the garden was created. This involved transporting huge quantities of soil and hummus from the mainland (all via the small ferry boats) and blasting rocks to create spaces to plant the coniferous shelter belt all around the island. The Bryce family continued work on the garden until 1953 when it was gifted to the Irish people.

The garden has a feel similar to Tresco Abbey Garden in the Scilly Isles; it is spectacular both for its incongruous presence on a tiny island, for its array of native and exotic plants and for the ingenious design elements. If you are ever in that part of Ireland it is a must to visit.

Hunte's Gardens, Barbados

By Jennie Starr

Unexpectedly in June, I was invited for a week's holiday in Barbados. Well, why ever not! There was little time to research what I might hope to visit and the majority of recommendations in the guide books were for turtle watching, snorkelling, beach trips and rum tasting. However, I did see an entry for two botanical gardens and hoped that my friend and I might be able to visit one of these.

Chatting to our taxi driver from the airport and mentioning gardens he immediately said that in his opinion the place to go was Hunte's Gardens. Apparently, the owner and horticulturalist, Anthony Hunte, was usually there to greet one at the end of the visit. On arrival at our hotel, and after a rum punch and a swim, I looked up the garden's website. It proclaimed it to be 'the most enchanting place on Earth … a place of serenity where you can feel peace of mind and the tranquility of your soul whilst being surrounded by nature….' The description made me laugh – it would have to be very special and could any garden live up to that?

Hunte's Garden is in parish of St. Joseph in a fairly central position on the island. The surrounding area is rather flat with gentle rises in the landscape. From the western coast going inland we passed both small houses with vegetable gardens and a few flowers in pots, as well as large open expanses of sugar cane. Whilst tourism is now the major economic driver in Barbados, sugar production remains a central part of its agricultural industry.



Plerandra elegantissima. © Jennie Starr.

The morning was hot and the air very humid; on arrival we were suddenly exposed to a mass of colour and textures from the planting at the entrance and the sight of an old weigh bridge formerly used to weigh sugar cane on a plantation. This is the first of many artifacts that Anthony Hunte, BCH, (Barbados Centennial Honour bestowed in 2000 by the Barbadian Government for his contribution to horticulture) has collected from his travels and included in his garden. Once walking through the garden there is a series of winding paths and steps leading through the dense planting and into small intimate areas where you can sit and enjoy the plants and birds. The garden covers approximately 2.5 acres planted in a gulley roughly 150ft deep and 500ft wide; land purchased by Mr. Hunte from a former plantation. The garden feels enclosed not only by being in a gulley but also due to the majestic palms towering above the shrubs and flowers. I was unfamiliar with many of the plants although some were more usually seen at home as smaller household pot plants, such as *Codiaeum gloriosa*, *Dendrobium*, *Anthuriums* and *Heliconia rostrate*. At the end of the garden there is a board showing images of flora and fauna in the garden and together with a handout that you are given at the entrance it becomes possible to identify many of the plants that may be unfamiliar. The final feature of the garden is that classical music is played throughout which enhanced my experience of the garden.



Caladium 'Thai Beauty'. © Jennie Starr.

Climbing up to Mr. Hunte's house at the end of our visit we were indeed welcomed and had an opportunity to chat about the garden. Anthony explained that it was his grandmother who had helped him develop his love of flowers, fruits and plants suited to the Barbadian climate. He said he still enjoyed working in the garden but at eighty years of age he is seeking to ensure a sound future for it.

How any individual will react to the garden is impossible to say, but I found it a delightful place which has left a lasting impression that I believe will stay with me.

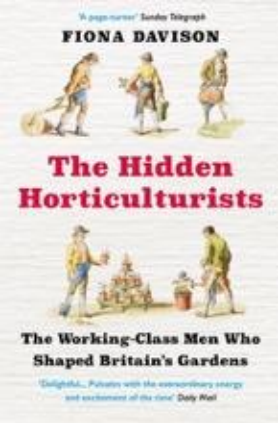


Artefacts at Hunte's Garden. © Jennie Starr.

Autumn Reading

The Hidden Horticulturalists: the working-class men who shaped Britain's gardens.

Fiona Davison. Published by Atlantic Books Ltd 2019
Hardback ISBN 978-I-78649-507-5 £25. 2022 Paperback edition. £10.9



An unexpected find of a box labelled 'Handwriting Book' in the Lindley Library has led to this remarkable book by Fiona Davison, who began her career in the archive and library in 2012. Inside the box were handwritten letters by young gardeners aspiring to further their careers by gaining experience at the Chiswick Garden of the Royal Horticultural Society. The letters were dated from 1823 and each applicant had to be sponsored by a Fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society. In their handwritten letters they detailed their careers to date and the type of gardens they had been working in, requiring as wide experience as possible to be accepted into Chiswick. There were 105 of these letters and setting out to trace the applicants took Davison three years travelling in England and around the world.

The gardener, John Lindley, was appointed to be in charge of the collection of plants at Chiswick when he was 23, and having studied botany advised these young gardeners to further educate themselves by forming a Mutual Improvement Society. Another garden designer who encouraged the young men was John Claudius Loudon and he wrote of the progress of the Horticultural Society in *The Gardener's Magazine*, first published by Loudon in 1826.

Among the notes was one from Joseph Paxton who began studying at Chiswick in 1823, sponsored by Joseph Sabine, and allowed admittance by declaring he was born in 1801 and not 1803 so as to claim two additional years of schooling. About two years into his training, whilst he was in charge of the arboretum at the Chiswick Garden, he was befriended by the Duke of Devonshire, whose land was adjacent to the garden and in March 1826 the Duke offered him the post of

Superintendent of the Gardens at Chatsworth. Paxton's meteoric rise to fame had begun.

There were few openings at large gardens for head gardeners, and some did not fulfil their potential. John Reicks arrived at Chiswick in 1828 coming from Castlecomor in the County of Kilkenny and was discharged after a month's trial. In the mid-1830s he was working for Miss Mary Driver at Hawthorne Cottage, Framfield, East Sussex, as live-in gardener and handyman together with his wife Anne, who was the cook.

Other trainees from Chiswick took their careers in different directions, some becoming plant hunters and collectors. Thomas Bridges was one of these and under the tutelage of John Lindley studied botany and plants sent back by the Society's plant collector James McRae from Brazil, Chile, the Galapagos Islands and Hawaii. Thomas Bridges aspired to go to Valparaiso in Chile and having collected enough sponsors to pay for his voyage he arrived in August 1828. His voyage has been traced by the letters he wrote to William Hooker, the well-known scientist, now kept at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.

Some of the young men were lucky enough to procure employment abroad. James Traill and William McCulloch were recruited to work for the son of the viceroy of Egypt, Ibrahim Pasha, to create a new garden. McCulloch was sent to India to source new plants for Egypt and James Traill introduced plants sent by the Horticultural Society. This was only partly successful due to the climate and McCulloch moved to Bombay to continue his career. When Ibrahim Pasha died Traill worked for Soliman Pasha and spent the rest of his life in Egypt.

In 1861 another horticultural garden opened which eclipsed the Chiswick Garden and led to the demise of the training scheme at Chiswick. This was the RHS Kensington Garden, financed by profits from the Great Exhibition and promoted by Joseph Paxton. Proving too expensive for the RHS to continue funding, in 1888 the lease on the Kensington site was terminated and attention was again focussed on Chiswick. The society sought a larger garden beyond London and in 1903 Sir Thomas Hanbury gave Wisley in Surrey to the society. The goods and chattels at Chiswick were put up for auction and the Handwriting Book made its way first to Wisley and eventually to the Lindley Library where it was discovered by Fiona Davison in 2012.

This detailed account of many of the gardeners who were admitted to Chiswick is a delightful read, fully illustrated with drawings and colour plates from the RHS Lindley Collections.

Review by Lynn Gausden