

From the President:

"Last year's celebration of the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust's first twenty years was a huge success. It was good that so many members and their friends took advantage of the most varied programme of events: lectures, garden visits, walks, etc., all ending in the excellent symposium held at Abbots Hill School. The schools programme went from strength to strength while it is pleasing to see our involvement in the possible restoration of the Jellicoe water gardens at Hemel Hempstead. Finally I would like to extend a warm welcome to all the new members who joined last year and to thank all those responsible for the year's success."

Dione Venlam .

The Hertfordshire Gardens Trust

Registered Charity No. 1010093

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Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire

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Chairman's Report—Christopher Melliush



We can look back on 2011 with some satisfaction, although there were moments of real challenge early on. These were taken up and sorted out, for which I

thank my fellow Trustees and the other members of the Trust's executive committee most heartily. All the events which were organised for our twentieth year were well attended and we warmly welcome several new members who have joined the Trust as a result.

The year ahead looks promising, with three garden visits already planned. A new initiative, outings to what can be termed "revitalised historic landscape", is represented in 2012 by a visit to Wrest Park led by Kate Harwood; others will follow.

It is exciting to see new blood involved with the Trust's publications and with the website: I welcome the expertise of Roger Gedye and John Craggs respectively.

The Trust's library has been taken on by Helen Leiper which is such good news. Enormous thanks are due to Harold and Margaret Smith who have housed this interesting collection of books for several years. I heartily recommend our library, particularly to those members researching specific subjects. Our Trust's constitution was set out in 1955

and we are reviewing it with the intention of seeking updates where they appear to be needed. This seems a less expensive route than a complete rewrite in a world where we are making every effort to keep our costs as low as possible.

On the same note we plan an experiment this year with the Trust's annual report; the Treasurer's Report, the Independent Examiner's statement and the Accounts will be handed out at the Annual General Meeting and sent out to all those other members who express a wish to see the figures. The Annual Report will be absorbed within this Spring Newsletter, which, with an autumn edition, will form the principal channel of communication with members. I trust that this will keep everyone informed of what is going on and of the Trust's progress. The editor and I hope that as many members as possible will submit articles to our regular newsletters to help make them as interesting as possible.

This year, for the Trust's annual meeting on Monday July 2nd, we have been invited to West Lodge Park situated on the edge of Enfield Chase just north of Cockfosters. It was described as "A pretty retreat for a gentleman" by John Evelyn in 1676. We will start with a conducted tour of the arboretum led by Andrew Beale, the managing director. (See page 13 for details).

Editorial—Roger Gedye



The autumn edition of your Newsletter took on a new look – a pocket sized publication in colour -which has been used as a template for this edition too.

As your editor I welcome feedback from members, and hope to encourage many of you to contribute to future editions, both articles and illustrations, giving a personal flavour reflecting the varied activities of the Trust.

In future you will receive a Spring and an Autumn Newsletter, with the former incorporating the 'Annual Report'. Both editions will record the activity of the principal sections of the Trust – the research and conservation groups, the work in schools and the programme of events and outings for members and their friends. In addition to the formal record, members will be encouraged to contribute articles that provide a more informal perspective. I am grateful to Mary Buckle, Monica Jordan and Liz Rolfe for their articles in this edition, and to Maggie Macrae who has given us a

glimpse of the great work done by our 'Mrs Wheelbarrows'.

Printing in colour gives an opportunity to showcase members' photography - gardens and gardening, plants and flowers, maps and illustrations that reveal the magic of historical gardens, children engrossed in learning and doing—all offer great potential for the photographer and the researcher. Digital cameras and mobile phones make it easy to capture the event of the moment and to share the result by email.

Do send me copies of your favourite 'HGT moments' – digitally or as prints. I'll print as many as I can and reserve the best two each year for the covers: Trevor Beale's photograph of Bedfield House, used for the cover of the autumn edition, and Kate Holland Hibbert's image of a spellbound class of children have set the standard.

Send your photographs, suggestions, likes and dislikes to:

roger.gedye@homecall.co.uk

20th Anniversary Events Report—Annie Saner

There has been a wide variety of fund raising events through the year to celebrate the Gardens Trust's 20th Anniversary. In May a plant sale and open gardens was held at Benington Lordship by kind permission of Richard and Susanna Bott. Despite inclement weather it was well attended with many contributions of plants. Sales were brisk and for the first time we had independent plantsmen selling their own specialities; all proving to be a very enjoyable day.

The Trust had a stand at the Herts Show at the end of May for 2 days when several 'Mrs Wheelbarrows' held workshops demonstrating making paper flowerpots and planting various seeds and plants, much to the delight of many young children who actively participated.

On 9th June we were privileged to be able to use the Marble Hall at Hatfield House as a venue for the Dowager Marchioness of Salisbury to give her lecture on 'A Gardener's Life'. Using slides, Lady Salisbury took us on a fascinating 'journey' of garden projects with which she had been involved over the years both in the United Kingdom and abroad.

On 22nd June our President, The Countess of Verulam, invited us all to attend

the Gardens Trust's 20th AGM at Gorhambury and visit her beautiful gardens. After the formal business and a short talk by Lady Verulam we dispersed for picnics in the grounds.

A series of walks and talks, featuring historic sites of parks and gardens, organised by Kate Harwood and Anne Rowe, proved very popular. There are plans to continue this theme with a visit to Wrest Park in 2012 and Tring Park in 2013.

On 8th October a concert and readings of John Betjeman poems was held at Abbot's Hill School in Hemel Hempstead. Crispin Bonham Carter was highly entertaining reading poems to the accompaniment of The Montagnana Ensemble, who also performed the Beethoven Septet. This was a very successful end to our year of celebrations and a big thank you to all members who have contributed and attended these events.

The Marble Hall, Hatfield House



‘The Garden of England’– Liz Rolfe

Besides a team of enthusiastic and engaging speakers, a good conference ideally needs comfortable accommodation, appetising refreshments, a pleasant setting and the benefit of fine weather. Add to all this a retail opportunity and the conferees should be better than pleased!

The ‘Garden Of England’ Symposium of November 2011, jointly devised by the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and the Herts Association for Local History (HALH), ticked all those boxes. Nearly 140 people attended the event and we were in the spacious, modern facilities of Abbots Hill School, amidst elegant grounds which the Headmistress, Kerstin Lewis, rightly described as ‘an unexpected haven’. Her warm welcome and that of Nicholas Maddox for HALH, launched the day most aptly with a brief history of Abbots Hill, whose first owner, John Dickinson, had a significant impact on the landscape before the house.



Subsequently our speakers treated us to a scrutiny of Hertfordshire’s landscape legacy which both celebrated the diversity and ingenuity of individual gardens and also probed the whole county’s role as buffer and escape route for the capital. Coming away from London, directed by the old iconic signs to ‘Hatfield and the North’, there seems always to have been a tacit assumption that Hertfordshire was but a staging post to greater things. Not so. Although visitors to Cheshunt now seek Marks and Spencer’s rather than Burghley’s glorious Theobalds and although ‘A10’ can never be as evocative a name as ‘Ermine Street’, Hertfordshire’s complex and nationally important history can still be read in its form. Our speakers traced much of that history for us, defending the county’s claim to be ‘The Garden of England’.

Deborah Spring's opening, 'The London Connection', assessing the significance of the county's proximity to London in Renaissance times, gave us our theme for the day. We considered great houses and their estates, the passion for water gardens – and we were once such a watery county! – the input of national heroes of garden design, the impact of Victorian industry and the aesthetic preferences of those reacting against it. All of these have helped shape the county and the range of topics covered by our speakers (Deborah Spring, Jenny Milledge, Tom Williamson, Anne Rowe, Helen Leiper and Kate Harwood) created a tapestry that covered time, place and social milieu.

The buzz of excitement was palpable. This was not a conference dominated by self-aggrandising erudition – although there was erudition in spadefuls. It was an opportunity where sharing ideas and understanding was the priority. The democratic mood may have been enhanced by leading speakers having to wrestle with the sellotape or change the microphone batteries themselves, but it was generated by a sense of common purpose and mutual excitement in both the topics themselves and also in the evident and empowering prospect of garden research and conservation being a cause we could all contribute to.

The range of opportunity was reinforced by the stalls set out for our benefit and to which we could repair, sustained by copious quantities of tea and biscuits, to discover other resources, other information. Launching the shopping spree – together with the Record Society's own publishing triumph – was Sue Flood from HALS who urged us all to order a copy of the reproduction of Repton's Red Books on Tewin Water and Panshanger. Judging by the frenetic activity in that corner of the room, I think most of us did!

Everyone concerned in the organisation and presentation of this Symposium deserves our gratitude and thanks. The day went smoothly, the speakers were stimulating and interesting, the venue was ideal. The publication of the proceedings later in the year will be eagerly awaited!

Book Review—Mary Buckle



Before



After

Repton's vision for Tewin Water

As a Garden History student in my final year of a four year course I have come to realise what a significant contribution Humphry Repton made as a landscape designer in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century.

He presented his ideas to his clients in the unique form of a 'Red Book', so-called because it was bound in red leather: Panshanger and Tewin Water were two of Repton's most important commissions in Hertfordshire.

Fortunately Herts County Council was able to purchase the Red Books for these properties and they are now in safe-keeping at the Herts Archives and Local Studies (HALS) facility. The Hertfordshire Record Society has now

reproduced these fragile documents in this lovely new book.

There is an informative introduction by Twigs Way which gives a good overview of Repton's life and work generally. She then goes into more detail about the Panshanger and Tewin Water estates specifically, which is especially interesting to those like me with no previous knowledge of these properties.

Both properties (and Cole Green) were owned by Earl Cowper and although Repton was sympathetic to their different aspects and topography he did try to design an integrated landscape for the whole valley. Work commenced in 1799 and many of his recommendations were taken up.

Cole Green House was demolished in 1801 (not Repton's suggestion) and sadly the rebuilt Panshanger house was demolished in 1954. The house at Tewin Water remains, albeit as luxury flats. Much of the designed landscape has been destroyed by quarrying, housing development or simple neglect.

Following the introduction are the high quality, colour reproductions of the actual Red Books. Repton used a 'lift the flap' device which unfortunately could not be utilised here for cost reasons but the 'before' and 'after' pictures are shown side by side

to get the closest representation of this effect with great success.

It is a delight to read Repton's observations and suggestions for the estates in his own handwriting. Many Red Books have now been lost, destroyed or are in private hands and so I highly recommend this important publication which is of a very high standard throughout.

'Humphry Repton's Red Books for Panshanger and Tewin Water, Hertfordshire, 1799-1800' with an Introduction by Twigs Way, Hertfordshire Record Society, 2011

ISBN 978-0-9565111-0-2

HGT Library Update

After several years looking after the HGT Library Harold and Margaret Smith have handed over this responsibility to Helen Leiper. The library will remain in St Albans and is now housed at 34 Homewood Road. We have a collection of over 80 books covering all periods of European garden design as well as more exotic subjects, such as the tropical gardens of Burle Marx or the gardens of Mughul India. Books are available to members of the Trust for loan and Helen will be happy to provide a list of titles in the library and make arrangements for borrowers to collect or return books.

Please contact Helen by email at helenleiper@aol.com or telephone 01727 839102.

Events and Outings—2012

Spring Lecture at Ashridge: Thursday, 12th April, 7.30pm

“Why the Rose?” - Jennifer Potter

Why do we fall in love with the rose? What makes it so special in cultures around the world? In this richly illustrated and entertaining talk, the acclaimed horticultural historian Jennifer Potter explores the tangled story of the rose and its transformation from a simple briar of the northern hemisphere into the western world's favourite flower. Ranging widely across cultures and art forms, she tracks its shifting associations with love, sex, death and the great religions of East and West, overturning along the way many cherished rose myths.



Tickets £10 for members, £12 for non-members.

(Gardens open from 6.30pm, a free glass of wine from 7.00pm)

Garden Visit to Essex: Thursday, 10th May, 2012 **£38**

[Departure from Stanborough Green, Welwyn Garden City at 9.00am]

‘Furzelea’: is a lovely 2/3 acre garden created by Avril and Roger Cole-Jones. It is planted for scent and colour - deep mixed borders overflow with tulips in Spring. Chamomile steps lead to an attractive lily pond, recently enlarged by the owner. There is topiary, a tropical themed courtyard, and a terrace full of interesting potted plants. A thatched summer-house beckons to the garden visitor to pause and relax in it. *The visit will begin with coffee and homemade cookies.*



Events and Outings—2012

‘Woodpeckers’: at Burnham-on-Crouch, is a 1.5 acre country garden full of attractive ‘rooms’ developed by the able and creative owners, Neil and Linda Holdaway. Spring brings blossom in the orchard, wild flowers and drifts of bulbs. There are formal areas and surprises, with lots of horticultural interest. *A ploughman’s lunch will be provided here.*

‘Orchard Cottage’: is an award-winning garden of 2/3 of an acre, featured in ‘BBC Essex’ and ‘The Good Gardens Guide’. May features hundreds of aquilegias, tulips and numerous perennials. The gifted and keen garden owners, Heather and Harry Brickwood, will provide us with *afternoon tea and cake.*

Garden Visit to Bedfordshire: Thursday, 10th June, 2012 £45

[Departure from Stanborough Green, Welwyn Garden City at 9.00am]

‘Flaxbourne Farm’: the Barretts have created an unusual and idiosyncratic garden of 2 acres at Apsley Guise. Grassy paths lead us through a variety of interesting borders and trees to lily ponds, a grotto and many surprise features. *Coffee will be provided on our arrival.*

Dawnedged Lodge: in the same village, Lynne Wallace’s garden has wide borders brimming with glorious blooms. A stop at the 17th century King William Inn at Kempstone is next, for *a light lunch with a glass of wine.*

The Manor House, Stevington: is the afternoon visit, starred in the Good Gardens Guide. Kathy Brown will give us a tour of her imaginative garden. Features include a Mediterranean garden, an edible flower border, a formal French garden, beds of grasses and many roses in flower. We return home after *tea and Kathy’s home made cakes.*



Events and Outings—2012

Garden Visit to Berkshire: **Thursday, 5th July, 2012 £44.00**

[Departure from Westminster Lodge car-park, St Albans at 9.30am]



‘Mariners’: The first of two glorious Berkshire gardens. Both Mr and Mrs Anderson are keen gardeners, constantly fine-tuning their planting and colour schemes. On a sloping site, the main herbaceous border leads to a bog garden and a wild flower

meadow. The highlight is the sunken rose garden, created from a former tennis court. We shall be welcomed with *coffee on arrival*, and after exploring the garden we drive the short distance to the pretty village of Stanford Dingley *for lunch at The Bull Inn*.

‘Miles Green House’: In the afternoon we drive to Bucklebury to visit Eric and Susan Lloyd’s fine garden. The garden here is approximately 3 acres within a valley setting, with a small lake, bog and woodland areas plus pond, and with specimen trees and shrubs, island beds and well-maintained lawns. There is also a meadow with grass paths.



Events and Outings—2012

AGM at West Lodge Park: 'A pretty retreat for a gentleman'

Monday, July 2nd, 2012

From 5.00pm

Members may arrive from 5.00pm for a tour of the Arboretum with our host, Andrew Beale, at 5.30pm. The AGM, at 7.30pm, will be preceded by wine served in the John Evelyn Room from 7.00pm.

Picnics will follow – remember to bring your chairs. Please use the enclosed return to tell us the number who are coming – and let us hope for a warm summer evening!

[*Directions:* "Leave the M25 at exit 24 marked to Cockfosters on A111. After nearly a mile you will see West Lodge Park on the left hand side of the road" (EN4 0PZ).]

Guided Walk of Wrest Park

Thursday, July 19th, 2012.

£5(Plus entrance)

2.00pm—4.00pm

Kate Harwood will lead a guided walk to examine the different periods and styles and the effects of restoration on this great garden. We will meet Kate on the terrace at Wrest Park at 2.00pm—the guided walk around the gardens will last for about 2 hours.

Entry is free to members of English Heritage, £8 for non-members. For directions and details see:

**[www.english-heritage.org.uk/
daysoout/properties/wrest-park/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysoout/properties/wrest-park/)**

Transport and refreshments are *not* included with this visit—do arrive early if you would like to visit the House and café first.



Annual Research Report - Anne Rowe

We have continued to make good progress with the Welwyn-Hatfield research project in 2011 despite a busy anniversary year.

The project received a welcome boost when Dr Sarah Spooner of the University of East Anglia very kindly donated a copy of her PhD thesis which includes information about some of the historic parks in the Hatfield area. Several new sites have been taken on by new members of the Research Group and they have been making some exciting and significant discoveries (see p16). Other notable events include the discovery of the earthwork remains of a spectacular 18th-century water garden in the former Popes Park at Hatfield and the identification of an important map showing previously unknown details of the famous gardens designed by Charles Bridgeman for Gubbins (now Gobions Wood) at North Mymms.

In addition to the Welwyn-Hatfield project, we have also identified the archaeological remains of a huge square pond in a farmer's field beside the A10 near Waltham Cross. Two sides of the pond are still marked by massive earthwork



The Folly Arch – an important feature of the early eighteenth century gardens at Gubbins

banks, each 100m long, which were created at the turn of the 16-17th century by William Cecil, Lord Burghley, or his son Sir Robert Cecil in their park south of Theobalds palace. These earthworks are a very rare and important survival from the period and we have submitted a request to English Heritage for them to be given Scheduled Ancient Monument status.

The Research Group got together for two seminar and lunch events at Woolmer Green Village Hall during the year. At the first, in April, sixteen of us enjoyed presentations by:

- Esther Gatland, whose talk *An Avenue Puzzle* included some intriguing avenues at Brickendon Bury, and by
- Kate Harwood, who told us about her research into *Hertfordshire's Arts and Crafts Gardens*.

Twenty-four of us enjoyed another morning of talks in early September when we had three speakers, whose talks were as follows:

- Elizabeth Waugh - *Planting the gardens: Hertfordshire's Great Nurserymen*
- Deborah Spring - *The London Connection*
- Helen Leiper - *Mr Lancelot Brown and his Hertfordshire clients*

All the speakers are members of the Research Group and their presentations clearly showed what the Group has achieved in its first twenty years. On both occasions the morning was rounded off with an excellent lunch contributed by all those attending.

In October Sue Flood, County Archivist, very kindly provided us with another two half-day sessions enabling seven new researchers to learn about the resources available at the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies.

We continue to work closely with HALS: we talked to the staff about the work of the HGT in April, mounted displays about historic parks and gardens in the foyer over the summer and a Garden History page has been added to the HALS section of the county council website. This includes a brief summary of the research undertaken by the HGT, a list of publications written by members and a direct link to the HGT website. You can see the page at:

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/leisculture/heritage1/hals/localhist/gardenhist>

Another major achievement was the production of a Landscape Restoration Plan for Tring Park on behalf of The Woodland Trust who manage part of the historic designed landscape and are hoping to get funding for its restoration from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Plan was researched and compiled by Kate Harwood, Jenny Milledge and Anne Rowe on behalf of the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust. The Trust also contributed towards the reproduction of Repton's red books for Panshanger and Tewin Water for the Hertfordshire Record Society.

Mystery at Woodhill—Monica Jordan

Woodhill is a pleasant area in south Hatfield, just off Kentish Lane. Today it consists of an early nineteenth century house (grade II listed), a second house constructed in what were the outbuildings of the main house, and a farm. On first sight, these buildings could be the remains of an early nineteenth century estate and when I asked for a project with the HGT Research Group one of the choices Anne Rowe sent me was Woodhill, with the comment “Repton?” beside it. When I consulted the two recent books on Repton, one by Stephen Daniels and one by Andre Rogger, Woodhill was listed in both as a Repton site with an existing red book. Unfortunately, neither specified the location of the red book.

I began with the old maps of Woodhill. The first, surveyed at the end of the eighteenth century (OS old series), showed Woodhill as a manor house in the middle of a belt of trees and surrounded by farmland. The second, surveyed in 1873-9 (first edition OS map), showed the area as having undergone considerable development with a new house, an open lawn area and woods at the end of which was an ice house. In addition, Kentish Lane had been diverted farther from the house.



Woodhill

Plan from the conveyance document when the estate was sold in 1820 which shows a remarkable likeness to the proposed plan in the Repton red book of 1803 (HALS D/EX9/T4).

From documents at HALS, it is clear that George Stainforth bought the estate (42 acres) in 1784 and increased it to 100 acres by buying land around the house, including a farm on the other side of Kentish Lane. In 1803, he consulted Repton who produced a red book but it was not clear whether Stainforth actually implemented Repton's plans. According to Andre Rogger, whom I contacted, there is no record of Repton visiting the site after the red book was produced. The estate was sold to William Franks in 1820 so any Repton specified changes should have been made between 1803 and 1820.

Did Stainforth or Franks change the estate to how it appeared on the later maps? When were the changes made? Was there any connection with Repton? Fortunately, the conveyance document of 1820 contained a plan which clearly showed the estate at the point of sale to Franks. Although changes had been made, the house existing in 1784 was still present and Kentish Lane had not been diverted. Both these changes were made by Franks later. But, the main question had not been answered: had the red book been implemented? The only way to answer that was to find the red book and make a comparison. Andre Rogger assured me that the red book existed and that he had seen an old Xerox copy but he did not know where the original was held. I then pursued a trail to find it. It was suggested to me that I look on the internet *carefully*. I did and eventually found it in the catalogue of the Sir John Soane Museum. I made an appointment to visit the museum where I saw the original red book for Woodhill. The exciting answer to the question is that Stainforth *did* implement Repton's suggestions, although Repton pronounced "*Woodhill so cheerful, so pleasing and so gentleman's like a place that my art can derive little credit from my late visit*", which explained why he had no need to revisit the site.

The sad end of the story is that between 1820 and 1821, Franks demolished the original house and built a new one at right angles to the old one. He then diverted the road, changed the Repton layout and with it the character of the estate.

Conservation/Planning Report—Kate Harwood

There have been changes to the Conservation group over the year and we now have fewer members. However, we are still working well with the GHS, English Heritage, planners, conservation officers, developers and owners.

We are very grateful for all the hard work the retiring members have put in over the years which has really helped us become established, not only as the first port of call in planning matters but as an exemplar to other gardens trusts. The SE Region Forum of gardens trusts asked us to speak on our work at Basingstoke last year, including the outreach we achieved with the walks and talks programme and the courses. This has inspired other trusts to take up the challenge.

There is lots of good news this year. There are definite moves towards having the Orangery at Panshanger restored and a practical use found for it. We are part of the working group on this project.

The Node at Codicote has been sold to Wilson Homes, with whom we have had a good working relationship in the past over Bayfordbury and Bengoe. They have undertaken to restore the Paxton Peach House at the Node.

The re-instatement of the Arts and Crafts gardens round the Lorimer wing at Balls Park has proceeded very well with advice from us on planting and statues.

We had a successful study day at Lockers Park School last April discussing Geoffrey Jellicoe's water gardens at Hemel Hempstead. Lots of good has come from this. We are putting together documentation for a Heritage Lottery Fund bid to restore it, together with many others we have raised its profile, we are putting together an argument for upgrading the Register Entry and we have successfully appealed to the government over English Heritage's refusal to list the concrete structures which will be considered in the light of the new evidence presented. However there is some very bad news in that Dacorum Council are thinking of siting their new Civic Centre/Library/Police station plus extra parking on the west bank of the water gardens. We will fight this proposal and have already started to think about a 'Save our Serpent Campaign' to raise much-needed Friends for the garden.

There is no good news on Ponsbourne Park either, where Tesco applied to have the

requirement for an Environmental Impact Appraisal waived on the ground that it was not a historic park! We objected but the council agreed with Tesco so they are one step nearer to demolishing the Victorian mansion and important local landscape and building a 1-hectare glass box with associated parking, and planting biomass for their green boilers in the historic landscape.

The battle over the new waste facility at Hatfield has now started in earnest. We feel that the dome at 45m and the chimneys at more than 70 m high will have an adverse impact, not only on the adjacent Grade I Hatfield Park and House but on several of our other important landscapes such as Brocket Park (Grade II), North Mymms, &c . English Heritage and the Garden

History Society have both objected strongly and we have objected on the grounds that there is likely to be a great adverse impact but the inadequate projections produced for the planning application are insufficient to make a considered comment upon. In this we are of the same mind as Hatfield House.

This coming year we will have the new planning legislation to consider. We have already commented that it is ill thought out and likely to result in unforeseen (by the legislators) detriments not only to our historic landscapes but the settings of some of our historic buildings. Many other bodies, such as the National Trust and CPRE have also expressed their reservations and we are watching their progress.

Wrest Park (W)Rescued!

One of the great gardens of the 18th and 19th century, Wrest Park, is undergoing a comprehensive period of restoration by English Heritage. The early 18th century canal and Archer pavilion were inspired by the French style of Versailles. Formal parterres and forest gardens of trees were dotted with strategically placed pavilions and garden buildings, designed by some of the leading architects of the day. Capability Brown worked on the garden in 1758 and again in 1778. In 1833 Thomas, Earl de Grey, designed the current house in the Louis XV style, added extensive walled gardens and laid out the parterres in the fashionable revival style.

The 20 year restoration project was begun in 2006 and HGT members have an opportunity to visit the house for a guided tour of the gardens in July .

(See p13 for details).

Schools' Report - Bella Stuart-Smith

Celebrating the 20th anniversary with something new, the schools team went to the County show at the end of May. Despite our location with cacti, bees, and flower arrangers in the Horticultural tent we had a very successful time. It is surprisingly hard work setting up a stand; the old hands had all the essentials in the back of their vans – lots of cups of tea and biscuits and the wonderful smell of all day breakfast! We had planted up two wheelbarrows with a school in Hemel which we used to advertise our stand and the customers poured in: toddlers, grandparents, teenagers and parents. All went away happy to have made and planted a pot, to have sat down without having to



Schools award winners—hard at work on their raised beds.

part with any money; and a fair few went away with leaflets about the Trust and its work.

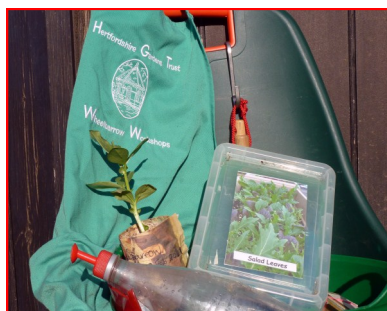
The volunteers who helped man the stall were terrific: we only achieve what we do because of them. The awards scheme attracted 37 schools, 24 of which won something and 5 of the 6 top awards were start up projects, which was encouraging. I was lucky enough to visit Roman Fields in Hemel, a remarkable school which caters for excluded and troubled adolescents from across the county who are outside mainstream education. Our money helped to buy a greenhouse which they will use to extend their gardening year. It was so refreshing to see a very different education having such success as they aim to get the young people back into mainstream.

Finally the wheelbarrow workshops, with continued sponsorship from Thompson and Morgan who supply our seeds; it is difficult to get communication with schools right but we have sent out an electronic newsletter this year and I have no doubt we will be fully booked until the end of May.

Long Live 'Mrs Wheelbarrow'! - Maggie MacRae

"So, do we eat any roots of plants?" I ask. "NO!" chorus the children emphatically and a little indignantly. "Oh yes we do, every day. What do you have with fish?" I ask, holding up a rather mouldy potato from the demo box as a big clue. "Peas" comes back the confident answer! Everybody laughs and eventually we whittle it down to a potato and they get the hang of what I'm talking about. A forest of hands goes up and the types of roots we might eat come in thick and fast – carrots, parsnips, turnips, beetroot together with a few more sophisticated surprises such as ginger or horseradish. Not knowing the level of knowledge or experience of any group of children is one of the challenges facing a Mrs Wheelbarrow for HGT, and it is not as simple as rural v urban schools.

Every Thursday in the growing season the little green barrows are trundled by volunteers through the corridors of countless primary schools with the aim of encouraging Primary 3 and 4 children (in the main) to think about growing food to eat and to let them have hands-on planting experience in their classroom. Why do we do it?



Mrs Wheelbarrow—the props!

The official answer is for that age group to develop knowledge of (and hopefully a lifelong interest in) where their food comes from and how they could participate. The real reason is because it is so rewarding. Each workshop develops differently, either in pace or emphasis, depending on the children taking part.

In an hour long workshop the children learn a little more about the life cycle of plants. The hands-on part of each workshop allows each group to plant different things in different ways; but the crowning moment is always the making of a paper pot and planting a broad bean or a pea to take home. We encourage them to bring the pots back later in the term to see whose has grown most – sadly we never get to see the end results but the absorbed way in which all the children, without exception, fall to the task is good enough.

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