SUSSEX GARDENS TRUST

Sussex Gardens Trust 2024 Garden Visits Programme

Once again, we hope that our summer programme will entice members and their guests to visit the gardens across the county that we have on offer this year. It is always a pleasure to see the gardens of our members and the first event in 2024 promises to be a very special visit to Warnham Park, owned by SGT members Jonathan and Caroline Lucas.

This summer also sees a new venture. In June, Jim and Sue Stockwell will host a Garden Party for members and their guests in their delightful garden in Lindfield. Light refreshments will be served, and it will be a chance to chat in an informal atmosphere.

Sunday 28 April: 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
Exclusive Spring Visit to Warnham Park, Robin Hood Lane, Warnham Park, Horsham, RH12 3RP
The AGM will be held at 4.15 pm



Warnham Deer Park



Drews Barn

Our first visit in 2024 promises to be very special. SGT members Jonathan and Caroline Lucas are the owners of Warnham Park and have very kindly agreed to open their property for an exclusive private visit for SGT members. On arrival visitors will drive through the historic Deer Park that is home to a very special herd of Red Deer that has been husbanded by the Lucas family for over 150 years.

Our meeting will be held in the medieval Drews Barn, recently relocated, and lovingly restored to create a wonderful meeting space; the quality of the restoration is exquisite, so much that it won in the Building Crafts category of the 2021 Sussex Heritage Trust Awards. Jonathan will talk about his family's involvement with the Registered Park over the past 200 years, and especially about his passion for Red Deer and the trees he has been planting in an arboretum in recent decades. There will be an opportunity to visit the Deer Museum that houses notable antlers, and to walk around the gardens of the modern house to view borders with traditional planting, a kitchen garden, a small white garden, a Moroccan courtyard and a walled garden.

Tickets are £15 per person, although members attending the AGM only are, of course, free.

Thursday 23 May: 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm The Beeches, Barcombe, Lewes, BN8 5TS




The Beeches

The front of the house dates from the sixteenth century when it was a farm. The present owners purchased the property in 2000 from the Borradaile family whose ancestor, General Borradaile, bought it in 1918 after returning from serving in France during the First World War. From 1760 the walled garden has appeared on maps and has been used as a kitchen garden continuously for over 250 years, growing a wide variety of vegetables, fruit and cut flowers. Having been neglected for a long time, the restoration of the garden has taken over nineteen years and again it now grows a wide selection of plants. There are many fruit trees and the beds have been delightfully planted, creating a long border and a hot border together with a stream and pond.

Refreshments will be served at the end of the visit. Tickets for members will be £13 and £15 for guests.

Sunday 9 June: From 4.00 pm
Summer Garden Party, 47 Denmans Lane, Lindfield, West Sussex, RH16 2JN




47 Denmans Lane

We are holding a summer garden party for members and their guests at the delightful garden in Lindfield created by Jim and Sue Stockwell, long-standing members of SGT. Their one-acre garden has been developed over the past twenty years and early June is a lovely time of year to see the roses and herbaceous perennials. Other features of the garden include a wildlife pond, sculpture, and a fruit, herb and vegetable garden.

This will be a wonderful opportunity to meet new members – we do hope all of you who recently joined SGT will come – and to catch up with acquaintances in relaxing and informal surroundings. Members are very welcome to bring a guest who might like to know more about the work of the Trust.

A variety of sandwiches, savouries, cake and drinks will be provided during the afternoon. We are prepared for inclement weather. Do please join us. Tickets are £10 per person.

Thursday 20 June: 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
Down Place, South Harting, Petersfield, GU31 5PN





Down Place

Nestled on the northern slopes of the South Downs, just below Harting Down (National Trust) and a spectacular part of the South Downs Way, Down Place has far-reaching views over the surrounding countryside. A top terrace leads to rose and herbaceous borders, the vegetable garden, and walks through beech trees. We have timed this visit to coincide with the peak of the rose garden and the natural wildflower meadow with its six varieties of native orchids to find! Seeds from the meadow are used to regenerate areas in the South Downs National Park. The owner will be giving us an introductory talk and tour, followed by tea and cakes on the terrace.

Tickets for members will be £12 and £14 for guests.

Friday 19 July: 11.00 am – 1.30 pm and 2.00 pm – 4.30 pm
Turners House, Middle Lane, Turners Green, nr Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 9RB
and Brightling Down Farm, Observatory Rd., Dallington, East Sussex, TN21 9LN



Turners House



Brightling Down Farm

We last visited these gardens in 2017 and we have had requests to revisit and of course they will offer an experience for the first time for many. The garden at Turners House has been lovingly developed by our members Julia Padbury and Christopher Miscampbell. Several changes have been made since our last visit to improve the views and flow from one part of the garden to another. We will have coffee and cake on arrival and an introductory talk about the garden. If you would like to bring your lunch please feel free to enjoy it here before moving on to Brightling Down Farm. (It will be helpful if you bring your own folding chair.) Another option would be The Horse and Groom pub at Rushlake Green.

Tickets for members will be £15 and £17 for guests.

Friday 30 August: 10.30 am – 12.30 pm
Gravetye Manor, Vowels Lane, East Grinstead, RH19 4LJ



Gravetye Manor

We last visited the former home of William Robinson, in 2012. His influence is still felt in gardens today and his legacy can be seen at Gravetye Manor. Robinson's magazines and books heavily influenced late Victorian and Edwardian garden styles and we will be able to see how Gravetye has introduced new ideas while respecting Robinson's ethos. The head gardener, Tom Howard, has been at Gravetye for fourteen years and has worked to restore and create the delightful garden that we see today, providing fresh produce for the hotel's Michelin starred restaurant from the abundant oval-shaped, walled vegetable garden.

After coffee and biscuits Tom will take us on a one-hour tour, talking about the wild flower meadow, flower and vegetable gardens.

Tickets, for members only, £27. This event is likely to be oversubscribed. Please register on the waiting list so that if you are disappointed, you will have priority in 2025, when we hope to repeat the visit.

Monday 9 September: 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
Knightsbridge House, Grove Hill, Hellingly, BN27 4HH





Knightsbridge House

This is a garden that we haven't visited before so we have an opportunity to look at the mature landscaped garden which is set in five acres surrounding the Georgian house. The owners Karty and Andrew Watson have developed the garden over the last thirty years. They were keen that it should sit comfortably in the landscape and allow views to the tranquil countryside. There are several garden rooms and spectacular herbaceous borders. The newer borders have been developed over the last twelve years and are planted in a contemporary style with a stunning variety of grasses. There is plenty of late season colour in the borders and some magnificent specimen trees as well as a partly walled garden.

We will end the afternoon with tea and cake at nearby Hellingly.

Tickets for members will be £10 and £12 for guests.

SGT garden visits can be booked on our website.

Photos of Down Place © Judi Lion, photographer. All other photos © of the garden owners.