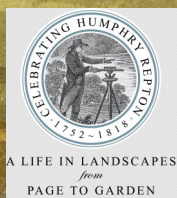


HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2018 AND ANNUAL REPORT



From the President:

This year, 2018, marks the beginning of a new Chairmanship under Roger Gedy. I am sure that all the members of the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust will give him their support.

*Having recently celebrated Capability Brown, now we can turn our attention to Humphry Repton. The Trust is marking the bicentenary of his death with a new publication, **Humphry Repton in Hertfordshire**.*

We have winter talks and summer walks to look forward to, one of the latter is to focus on the St Albans Abbey Monastic Gardens. I do urge members to concentrate on this as there are plans afoot to improve the landscape around the Abbey in conjunction with the construction of the new entrance building. If anyone knows any individuals or Trusts who would be interested in supporting this project then please let me know.

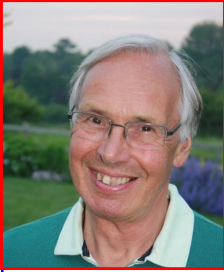
The Hertfordshire Gardens Trust is a splendid organisation and it gives me great pleasure to be writing the foreword under Roger's leadership.

Bione Vanlam.

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Chairman's Report—Roger Gedye



My experience since July has confirmed the impression that HGT has a really great group of volunteer members: supportive, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. My thanks to all of you who returned my questionnaire (and if there are still a few with the forms 'propped behind the clock', it is not too late to send them back!) The returns show general approval for the programme of activities on offer, with a proportion suggesting that they might give unfamiliar activities a try – which is most encouraging.

An average of 35 members attended each of our first two Winter Talks. The programme for 2018/19, including some attractive and interesting 'Summer Walks', is advertised on pages 18-22. With the regular programme of garden visits and an evening talk and tasting of wine in September, there is an eclectic programme of activity for members throughout the year, and I am immensely grateful for the leaders and helpers who make this programme possible. I have one appeal: Tina Rowland, who played a key part in setting up our programme of Talks and Walks, is not able to join the planning group next autumn. I would love to hear from any member of the Trust who could volunteer to help the group in her place.

The Association of Garden Trusts and the Garden History Society merged successfully to form 'The Gardens Trust'. A small headquarters team is working hard to support the County Trusts on a

regional and a national basis, and it is good to have the opportunity to meet and share experiences with our neighbours. Those involved in research, conservation or educational activities for HGT may like to take part in future regional, or national, events – do let me know.

We are extremely fortunate to receive the support of leaders of the quality of Kate Harwood and Anne Rowe. A glance at their reports shows the quality and extent of their commitment. Hertfordshire's designed landscape is under extreme pressure, notably from housing development and industrial mineral processing operations; somehow Kate brings her tenacity and expertise to bear on a multiplicity of challenges, and still finds time to offer imaginative and stimulating courses for the benefit of our members.

HGT's most ambitious publication to date, *Humphry Repton in Hertfordshire: documents and landscapes*, is to be launched at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) at County Hall on April 19th, with a talk by Tom Williamson. This will be a splendid event, the culmination of two years' hard work by HGT's Research Group, timed to contribute to the national celebrations commemorating the works of this great garden designer. To whet your appetites, this volume of the Newsletter features articles from Tom and from a selection of the book's contributors.

I look forward to meeting members at our events, and to welcome you to our AGM, held this year at Thundridge Hill House on July 12th (page 22)

*'The culmination of two years' hard work by
HGT's Research Group.'*

***Humphry Repton in Hertfordshire:
documents and landscapes***

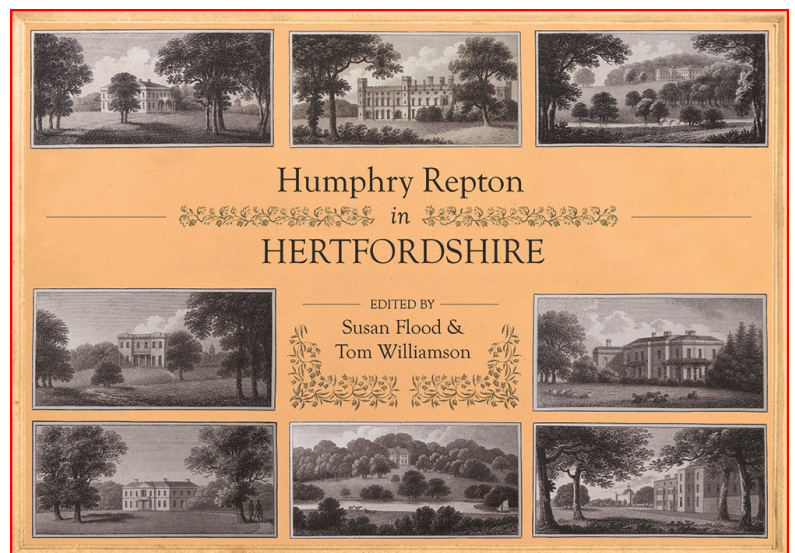
Edited by Susan Flood and Tom Williamson

Hertfordshire Publications: an imprint of UH Press

ISBN 978-1-909291-98-0

Hardback, Spring 2018

£25

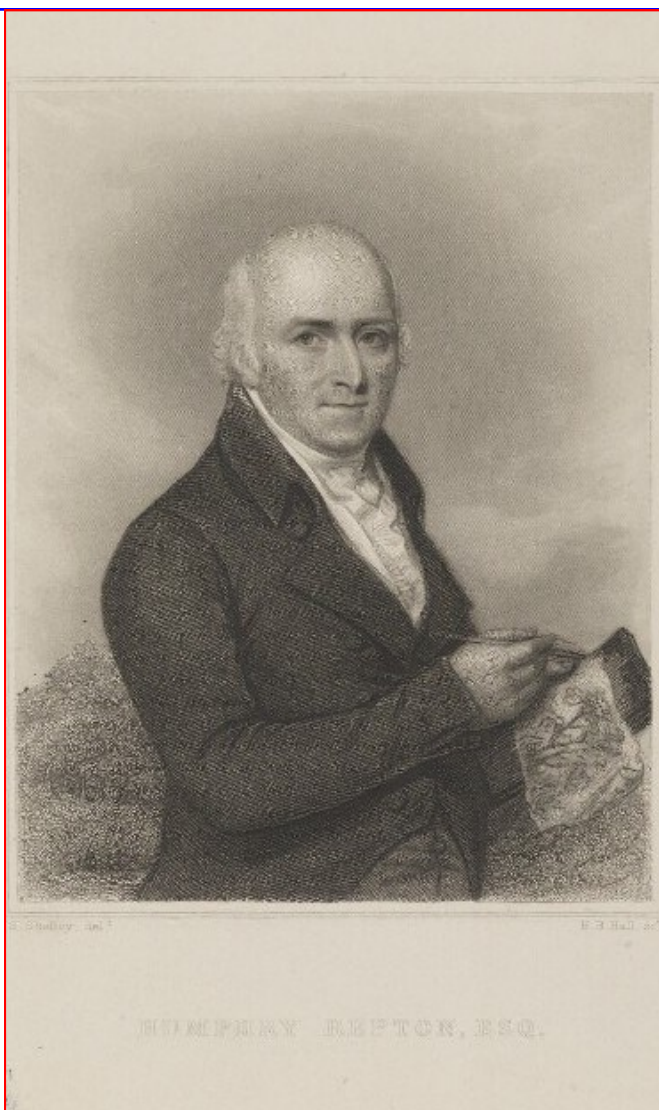


Repton and Brown

Just as we finish celebrating the tercentenary of Capability Brown's birth, along comes another anniversary, that of Humphry Repton's death in 1818. But Repton is in many ways a more interesting figure to study, not least because – unlike Brown, who wrote little and published nothing – he wrote prodigiously, and published much. And he is a designer whose work is particularly well represented in Hertfordshire.

Repton began working as a professional landscape gardener five years after Brown's death in 1783. He continued to produce designs for nearly three decades. In broad terms, just as Repton's career spanned the cusp of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, so his style represents a bridge between the 'naturalistic' landscape parks of Brown, and the more structured and formal gardens of the Victorian period. By the end of his career, as we see in Mick Thompson's article on Ashridge, p.11, Repton was designing highly formal gardens, even geometric parterres, of the kind that would have appalled Brown.

There were significant differences of approach between the two men, born in part of the fact that Repton tended to deal with smaller properties than Brown. Repton was employed to improve the grounds of local gentry or wealthy businessmen, rather than focusing on the extensive demesnes of great aristocrats. From an early date, Repton criticised Brown's meandering drives, which were much less suitable for smaller park landscapes than for large, and Repton more generally relied on subtlety to produce his effects. If Brown was a cosmetic surgeon, Repton was a make-up artist. Where Brown would hide an unpleasant feature in the prospect with massed planting at a distance, Repton tended to use a few carefully placed trees in the foreground. He was a master of illusion, of making a little go a long way. At Lamer, for example, he recommended that the entrance drive should not leave the public road at a right angle, as this would 'rob it of importance'. It should instead form a smooth curve, preferably so arranged that 'the high road may appear to branch from the approach rather than the approach from the high road'.



*Humphry Repton by Henry Bryan Hall
published by Longman & Co, after Samuel Shelley
stipple and line engraving, published 1839
NPG D5801
© National Portrait Gallery, London*

The Red Books

There were differences, too, in their working practices. Brown supplied not only a design for his clients but also a team of sub-contractors and labourers who made it a reality. With a few exceptions, Repton supplied only the design. He sometimes staked out the line of an approach, or the precise boundaries of an area of planting, on the ground, and he occasionally supervised the activities of a contractor. But his main contribution was the plan for improvement, usually although by no means invariably presented in the form of a 'Red Book'. This contained a text which analysed the appearance and character of the landscape as it was and explained how it could be best improved,

together with a series of watercolours, some with flaps which could be lifted to reveal the changes he proposed making.

Repton and social change

Repton was highly sensitive to the social aspirations of the moderately wealthy, and their particular concern to dominate, or at least appear to dominate, the countryside around them, something he described as 'appropriation'. He was also more aware than Brown had been of the close links between the size, role and architectural style of a residence – its particular 'character' – and the design of its grounds. These concerns need to be viewed in the context of wider contemporary changes in society and economy, especially the growing social importance and influence in the late eighteenth century of the local gentry, and the rising numbers and increasing wealth of merchants and financiers, keen to build 'villas' with parks, but often without a significant estate attached, within easy reach of the major cities. Such changes were particularly important in Hertfordshire, and especially in the south of the county, where many wealthy Londoner businessmen bought small manors or even farmhouses and converted them into fashionable residences.

The Hertfordshire evidence

This spring, the University of Hertfordshire Press will publish a lavishly illustrated volume on Repton's Hertfordshire commissions, the result of several years' hard work by members of the HGT's Research Group. Rather than write a general work on Repton's activities in Hertfordshire, we decided to produce something that was both more useful and more ambitious. The book thus presents complete transcripts of the seven known 'Red Books' Repton prepared for places in the county, with full colour reproductions of all their illustrations. These are accompanied by a short introduction to the sites in question. Also reproduced in full is the remarkably detailed archive relating to Repton's commission at Haileybury, the East India Company's training college, between 1808 and 1810. A second section presents, in a similar way, all the evidence which associates Repton with a further 11

places in Hertfordshire, each again with a brief introductory discussion. The result is a volume that not only looks very beautiful, but which can also allow readers to make their own interpretations of what Repton did or did not do at various places.

In the course of all this work members of the research group discovered exciting information which has allowed us to reappraise aspects of Repton's art. To take but one example: it is usually assumed that the 'Red Books' provide a good indication of what Repton proposed for particular places but at Panshanger, the estate accounts show a far more extensive involvement, and there are strong hints of something similar at Wall Hall. Above all, the particular social composition of Hertfordshire at this time – the influx of people with 'new money', keen to differentiate from the farming population around them – ensures that several of the Red Books provide particularly interesting discussions of 'character' and 'appropriation'. At Woodhill in Essendon for example the small villa stood next to a public road, although its diminutive estate extended along both sides of it. Repton insisted that the house,

'Can hardly be described as "standing near or by the side of this road", it ought rather to be said that "the road passes thro' the premises". This idea will be strongly enforced by a similarity of fence on each side of the road, at least in front of the house'.

It is the subtlety of his approach, and the complex interplay of social attitudes and design evident in his writings, that make Humphry Repton so interesting to study, especially in the context of a county like Hertfordshire.

Tom Williamson, Professor of Landscape History at the University of East Anglia, directs HGT's Research Group.

In search of Repton

Humphry Repton is in some ways an enigma, as far as his work in Hertfordshire is concerned. As the bicentenary of his death in 1818 approached, HGT decided to discover what exactly Repton did in Hertfordshire, where and for whom, and whether any of this work survived on the ground. Our aim was to compile the detailed discussion and gazetteer of Repton's Hertfordshire commissions that will be published this year.

HGT Research Group members were already familiar with the records held at Hertfordshire Archives (HALS). The county maps, early nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey Drawings, individual estate maps and plans, and the marvellous collection of prints and drawings held there can kick start any research. Nevertheless, we found we needed to cast the net much wider to find direct evidence that Repton had worked or had some involvement, even if just in an advisory capacity, at the Hertfordshire sites we identified.

Repton's surviving manuscripts are scattered across archives in the UK and USA, in county record offices, university and research libraries and private collections. The largest collection of Repton family documents, the Aylsham papers, is at the Norfolk Record Office (NRO). Material relating to Humphry Repton (1752-1818) is contained in the private papers of his son William (died 1858), a partner in the firm of Adey, Repton and Scott, solicitors of Aylsham. These documents are useful for general research into aspects of Repton's contribution to the English landscape, but they contain nothing specific to his work in Hertfordshire. NRO also holds the only surviving account book of Repton's work as a landscape gardener, covering the period 1788-1790. While it does contain references to work undertaken in Hertfordshire, the period it covers is too early for many of our Hertfordshire sites.

Family correspondence reflecting Humphry's personal and legal affairs and his work as a landscape gardener is contained in part of the Aylsham collection that was purchased in 1974 by the Huntington Library in California. Just one letter mentions Hertfordshire: writing to William in 1808, Humphry refers to a visit he intends to make to Sir Culling Smith at Bedwell Park. He says that he will 'earn 20 guineas' – a large sum. Could he have been planning a Red Book? Despite this letter, we have found little evidence of Repton's work at Bedwell, and no trace of a Red Book.

Even the extensive Whitbread family archive held at Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service does not mention him. Several letters between Sir Culling Smith and Samuel Whitbread, from whom he purchased the estate, refer enigmatically to Smith's desire to fell some trees, but to what purpose he is silent. We can only guess that it might have been to open up a vista in his park.

The Hertfordshire Red Books

There is, however, firm evidence that nine Red Books were produced for Hertfordshire sites. We now know that six of these survive. This total includes Ashridge and Haileybury, whose Red Books were produced in loose-leaf format, rather than with the usual red morocco leather binding. HALS is very fortunate in owning the Red Books for Panshanger and Tewin Water, two sites where Repton's work can still be seen today. A further two are in private ownership: the Red Book for Wood Hill, Essendon, was tracked down by an HGT researcher to the John Soane Museum, London (see p. 9) and the Ashridge Red Book is in the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California. All the owners and custodians of these Red Books have generously allowed copies of them to be reproduced in our Hertfordshire volume.

The report that Repton produced in January 1809 for the East India Company containing details of his proposals for Haileybury has been lost, although correspondence, plans and accounts survive amongst the Company's archives at the British Library. These include extensive details of the work completed there. Sadly, both the Lamer and Wyddial Red Books have been lost, and we can only guess how many other Red Books may have been produced for Hertfordshire estates.

More connections

The existence of a Repton drawing in *Peacock's Polite Repository*, an annual publication produced between 1790 and 1811, hints at Repton's involvement at a further nine sites in Hertfordshire. This makes a total of 18 estates at which he may have worked, one of the highest concentrations in the country. Despite extensive research, we have not been able to establish a Repton connection for Little Court, Buntingford and Marchmont House, Hemel Hempstead. However, we have added one more site, Digswell, to make a grand total of 19. Relying on evidence drawn from extensive correspondence and personal papers

in the Cowper archive, we feel confident that Repton did advise there. Digswell's owner, Edward Spencer Cowper, took a close interest in Repton's work at Panshanger and Tewin Water, at the time when all three sites were being re-developed.

Three of our sites are situated in the parish of Aldenham, where Repton was engaged by wealthy businessmen to improve their Hertfordshire country retreats. These were the smaller properties he worked on in Hertfordshire, which are closer to London. His work at Organ Hall and Wall Hall was well known. The Red Book for Wall Hall is safe in private ownership. If a Red Book was made for Organ Hall, it does not now survive.

The Research Group only became aware of the third Aldenham site, Hilfield, when work on the book was well under way. As so often in these matters, a tip-off from a fellow researcher proved the catalyst for further enquiry. The references come from the archive of the Parker family now held at the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office,

which contains the extremely chatty letters written by Theresa Villiers, née Parker, the wife of George, owner of Hilfield. They include a lot of detail about the ongoing work on the gardens at the Villiers' new house at Hilfield. Without the web catalogue and the detail now being added to it we would never have discovered so much about Repton's relationship with George Villiers.

There are references to other sites in Repton's published works including his Memoir, which was not published until the twentieth century. But many details remain elusive; firm evidence for Repton's work is still a matter of conjecture in many areas. The Internet is a fantastic source for references to archives. Many local and national offices are gradually adding more and more details of their catalogues on line. Who knows how much more may be discovered in the future as researchers (often volunteers) read through the mountain of personal correspondence held in archive offices around the country. Further information may well be found in surprising places. Watch this space!

Humphy Repton at Lamer and Shardeloes—Liz Carlin

One of the most interesting and satisfying things about doing research for the HGT is making connections. Asked to look at Lamer Park just outside Wheathampstead, I discovered that Repton had visited in 1790 and 1792 and produced a Red Book. The original book is now sadly lost, although I have seen and transcribed a photocopy.

Repton was called in to complete the landscaping of the park after the death in 1784 of Nathaniel Richmond, who had worked with Capability Brown since 1754. Richmond had a hand in designing several Hertfordshire estates, including Moor Park. Had Charles Garrard Drake, the owner of Lamer, been encouraged to employ both these fashionable designers because of their reputations, or because they both had worked for his father Walter Drake? Walter Drake was a distinguished, long-serving Member of Parliament, who owned Shardeloes at Amersham in Buckinghamshire. His son Charles inherited Lamer from a cousin, Benet Garrard, and added 'Garrard' to his name in order to do so. His great-grandmother had been Jane Garrard.

Repton also produced a Red Book for Shardeloes in 1792, which I was delighted to find, after months of trying to find Lamer's, was said to be in the Amersham museum. Excitedly I set off in the ice and snow before Christmas to keep my appointment with the curator. Unfortunately, the

book turned out to be a photocopy, but the watercolours had been photographed, so that was one step better than the Lamer book. The Shardeloes original remains in private hands.

Repton was pleased with what he saw of work already done at Lamer. He saw no reason to alter anything that Richmond had done to the gardens around the house or to the pleasure grounds, which offered pleasant walks through woodland. He suggested only the development of a circular walk bringing the walkers back along an avenue for a little variety. His largest complaint was that although the distant views seen from the house were extensive and attractive, they were marred by a 'too great expanse of uninteresting lawn'.

At Shardeloes he was asked to shape the northern part of the park. From the house, the ground dropped away beyond the garden over pasture to a lake at the bottom of the valley and then rose again over pastures with clumps of trees dotted across them to woodlands with a ride running through. This prospect he wrote, presented 'a subject so beautiful that few will suppose that any further improvement necessary'. However, like by the lawn at Lamer, the view was marred by the turnpike which ran



'Before'

Repton's water-colour painting of the view across the lake at Shardeloes

Images by courtesy of Edward Copisarow, Private Collection



'After'

along the valley and by the lake, which, although he admired it, made another division. The lake and beyond was his commission. As at Lamer, his main concern was to enliven the view and vary the rides.

The watercolour maps in the Red Book show that he suggested clumps and dells to break the line of the wood and instead of planting extra trees, removing some, leaving gaps which suggested that the park extended beyond. He remarked that the existing rides through the woodland could be tedious, and his plan would bring them close to the edge offering views in both directions as well as crossing open ground before moving back into the seclusion of the trees. He also suggested a pavilion on a knoll in a dell at the edge of the wood facing the house which could be a focal point for a walk or a refreshment break. His guiding principle was that 'the traces of artificial management be everywhere more concealed.... which will give the whole an

air of more nature and less art.'

At Lamer he suggested that the view across the lawn needs to be broken by plantations to enrich the view but in clumps, disliking, as at Shardeloes, one continuous screen of trees. There are beautiful watercolour drawings in the Red Book for Shardeloes of the before and after planting and rides on the north side of the park, and a walk along the public footpath offers fine views today over the lake to the wooded slopes beyond. But even when accompanied as I was by Kate Harwood, on a bitterly cold day in December, it was difficult to say how much of what was suggested had been done. And the same is true of Lamer. Here, Repton left no plan, and the site is now so altered that little of the original remains except part of the bordering woodland through which a bridleway still runs.

There is of course great pleasure in speculation. Were those pairs of very old oaks the remains of an avenue? They certainly seemed to be in a line! Was that the remains of a dam Repton suggested at the end of the lake, under all that undergrowth? Frustratingly, only a glimpse of some ironwork could be seen from the path. The edge of the lake was no longer 'bald and naked' as he complained, but whether the ancient hawthorns were planted at his suggestion, we have no way of knowing. He thought that the valley was deep enough to take a Doric arch 'inbosed with' wood at the other end of the lake but we didn't see any evidence of that - and it was too cold to search further. That's the thing about research. There's always more to see and do.



The lake at Shardeloes today

Photo— Kate Harwood

Finding the Red Book for Woodhill—Monica Jordan

In 2011, I joined the research group of the HGT and asked Anne Rowe to allocate me a property to research. She sent me a list of four properties, one of which was Woodhill (or Wood Hill as it was known). She thought that Woodhill might be of interest because of a possible connection with Humphry Repton. It turned out to be a fascinating choice and I am still researching it six or seven years later.

I began with the early history and found that Wood Hill house did not exist before 1753. In 1784, it was sold to Mr George Stainforth, a banker, who expanded the site. In 1803 he commissioned Repton to look at his small estate of 100 acres. At that time, I was attending classes in Garden History at Capel Manor, where Kate Harwood introduced us to Repton's work and books on Repton by Stephen Daniels and Andre Rogger. I looked up the list of Red Book sites in both books and found that Wood Hill appeared on those lists, but with little information. However, it showed that the Red Book had existed. I emailed Andre Rogger to ask if he knew anything about it, including its location. He did not know whether it still existed or, if it did, where it could be found. He told me to contact John Phibbs, whose advice was to search the Internet carefully. This amounted to a recommendation to look for a needle in a haystack, but his response encouraged me to keep looking.

Whenever I used my computer I spent a little time searching under various terms, and for weeks, I found nothing. I tried terms such as "Woodhill", "Wood Hill", "Repton", "red book", "Stainforth" and I used them in different combinations. All the results of each search had to be examined carefully, which was quite time consuming. One day I finally had a positive hit. A short piece of text appeared, which was part of a very long text file. I had managed to get the right combination of terms for it to be identified. The file came from the Sir John Soane's Museum, and the Red Book was part of a long list of items that are in the museum, but not in the catalogue.

I contacted the archivist to ask if they had the book, and if I could see it. She said that they did have the Wood Hill Red Book, and that I would be able to look at it. I made an appointment, and with great anticipation went down to Lincolns Inn Fields in London. We went into the museum where we were met and taken to the premises next door. A small red book was on the table. It was undoubtedly a Repton Red Book, bound in red Moroccan leather. When I looked inside, I had a wonderful surprise. The book had not been looked at for decades or even longer, and the sketches were as bright as the day they were drawn. I was amply rewarded for my patience.



*Repton's Red Book for Wood Hill—Forecourt with overlay
Courtesy of the Picture Library, Sir John Soane's Museum*

‘Good taste can only be acquired by leisure and observation; it is not therefore to be expected in men whose time is fully employed in the more important acquirement of wealth and fame.’

(Humphry Repton, Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, 1803)

There is little doubt that Humphry Repton, a man always concerned about his reputation and status, preferred to work for long-established landowners with large estates and recognised social standing. However, the quickening commercialism of English society in his time obliged him also to take on newly rich clients with rather different values, who chose to acquire a country property as evidence of their social ambition. Good examples are brothers Matthew and William Towgood, who employed Repton around 1802 to work at their Hertfordshire estates, respectively New Barnes near St Albans, and Organ Hall, near Radlett.

The Towgoods were descendants of a West Country nonconformist family of considerable renown. Their grandfather Michaijah Towgood was a minister in Exeter, and made his reputation writing a series of controversial publications. His son Matthew worked as a minister in Bridgwater, before becoming involved in trade with the West Indies – certainly sugar, and possibly slaves as well. He made a substantial fortune, ultimately moving to London where he started a merchant bank in partnership with James Langston of Sarsden House, Oxfordshire. After his death in 1791, his estate was divided equally between his five children – three sons and two daughters.

All three sons used the money to set themselves up as propertied gentlemen. In 1795 the eldest son John, who ran the family bank in Clements Lane, bought a newly built mansion and large garden on Clapham Common West Side. In 1797 Matthew, the youngest, bought New Barnes (192 acres); and finally in 1801 the second son, William, acquired the estate of Organ Hall (130 acres). Both Hertfordshire estates were subsequently enlarged by further land purchases, but remained modest in size.

The employment of Repton to help with the fashionable development of the New Barnes and Organ Hall estates may have been inspired by the work he had done for

Langston, the Towgood family’s business partner, at Sarsden House in 1795. Our knowledge of Repton’s activities at Organ Hall is sketchy, especially as the house and estate are long gone.

But the New Barnes house still survives, albeit as part of Sopwell House Hotel, as does much of the estate, now Verulam Golf Course. And vitally, the Red Book which Repton produced for Matthew Towgood is in the Gorhambury House archives. It is evident from its text that Repton struggled to come to terms with the views and values of at least this representative of his commercial clientele.

The main difference of opinion between the two men was over a proposed new approach driveway to the house. In their on-site discussions Repton recommended a new drive, partly to show off the beauty of the estate to visitors; Matthew Towgood appears to have regarded the whole idea as an unnecessary expense. In the Red Book he subsequently wrote for Towgood, Repton makes a point of lecturing him on the meaning of True Taste, which ‘teaches us that we do not live for ourselves alone’, and comments that ‘if profit were only to be considered, the lawn in front of the house must continue to be sown with corn and the flower garden at the back with potatoes and cabbages’. Although Towgood acted upon a number of Repton’s less controversial suggestions, the new approach drive never materialised.

Although the Towgoods had acquired country estates, and were prepared to devote a certain amount of time and money to develop and expand them to meet contemporary expectations, it seems their main interests remained commercial. William Towgood continued as a partner in a sugar refining company, and Matthew Towgood became heavily involved in the development of mechanised papermaking by the Fourdrinier brothers at Frogmore Mill on the River Gade, an innovative industrial process financed by the Towgood bank. Ultimately these interests took both brothers away from Hertfordshire. Matthew left New Barnes in about 1810 to help develop the papermaking business at St Neots, and William moved on from Organ Hall in 1820, to set up a new bank in Cardiff. While Humphry Repton may have assisted both men to enhance the beauty of their estates, they and their families did not stay around very long to enjoy the results.

Humphry Repton at Ashridge—Mick Thompson

Humphry Repton (1752- 1818) was the first person in Britain to describe himself as landscape gardener. He picked up the mantle of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, who had died five years before Repton embarked on his new career as landscape gardener. This article will consider his commission for Ashridge in 1813, and a probable link with Brown.

Repton was given an almost free hand within the area of the commission. As can be seen from the plan included in his proposals, Repton divides the garden into two sections. The eastern half of the garden, entitled 'Ancient Garden', gives a nod to the wider landscape tradition of Brown who had worked at Ashridge some fifty years earlier. It is overlooked by the house built by Henry Holland Senior for

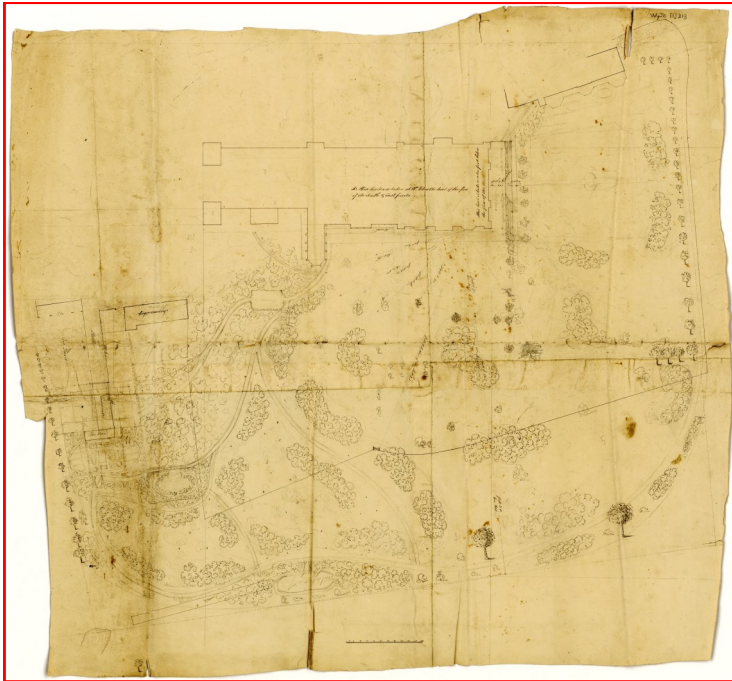


Plan of the Gardens at Ashridge 1813. From Red Book for Ashridge. Getty Research Institute. Los Angeles. (850834).

The *Proposals for the Gardens of Ashridge*, whilst technically not a Red Book, as they were presented in an unbound folio, are one of Repton's significant late commissions. Referred to in Repton's final book, *Fragments*, published in 1816 as 'the novelty of this attempt to collect a number of gardens, differing from each other', this innovative design would set a trend for the future. Ashridge can be seen as a significant step in the transition in style that heralded the return of a series of smaller gardens close to the house.

the Third Duke of Bridgewater. The western half, entitled 'Modern Pleasure Ground' is the collection of fifteen gardens Repton proposed. Many of them were created as described, and elements of others are used.

The gardens were laid out by Jeffry Wyatt, who was continuing work on the construction of Ashridge House following the death of his uncle, James Wyatt in 1813.



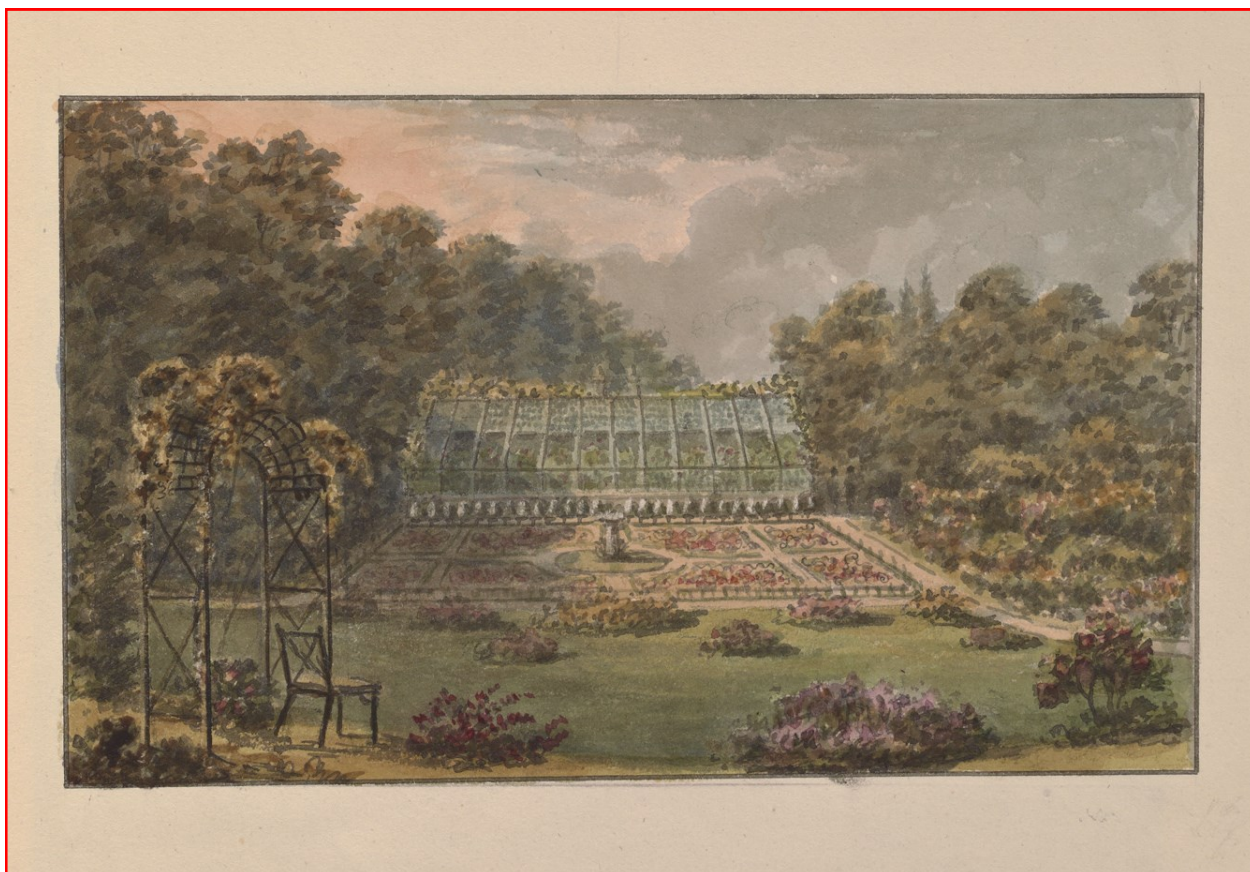
*Plan of the Pleasure Grounds by Jeffry Wyatt. RIBA.
SA15/WYE [1](313)*

Jeffry Wyatt's plan depicts the garden before work commenced. The site had been cleared of the earlier monastic buildings and surrounding walls. Within the

garden, apart from avenues of lime, yew and elm along with a few, possibly Brownian, shrubberies and a wire fence, the garden was a blank canvas. A bank and ditch on the line of the wire fence shown on the plan also roughly follows the line of the path shown on Repton's plan. It is highly likely that Repton retained much of the garden shown on the Wyatt plan, with minor amendments, to form his 'Ancient Garden.'

Most of the fifteen gardens proposed by Repton for the 'Modern Pleasure Ground' were laid out by Jeffry Wyatt, with minor additions. The significance of Ashridge is the return of Flower Gardens to the proposals. Forms of Flower Gardens would appear in many of Repton's plans, although not all were realised in their exact form. Examples include Woburn (1804), Brighton Pavilion (1808) and Ashridge (1813).

At Ashridge, three significant flower gardens of differing styles were proposed and laid out. A formal garden was proposed in front of a lean-to glasshouse known as the Flower Stove.



Flower Stove

'It is impossible to represent such a subject in a Landscape yet in reality, it is one of the chief agrimens of Garden Comfort and the formal embroider'd parterre is in Character with it. Perhaps an Apiary with Glass Beehives might be added.'

The Countess of Bridgewater's Flower Garden was an informal arrangement of 28 individual flowerbeds, that could be seen as a precursor of the Gardenesque. For the creation of the rose garden Repton proposed a single genus flower, with a formal pattern of beds that drew on French design and signified a return to an element of formality. The pattern proposed, representing a flower, had been used many times before. Brown had made a similar proposal for the garden at Brocklesby some forty years earlier.

There were many influences on Repton in the move to include proposals for flower gardens in his commissions. The use of the "corbeille" for flowers showed he was aware of French publications illustrating designs for gardens. The placing of small flowerbeds, often enclosed in basket work, in an informal layout rather than within the bounds of a formal garden was a feature increasingly used from the commencement of his career. Similarly, his device to create a parterre by surrounding a garden with some form of shrubbery showed an awareness of French and Italian design. Such a device was applied in gardens such as the detailed design for Lady Wakes Flower gardens at Courteenhall in 1791.

The Gardens at Ashridge remain one of Repton's most significant extant commissions. In recent years, the Rose



Rosarium

'This sketch of a Rose garden shows a lighter sort of Trellis than that of the flower garden, but to secure its durability, the hoops may be formed of iron'

garden and the Flower garden have been restored. Unfortunately, Ashridge Gardens are no longer open to visitors with the exception of an open day for the National Gardens Scheme on 10th June 2018 and house and garden tours on Thursday afternoons in August 2018.

Images of the Rose Garden, Flower Garden and Flower Stove from Red Book. Getty Research Institute. Los Angeles. (850834)

A conference on the work of Repton will be held at Ashridge in association with the Gardens Trust on 10th and 11th August 2018.

Details from Sally Rouse at Ashridge. Tel. 01442 841028 or sally.rouse@ashridge.hult.edu.



Flower Garden

'This sketch is supposed to be taken from the East Entrance of the Sousterrain showing the sort of Cabinets de verdure composed of more massive trellis, than that described in the Rosarium'

When Jane Austen's novels take us into the Regency landscape, we may find the vogue for the 'picturesque' gently parodied. In *Pride and Prejudice*, when Elizabeth Bennet comes across Mr Darcy and the two Bingley sisters in the shrubbery, she exclaims, 'No, no stay where you are, you are charmingly grouped and appear to uncommon advantage. The picturesque would be spoilt by admitting the fourth...'. Longbourn, the Bennet family home, is situated in Hertfordshire. (Revealed when Mrs Bennet wonders what business Mr Bingley could have in town so soon after his arrival in Hertfordshire.) The exact whereabouts of Longbourn has prompted speculation – could the nearby town of Meryton in the novel be Hertford? Or perhaps Ware? In a famous scene in the novel, the confrontation between Elizabeth Bennet and formidable Lady Catherine de Bourgh, the characters move outside into the garden, which has fashionable elements: 'Lady Catherine very resolutely, and not very politely, declined eating anything; and then rising up, said to Elizabeth,

"Miss Bennet, there seemed to be a prettyish kind of a little wilderness on one side of your lawn. I should be glad to take a turn in it, if you will favour me with your company."

"Go, my dear," cried her mother, "and shew her ladyship about the different walks. I think she will be pleased with the hermitage."

In *Mansfield Park*, the fashion for 'improving' the landscape is addressed directly.

"Cut down an avenue! What a pity. Does not it make you think of Cowper? 'Ye fallen avenues once more I mourn your fate unmerited'," murmurs Fanny Price, when Mr Rushworth, determined upon 'improving' his estate at Sotherton, suggests cutting down the avenue of ancient oak trees. Sotherton is thought to be based on Stoneleigh Abbey, home of Jane Austen's wealthy relatives, the Leigh family. Repton produced a Red Book for Stoneleigh in 1809, two years before she is known to have visited in 1811. As the debate on how to 'improve' Sotherton unfolds, more characters have their say: "had I a place to new fashion, I should not put myself into the hands of an improver", asserts Edmund Bertram. "I would rather have an inferior degree of beauty, of my own choice, and acquired progressively. I would rather abide by my own blunders than by his."



Jane Austen
by Cassandra Austen
pencil and watercolour, circa 1810
© National Portrait Gallery, London

But Mr Rushworth has been inspired by a visit to a Repton landscape:

"I wish you could see Compton," said he; "it is the most complete thing! I never saw a place so altered in my life. I told Smith I did not know where I was. The approach *now*, is one of the finest things in the country..."

In comparison, he says, Sotherton looks like a dismal old prison.

"I must try to do something with it, but I do not know what. I hope I shall have some good friend to help me."

"Your best friend upon such an occasion," said Miss Bertram calmly, "would be Mr. Repton, I imagine."

"That is what I was thinking of. As he has done so well by Smith, I think I had better have him at once. His terms are five guineas a day."

Annual Research Report - Anne Rowe

Much of our effort at the beginning of 2017 was targeted at researching, compiling evidence and writing up entries for our book celebrating the work of Humphry Repton in Hertfordshire. Our efforts were spurred on by a very interesting Seminar and Soup day in March when Professor Tom Williamson gave us a talk on Repton and his work and told us how our findings in Hertfordshire were adding to – and challenging – current knowledge of this famous landscape designer. A series of short presentations followed Tom's talk, allowing us to discuss the evidence for several Repton sites in more detail:

Sally Pearson – New Barnes, Sopwell

Mick Thompson – Ashridge

Alison Moller – Wyddial Hall

Liz Carlin – Lamer

Anne Rowe – Panshanger and Tewin Water

By the summer, a dozen of us had submitted reams of papers and copies of maps and illustrations to Tom Williamson and Sue Flood who had bravely volunteered to take on the task of editing the book. And what a task it proved to be: the contributors had written far more than could be accommodated in the book, so Tom spent many hours carefully trimming the text down to acceptable proportions and Sue was kept equally busy sourcing illustrations and communicating with numerous archive repositories to obtain the permissions needed to reproduce their material in our book. By means of some determined detective work and dogged diplomacy Sue also managed to track down the Red Book for Wall Hall and this has now been re-photographed by Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS). So Repton's artwork for this site, as well as five others, will be portrayed in all its glory in the book which is due to be published by the University of Hertfordshire Press in the spring.

It promises to be a beautiful book and has an excellent and authoritative introduction written by Tom. We have managed to keep the retail price at a reasonable level thanks to some very generous donations from the

Gretna Trust and George Mitcheson, a bequest from Mary Campbell, and donations in memory of our founding Chairman, Lady Joan Stuart-Smith, together with £1000 from HGT funds.

Meetings for Researchers were held at HALS in January, April, July, September and November with an average of 8-9 attendees at each. At the meetings we shared experiences of researching more than 15 sites – some for the Repton book and others as part of our ongoing research projects. New Chairman Roger Gedye joined us for the meetings in January and September and County Archivist Chris Bennett attended our November meeting in order to show us the original Red Books for Wall Hall, Panshanger and Tewin Water – a unique treat.

Two excellent site reports were completed, printed and bound during the year:

High Leigh and Barclay Park at Hoddesdon by Tina Rowland

Wyddial Hall near Buntingford by Alison and Tosh Moller



The lake in the lower garden at High Leigh photographed by Tina Rowland April 2016

Copies of these will be deposited at HALS in due course and added to the collection of HGT site reports in the Garden History section of the Local Studies Library.

This has been another busy year with Local Plan Submissions and Examinations for East Herts, North Herts, Welwyn Hatfield, Broxbourne, St Albans and Dacorum. To inform and influence these plans as much as possible we have worked with a variety of groups and people across the county, notably the Central Herts Green Corridor Group for the Welwyn Hatfield and East Herts, but also the Letchworth Garden City Society for North Herts, local parish councils and concerned residents.

We have tried to engage with the developers on the Gilston site where 15,000 houses are allocated, though their understanding of the heritage issues seemed a little blinkered. My thanks to Anne Rowe for trying to engage with them; the archaeologists were somewhat more sympathetic though also constrained by their brief. We have critiqued many of the heritage submission documents for all local plans and found they did not take our designed landscape heritage into proper consideration.

We have also engaged with several parishes over their Neighbourhood Plans, actively encouraging the inclusion of our landscape heritage in their submissions. Sele Ward (Hertford) , Hertingfordbury, and Preston have all requested help. We are consulted by the District and Borough authorities on their parish neighbourhood plans and we have commented on these - about a dozen this year.

A huge problem, literally, in Hertfordshire is the overfilling of landfill sites after the extraction of minerals has finished. We have noted a huge mountain rising alongside the A10 south of Poles Park and are involved with the local community in protesting about the reshaping of the landscape around Roxford Grotto which has destroyed its setting. Eight years ago we raised the issue of excess run-off from the Waterhall site which was threatening the Roxford earthworks, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Concerns about the content of the filled area along the A414, known locally as the Birchall Alps, has formed part of the objections to the new Birchall Garden Suburb proposals.

We continue to monitor the planning applications submitted in Hertfordshire every week and are pleased

to note that more owners, developers and councils are consulting us before an application is submitted, though there are still plenty of horrors out there. A 23-storey block of flats for Watford Town Centre was approved despite being in the line of vision between Moor Park and Cassiobury Park, just where Bridgeman had removed the hill to make that view. There have also been plans for high-rise blocks in Hatfield town centre which would severely harm the setting of Hatfield House and its landscape.

There have been other disturbing applications: for a built farmyard and house in the Registered Repton landscape at Tewin Water, as well as a mineral extraction proposal on the edge of Panshanger and between Briggens and Stansted Bury, as if Gilston Garden Village was not threat enough.

Panshanger has moved on with the conditions for importing inert material to fill the two giant holes along the A414 on the Capability Brown site, finally agreed. A heritage committee has been set up to oversee the heritage enhancement (there are still some bits left!) and we sit on that. We also sit on the heritage group looking at producing an updated Heritage Management Plan for the whole site. Panshanger was placed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register in 2017 which has the benefit of much more involvement from Historic England and we are working with our HE landscape officer on a number of sites.

We have been approached by a number of owners and concerned residents such as at Berkhamsted Bothy, the Node at Codicote, North Road in Hertford, Rickmansworth town centre etc. and have been able to help some of them but not as much as we could wish.

The Orchards East Initiative was launched in 2017; HGT was at the initial meeting and is very involved in rolling this out across the county, with launches at Tewin and Fairfield Orchards and training days for surveyors. We have been encouraging local communities to become involved in this.

The GT are now preparing a companion volume on Repton and again Hertfordshire sites will tick all the boxes for bad management or oversight.

My Utopian Walks round our three local Gardens Cities

and Suburb were well attended and raised the points about what makes a real Garden City or Suburb, unlike some of the government's suggested garden developments at Birchall and Gilston which do not accord to Garden City principles as laid down by Ebenezer Howard.

For 2018, as a respite from the 18th century, I have organised a short course in three aspects of Victorian gardens which I hope will raise awareness of what we have lost and how we can conserve what is left.

The Repton bicentenary this year has led to much research across the country and as co-ordinator for that, I have been able to share much new information, although many gardens trusts are understandably hanging on to their results until they have published them. We will be

publishing the Repton book, edited by Sue Flood and Tom Williamson, and also the Proceedings of the Haileybury Study Day, Repton's only institutional landscape, edited by Toby Parker and myself with valuable input from Tosh Moller. The GT are also working with the Garden Museum in Lambeth on a county gardens trust symposium in the autumn where a lot of this new research will be aired. This will coincide with a major Repton exhibition at the museum from October. There are many events, talks, exhibitions, picnics and study days across the country. The major one in Hertfordshire will be at Ashridge in August, and we are in discussions about an event at Panshanger as well as the launch of The Book and a touring exhibition.

If anyone needs further information or would like our input, please contact me on conservation@hertsgardenstrust.org.uk

Annual Schools Report 2017-2018—Bella Stuart-Smith

After some thought, and a realistic assessment of the time commitment required to run both Wheelbarrow workshops and a competitive awards scheme in schools, we have decided on a slightly different approach for 2018. It is 10 years since these were launched and much has changed in that time in primary schools. Not least is the fact that the RHS has really risen to the challenge of gardening in schools, and the need for horticultural training for a future generation of gardeners in private, commercial and heritage sites. So the future is looking much brighter than it was when we launched the Wheelbarrow workshops. Many schools are engaged on the RHS schools programme and that is all positive.

There is always the need for funding from a schools perspective though, to help set up a garden. So, we are going to commit a sum per year, and wait to see which schools find out about us and apply. Those who are most keen to establish a garden can usually find out about a source of money. This will mean we are very much more restrained in the number of schools we commit to working with, and ensure that we guide them to produce a sensible working plan and make sure they have the staff commitment and knowledge to follow up with it, and deliver valuable gardening projects for their school community. I hope this will also mean a more manageable use of our resources too, while still supporting some gardening in Hertfordshire's schools.

From the Membership Secretary

We are pleased to say that our membership numbers have now reached 320. However, we would be very happy to recruit additional members. If you have friends or relatives who might be interested in receiving information about the HGT, please let us have their name and address and we will send them a membership brochure, mentioning your name as a further source of information.

To reduce our administrative costs, we would make a plea to those who pay their annual subscription by cheque to start paying by Standing Order. We would be most grateful if you would fill out the Standing Order form enclosed with

this Newsletter and forward it to your bank. Subscriptions are £30 for joint membership and £20 for an individual.

The due date for subscriptions is the 1st of April, 2018. If paying by cheque (payable to 'Hertfordshire Gardens Trust'), please send your cheque to the Membership Secretary, Mead House, Bromley Lane, Wellpond Green, Ware, SG11 1NW. Subscriptions for members who joined after December 2017 are next due on the 1st April 2019.

Please notify post or email address changes to membership@hertsgardenstrust.org.uk

Welcome to New Members 2017/2018

Mrs Susanna Bott
Mrs Clare Butler
Mr and Mrs L Hyman

Mr and Mrs Robert Irving
Mrs M D Scholes
Mrs Jacqueline Wheeler

Dates for your Diary—Events and Outings in 2018/2019

Garden Visit to Northampton and Rutland

Wednesday 27th June £52.50

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

Our first visit is to **Deene Park in Northamptonshire**, the home since 1514 of the Brudenell family, whose most famous member was the 7th Earl of Cardigan, who led the Charge of the Light Brigade. The contents and furnishings of Deene Park are exceptionally interesting, so after coffee we start the day with a private conducted tour of the house. Deene Park's grade II historic gardens, which enjoy extensive views over the lake and parkland, include a parterre designed by David Hicks with fine topiary, long borders providing a profusion of colour, a four season garden with statuary, a white garden and the latest addition, a gold garden.



After lunch in the Old Kitchen we drive a short distance into Rutland to visit **Redhill Lodge**, featured last November in Country Houses and Interiors. This is an exciting contemporary garden, the home of Susan Moffitt, herself a garden designer, who planted gardens at Chelsea in 2016 and 2017 for the sculptor James Parker. Features include a Japanese garden, an avenue of "Winter Orange" lime trees, a natural swimming pond, a viewing mound and clever use of water and sculpture. Tea and cakes will be served before we return home.

Garden Visit to Buckinghamshire

Wednesday, July 11th £49

**[Departure from Stanborough Green,
Welwyn Garden City at 9.30am]**

Our first visit will be **Hillesden House**, the home of Mr and Mrs Faccenda. With five acres of formal gardens and eighty acres of deer park, there is room for carp lakes, fountains and waterfalls, in addition to rose, alpine and herbaceous borders. Coffee/Tea will be taken on arrival. After lunch at The Old Thatched Inn at Adstock, we shall move on to **Kingsbridge Farm** at Steeple Claydon, belonging to Mr and Mrs Aldous. The house sits low and mellow under a warm tiled roof. The largely informal garden created by Serena Aldous mirrors the house. The lawn is enclosed by softly

Garden Visit to Suffolk

Tuesday 12th June £49

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

Coffee and cake will be served on arrival at **Fullers Mill, West Stow**. This enchanting 7 acre garden, created over 50 years by its owner, Bernard Tickner, is managed today by Perennial - The Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Society. The garden is situated on the banks of the River Lark and comprises woodland and a plantsman's collection of unusual shrubs, perennials, lilies and marginal plants.



Fullers Mill, West Stow

Following a drive to Moulton, where we shall have a light lunch at The Packhorse Inn, it is a short walk to **'11 Brookside'**. There are surprises aplenty in this beautiful, contemporary-styled garden. The garden's owners, Elizabeth Goodrich and Peter Mavroghenis, have shown a high level of imagination and creativity in its design, and maintained its quality with much love and hard work. Tea and cake will be served in the garden before setting off on our return journey.

curving borders; winding paths, interestingly planked, lead into a woodland garden on either side of a small stream, crossed by a variety of bridges.. The central vista across the main lawn leads out across a ha ha into the countryside. We shall have tea and cakes in the garden before leaving for home.



Kingsbridge Farm, Steeple Claydon

Reservations for places on the three garden visits should be made to Mrs Sonja Fillingham, using the 'flyer' which accompanies this Newsletter

HGT GUIDED WALKS

The cost of each walk is £5 Members are responsible for their own transport and refreshments.

Reservation and payment for places on the three walks should be made to Mrs Liz Carlin,
using the 'flyer' which accompanies the Newsletter

Each applicant will receive detailed information on the location, timing and the precise meeting point for each walk, together with advice on suitable clothing and footwear and contact details of the Walk's leader.

A Guided Walk around the Inns of Court

Monday 21st May 11.45am—2.30pm

Meet at 11.45am at Farringdon Station

Please bring a packed lunch

Walk to be led by Deborah Spring

Using a 16th century map of the area, we will explore the origins of the gardens of the Inns of Court: Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, Middle Temple and Inner Temple. These secluded and spacious gardens, hidden from view behind walls and buildings, are open to the public for a few hours in the middle of the day. At Gray's Inn, where we will stop for a picnic lunch, we will see the gardens originally laid out by Francis Bacon in the 1580s, and at Lincoln's Inn we will look for traces of the work carried out to improve the gardens in the same era. Emerging from Lincoln's Inn behind the Royal Courts of Justice, we cross the Strand to discover the beautiful gardens of the Middle Temple and Inner Temple, once home to the Knights Templar, now a three-acre haven of wide lawns and spectacular borders in the heart of legal London, sweeping down to the River Thames. While our walk focuses on the gardens, it may also be possible to see inside the chapel at Lincoln's Inn, where John Donne preached, and the Temple Church with its Crusader memorials - for both, opening times vary.

A Guided Walk around St Albans Abbey Precincts

'In the footsteps of Medieval Gardeners'

Monday 25th June 2.00pm—3.30pm

Meet at 2.00pm at The Old Fighting Cocks Inn

Walk to be led by Sally Pearson

This walk will require imagination! Very little remains of the mediaeval monastery buildings in St Albans, let alone the garden areas which we know lay between them. But, as with other historic landscapes, by walking the ground, and hearing contemporary accounts of the features which were once there, it is possible to build a picture of what one of the most important monastic institutions in the country looked like, and maybe also gain some insight into the lives of the men who lived and worked at St Albans Abbey over five centuries ago.



*Artist's impression of St Albans monastery before 1539.
By Joan Freeman*

A Guided Walk around the Jellicoe Water Gardens

Monday 9th July 10.30am—12 noon.

**Meet at 10.30am at the Jellicoe Water Gardens,
Hemel Hempstead**

Walk to be led by Kate Harwood

This walk will take in the restored Water Gardens designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe as the centrepiece of Hemel Hempstead new town. The influences behind its final shape, the changes in the design and concept, the dereliction into which it fell, the restoration and ongoing involvement of the Friends and the local

community will all be addressed. The role of HGT in this will also be highlighted. The Community Garden is run by the Friends and has links to other gardens and to the Orchards East project.



Jellicoe Water Gardens after restoration—photo Kate Harwood

HGT Winter Talks—2018/2019

A series of four talks for HGT members and their guests, to be held on Monday afternoons at 2.30pm.

Tea/Coffee will be served from 2.15pm and each talk will cost £5 per person.

Reservation and payment for places on the four Talks should be made to Mrs Liz Carlin, using the 'flyer' which accompanies the Newsletter

Monday, 19th November 2018

2.30pm

'Orchards East and Historic Orchards in Hertfordshire' - Professor Tom Williamson

The Village Hall, Hall Lane, Woolmer Green, SG3 6XA (Near Knebworth)

Tom Williamson, Professor of Landscape History at the University of East Anglia, directs HGT's Research Group

Orchards were for centuries a ubiquitous and essential feature of the rural landscape. They were also an important part of many garden designs, valued for their aesthetic and symbolic qualities. The last half century has seen a catastrophic decline in their numbers, in Hertfordshire as elsewhere, with important impacts on biodiversity, as well as on our cultural heritage. This talk will explain what we know so far about the history of orchards in Hertfordshire, and what we hope to find out in the future.

Monday, 3rd December 2018

2.30pm

'The Water Gardens of Geoffrey Jellicoe' - Kate Harwood

The Village Hall, Hall Lane, Woolmer Green, SG3 6XA (Near Knebworth)

Kate Harwood, HGT conservation team co-ordinator, member of the conservation committee of the Gardens Trust

Jellicoe was commissioned in 1947 to develop the New Town of Hemel Hempstead following a landscape appraisal by Sylvia Crowe. His design was not accepted and another design just for the water gardens was accepted much later. The gardens opened in 1962. This talk will look at the influences behind Jellicoe's plans, his other water gardens and the Hemel Gardens in the New Towns context, and the decline and renaissance of the gardens under the HLF Parks Programme.

Monday, 14th January 2019

2.30pm

'The Pulhams in Hertfordshire' - Kate Bannister and Tina Rowland

High Leigh Conference Centre, Lord Street, Hoddesdon, EN11 8SG

Kate Bannister and Tina Rowland are members of the HGT Research Group. Tina Rowland has recently researched the gardens and grounds at Presdales, Ware and High Leigh, Hoddesdon

James Pulham and Son of Broxbourne in Hertfordshire were one of the most important firms of landscape designers in the 19th and early 20th centuries. They were one of the main manufacturers of artificial rockwork, known as 'Pulhamite'. The Pulhams specialised in water gardens and rock gardens – building cliffs, ravines, waterways, ferneries and grottoes – as well as manufacturing fountains, vases, urns, sundials and other garden ornaments. This lecture describes Pulhams' known work at sites in Hertfordshire, including details of recent research and discoveries made about the gardens and grounds at Presdales and at High Leigh.

Monday, 4th February 2019

2.30pm

'The History of the Garden and grounds at Wimpole Hall' - Alison Moller

The Village Hall, Hall Lane, Woolmer Green, SG3 6XA

Alison Moller is a member of the HGT Research Group and recently completed an MA in Garden and Landscape History

Situated near Royston in Cambridgeshire, the landscape and setting of Wimpole Hall are a fine example of how the evolution of the garden over many centuries can be traced on the ground in conjunction with archaeological and documentary evidence. Vestiges of the Medieval landscape survive, but it is the 17th and 18th century developments that are perhaps the most interesting. Many of the great names in Garden History worked at Wimpole: London and Wise, Charles Bridgeman, Robert Greening, Lancelot Brown, William Eames, Sir John Soane and Humphry Repton all made contributions, which will be examined in this talk.

Three aspects of Victorian Gardening: *Pteridomania*, *Pineta* and *Parks* A Short Course of six sessions to be led by Kate Harwood

Three aspects of Victorian Gardening: ***Pteridomania***, the Fern Craze, swept Victorian England. It stimulated plant collecting, technological advances and added new features to homes and gardens. ***Pineta***, and their close cousins, arboreta were the product of the mania for exotic trees. Driven by nurseries such as Veitches of Exeter and fed by plant hunters such as David Douglas and William Lobb, the giants of the American West and elsewhere have made a distinct mark on our landscapes. **Public Parks** were part of the answer to overcrowded slums giving the people access to fresh air and green space, with sports facilities being added as an afterthought. The Head Gardeners and their teams grew thousands of bedding plants and laid out splendid displays but also experimented with exotic plants such as bananas, and introduced water features, bandstands, statuary and refreshment kiosks.

Our three talks sessions will be complemented by three relevant garden visits: Danesbury Fernery, Bayfordbury Pinetum and Battersea Park.

Talks will take place at Woolmer Green Village Hall 10.00-12.00.

[The Village Hall, Hall Lane, Woolmer Green, SG3 6XA (Near Knebworth)]

Visits to Danesbury and Bayfordbury will be made by car, car sharing-arrangements will be discussed in class.

Battersea park is best reached by public transport (details will be provided)

The cost of the course will be £36 per person.

Reservation and payment for places on the three walks should be made to Kate Harwood, using the 'flyer' which accompanies the Newsletter

April 4

Pteridomania: Kate Harwood

Danesbury fernery: John Roper

April 11

Guided tour Danesbury Fernery to examine the Pulhamite and the restoration of the site, including new fern planting

April 18

The great Victorian parks: Kate Harwood

April 25

Guided Tour of Battersea Park to include Pulhamite, Gibson's exotic planting, The Festival of Britain Gardens, the Dan Pearson Winter Garden

May 2

The mania for exotic trees: Kate Harwood

Bayfordbury Pinetum: Edward Eastwood

May 9

Guided Tour of Bayfordbury Pinetum to look at the 150 species of conifers assembled by Baker and Clinton families, many during the 19th century, although the collection was begun in 1767.

Champagne and Sparkling wines: talk and tasting

Monday, October 8th. 2018

£10 per person

An evening for members and their guests with Alison Moller, HGTs wine expert: the history of Champagne; the way it is made; followed by a 'blind' tasting of 6 wines - 3 Champagnes and 3 sparkling rivals.

8.00pm—9.30pm - Woolmer Green Village Hall.

[The Village Hall, Hall Lane, Woolmer Green, SG3 6XA (Near Knebworth)]

Reservation and payment for places should be made to Alison Moller, using the 'flyer' which accompanies the Newsletter

HERTS GARDENS TRUST—AGM—2018

This year's AGM will be held on Thursday, July 12th 2018 at Thundridge Hill House, by kind permission of Christopher and Susie Melliush.

The garden will be open from 6.00pm when a glass of wine will be served. The meeting will start at 7.00pm and members are invited to stay for picnics—please bring tables and chairs (and umbrellas if wet). A copy of the examined accounts will be published on the HGT website from the end of June.



Thundridge Hill House and garden

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. To approve the Minutes of the AGM of 13th July 2017
4. Matters arising from the Minutes
5. The Chairman's Report
6. The Hon. Treasurer's Report and approval of the Annual Accounts for 2017/2018
7. Election of members of the Executive Committee
8. Any Other Business

Directions:

**Thundridge Hill House, Cold Christmas,
Ware, SG12 0UF**

Hertford, A10(N), 2nd exit to Thundridge, 1st right after 0.5 km, and follow Cold Christmas Lane for 1km to Thundridge Hill House, which will be marked by green HGT banners.

*The AGM will be an opportunity to celebrate the publication of 'Humphry Repton in Hertfordshire'.
Copies of the book will be on sale, and there will be a discount for HGT members on the RRP of £25*

Further Dates for Your Diary

Thursday, 19th April, 2018

6.00pm for 6.30pm

HALS, County Hall, Hertford SG13 8EJ

The book launch for 'Humphry Repton in Hertfordshire' featuring a talk by Professor Tom Williamson

This is an opportunity to meet the authors, to see the Red Books owned by Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, and to purchase copies of the book, which will be on sale at the RRP of £25

Tickets at £5 may be booked via HALS at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hals

[for more details see: <http://www.uhpress.co.uk/events/2018/humphry-repton-in-hertfordshire-launch>]

Sunday, May 6th, 2018

Panshanger Park, Hertford

HGT members and friends are invited to explore the historic Repton landscape of Panshanger Park in the company of Anne Rowe and Kate Harwood

**Free, no need to book, but please email Anne for details of the start point for the walk:
research@hertsgardenstrust.org.uk**

Friday and Saturday, 10/11th August, 2018

Ashridge House, Hertfordshire, HP4 1NS

A conference on the work of Humphry Repton, in association with the Gardens Trust

Further details from Sally Rouse at Ashridge. Tel. 01442 841028 or sally.rouse@ashridge.hult.edu

Monday, November 5th, 2018

The Garden Museum, 5 Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7LB

'Repton Discoveries Symposium': to be chaired by Prof. Tom Williamson and Stephen Daniel

Further details will be available from the Gardens Trust: kateharwood@thegardenstrust.org

The Hertfordshire Gardens Trust

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Registered charity no. 1010093



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*Repton's Red Book for Wood Hill—Walk with Kitchen wall
Courtesy of the Picture Library, Sir John Soane's Museum*