

HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

**SPRING NEWSLETTER 2015
AND
ANNUAL REPORT**



From the President:

"Our new Chairman has not let the grass grow under her feet and under her leadership this has been another productive year for the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust.

There is plenty of activity in all departments which is impressive. The Hertfordshire Gardens Trust provides interesting opportunities for its members and I do encourage you to bring your friends along to see what is going on as there is something of interest for everyone. It would be an advantage to widen the circle of membership."

Dione Vanlam.

Chairman's Report—Bella Stuart-Smith



Like caged beasts unleashed, gardeners emerge in spring with such huge energy and enthusiasm that they can tackle anything. The committee see this coming and so put together a wonderful year full of events, outings, study opportunities and visits which really should inspire and enthuse.

Whatever your particular interest I hope you find something to enjoy; and please bring your friends. I particularly recommend Tony Kirkham's tree lecture, an extraordinarily knowledgeable and engaging expert.

Our Research and Conservation team don't ever seem to hibernate. The reports you will read show just how much is going on behind the scenes. What they highlight is the expertise and knowledge that has been built up by our individual members. With support and training, like the day we held in February, we hope to make this research really count so that planners and local districts, at the click of a mouse, can readily access information about what our members and researchers consider to be the most important elements of our historic landscapes.

Collaboration and consultation are the key to ending up with success stories such as Tring Park, Gobions Wood and the work in progress at Hemel Water Gardens. We hope to encourage the same levels of collaboration across all the landscapes we are involved with.

The wheelbarrows are back in schools too, and I look forward to bringing you up to date at the AGM when we hope to welcome many of you at Pie Corner and look forward to enjoying a sun filled evening listening to Jazz! I have lots of work to do before then and hope the new bit of our garden will survive your scrutiny.

'Pie Corner'

To be given a blank slate, an empty plot, and a license to create a garden from first principles, may be every gardener's dream - or possibly their nightmare. In 1989 Bella Stuart-Smith, occasionally supported by husband Jeremy, found herself in just this situation. The opportunity to replace a couple of tumbledown cottages with a house designed by architect James Gorst, described by 'Country Life' as 'a startlingly austere neo-classical design', had left the young family with an exposed and overlooked site, a hostile planning authority, and severely strained resources. Expectations must have been particularly high for Bella, who would have the challenge of creating and realising the garden's design, since she had married into a family with a notably strong gardening pedigree who would doubtless have firm opinions on how things should be done.

'Pie Corner' stands at the western end of a shallow valley with a stunning view to the east. From the outset there was a pressing need to screen the house and garden from the properties and the main road on the elevated ground to the north and west. Priority was given to hedge planting, formal lines of hornbeam and yew to the north and south, and



less formal screens of holly to the west. The formality of the hedges complemented the classical lines of the house and lent form to the original concept for the garden. Planning restrictions prevented development to the east, where the field boundary flanked the York stone terrace surrounding the house. The rising ground to the south was levelled and a retaining brick wall with a central set of steps built to provide a backdrop to a formal lawn with four rectangular



borders, flanked by clipped yew hedges. In later years part of the lawn has been sacrificed for a swimming pool and cloud clipped box hedging and cypress spires planted to modify its impact. Today, a doe and fawn by Clare Tupman, a 50th birthday present, seem to graze contentedly at the top of the brick steps.

To the north, close-clipped hornbeam hedges, which today are a good ten feet in height, were planted to enclose three sides of a box-edged *parterre*; perhaps more properly described as a *potager*, as the beds housed fruit and vegetables in addition to flowering plants. Beyond the *parterre*, and approached through an archway fashioned in the hedge, is an extensive area of woodland. Once dominated by mature sycamore trees and

featuring a wooden pirate ship for the younger members of the family, this area has been much changed in recent years. The sycamores have gone, remembered only by a ring – a ‘druids circle’ – of rustic seats. Now the light can find its way through to a dell garden, rich in spring bulbs and bluebells, where forget-me-not and foxglove can self-seed in abundance. Grassy paths wind through informal plantings of Paeonia, Viburnum, Hydrangea, Eleagnus and Crataegus, extending the flowering into early summer. Like any good gardener Bella is not content to stand still. At the time of writing the *parterre* is no more, the box edging has been transplanted, the beds are empty of all but two lone apple trees, whose fate has yet to be decided.



Bella describes her garden ‘as something of an experimental playground with a lifetime’s opportunity for my learning’; at ‘Pie Corner’ experiment has been strongly underpinned by more formal theory. The early years of making the garden at ‘Pie Corner’, together with her academic experience as an historian, led to a three-year part-time course in Garden History at Birkbeck College – juggling life with four young children at the same time; and then, in 2003, to a part-time course with the Pickard School of Garden Design at the Museum of Garden History. The highlight must have been the opportunity with a group of fellow students, sponsored by Woolworths Ltd., to design and build a show-garden for the Chelsea Flower Show, with the satisfaction of an award of a Silver Medal. In turn, this has led to a successful practice in garden design for private clients, as well as inspiration for the further development of the maturing garden at ‘Pie Corner’.

Eventually, permission was given for the extension of the garden to the east. Sheep pasture gave way to an extensive mown lawn, with hornbeam hedges and a broad avenue of limes leading the eye towards the middle-ground and the view of the valley beyond. An enclosed fruit and vegetable garden was developed to the north, together with a dry and sunny gravel garden. To the south an oak framed barn and garage leads through to an enclosed cherry orchard where sheep can still graze and chickens forage.



From the eastern end of the lawn one can look back towards the house, and metaphorically through the stages of development of the garden: ‘formality to Informality’ in the words of its designer. For the writer, reflected in the design is the inspiration of earlier generations: from

Bridgeman's grand avenues, to Sackville-West's association of formal hedge lines with abundant planting, to the wild garden at Wisley. The Trust has been most fortunate to benefit from Bella's experience, promoting the educational values of hands-on gardening in Primary Schools through her 'Mrs Wheelbarrow' scheme, and now as its Chairman. In 2015 our AGM is to be held at 'Pie Corner' and members will be able to enjoy the discovery of this very special garden for themselves.

AGM—2015

This year's AGM will be held on Wednesday, 8th July at 'Pie Corner' at the kind invitation of Jeremy and Bella Stuart-Smith. The garden will be open from 6.00pm, with a glass of wine served from 7.00pm.

The meeting will start at 7.30pm and members are then invited to stay for picnics—please bring tables and chairs (and umbrellas, if wet.)

'Pie Corner House', Millhouse Lane, Bedmond, WD5 0SG

Agenda

- 1. Apologies for absence and Chairman's welcome*
- 2. Proposal and adoption of officers*
- 3. Minutes of the last AGM held on 8th July, 2014 and matters arising*
- 4. Report and accounts for the year 01/04/14—31/03/15*
- 5. AOB.*

A 'druids circle' of seats in the garden at 'Pie Corner'



Annual Research Report—Anne Rowe

This year got off to an energetic start when on 16 January a posse of 13 volunteers spent a pleasant, if somewhat frustrating, morning looking for remains of the Dairy Garden under a layer of leaf-mould in **Panshanger Park**. Sadly the former garden appears to have been covered in part by a raft of concrete and partly by a deep layer of sand. A surviving length of garden path was uncovered alongside the west wall of the garden, complete with shaped concrete edging. The remains of the former stone steps leading up to the Dairy Garden from the south terrace were also identified.

*Researchers taking a break by the
'Panshanger Oak'*



A very successful Research Group 'Seminar and Soup' meeting was held at Woolmer Green Village Hall on 27 February attended by over 20 people who heard about various projects undertaken by HGT over the past couple of years under the title of 'Work in Progress'.

Presentations included: An overview of the history of **Tring Park** from 1700 to 1900 (Jenny Milledge and Kate Harwood); a description of the garden earthworks we've discovered in Tring Park and in **Gobions Wood** (Anne Rowe); CB300 (the celebration of 'Capability' Brown's tercentenary – in 2016) and an update on progress at **Panshanger** (Kate Harwood and Helen Leiper). As ever, the morning was rounded off by an impressive selection of soups and other food kindly supplied by those attending the meeting. Huge thanks to Jenny Milledge for organising the day.

Volunteers from the Research Group got together in April, June, August and October in the Lionel Munby Room of Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) at County Hall. Documentary research tends to be a somewhat solitary occupation so these convivial meetings enable us to share our latest findings, frustrations and occasional breakthroughs – and to swap information on the complex network of kinship ties which often linked the county's land-owning classes. Writing up the results of one's research involves a great deal of hard work and meticulous attention to detail, including a record of all the sources consulted, so being able to see the labours of one's fellow researchers finally come to fruition in the form of a printed and bound site report provides enormous encouragement for everyone – and some very welcome inspiration to keep going! In 2014 site reports were completed for **The Hook** at Northaw (now The Oshwal Centre) by Liz Carlin and for **Hunsdon House** by Deborah Spring. We welcomed

two new researchers during the year: Esme Marshall who has elected to research the garden of a town house called **Welcombe** in Harpenden; and Sally Pearson who is investigating the early gardens at **St Albans Abbey**. A preliminary site visit was made to **Presdales** (now a school) in Ware during the Easter holidays, a site which is being researched by Tina Rowland. Tina and I were accompanied by garden historian and HGT member Kate Banister, a former teacher at the school, and we were able to identify significant elements of the 19th-early 20th-century gardens which survive in the school grounds.

Tring Park project

On 7 March Kate Harwood, Jenny Milledge and I introduced Tom Williamson to Tring Park and we started to record some of the earthworks in the lower part of the park. Having examined the results of our survey, we now believe that, in addition to the garden archaeology, there are several features which could be relict field boundaries which pre-date the creation of the park in the late 17th-early 18th century – but which may have been utilised by Charles Bridgeman when laying out his landscape design. On 9 April we enjoyed a great afternoon at the invitation of the Woodland Trust to celebrate the restoration of the Charles Bridgeman *rond-point* – ceremonially completed by the planting of the final tree by Lady Verulam. A lovely pair of spotted ponies pulling a small carriage was laid on for the VIPs, namely the HGT President and Chairman and the Mayor of Tring.

Gobions Wood

Work continues to raise public awareness of this important site, a famous garden designed by Charles Bridgeman, now owned by the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT). We were invited to comment on the HMWT's 5-year management plan for Gobions Wood and their project officer, Susannah O'Riordan, designed a fabulous information panel explaining the history of the site and these have been installed at entry points to the wood. I led two walks around the wood in the spring to show the public the garden archaeology – one for the HMWT and one for the Potters Bar Health Walkers – and in October my 18th-century alias, Lady Anne, joined in the fun of the HMWT's 'Wild Woods Day' to show the garden remains to children and their parents. Bernard Spatz of the Friends of Gobions Wood has kindly presented the HGT with the Heritage Report, Ecological Survey and Restoration Plan produced by Landscape Design Associates in 2002.



Lady Verulam, HGT President, planting the final tree of the rond-point at Tring Park

Annual Schools Report—Bella Stuart-Smith

The Mrs Wheelbarrows had another good year. In terms of numbers that meant 26 primary schools were visited and 41 workshops delivered. That is approximately 1,200 children who enjoyed some practical gardening and we hope, managed to grow and care for some plants. 10 of those schools were ones we had never worked in before.

The numbers are important because we have been doing this a long time, since 2008, and feel we have made a significant impression. More and more schools are gardening and using the outside opportunities in their grounds to give practical depth to the science curriculum which is very encouraging. This year we have been consulted twice by the RHS who now have developed a very good programme for schools. Not only do they have an excellent bench mark scheme for schools to work through, but they have really brilliant on line resources for teachers including ready made lesson plans and lots of ideas. The primary stage science national curriculum is also changing and it will have more emphasis on getting out and observing what is happening in nature so there will be even more reason to grow and garden. A return to look and learn!

The RHS are running a pilot project to encourage their members to volunteer in their local schools and support gardening clubs and growing projects. This will be an excellent way of using existing horticultural skills in the community to help staff in schools who might not have the knowledge or experience. I hope very much that once trialled it expands nationwide so Hertfordshire schools can benefit.

This is all a long way round of saying that the Mrs Wheelbarrows may well be hanging up their aprons because we have come so far and I want to thank everyone for the effort they have made to get the job done so well. They have enthused, encouraged and engaged all the children lucky enough to meet a Mrs or Mr Wheelbarrow. I am really lucky to have had such a great team who have made the effort seem endlessly worthwhile. Effectively we have made ourselves redundant!

We have some new ideas for the Awards scheme as we want to put our efforts into an older age, who may be considering careers or apprenticeships in gardening or horticulture and who could need support at college level. I hope to be able to report more at the AGM.

At the risk of being repetitive if you would like to become more involved in the schools work please do get in touch with any ideas, great or small. We could well be missing something very obvious and not know about it. And thank you to the great team who have already done so much.

Annual Conservation Report—Kate Harwood

Again, the work done behind the scenes takes up much time. This year there have been a number of Local Plan consultations. It is important that HGT comment on these documents, vast though they may be. This is our chance to have the importance of our historic parks and gardens, particularly those not on the English Heritage Register, recognised and policies to protect them put in place. If a Local Planning Authority can adopt a list of locally important historic parks and gardens, something which they are now obliged to do, then some protection from the council's own policies is afforded to these fragile sites.

We have commented on St Albans, East Herts and Dacorum and have North Herts and Welwyn Hatfield in progress. Not only do we look for the policies to protect our site we also look at the development proposals, including suggested housing allocations. These can cause serious problems with concentrations of housing around some of our parks causing loss of setting and therefore of significance. Alarm bells have been rung by suggested housing allocations around Gobions, Panshanger Park, the medieval parks around Gilston, Tewin Water, Digswell, and other sites, and we fully support CPRE in their comments about loss of the Green Belt and merging of hitherto distinct communities. We have been very pleased indeed that Dacorum BC has taken about half of our suggested sites and in consultation with us put them into the draft of their new Plan.



Panshanger Park: an example of impact on the historic landscape, in this case the legacy of Humphry Repton, when designed landscape considerations are not taken into account .

This, of course, is only one aspect. The other is monitoring planning applications weekly and commenting on them. Some of the required documentation submitted for historic sites is not up to standard and we work with the planning officers across the county to highlight various issues. We have been working on a number of sites, including Shendish, Knebworth Park Cricket Club, Jellicoe Water Gardens, Putteridge Bury, Hanstead House, and Frogmore House to try to reach the best possible solutions. As we now comment on behalf of the Garden History Society,

statutory consultees, we liaise with them and also with English Heritage as well as CPRE.

The Jellicoe Water Gardens at Hemel Hempstead are a sea of mud as work starts to restore them to their full glory and we hope will open in a couple of years. Work on Cassiobury Park, also the recipient of a heritage Lottery Fund grant, will remodel the paddling pool area giving more facilities and restore some of the historic aspects round the Cha-Cha–Cha café. The Friends of Jellicoe Water Gardens have made contact with the Friends of Bushey, and the Friends of Panshanger Park have visited Painshill in Surrey to discuss the issues with managing a historic park open to the public.

We continue to work with anyone who will talk to us – owners, managers, Friends, planners and the public to help keep as much of our historic park and garden heritage for future generations.

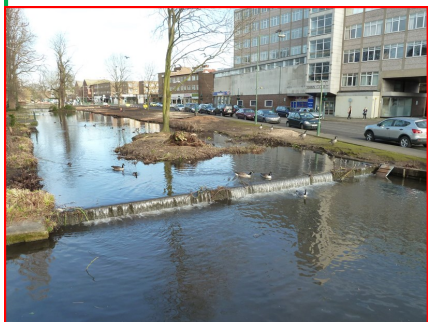
Educational topics:

- In February 2015 a joint meeting with the HGT Research Group will focus on 'Local Lists'.
- A Short Course is planned on 'Tudor and Jacobean Gardens' (details on p)

Study Days:

- In 2014—a highly successful and heavily oversubscribed course was held on the Bridgeman landscape at Tring Park .
- In 2015 we are hoping for similar success with the work of Repton at Haileybury, where a good cast of speakers has been lined up (details on page)
- Next year, in 2016, we will be at Wood Hall (Heath Mount School) at Watton -at-stone.

CB 300: A working party of Christopher Melliush, Jenny Milledge, Kate Harwood, Helen Leiper and Alison and Tosh Moller are preparing for the 'Tercentenary Celebrations' for Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. In addition to the Study Day there will be a series of printed walking guides around Hertfordshire's 'Brownian' landscapes, an exhibition, and possibly a series of talks.



A conservation success story: co-operation and hard work between Dacorum District Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Hertfordshire Gardens Trust has led to a major project restoring the Jellicoe Water Gardens at Hemel Hempstead.

AGT and GHS merger to form The Gardens Trust—Kate Harwood

The County Gardens Trusts, as members of the AGT, and members of the GHS have agreed in principle to merge and work has been going forward to produce a joint business plan which will be sent to county gardens trusts in February for comment.

This will be discussed at the AGT Business Meeting in March, taken back to the two organisations' management committees and finally voted in – or out – at a joint AGM in Newcastle in July, 2015.

Time and effort have been expended on trying to sort out the two very different funding streams for the organisations, the legal implications and our slightly different emphases. The merger has in part been driven by the lack of financial resources available to run two organisations. With the demise of the local conservation officer, more and more county gardens trusts are taking on the role of watchdog for their local historic parks and gardens and with the enhanced clout given by the merger with the statutory consultee (the GHS) and continued support for the county gardens trusts, we hope to become more effective and raise the profile of our historic parks and gardens.

In brief the new organisation's aims are:

- To speak with a more powerful voice for the protection of parks, gardens and designed landscapes;
- To play a key garden conservation role in the national, regional and local planning systems as a statutory consultee;
- To provide more resources to support and strengthen the local activity of the County Gardens Trusts, particularly with respect to conservation and education;
- To be an internationally regarded centre of excellence in the study of garden history.

As a charity it will:

- Promote the study of the history of gardening, landscape gardening and horticulture in all its aspects;
- Promote Gardens Trusts and through them, education, appreciation and involvement in matters connected with the arts and sciences of garden land;
- Promote the protection and conservation of historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes and to promote and advise on their conservation;
- Encourage the creation of new parks, gardens and designed landscapes

Education lies at the heart of the new organisation. Although outdoor education

for children and tertiary adult education in colleges and universities are stressed; we in Hertfordshire know that attending local courses, study days and research group meetings is a key part of the remit of a gardens trust so hope this is fully recognised in the new body. We have an excellent team on the AGT side who have made excellent progress and have set up a website giving more details at:

<http://agt-ghstogether.org>

Events and Outings 2015

'Profit and Pleasure: Humphry Repton and the East India College Landscape'

A Study Day to re-evaluate the unique landscape at Haileybury

Ray Desmond's article in the Garden History journal in 1978 admitted little was known about this commission—even hinted that it was almost a back of an envelope idea done as a favour for a friend. Toby Parker has uncovered much new information, and the tantalising possibility of a Red Book, about Humphry Repton's quite extensive involvement and also the American and other influences on Rev. Samuel Henley, the First Principal, and on his flower garden at Haileybury.

The day aims to add to the information and understanding of Repton and his designs, and put this rare collegiate commission into context of Repton and his era.

To be held at Haileybury, Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire £30 per person
Saturday, April 18th 2015
0930-1700

09.30 Registration and coffee

10.00 Welcome

10.10 The Commission: Toby Parker, Haileybury College

10.50 Wilkins and the East India Company, Amy Thomas, UCL

11.30 Repton and the Flower Garden: Mick Thompson, Ashridge

12.10 Repton and Landscape at Haileybury: Tom Williamson, UEA

12.50 Questions

13.15 Lunch

14.15 Tour of the College: buildings, garden and landscape.

16.15 Plenary

17.00 Depart.

For further details and an application form contact Kate Harwood at
hertstalks@gmail.com

Events and Outings 2015

Medieval or Renaissance?

Parks and Gardens in the Tudor and early Stuart periods

Programme

Tuesday June 2nd (Kate Harwood and Alison Moller)

Tudor gardens and the influence of the Renaissance

Tuesday June 9th

Visit to Lyveden New Bield (by coach)

This is an optional trip, led by Alison Moller, to the most interesting relic Tudor garden layout. Booking by separate form.

COST £26 + ENTRY

(Lyveden is NT so entry is free to members, £6.00 for others)

PRE-BOOKED LUNCH AVAILABLE

Tuesday June 16th (Jenny Milledge and Kate Harwood)

Later Renaissance influences looking at key developments at Wilton

Tuesday June 23rd

On-site study session at Cedar's Park, Cheshunt (site of Theobalds Palace)

Tuesday June 30th (Anne Rowe)

Tudor and early Stuart Parks in Hertfordshire

Tuesday July 7th

Guided Walk round Stanstead Bury

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

Inclusive cost (with the exception of the visit to Lyveden New Bield): £30

[Stop Press: The main course is fully booked, but you may add your name to the 'reserve' list by using the accompanying 'flyer'. Places are still available on the coach to Lyveden New Bield and may be reserved using the 'flyer'.]

FRIENDS OF PANSHANGER PARK

'BACK TO THE FUTURE'

A study day on the history, the wild life and the future of Panshanger Park

Mayflower Place, Hertingfordbury, Hertfordshire, SG14 2LG

Friday May 15th 0930-1600

Further details and an application form are available from the website:
www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk

Events and Outings 2015

Garden Visit to Cambridgeshire/Northants: Tuesday 9th June 2015
£48.50

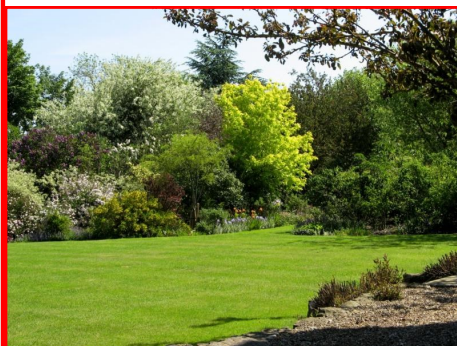
[Departure from Stanborough Green, Welwyn Garden City at 9.00a.m.]

Castor House: The three acres of gardens around Ian and Claire Winfrey's Queen Anne home at Castor (formerly the summer residence of the Bishops of Peterborough) include a unique Italianate bog garden, an ornamental *potager* designed by Bunny Guinness, a hot border, a walled garden with local apple varieties, a lily pond, and rose and cottage gardens.

Coffee will be served on arrival at Castor House, and after the visit we move on to take a light lunch with a glass of wine at the Falcon Inn, Fotheringay, when there will be time to visit the fine parish church next door.

Titchmarsh House: Around their 17th century home, Titchmarsh House, Sir Ewan and Lady Harper have created an outstanding garden extending to over four acres, including a walled garden, an ornamental vegetable garden, a wild garden, and a quiet garden, to house a remarkably wide range of unusual plants, flowering shrubs and trees from all over the world.

After tea at Titchmarsh House we shall leave for home.



Titchmarsh House



Castor House

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

Events and Outings 2015

Garden Visit to Denham, Bucks: Tuesday 30th June, 2015 £39

[Departure from Westminster Lodge, St Albans, 9.30a.m.]

The White House, Denham: the home of Mr and Mrs Courtney Luck, 'The White House' is a well established garden of 6 acres with the River Misbourne meandering through its lawns. There is a walled garden, an Italian garden, a developing laburnum walk, Victorian greenhouses, a rose garden—something for everyone! *We will have coffee here.*

A short walk away is the 'Green Man', where we will have a light lunch, before walking to our second garden.



The White House, Denham

Kayalami: Mrs Hazel de Quervain's deep love of gardening is evident in this quiet secluded garden of 1 acre, which she has been nurturing with her gardener, Tony, for over 21 years. A riot of intense and natural colours in flower and foliage, herbaceous borders packed with hardy plants, provide a magnificent backdrop to beautifully manicured lawns.

We shall have tea here before leaving for St Albans. Members should be aware that numbers will be limited for this garden visit.

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

Events and Outings 2015

Garden Visit to the Chilterns: Thursday, July 16th, 2015 £42

[Departure from Stanborough Green, Welwyn Garden City at 9.15a.m.]

Tythrop Park: Following *coffee and biscuits* served in the pre-1680s stable block, the Head Gardener will guide us around the 10 acres of exciting gardens surrounding the 17thC Grade I listed manor house. The huge, formal box *parterre* behind the house gives visitors an immediate 'wow' factor, and other features include the pond, mature trees and shrubs. A deep, long border leads to the *pièce de résistance*, the newly re-created walled garden, with fruit, vegetables and more contemporary planting.

We will have a light lunch, including a glass of wine, in a nearby village pub (included in the cost), before proceeding to our second garden.

Red Kites: This 1.5 acre sloping garden has 'views to die for' and red kites circling overhead. Lovingly created and tended by the owners, the garden is terraced and divided into a series of garden rooms; there are overflowing flower borders, a wide use of clematis and climbers, a pond, a vegetable garden and a wild flower orchard.

Tea and cake will be served on the terrace before we leave for home, but beware those hungry red kites!



Tythrop Park



Red Kites

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

Events and Outings 2015

'TREES - A CUT ABOVE THE REST'

***A Lecture by Tony Kirkham
(Senior Tree Specialist, Kew Gardens)***



Tony Kirkham is Head of the Arboretum, Gardens and Horticultural Services at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

He probably knows more about trees, their natural history and their cultivation than anyone in England (and beyond).

Those who have heard him will agree that he is a 'natural': passionate about his subject and enormously entertaining. HGT are very lucky to have him as our guest speaker— don't miss it!

Monday 1st June 2015 - 7.30pm

Drinks available from 7.00pm

**A short tour of the grounds with Tony Kirkham will start at 6.30pm
at**

**Ashridge Management College
Nr Berkhamsted HP4 1NS**

**Tickets £12.00 Members
£14 Non-Members**

For tickets apply to Mrs Annie Saner using the 'flyer' which accompanies this Newsletter.

Events and Outings 2015

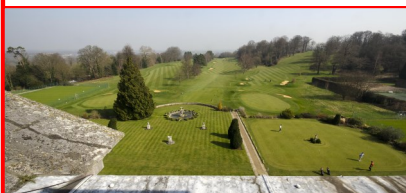
A Private Tour of Moor Park and its 18thC landscape.

Thursday, 17th September, 2015. £27 per person

In the 300 years to 1920, Moor Park, south of Rickmansworth, changed hands more than a dozen times. During the 18thC the significant designers employed to improve the House and Gardens included Robert Adam, Charles Bridgeman and Capability Brown. Moor Park is a perfect example of one-upmanship where, seeking to impress, successive owners have lavished fortunes on the house and gardens.

Programme

- 10.15-10.30am Arrive at Moor Park, coffee will be served
- 10.45am Tour of the House led by members of NADFAS
- 12.15pm A light lunch will be served
- 1.00pm Talk on the 18th C landscape
- 1.45pm Tour of the Grounds



A Visit to the 'Painting Paradise' Exhibition and Lecture at the Queens Gallery, Buckingham Palace.

Thursday, 8th October, 2015 Adult—£20 Over 60—£18

Bringing together paintings, botanical studies, drawings, books, manuscripts and decorative arts, the exhibition explores the changing character of the garden from the 16th to the early 20th. Century.

Programme

- 10.45am Coffee will be served in the Redgrave Room of the Queen's Gallery.
- 11.00am 30 minute talk by a Royal Collection Trust curator.
- 11.30am Tour of the exhibition.

Members to make their own way to both of these events, either by car or by public transport. All enquiries to:

Annie Saner, Bury Orchard, Hudnall Common, Little Gaddesdon, HP4 1QL
Tel 01442 843428 email: johnsaner@btinternet.com

For tickets apply to Mrs Annie Saner using the accompanying 'flyer'.

My Work with the HGT—Tom Williamson

My 'day job', so to speak, is teaching landscape history at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, but I have worked with the research group of the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust since the late 1990s, and hope to do so for many years to come. An exile from the county, I still wonder at the strange and striking contrasts it presents, between the busy south and west - with London close at hand – and the north and east, which has a landscape more rural in character. Even here, however, pressure on the historic landscape generally, and on 'designed' landscapes - on parks and gardens – more particularly, is intense. The most important role of the Trust, directed with such skill and determination by Kate Harwood, is that of monitoring developments and lobbying the planning authorities to protect our heritage of gardens and parks. But to do this effectively we need to know more about our gardens, so that we can identify the places which are particularly worthy of conservation, and justify our arguments for conserving them. Conservation and research have thus, for a long time, gone hand in hand in the work of the HGT.

My work with the Trust has, over the years, been very varied. I helped, back in the late 1990s, to write up the survey of gardens and parks in west Hertfordshire which was published – thanks especially to the work of Anne Rowe and Ann Mallinson – in 2000 as *The Parks and Gardens of West Hertfordshire*. Since then I have attended meetings and offered advice on subsequent phases of the Trust's survey work. I have also had the pleasure of contributing to the Trust's second book – *Hertfordshire Garden History: A Miscellany*, edited by Anne Rowe - and to some of the remarkable conferences and symposia organised by the Trust. One of these resulted in another book - *Hertfordshire Garden History vol. II: Gardens pleasant, Groves delicious*, edited by Deborah Spring – and both volumes have a proud place on the bookshelves in my study, and constitute major contributions to the study of



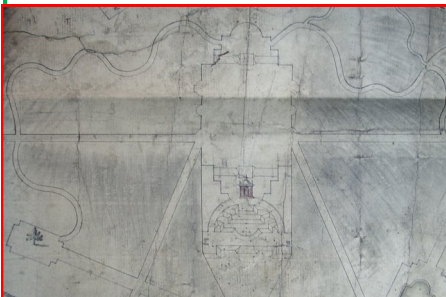
Tom Williamson (on the left), supervising members of the Research Group on the site of the Bowling Green at Gobions Wood.

garden history. Over the last few years, however, I have been mainly involved in studying the county's rich legacy of 'archaeological' gardens. In part because of its proximity to London and the rapid turn-over of properties, Hertfordshire has more than its fair share of 'lost' gardens, largely preserved in the form of earthworks. Working with Anne Rowe and a well-honed group of HGT surveyors I have been involved in researching and planning a range of sites in the county including Offley Holes (an early twentieth-century 'arts and crafts' garden associated with a now demolished house); Popes near Hatfield (an astonishing mid-eighteenth century water garden, now dry, buried in dense woodland); Tring Park (the Trust's most recent restoration triumph); and, above all, Gobions near Brookmans park.

Gobions was designed by the great Charles Bridgeman for Jeremy Sambrooke in the late 1720s and early 1730s and was the most celebrated garden in eighteenth-century Hertfordshire. George Bickham in his famous *Beauties of Stowe* of 1750 praised it as a place of 'surprising Greatness' and 'a sensible Resemblance in Miniature of Stow', while Horace Walpole in 1780 lauded it as a seminal landscape in which 'many detached thoughts, that strongly indicate the dawn of modern taste' could be observed, in part because of its 'pleasing Variety of Prospects'. The gardens survive only in vestigial form, as earthworks, and - covering a vast and well-wooded area - have not been easy to survey, or to understand. But the hard work of the surveying team (experts all in the operation of a Total Station Theodolite!), coupled with Anne Rowe's discovery of Bridgeman's original plan for the site in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, hitherto quite unknown, have ensured that their layout and meaning are now much clearer.

The gardens, associated with a house demolished in the 1840s, were laid out within an area of ancient woodland on either side of a deeply incised stream and comprised a network of paths – some straight, some serpentine – connecting a

number of clearings. These contained a bowling green, ornamental canal, grotto, lake with cascade and a number of



Detail from Charles Bridgeman's plan of the gardens at Gobions, showing the Bowling Green House.

statues and buildings. Bridgeman exploited the undulating topography with considerable skill, ensuring that the garden's various elements were visually linked in a tantalising fashion, inviting exploration. Much of the surrounding estate was, moreover, crossed by walks which extended the line of the allées within the woodland, or was otherwise incorporated into carefully composed views. On the low hill to the south a prominent eye-catcher terminated one of the main vistas within the gardens, a gothic gate tower designed by James Gibbs, which still survives (it may predate Gibb's Gothic Temple at Stowe, often posited as the earliest eighteenth-century garden building in this style). The original design also included, again on the low hill just outside the gardens, a romantic ruin, but this was never built. The most striking feature of the gardens – and perhaps that which made them so appealing to Walpole and Bickham – was the way in which they were so poorly related to Gobions House itself. The two lay more than two hundred metres apart were connected by only a single avenue: this pre-dates Bridgeman's involvement here and was not employed as a major articulating axis within the new design. The gardens were, in consequence, something to be experienced in their own right, rather than functioning primarily as a setting for, or view from, the house. This may have been the main reason why Walpole and others considered that Gobions marked a major stage in the development of the English landscape garden.

The work of the Trust's research group is at the cutting edge of landscape research. It involves the systematic combination of documentary, cartographic, botanical and documentary evidence. Over the past few months commitments in East Anglia, Warwickshire and elsewhere have conspired to keep me away from the county and from the work of the group. But later this year I look forward to working once again with a most inspiring group of people, both at Gobions and elsewhere.



The remains of one of the allees in the gardens at Gobions, focussed on James Gibbs' 'Folly Arch' on the skyline.

Glimpses of Edwardian Country Life—Lottie Clarke

Historic designed landscapes may be created in response to topography, fashion, politics and fluctuating family circumstances, but above all they are about people. The people who commission, design, maintain, enjoy and destroy them. However, until the late 19th century we rarely had pictorial depictions of these people, so our image of them is often based on contemporary portraits of other landowners, politicians or merchants. Such pictures are formal, often commissioned as symbols of wealth and status. Rarely do we have the chance to see the families at play, or see estate staff at work. Images of the gardens may exist, but not of the people who lived and worked in them.

When I was researching Stagenhoe at St Pauls Walden, I took photographs of the gardens and remaining features, I found sales particulars with plans showing the extent and layout of the grounds, Edwardian illustrations from Country Life, even a 1960s aerial photo. These all helped show the design of the gardens and their evolution, which was influenced by the changing fortunes of a succession of owners, but it was not until I came across some photographs from the early 1900s that I gained a sense of the way in which the gardens were enjoyed by the people who lived in them. I was able to buy at auction a series of photos from the album of the Bailey Hawkins family, who lived at Stagenhoe between 1894 and 1922.



Lunch in the Rose Garden. Male staff stand stiffly behind the lunch guests. Were they summoned specially for the photograph, or would there always have been so many in attendance?

They not only show views of the gardens, but also of the ways in which wealthy Edwardian families spent their leisure. William Bailey Hawkins had bought Stagenhoe in 1894. Its previous owner the 15th Earl of Caithness had died childless aged 30 and subsequently a succession of

tenants had occupied the property for several years, resulting in deterioration in the condition of the estate. The 14th Earl had spent large amounts of money extending and improving both house and grounds.

Alban Bailey Hawkins on the frozen lake. He is carrying a stick, so was perhaps playing a form of ice hockey.





Members of the family in an uncharacteristically happy and relaxed pose. They are picnicking in a cornfield at harvest time with provisions in a basket and no furniture. The stubble, by modern standards, is very long and uneven.

Under Bailey Hawkins' ownership fortunes improved once again and it became a showpiece Edwardian estate, much praised in a 1910 issue of The Gardeners Magazine.

By studying pages from the photograph album, one can see what activities the family enjoyed throughout the year and see how they entertained guests. Photography, still a relatively new medium for recording daily life, shows us intimate details of life at Stagenhoe, and although posed, the photographs are of informal outdoor activities. These images were captured for family and friends to enjoy. The formal portrait, as catalogue of succeeding generations, often only the male representatives, has been replaced by the

Renee Hennenberg – a guest, is posing by the Stag Gate . She carries a tennis racquet and is wearing a long skirt, shiny shoes and a tight jacket – ordinary day wear, which surely must have hampered her movement on court. Through the gate surmounted by stags, which allude to the name Stagenhoe, the kitchen garden can be seen. Beds of vegetables and fruit trees are bordered by immaculately trimmed box hedges.



Edwardian equivalent - a photograph of real people, women and children included. They are unflattered by the artist, indulging in unexceptional country pursuits. We see picnics, croquet, livestock, shooting parties and family pets. Informal though the settings might be, people wear formal clothes and pose self-consciously. Often



women are concealed under large hats and veils, men always wear jackets on summer days. Jaunty

Goring Bailey Hawkins rowing on the lake in summer. The lake was created in the 19th century as habitat for wildfowl, so has lots of reeds and small trees as cover. Shooting parties were a regular seasonal feature.

hats are *de rigueur* for men, whatever the weather. Boaters, caps or homburgs are worn for riding as well as for relaxing in the garden. Specialist clothing does not appear to have been worn for tennis or skating. Rarely are the Bailey Hawkins smiling, even in their own garden. Their leisure activities therefore look more like something to be endured rather than enjoyed.

Whereas once individuals were immortalised in oils and their portraits displayed prominently on walls, the advent of photography captured tableaux of the family and their guests in albums. Portrayals of wealth and power had been replaced by illustrations of the pursuits of a country gentleman, his influential guests and his prowess as a landowner – status symbols in a more informal guise.

From the Hon. Membership Secretary

For those who pay their Hertfordshire Gardens Trust subscription by cheque, the due date for renewal is 1st April, 2015. Subscriptions are £30 for joint membership and £20 for an individual, payable to 'Hertfordshire Gardens Trust'.

Subscriptions for members who joined since January 2015 are next due on the 1st April 2016. If you wish to start paying by standing order please ask the Hon. Sec. to send you a form:

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