

HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2018



Chairman's Report—Autumn Newsletter, 2018



I have recently completed a morning's walk around the 1000 acre Wall Hall estate, beginning and ending in the pretty village of Aldenham, just a few minutes' drive from the M1, the A41 and the industrial outskirts of Watford. I was unprepared for this oasis of well managed countryside on the gentle slopes of the river Colne, and it would not have been high on my list of potential walks had not 'Wall Hall' featured in HGT's new publication, *Humphry Repton in Hertfordshire*. The great landscape gardener prepared

a Red Book for the owner, George Thellusson, a wealthy merchant, following visits to Wall Hall in 1802 and 1803. The Red Book sets out Repton's proposals for the approaches to the mansion. Kate Harwood explains in her introduction to the chapter that few of Repton's proposals in the Red Book were implemented, but a number of 'Reptonian' features in the grounds around the mansion suggest that he may have been rather more widely involved with the wider landscape design. In common with so many of Hertfordshire's 18th and 19th century historic landscapes, few of the early features survive today.

Wall Hall is an illustration of the role of HGT in research and conservation, and in raising the public's awareness of Hertfordshire's historic landscape. The anniversaries associated with Brown (2016) and Repton (2018) have inspired our HGT researchers. Their work has made significant advances to the knowledge and understanding of the role of these landscape designers and their contemporaries in Hertfordshire, and the publications that have accompanied their research should inspire the rest of us to explore, appreciate and protect their legacy. The booklets describing walks around the county's 'Brownian' sites are all available on the HGT website and *Humphry Repton in Hertfordshire* is a mine of scholarship and information about the nineteen sites with which Repton is associated. Most recently of all, we have the newly published *Structure and Landscape* edited by Toby Parker and Kate Harwood, revealing Humphry Repton's contribution to the landscape for the East Indian Company College at Haileybury, with yet another link to Wall Hall: George Thellusson was a director and banker to the Company at this time (page 23).

The Trust's programme of three 'Guided Summer Walks' and the traditional series of 'Garden Visits' (pages 15-20) all benefitted from the unbroken summer weather in June and July, as did the AGM held at Thundridge Hill House. Thundridge Hill House faces the unspoiled landscape, associated with Capability Brown, surrounding Youngsbury House across the valley of the river Rib. At the AGM Kate Harwood described the ambitious plans of the new owners of Youngsbury: they have sought the advice of HGT and Historic England to help them restore the house and its park to their 18th century designs, which would be a magnificent achievement.

Finally, may I draw attention to the second series of HGT 'Winter Talks', advertised on pages 21 and 22, together with an application form, and thank all those HGT members who have helped with the organisation of our programme of events during the past year.

The Gardens at High Canons—John Sloan

On a rise overlooking rolling fields and woods near Shenley in the south of the county stands High Canons House, a late 18th century villa, and its historic garden. Anne Rowe suggested High Canons to me as potentially an important place to research: it was described in the Victoria County History as 'one of the most beautiful gardens in the county'. I found much interesting material about High Canons in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS), though what first caught my eye were clips on the internet from films and television series, showing the listed gate lodge and scenes of the gardens.



*High Canons -
An ancient Cedar of
Lebanon ...*

The immediate impression on visiting High Canons is how quiet and peaceful it is for a place so close to London and two motorways. On my first visit, I was delighted to find that the gardens that can be seen on plans of 1829 and 1887, and the first OS map of 1881, are remarkably well preserved. An ancient cedar of Lebanon with a vast trunk, at least as old as the house, is still there. Enosh and Richard Durant who lived at High Canons between 1812 and 1886 created much of the garden we can see today, and some of the features in the garden match the contents of an 1887 sales description. The pinetum, for example, and the gravel paths which wind through its trees, are reminders of the splendid Victorian garden created by the Durants. And despite the loss of individual trees, the pinetum is still stocked with rare specimens.

Alongside the Victorian garden are older features. The house dates from the late 18th century, but there is no record of who built it. Thomas Fitzherbert, who had made his

fortune in naval supply to the Portsmouth dockyards, and had been an MP, owned High Canons from 1795 to 1802. He spent large amounts of money on beautifying and improving the grounds, including the walled garden and canal, remodelled in the late 1790s, and a string of small ornamental lakes at the bottom of the valley north of the house, beyond which fields rise towards Shenley. Although the walled garden is not as fully cultivated as it was a century ago, there are still four old apple trees there of an unknown variety.

The present owner was an extremely helpful source of information for High Canons' recent history. Old bottles had been found in the ground under the route of a narrow lane which until over 200 years ago had run through the east side of the park. In the 1950s, after buying the estate for green belt, the county council wanted to sell the house for change of use, possibly involving demolition. This fate was avoided when a school took over the building for a few years. A British Pathe newsreel from 1961 shows pupils swinging from trees in the grounds. Soon after, a private buyer restored the dilapidated house, dredged the lakes and ornamental canal, and tidied up the neglected gardens. New plantings since then have brought fresh life to the scene.

My next visit was to Julian Watson, who had lived at High Canons as a boy in the 1930s and 40s. I was told he had an extensive archive about the house. Among his many hunting memorabilia was a picture from 1904, showing his grandfather on horseback as leader of the stag hounds based at High Canons. To the right of the picture is a much-loved cedar of Lebanon that until a few years ago stood at the front of the house.

An album of photographs of High Canons in the 1930s contains views of the garden and walled garden in full cultivation, with avenues and paths, and trees, some of which have since disappeared. At this time the grounds were looked after by a staff of ten gardeners. Trees had been replaced, local boys stripped the lead off a peach store, and during the war, a rocket landed 'in the cricket field behind the azaleas' south of the garden, something confirmed by a document in HALS.

Julian Watson then unrolled a precious document - a parchment map of High Canons in vivid colours made for Thomas Fitzherbert in 1802, when he sold the property, and showing features mentioned above which are there today. A close examination of the plan revealed faint marking indicating the intended site for a fifth lake in addition to the four already created by Fitzherbert.

Questions remain. Who designed Fitzherbert's garden and park? How old is the otherwise unknown drive across the meadow south of the gardens revealed by parch marks and surface gravel seen during a visit following a dry summer?

This modestly sized but special garden is a wonderful survival, a place very much worth preserving for future generations.

Mrs Wheelbarrow Awards 2018 — Bella Stuart-Smith

The idea this year has been to work only with schools who actively seek us out. The real reason behind this was the hope that then only schools who are really serious about building a garden would apply. We had three expressions of interest, and of those two gained an award towards the costs of developing or building something new to encourage gardening activity. So the hope is being realised, and the limited number makes it much easier to follow up.



In conjunction with Abbots Langley Gardening Society we have worked with Tannerswood primary school and a really enthusiastic early years' teacher who readily admitted to knowing nothing about gardening. The hands-on support from the local gardening society has been a real help here. The members have worked together, with some supportive parents as well, to reclaim an area which was full of weeds to create some raised beds, build a compost bin and harvest lots of radishes and even a crop of beans. They have plans to extend this and plant fruit bushes and apple trees. Most importantly the children are really enjoying it. They received a grant of £500 towards the cost of these beds, tools, weed suppressing fabric and bark mulch.

*Building the raised beds
at Tannerswood*

We have also worked with a parent on the PTA at St John's Digswell who has been marshalling the support of the parent body to help re-establish and revitalise the garden in the grounds, which are extensive and include a wildlife area. Intervening at an early stage to give advice and helping them to focus their plans to realisable goals does make a difference; our grant of £567.95 has been well spent on a very small greenhouse, benches and gardening equipment which means more children will be able to join in and help.

Although we have supported far fewer schemes, we are able to scrutinise the work better and make sure their plans are practical. It seems to be a sensible way forward.



*St John's School pupils,
using their new HGT tools.*

Members' gardens with a story to tell—Benington Lordship

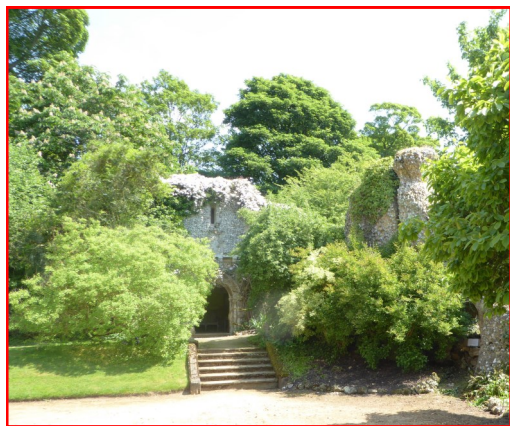
Roger Gedye

Arthur Bott was a civil engineer who made his fortune from his work on the Indian Railway. In 1905, Arthur and his wife, Lilian, purchased Benington Lordship. It was the ideal house in which to begin their marriage, and the place where they would create one of Hertfordshire's finest gardens.



Arthur and Lilian Bott

The village of Benington is recorded in the Domesday Book as 'Belintone', part of a vast estate granted to the Conqueror's nephew, Peter de Valogne, following the Battle of Hastings. Peter defended his estate by building a moated castle at Benington. The castle was finally destroyed by 1213, but the dry moat and the remains of a rectangular tower keep remain to this day. By 1700 the site was owned by the Caesar family of Benington Park who built a Dower House in the Queen Anne style adjacent to the castle ruins: Benington Lordship. In 1826 the Lordship was sold to George Proctor, who added a magnificent neo-Norman gatehouse, summer house and curtain wall from James Pulham of Broxbourne, to be known as the folly.



The folly— summer house

With money to spend, Arthur extended the house to the west and included a broad verandah (perhaps his salute to the Raj) from which to enjoy the view across two spring-fed lakes to the wider estate. The drive was moved from the west front to the east and the slope from the house towards the lakes was contoured and terraced as a gracious lawn, separated from the wider estate by a ha-ha. A rose garden replaced the former bowling green to the south of the house, with a terrace linked by steps to a long, undulating axial path below the house. This led to wrought iron gates into a newly created, walled vegetable garden. In this golden Edwardian Age, Arthur could afford a fleet of gardeners.

Running down the slope, alongside the wall, the Botts created a double herbaceous border, which has become famous for its situation and the richness of its planting. Fortunately for posterity, Lilian was both a creative plantswoman and a skilled watercolourist. She painted a



Yew trees on the rose garden lawn
Lilian Bott



Wrought iron gates and axial path
Lilian Bott

series of views of the garden, which have been passed down the generations and allow us to enjoy aspects of her garden in full colour.

Arthur and Lilian lived in great style and the Lordship became a focal point for the village with Arthur enjoying his status as the local squire. He was the proud owner of the first motor car in the village, but narrowly missed the opportunity to subscribe to the first telephone, having to settle for the less prestigious number, 'Benington 2'. The Lordship was opened to the public as one of the very first gardens affiliated to the NGS 'Open Garden' scheme.

After Arthur's death the garden was tended by Lilian and her daughter Marjorie. When Lilian died in 1953 the Lordship passed to Marjorie's brother Richard and his wife Esme. The years from the second World War until 1970 were a fallow period for the garden. The team of gardeners was reduced to one man. Richard was preoccupied with his farming interests and Esme with her horses and dogs. The grass on the lawns was mown for hay, the moat gradually filled with rubbish and, with the exception of the creation of a heather garden, reflecting the owners' enthusiasm for Scotland, the garden had begun to fade.

Fortunately, when the third generation of the Bott family, Harry and Sarah, inherited the Lordship, they reversed this decline. Sarah had inherited her love of plants and gardens and developed her skills from an early age. By 1970 technology was available to supplement the physical efforts of the gardener. Motor mowers, hedge cutters and strimmers were at hand and 'Roundup' could be used judiciously on the perennial weeds and scrubland. With one

full-time gardener, and occasional part-time help, Sarah set about restoring the Lordship garden. New trees were planted, the herbaceous borders were restocked, and Lilian's rose garden was re-designed. The two lakes were incorporated into the garden and a new water garden planted. Once the rubbish was cleared from the moat, carpets of snowdrops appeared in early spring.



The long border

In 2005 Benington Lordship passed to the fourth generation, when Richard and Susanna moved in with their young family and Sarah and Harry moved to Garrett's Farm at the far end of the village. It quickly became clear that Susanna would take responsibility for the garden. This must have been a daunting prospect. To inherit one of the finest gardens in the county, loved and tended for 35 years by a true gardening expert, who just happens to be one's mother-in-law, would be a challenge for any gardener. To a busy wife and mother, with no previous experience of serious gardening, this could have been overwhelming.

The priorities may have changed, but a visitor today can be in no doubt that the garden remains in excellent hands. The design of the first Edwardian garden and the skilful planting associated with Lilian and Sarah has been retained, but the garden has evolved. The house and garden continue to earn their keep, while less frequent garden events replace the labour-intensive weekly open days. Garden designers have created new planting schemes for the terrace border and the rose garden. There are plans to restore the planting associated with the 19th century courtyard and the castle ruins. The garden and its gardeners are looking to the future.



The rose garden, with castle ruins

Benington Lordship illustrates perfectly the truths that every generation uses its house and garden differently, but that great gardens reflect and enhance the hard work and inspiration of their predecessors.

A Vision for the Gardens of St Albans Cathedral

Bella Stuart-Smith

Opening in the summer of 2019, 'Alban, Britain's First Saint' is a major project which will bring many more people to experience the stories and unique heritage of the Cathedral. Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and over 1000 donors, the project will deliver new interpretation, learning spaces, event programmes and a Welcome Centre to provide a much-needed focal point for visitors.

The new Welcome Centre is beside the veteran Cedar tree in Sumpter Yard. Anyone who knows the Cathedral loves this great tree, but they may well have blocked out of their minds some of the approach to it. This is certainly not a fit setting for such a beautiful Grade 1 historic monument, developed haphazardly and now disjointed with multiple uses and various access issues: cars, uneven surfaces, and municipal planting, to name a few. A new, and I believe, very exciting project is underway which will transform Sumpter Yard in the first instance to maximise the impact of the Welcome Centre, and in the long term to enhance the landscape of the whole cathedral precinct, drawing more of the community in to enjoy and use this space.



Landscape design for Sumpter Yard

It is particularly interesting for me as Chair of the Cathedral Education Trust, as there is so much in the landscape with the scope to be tapped for educational purposes for adults and children. Tree trails, therapeutic gardening, community orchards, planting workshops for schools, herbal and physic gardening, a labyrinth for mindfulness, volunteering opportunities. The list is endless.

Johanna Gibbons has been appointed as the landscape architect. She has widely consulted those who use and enjoy the Cathedral, and fully researched the landscape using the archives. The historic visuals she has unearthed show how productive the area once was,

with allotments, planting against the cathedral walls, and flower gardens, all of which continued the tradition of monastic gardening. As Johanna says of her design approach, it 'draws on the layout of a monastic complex made up of small interconnected gardens, community links, contemplative spaces and productive gardens. It has centred on the monastic connection with the land and social benefits for pastoral care and mental wellbeing'. She has also looked strategically at how, by changing the management of the wider area, biodiversity will be improved, which in turn will lead to greater sustainability in the future. HGT will be particularly pleased that the proposed plans include replanting an orchard on the area known as the Abbey Orchard.

The most critical works in Sumpter Yard in front of the Welcome Centre will be ready for the opening in 2019. Tom Stuart-Smith, HGT patron, has thrown his full support behind the landscape plans as a project mentor. As he explains: 'This thrilling project reinforces the place of the Cathedral as the beating heart of the city. This is all about making a landscape that brings the heritage of this extraordinary place to life and does it in a way that involves and engages people. It is our Cathedral, our city and our community. All of these are profoundly deserving of our care and support.'

A project of this scale and ambition needs as much support as we can give it to make it happen. Dione Verulam, HGT president, has been leading a fundraising team to realise the vision and over £100,000 has already been secured in pledges.

If you would like to help or know someone who can, or you would like further details please contact the Cathedral Development Office.

01727 890229 email appeal@stalbanscathedral.org

Development Office, St Albans Cathedral, Sumpter Yard, St Albans AL1 1BY

From the Membership Secretary

We are pleased to say that our membership numbers have now reached 325. 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.

Full details of the benefits of membership, together with a membership application form, may be obtained from the HGT website:

www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk

Or contact:

HGT Membership Secretary, Mead House, Bromley Lane,
Wellpond Green, Ware, SG11 1NW

Email: **membership@hertsgardenstrust.org.uk**

HGT research group 'Seminar and Soup' - Deborah Spring

The ever-popular annual 'Seminar and Soup' day on 29 March attracted a full house for three expert presentations about orchards, past and present.

Orchards East Tom Williamson

Orchards have been neglected by historians, though they are important parts of designed landscapes, said Professor Tom Williamson of the University of East Anglia, opening the day with a lively account of the Orchards East project. Based at the university's School of History, and supported by Heritage Lottery funding, the project's aim is to survey the sites of historic orchards and compare evidence from the past with what can be seen today. It is devoted to discovering and understanding the past, present and future of orchards in Eastern England. Due to last for three years, the project extends initiatives already developed by county orchards groups.

Tom highlighted the evidence for the abundance of orchards and different fruit varieties in the past: at their peak, up to the late 19th century, Norfolk orchards contained up to 250 varieties of apples and 140 varieties of pears. But there has been a gradual decline, especially since the 1970s and 80s. Economic and social changes have affected the types and numbers of orchards over the centuries. Farmhouse orchards were once ubiquitous in the landscape, and commercial orchards flourished and expanded with the advent of the rail network in the 19th century. By then West Hertfordshire, particularly Watford and Aldenham, had many apple and cherry orchards. Big institutions often developed orchards, and garden orchards existed in all shapes and sizes.

The Orchards East project is recruiting volunteers to survey individual parishes, and several of us signed up on the spot. For further information about the project, and to find out more about volunteering, see <https://www.uea.ac.uk/orchards-east/home>.

Hertfordshire Orchards Initiative (HOI) Martin Hicks

Martin Hicks, Senior Ecologist with Hertfordshire County Council, spoke about the diverse activities of HOI, which was set up to promote a greater appreciation of the heritage of Hertfordshire fruit, to conserve and maintain the remaining traditional orchards and create new ones where appropriate, and create and maintain a database of sites and cultivars. The initiative brings together local government officers, orchard owners and wildlife experts. Members include Tewin Orchard, Stanley Lord Orchard (Shenley Park), Highfield Park Orchard (St Albans), Rivers Community Orchard in Sawbridgeworth and Codicote Community Orchard. Martin told us that traditional orchards were added to the list of Priority Habitats under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan published in August 2007, and

orchard biodiversity is of increasing interest. An orchard lichen survey is under way, in association with Hertfordshire Natural History Society.

Martin described how in the 18th century, St Albans was surrounded by orchards, which can be seen in the 1766 map of the county by Dury and Andrews. However, continuing urbanisation and development have taken a heavy toll, with a steep decline in the number of orchards in Hertfordshire over the past century.

Turning to the present, Martin reminded us that there is also good news about orchards in Hertfordshire, for example the inclusion of a community orchard in Heartwood Forest. Apple Days are popular, and the Tring Apple Fayre puts on every kind of apple-related event throughout October. Finally, Martin highlighted the boom in apple juice production in the county - an astonishing 300,000 bottles a year from seven producers.

Arts and Crafts Orchards Kate Harwood

Kate began by telling us that Historic England now recognise orchards – though not for listing purposes - before going on to outline the ideals and philosophy of the arts and crafts movement in relation to orchards. ‘We will try to take some small piece of English ground, beautiful, peaceful and fruitful’, wrote John Ruskin, setting out his plan for self-sufficient ‘land communities’ in opposition to industrialisation and urbanisation. William Morris had orchards at both Red House and Kelmscott Manor. Kate explained the centrality of the idea of a ‘complete life’ to the design of the first garden cities, when fruit farms were included in the plans. In Letchworth Garden City, the orchards planted in the 1920s were intended to be both productive and ornamental. Meanwhile at Gravetye in Sussex, William Robinson, influential champion of natural planting, made a wild garden with an underplanted orchard, an approach followed by the arts and crafts architect Baillie Scott, whose designs contrasted the regularity of kitchen gardens with wilder areas.

Ashwell Cottage Garden—Liz Moynihn

It is not often that a garden survives in good shape for over fifty years unless it is a historic garden, looked after by an institution or Trust. The Cottage Garden, in the centre of the attractive village of Ashwell in North Hertfordshire, has bloomed for over fifty years. It was created by villager Albert Skerman, on derelict land next to his cottage. He gardened at several big houses in Ashwell and was not averse to pinching slips and cuttings to beautify his patch. In the fifties John Betjeman visited Ashwell and wrote an article in the Spectator eulogizing the village. He stopped to admire Albert's garden and called it 'the best cottage garden I have ever seen'.



Albert and Alice

In 1968 a planning application for a chalet bungalow threatened to obliterate the garden. The then Parish Council felt that the application would ruin the integrity of this old and beautiful part of the village, next to the medieval Museum with the Grade 1 listed Church of St Mary in the background. The Council set up a committee to raise money to buy the garden site to save it for posterity. After a heroic effort the garden was bought for the village and a charity set up to administer it.

After the deaths of Albert and his wife Alice, teams of volunteers looked after the garden. A grant from the Hertfordshire Garden Trust to the Ashwell Village Trust (Cottage Garden) funded a garden designer to do a plan for renovating the garden, and several renovations later, it is finally wheelchair accessible and family friendly. Villagers and visitors alike enjoy using

the garden: children run round the paths and smell the flowers, older people enjoy coffee or picnics and quietly read their newspaper.

Horticulturally, the garden has seen some excitements. Some of Albert's original plants still exist having seeded themselves down the years. Among them are the usual suspects: love-in-a-mist, forget-me-not, honesty, primrose, violets. Other seeders from the original plants include tall yellow achillea, cephalaria (tall with yellow scabious-like flowers), evening primrose, and sweet rocket. One year the latter virtually took over the whole garden with swathes of shades of white, purple and pink sweet-smelling flowers.

Sadly, the focal point of the garden – a wonderful low-growing conifer raised by Albert from a cutting – burnt down on a hot day when youths threw their cigarette butts into it. A similar conifer has now spread itself sideways to fill the gap. A small, shapely young monkey puzzle tree from the Eden Project was donated by a senior citizen who was warned that it would have to be relocated when it reached six feet. Thankfully it is now growing happily at Wimpole Hall and has been replaced by a pretty and more easily controlled Amelanchier. Various donated shrubs recall former gardeners and villagers. As befits a cottage garden, ours majors in herbs and scented plants, and a recent addition is a small apple tree on a dwarfing rootstock to celebrate the first fifty years of this remarkable garden.

Earlier this year the Garden was decorated with yards of golden bunting and a beautiful hand stitched banner. Over fifty guests, who had been involved with the Garden over the years, celebrated its Golden Anniversary with fizz and nibbles.

[Front and back covers show a photograph of Ashwell Cottage Garden today]

Summer Short Course and Summer Walks, 2018

Roger Gedye

Pteridomania, Pineta and Parks: three aspects of Victorian Gardens—A short course of three talks and related visits delivered by Kate Harwood, in collaboration with John Roper (Danesbury Fernery) and Dr Edward Eastwood (Bayfordbury Pinetum).

Pteridomania

This term was coined by Charles Kingsley in 1855 to describe the curiously British craze for all things associated with ferns. Romanticised as a pursuit 'suitable for both ladies and gentlemen', the collection, cultivation and depiction of ferns became a serious social and gardening interest during the later Victorian period, and satisfied the passion for plant collecting enjoyed by amateur naturalists at the time. Although the craze for foraging in the wild became a threat to the existence of some of the rarer varieties, specialist nurseries were soon able to satisfy the demand for plants – and if you had a collection of exotic ferns, you needed a fernery. Few Victorian ferneries survive: the enthusiasm for ferns did not endure beyond the 19th century. Exceptions include the fine restored sunken, glass-domed fernery in the Swiss Garden at Old Warden in Bedfordshire. Its tufa-lined interior, complete with stalactites and stalagmites, was provided by James Pulham and Sons in 1876. Nearer to home, John Roper and a band of dedicated volunteers have revealed and restored a magnificent pulhamite fernery at Danesbury, near Welwyn, the location of the visit that followed the talk. John Roper's article about this epic restoration appeared in the HGT Autumn Newsletter 2017 (www.hertsgardenstrust.org/newsletters).

Pineta

Collections of conifers were at the height of their popularity during the 19th century. Britain played a leading role in the collection of plants from around the world from the early 17th century. By the mid-18th century, Capability Brown was using Cedar of Lebanon, *Cedrus libani*, as a signature tree in his landscapes. Wealthy landowners, who sometimes formed syndicates, initially acted as patrons for plant hunters. By the 19th century scientific institutions and commercial nurserymen were actively involved. The Horticultural Society of London (later the RHS) sent David Douglas on several expeditions to North America, where he collected many of the 'giant' conifers, including the Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga douglasii*) that bears his name. James Veitch and Co. of Exeter employed William Lobb to bring back seeds of the Monkey Puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*) from Chile; 10 years later Lobb collected commercial quantities of seed of the Wellingtonia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) from California: today, their progeny are to be found throughout Europe.

A visit to the Clinton-Baker Pinetum at Bayfordbury brought the material of this talk to life. Its curator, Dr Edward Eastwood, explained that the Pinetum was created from 1837 by William Robert Baker with help from the landscape designer, John Claudius (J. C.) Loudon. The collection continued to grow throughout the 19th century. A fernery and grotto, with an



associated dripping well and water course, were created on the site by Pulham and Sons. The Pinetum remained in the family until 1935. Following the devastation caused by the great storm of 1987, which reduced the species count to about 45, generous donations from the Worshipful Company of Carpenters enabled Dr Eastwood to create a hardworking Friends' Association and re-establish Bayfordbury as a nationally respected conifer collection, with more than 170 species represented. HGT has plans to revisit the Pinetum in 2019 to give members an opportunity to hone their identification skills.

Bayfordbury Pinetum—Redwood

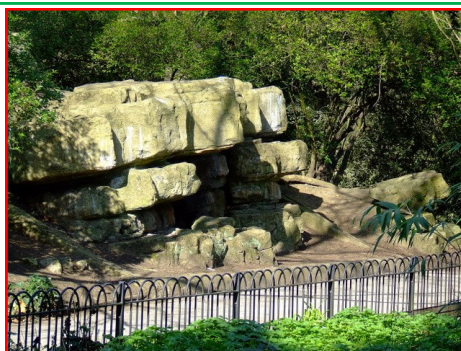
Parks

The great Victorian urban parks were developed in response to the 'chaos, cholera and crowding' in Britain's industrial cities following the migration from the countryside brought about by the Industrial Revolution. The earliest models for public parks were tourist attractions associated with seaside resorts and spas, such as Brighton and Cheltenham. It was not until the 1830s that a combination of philanthropic concern for the state of the poor and political awareness of the appalling sanitation and housing conditions in the inner cities, highlighted by Chadwick's Sanitary Report of 1842, provided the stimulus to provide green open spaces accessible free of charge to the working population of Britain's towns and cities. Two names associated with this 'Parks movement' are conspicuous: J.C. Loudon and Joseph Paxton. Loudon designed England's first public park, Derby Arboretum, opened in 1840. Funded by local industrialist Joseph Strutt for the benefit of his workers, Loudon's design is based on three principles: leisure, education and moral improvement. The arboretum form was chosen to be of low maintenance while enabling the public 'to enjoy a rare opportunity of expanding their minds by the contemplation of nature'. Loudon died in 1843 and his position as the pre-eminent parks designer was taken by Joseph Paxton, who was selected to design the first publicly funded park at Birkenhead on the Wirral, created between 1843 and 1847. A hundred and twenty-five acres of poor quality land was purchased for the park and a further 60 acres for sale as building plots to fund the park's development, a model that was adopted elsewhere. The design incorporated a carriage drive around the perimeter and ambitious planting schemes of trees, shrubs and flower gardens. There were areas set aside for sports facilities, and lakes with associated bridges and boathouses. Frederick Olmsted was sufficiently impressed by the park to incorporate features of its design into his plan for New York's Central Park, opened in 1858.

Many of the features associated with Derby Arboretum and Birkenhead Park are reflected in the design for Battersea Park, completed in 1862, and the destination for the final visit of the course. The park's commissioners purchased 320 acres of poor quality, swampy land

Battersea Park—pulhamite rockwork

and less than desirable riverside development on the south bank of the Thames, of which 120 acres were let on building leases. A perimeter carriage drive was constructed, and the land drained to create an ornamental lake, with an island embellished with picturesque pulhamite rockwork. The plan for the park was drawn up by James Pennethorne, but largely implemented by John Gibson, a protégé of Paxton at Chatsworth. All the Victorian parks have evolved over time as social needs and interests have changed. Battersea Park retains a few elements of the ornamental pleasure gardens from the 1951 Festival of Britain, now absorbed into the more mature features of this much loved urban landscape.



Summer Walks—A pleasant stroll through an historic park or garden can be dramatically enhanced by a knowledgeable companion. HGT's new series of 'Summer Walks' was planned to take advantage of the local knowledge of the Trust's group of historians, and the first three examples have left participants looking forward to more.

In late May, a short walk through City streets from Farringdon brought us to the gracious surroundings of Gray's Inn. Here Deborah Spring began her tour of the gardens of London's Inns of Court, using the 'Agas' map of 1561. The Inns were originally collections of lodgings for lawyers, situated on the outskirts of the City. In 1576, Francis, youngest son of Sir Nicholas Bacon who was Lord Keeper of the Great Seal to Elizabeth I and a distinguished Benchman of the Inn, followed his father and brothers as a pupil. The Bacon family provides the link between Gray's Inn and Hertfordshire. Francis Bacon pursued parallel careers as a lawyer and parliamentarian, rose to become Lord Privy Seal, and was created Viscount St Alban in 1621. He maintained lodgings at the Inn, where he had been appointed Treasurer, and laid out the gardens, still known as 'The Walks' in 1608. These formal avenues of trees and grassy banks, with an associated summer-house and mound, became a place of fashion throughout the 17th century. Our walk continued across Lincoln's Inn, where there are further traces of early gardens, and past the Royal Courts of Justice into the Inner Temple. Within these historic precincts, associated with the Temple Church of the Knights Templar, the gardens provide a complete contrast to the 17th century formality of the Walks. The richly planted and colourful gardens lie along the Embankment, taking their modern shape following Bazalgette's work in the 19th century. Once monastic gardens, including an ancient orchard, commemorated by a fine walnut and other mature fruiting trees, the sweeping lawns and perennial borders of the Inner Temple garden are now very much of the 20th/21st centuries.



HGT at the Walks, Gray's Inn

For our second walk, on a scorchingly hot day in June, Sally Pearson had the daunting task of re-creating in imagination the monastic gardens of the pre-Reformation Abbey at St Albans. Appropriately, we assembled outside Ye Olde Fighting Cocks Inn. Allegedly the oldest inn in England, the octagonal timbered roof structure was originally a

pigeon-house, moved from the Prior's Garden to its current site following the dissolution in 1539. Apart from the Abbey Church and the Great Gateway, nothing remains of the monastic buildings and their associated gardens, other than a few humps and bumps and the outline of foundations shown up by the wilting grass in the Abbey Orchard. Sally's walk took us around the Abbey in a clockwise direction, from station to station in the shade of strategically placed trees. We were armed with maps, showing a reconstruction of the monastic buildings at the time of their dissolution, and copies of the artist's impression by Joan Freeman, which is displayed in the nave. Much of what is known of the monastic period is derived from the 'Gesta Abbatum', the deeds of the Abbots of St Albans, much of which was written by two monks, Matthew Paris and Thomas Walsingham. Thanks to Sally's extensive knowledge and enthusiasm, the grassy slopes of the Abbey orchard became in the mind's eye a fertile allotment providing fresh vegetables and fruit for the community and herbal medicines for those being treated in the Infirmary. We could picture squabbles between the Almoner, responsible for the vegetable gardens, and the Cellarer, responsible for the animals, who wished to enclose his sheep close by. Abbey visitors could stay in the Guest House at the west end of the Abbey, where the Gesta Abbatum suggests there was a garden in which to relax and refresh – 'a green place, merry with trees and herbs'. Our walk ended in the restored Vintry Garden at the NE corner of the Abbey: the site of a vineyard during the monastic period, today a quiet green space in which to sit and reflect on the past.

Our third walk, led by Kate Harwood, was firmly based in the present. The Water Gardens at Hemel Hempstead, were designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe to enhance the building of the New Town and were completed in 1962. Jellicoe took his inspiration from the modernist paintings of Paul Klee, and canalised the River Gade in the form of a mythical 'Serpent', with its 'head' represented as a lake at the east end of the shopping precinct and its 'tail' wrapped around an earth mound to the west. In the centre, strapped as it were to the serpent's back by two bridges spanning the Gade, a flower garden was laid out, and a 'lovers' walk' planted along the south bank. The gardens were appreciated by the town's new residents but with little funding for maintenance by 2010 the river had silted up and the banks were despoiled by Canada geese. Dacorum councillors were considering redevelopment as a building site. HGT, firmly led by Kate Harwood, campaigned to 'Save our Serpent', ultimately winning the support of the council. The Friends of the Water



Jellicoe Water Gardens—Hemel Hempstead

Gardens were established and successfully bid for a £2.4 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. As a result the Water Gardens have been restored to their former glory by HLA Design and are once again fully open to the public. Our walk began at the new shelter built in the Friends' Garden to the west, where the mound is once again clearly visible. The river flows gently along its restored and cleared channel,

tumbling tunefully over shallow weirs and under crisp new concrete bridges, re-created to Jellicoe's design. The newly planted gardens are a mass of colour and once again the genius of Jellicoe's vision, to create a natural environment between the carpark and the concrete modernism of the New Town, can be appreciated. Do pay the gardens a visit – and consider supporting the Friends, the most practical way to keep the gardens in prime condition.

Garden Visits 2018—Trevor Beale



Fullers Mill

The basic formula for our garden visits (which are often fully booked) is that we leave our cars at Stanborough Green in Welwyn Garden City, and hop on a coach which takes us somewhere deep in the countryside for private visits to some very special gardens chosen by a committee, including Sonja Fillingham, Roy Johnson, Ellie Johnson and myself. Lunch is taken in a private room of a local pub, and after visiting the second garden we enjoy home made cakes and tea before being driven home, purring with satisfaction at having seen some English gardens at their very best.



11 Brookside

This summer was a vintage year for the visits, in superb weather. We saw gardens at Fullers Mill, Suffolk; 11 Brookside, Moulton, Suffolk; Deene Park in Northamptonshire; Redhill Lodge, Rutland; and Hillesden House and Kingsbridge Farm, both in Buckinghamshire.

For plants, it was hard to beat Fullers Mill, a plantsman's paradise of rare plants, including a range of lilies, such as the delicate Turk caps, and the tall *Cardiocrinum giganteum*, with white flowers tinged with green. Prairie-style beds with unusual grasses, dotted with *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire', were a feature at Redhill Lodge, while topiary added structure to the herbaceous borders at Kingsbridge Farm.



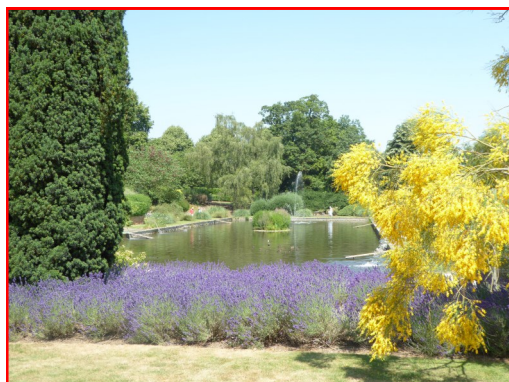
Redhill Lodge



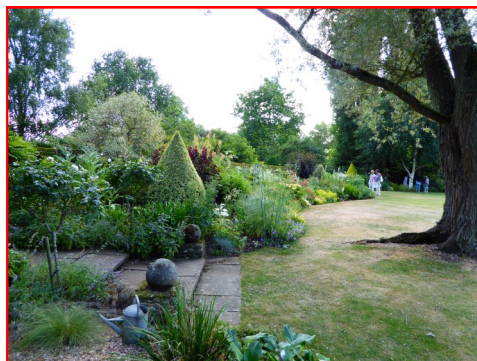
Deene Park

For the use of water in gardens, we enjoyed the dramatic lakes and ornamental ponds, one of them filled with Koi carp, at Hillesden, the River Lark meandering through islands at Fullers Mill, and the natural swimming pool with marginal plants and reeds at Redhill Lodge. It has been a splendid year for trees, and two that made a big impression were the twenty-five-foot high Mount Etna broom at Hillesden and the golden catalpa at Kingsbridge Farm, both in full bloom.

Landscapes ancient and modern ranged from the formal splendour of Deene Park, the home of the Brudenell family since 1514, with its battlements, classical bridge and David Hicks parterre, to the striking contemporary garden at Redhill Lodge. A farmer's field until bought in



Hillesden House



Kingsbridge Farm

2004, the garden is now cleverly configured to include a viewing mound, stepped terraces, modern sculpture and an avenue of winter orange limes.

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 the 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.

(Further details of the location and directions to High Leigh will be sent to all applicants)

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.

HGT Bridge Day 2019

A Bridge Day for members of the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and their friends will be held at Woolmer Green Village Hall, near Knebworth, on Wednesday, 13th February, 2019.

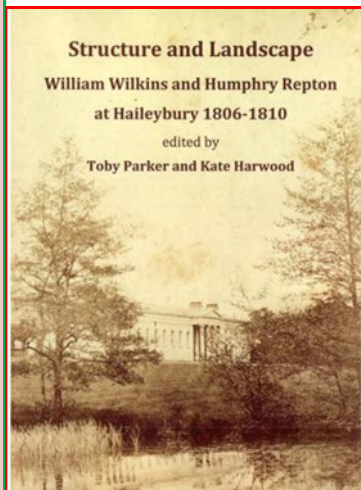
10.45am for an 11.00am start

A two course lunch with wine will be included and the cost of the day will be £90 for a table of four.

Members who would be interested in taking part and would like to make up or join a table should contact Sally Pool for further details:

sally.pool@hotmail.co.uk

New book: Structure and Landscape
William Wilkins and Humphry Repton at Haileybury 1806-1810
edited by Toby Parker and Kate Harwood



The Study Day organised by HGT at Haileybury in 2015 presented new information about the construction of the East India College and its Landscape. These Proceedings of that Study Day, with some additional papers, provide new insights to both the buildings and Repton's landscape and his considerable involvement in the site as well as the importance of the College as innovative in concept, design and execution.

To order a copy of this book please send your name, address and a cheque for £14.00 (to include p&p) payable to 'Hertfordshire Gardens Trust' to:

**HGT, 78 Broadstone Road, Harpenden,
Herts AL5 1RE**

HGT Short Course, 2019—Arts and Crafts Gardens

'The Recreation of the Golden Age: Arts & Crafts Gardens'

This will be 6 sessions: 3 lectures at Woolmer Green Village Hall and 3 visits. The first visit will be to Easton Lodge on Wednesday May 1st using own transport. Friends are welcome to join in for this visit at £6.50 per head which includes the guided tour and coffee and home-made cake. Entry for the course students is included in their fee.

Duration: Wednesdays, 24th April - 29th May; 10 - 12 noon with a coffee break.

Cost £45

If you would like to register interest please email Kate Harwood at
hertstalks@gmail.com

Hertfordshire Gardens Trust (HGT) Privacy Policy and the General Data Protection Regulation

Introduction

This information relates to the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into effect on 25th May 2018 and which you may have seen referenced in the wider media and in emails from other organisations.

The purpose of the GDPR is to provide a set of standard data protection laws across the EU, making it easier for you to understand how your data is being used and to give you greater control over its use.

How HGT is complying

HGT undertakes to collect and use your personal data in compliance with the GDPR. Our legal basis for processing this data is our *legitimate interest* as a membership organisation.

We use the data for the administration of your membership, the communication of information and the organisation of activities and events. We do not share your personal data with any other organisation.

We have a Privacy Notice on the HGT website with a link on the Home page. This is where you can find details of all these matters including:

- What data we collect and what we use it for
- Where we get it from and who we give it to
- What we do to ensure its security

Having read the Privacy Notice, if you are content with the personal information that we hold, how we process and store it, and how we currently contact you, then you do not need to do anything. Due to HGT's position as a membership organisation, we do not need you to grant consent for your information to be used and you do not need to complete any forms.



*Ashwell Cottage Garden—today
(see article, pages 12-13)*