

## *From the President:*

*“After the success of the twentieth anniversary year in 2011 it is impressive that the pace of the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust has not slackened. On the contrary all departments are flourishing and alongside serious work there is much to look forward to in the 2013 programme of events.*

*I would like to thank our Chairman very much for leading the trust so ably during this year and indeed many other years in the past.”*

*Dione Vanlam .*

# **The Hertfordshire Gardens Trust**

Registered Charity No. 1010093

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Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire

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## AGM—2013

### **AGM at Furneaux Pelham Hall, Furneaux Pelham, Nr Buntingford SG9 0LB**

This year's AGM is due to take place on **Tuesday, July 16th** at Furneaux Pelham Hall at the kind invitation of Adrian and Tina Brunner.

The gardens, which are very well worth looking round, will be open from 6.00pm with a glass of wine served at 7.00pm.

The meeting will start at 7.30pm after which Sue Flood, who has for so long been very much a leading light at HALS, will speak informally about her work and her close association with the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust.

Members are then invited to stay for picnics—please bring tables and chairs. If it is wet we will be invited into the Hall. Parking will be well signed.



*The gardens at Furneaux Pelham Hall*

## Chairman's Report—Christopher Melliush



It has been another good year for the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust with many things going on, both in the wide open spaces as well as behind the scenes.

Our Conservation and Research groups have been as busy as ever and I am most grateful to them for their serious contributions. The general coverage of the Welwyn-Hatfield area continues with several interesting "extras" being thrown up. The publication of *Hertfordshire Garden History, volume II*, entitled "Gardens pleasant, groves delicious" was an immediate success and extremely well received. It is delightful to see it published in

memory of Esther Gatland, who most sadly died last year and is greatly missed. Her large collection of books has recently been given to the Trust; those volumes not to be kept in the Trust's library may be sold for the benefit of the Trust - a most generous gift. While on the subject of recent publications, I commend another recent book of historic interest, "Maydencroft", published by the Hitchin Historical Society.

The 'Mrs.Wheelbarrows' remain busy in the county's primary schools. This is such a very worthwhile activity and always extremely well received. This summer we plan another schools award scheme and will emphasise where possible those schools which are in the early stages of improving their environment.

A lively programme of outings and events, both educational and social, is planned for the year ahead. Full details are given on pp 10-13. We shall build on the success of last year's guided walk at Wrest Park, led by Kate Harwood, and continue to offer our members the imaginative range of activities organised by Sonja Fillingham and Annie Saner. Do make room in your diaries for these, including our Spring lecture: 'Medicinal herb gardens and their relevance to modern medicine' by Dr Tim Cutler, to be held on Thursday 9th May at St Nicholas Church, Great Munden by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Howard Guard.

I am ever grateful to those members who contribute their academic expertise to the work of the Trust. The critical contribution of Kate Harwood and her conservation team to the planned development of the Water Gardens at Hemel Hempstead is an excellent example. Nor must I forget those whose work on the executive committee gives me such great support, particularly Penny Figgis, the Trust's Hon. Secretary and Fiona Bancroft, Hon. Treasurer. We have welcomed several new members of the Trust this year; but I am sad to have to report the death of Mr. Robert Harkness, who has been a supporter of the Trust since its inception.

Finally, may I thank Mr.Philip Patten, The Trust's independent examiner, who gives us great help with the accounts. I hope that as many members as possible will be able to attend the Annual General Meeting which this year is being held at Furneux Pelham Hall by the kind invitation of Mr and Mrs Adrian Brunner.

## Annual Research Report - Anne Rowe

The **Welwyn-Hatfield Research Project** has made good progress during 2012. Anne Shellim completed a substantial report on **Northaw Place** which has been very well received by the owners. Harold and Margaret Smith have also completed a fine report on **Astwick Manor**, Hatfield, their second for the project following their earlier research into **Leggatts Park**, Potters Bar. Research on another seven sites in the project area is ongoing and site visits have been made to **Bush Hall**, Hatfield, **Northaw House** and **The Hook** (now the Oshwal Centre) at Northaw. Most of these sites have been taken on by HGT members newly-recruited to the Research Group over the past couple of years. Two afternoon sessions in the Lionel Munby Room at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) in July and October provided opportunities for sharing successes, queries and frustrations with their research and report-writing.

Woolmer Green Village Hall provided the venue for a seminar on the eighteenth-century gardens at **Gobions** led by Research Director, Tom Williamson, prior to two days of site surveying in March. A review of the project can be found in the accompanying article by Jenny Milledge on page 7. Much remains to be done to record the important garden archaeology on this site and we hope to return in 2013.

2012 was a notable year for **publications**. The first was an article which appeared in the journal of the Landscape History Society about the amazing garden earthworks at **Benington Park**. Written by leading landscape historians Christopher Taylor and Tom Williamson, together with Anne Rowe, it included earthwork plans based on a survey undertaken by members of the HGT Research Group a few years ago. The Bridgeman gardens at **Gobions** were the subject of an article by Anne Rowe and Tom Williamson published in *Garden History* in May 2012 which discusses the important new information brought to light by the chance discovery of the previously unrecognised plan of the gardens in the Bodleian Library.

Last, but most certainly not least, was a volume of essays covering a variety of aspects of the garden history of the county written by eight members of the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust, edited by member Deborah Spring and published by the University of Hertfordshire Press in August 2012. Entitled *Hertfordshire Garden History Volume II: Gardens Pleasant, Groves Delicious*, this beautifully produced book forms a companion volume to *Hertfordshire Garden History: A Miscellany* published in 2007 and the background to its publication is described by Deborah on page 9.

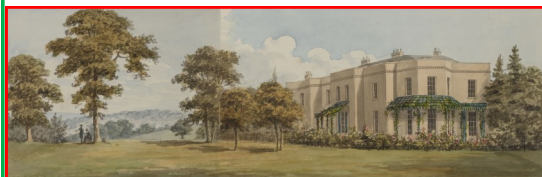
### Spreading the word

Some excellent opportunities to promote the work of the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust arose during the year. On the morning of 7 July members of the

Hertfordshire Association for Local History and the Hertfordshire Record Society got together for a guided walk around the site of the former gardens at **Panshanger** near Hertford. This was followed in the afternoon by two talks: one by Dorothy Abel Smith, President of HALH, on the families who had owned the estate and another by Anne Rowe on the history of Panshanger's designed landscape. We have also been forging important links with the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust who now own **Gobions Wood**. In July the HMWT organised a public talk in Brookmans Park where Anne Rowe spoke about the history of the former gardens at Gobions and this was followed a few days later by a walk to show members of the public the garden earthworks in Gobions Wood. In October a meeting was held at Gobions to inform HMWT site managers about the wood's former life as a famous 18<sup>th</sup>-century tourist attraction and to show them the important archaeological remains of the Bridgeman gardens which are now in their care. The HMWT are preparing information boards for the main access points to the wood which will alert the visiting public to the garden history as well as the wildlife interest of the wood and we hope to work with the Trust as they draw up their management plan for the site for the next few years.

### **Repton's Red Book for Wood Hill, near Essendon**

This red book was discovered in Sir John Soane's Museum in London by HGT member Monica Jordan whilst carrying out research for the Welwyn-Hatfield Project and featured in an article in the Spring 2012 newsletter. The Hertfordshire Gardens Trust has paid for the book to be professionally photographed and a copy can now be seen at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies at County Hall, Hertford (HALS ref. Acc 5388).



*Repton's vision of Wood Hill after his proposed (minor) improvements had been carried out..*

*By courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum.*

*Photo: Ardon Bar-Hama.*

### **Cecil Lodge, Abbots Langley**

Garden historian William Noble has very kindly provided HGT with a copy of his beautifully illustrated report on the history of Cecil Lodge, which grew out of research undertaken for his Masters Degree, and this has been added to our collection of site reports in the Local Studies Library at HALS.

### **Details of publications:**

A. Rowe, C. Taylor & T. Williamson, 'The earthworks at Benington Park, Hertfordshire: an exercise in dating an archaeological garden', *Landscape History* vol. 32, issue 2, (2011).

A. Rowe & T. Williamson, 'New Light on Gobions', *Garden History*, Vol. 40, No. 1, Summer 2012.

D. Spring (ed.), *Hertfordshire Garden History: Gardens Pleasant, Groves Delicious* (University of Hertfordshire Press, 2012).

## Gobions Wood— 'The most famous garden in Hertfordshire'

Jenny Milledge

On a bright spring day the HGT research group gathered in the Woolmer Green village hall. The anticipation was palpable as we awaited the arrival of Tom Williamson. Gobions Wood was the topic under discussion. Anne Rowe had discovered a new map in the Bodleian Library which had been mis-filed as "North Mymms".

Anne brought us up to speed on the history of "Gubbins", as it was known when Jeremy Sambrooke, an East India Company nabob, purchased the estate in 1708. Sambrooke commissioned a new house and garden buildings by James Gibbs with a garden by Charles Bridgeman. The Gubbins gardens were highly acclaimed, being described by Bickham as "a sensible Resemblance in Miniature of Stowe", and were much visited, notably by Queen Caroline. Her visit in 1732 gives us an accurate date at which the gardens were largely complete, but there are still many unanswered questions relating to the development of different garden areas. Sources to assist in understanding the gardens are a map by Thomas Holmes (c. 1735) held in Gloucester Record Office, engravings by Châtelain (1748) of the bowling green and canal, and descriptions by George Bickham (c.1750) and William Toldervy (1762).

The Holmes map, arbitrarily dated c.1735, shows the gardens in some detail but new garden features have been added in a different hand, indicating that the map originally pre-dated 1735. A note states 'this line of trees not planted', showing that this map was a working plan which had been updated rather than a survey of what actually existed.

Sadly, there is no surveyor, date or title to the Bodleian Library map, but it depicts more detail of the layout, earth works, water features and buildings. The last of these, drawn in elevation, include the Bowling Green Summer House, the Lattice-Work Summer House, a sham ruin, seats, alcoves and an obelisk. In fact the two maps show different features and together give a huge amount of information. Common to both maps is the Folly Arch with its accompanying avenue.

Tom Williamson considers that Gobions was one of the most exciting gardens of the 18thC, and he encouraged us to take an overview of the gardens and think about why they were so significant. House and gardens were unrelated, an extraordinary development at a time when house and garden were axially aligned



*Bowling Green at 'Gobions' by J.B. Chatelain, 1748. 'Reproduced by kind permission of HALS [D/Z119/4/452A]'*

and geometry was the norm for garden design. Gobions predates by at least a decade the work of designer William Kent, who in the words of Horace Walpole 'leapt the fence and saw that all nature was a garden'. The carefully constructed views and sightlines for features demonstrate an understanding of design concepts which have not been thought to occur in gardens at this date.

The next step was later in March when a team of researchers, led by Tom and Anne, met at Gobions Wood for two days of practical fieldwork. The group was divided into two sections – one team was to survey the bowling green using equipment that Tom had brought along and Anne's group was assigned the task of looking at the water features as well as the landscape and noting anything unusual. Tom bounced back and forth between the two groups providing advice and enthusiasm. The outcome was a hugely satisfying survey of the bowling green with its associated sculpted turf terraces below the site of the former summerhouse, and a much better understanding of the lake and its associated islands and cascades.

It is clear that Gobions is a significant early eighteenth century garden with many questions about its design still unanswered. The discovery of the Bodleian map has been ground-breaking as it contributes to a better understanding of the design of the gardens; however, it is tantalising, as there are new questions to be addressed. Who designed the folly arch? (If it is by Gibbs, it is an early example of the use of Gothic.) The gardens have been compared to Stowe – why? Was there a sculpture programme? Was the sham ruin ever constructed? (If so, this would have been an early example.) The HGT research group still has plenty to think about!

*Reference: New Light on Gobions by Anne Rowe and Tom Williamson, published in the Summer 2012 Edition of 'Garden History' the Journal of the Garden History Society.*



## **‘Gardens pleasant, groves delicious’**

### **The story of the book—Deborah Spring**

While the country got in the mood for the Olympics, a small group of HGT researchers were beating their personal bests at the computer, wrestling with deadlines, and chasing elusive illustrations to their sources. As volume editor, I tried to keep track of the chapters, turning over my dining room to drafts, redrafts, and picture lists.

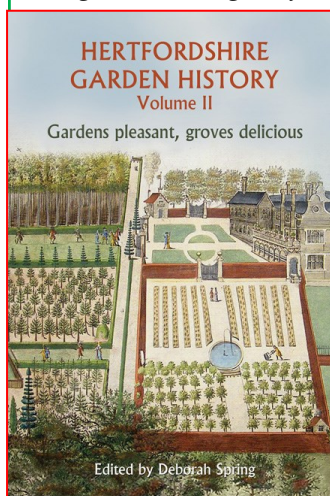
How did it all begin? The Trust’s twentieth anniversary celebrations seemed a timely cue for the research group to publish a second volume of garden history. The Hertfordshire Local History Symposium celebrating the anniversary was the focus we needed to get started. We set a timetable to develop a book from the papers written for the symposium.

A list of possible topics and presenters was drawn up. We decided to focus on the connections between London and Hertfordshire in the development of the county’s designed landscape, and how Hertfordshire’s historic parks and gardens have been influenced by the social and economic history of their time. In contrast to other regions in England where garden-making was usually funded by income from agriculture, many Hertfordshire gardens were made by newly rich incomers, whose fortunes often came from work in the capital. The area was also key in the supply of plants through the nursery trade.

There were changes along the way: new research became available, notably Anne Rowe’s discoveries about water gardens, and Jenny Milledge’s work on Hadham Hall. Very sadly, Esther Gatland was too ill to write her planned chapter on avenues. We did nevertheless manage to keep to our overall plan. Our very different chapters emerged in time for the publisher’s deadline, arranged chronologically and linked by the agreed themes. We did not confine

ourselves to grand gardens. There are chapters on industrial landscapes, nurseries, and garden cities as well as the gardens of Cecils and Capels and the designs of Lancelot Brown.

Clearing permission for illustrations was fiddly but we honed our negotiating skills and achieved some notable reductions in cost from friendly institutions. The high quality and number of illustrations included is testament to this, and HGT generously supported the cost of printing in colour. After an almost painless production process thanks to Hertfordshire University Press, the book was launched on a convivial August evening at Waterstones bookshop in St Albans.



*Hertfordshire Publications*

*ISBN 978-1-907396-81-6*

## Events and Outings –2013

**Garden Visit to Essex:      Tuesday, 23 April, 2013      £45**

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

**‘Olivers’, Colchester:** We will have a garden talk and tour, including refreshments, at this beautiful four acre garden surrounding a mellow, red-brick 18C house, featured in the ‘Good Gardens Guide’. Densely planted borders are backed by yew hedging; springs feed streams which lead beside a south sloping lawn to an ancient monastic fishpond; a dell is carpeted with primroses and anemones, and a ride through the woodland edge is bordered by a mass of daffodils beneath rhododendrons. A larch wood is under-planted with ornamental trees and shrubs, such as acers, amelanchiers, enkianthus and hamamelis. The borders on the York stone terrace in front of the house blossom into a spectacular display of tapestry bedding, with tulips, myosotis and wallflowers.

**Beeleigh Abbey and Gardens:** This historic (and allegedly haunted!) 12<sup>th</sup>C Abbey surrounded by its elegant garden, is the property of the Foyle family, associated with the well-known bookshop. Our visit will include a tour of the Abbey. We will view the three acre secluded garden independently. We are assured of a warm and vocal welcome from the resident peacocks. *Lunch will be provided here, and we ask you to select from one of two choices when you place your booking:*



**A** Quiche and salad or **B** Ploughman’s lunch.      *Coffee and cake will also be served.*

**Garden Visit to Herts and Beds:      Thursday, 23 May, 2013      £44**

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

**‘The Manor House, Ayot St Lawrence’:** ‘The Manor House and its garden are an unexpected blend of ancient and modern’. The present owners have worked with garden designer Julie Toll (who will be our guide on this visit) to create a series of new gardens within the existing framework; these include three big island beds filled with herbaceous perennials in the manner of the late Alan Bloom. A set piece parterre, designed by John Brookes for a previous owner, has been reworked, as has the original walled kitchen garden. *Coffee will be provided on our arrival.*

## Events and Outings –2013

**‘Tofte Manor’:** The strong boned Jacobean manor house, with its walls covered with magnolias, wisteria, roses and jasmine, is adorned by a wonderful and uplifting five acre garden. A grass labyrinth, inspired by an earlier model at Chartres Cathedral, is accompanied by water flowing in the same circular pattern, emphasising the influence of geometry in the overall garden design. A huge old well leads to a sunken garden; deep herbaceous borders sit astride a watery crystal ball which gleams in the sunshine. *We shall be having a simple but substantial lunch, including a glass of wine, here.*



**‘Glebe House, Southill’:** When, seven years ago, Sir Samuel and Lady Whitbread moved from Southill House into what had been the Agent’s house, they invited Tom Stuart-Smith to design the garden. This is laid out in the form of a series of vistas that radiate across the garden from the house. A wide grass path bisected by generous stone steps and flanked by borders leads to a grove of Robinias contained within beech hedges. A long late-summer border leads to the rose garden and a charming thatched pavilion. All that remains of the original garden is a sunken rectangle enclosed by yew hedges – the perfect place for hot coloured plants that would be out of place elsewhere in the garden. *We shall take tea here before returning home.*

**Garden Visit to Northants: Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2013      £45**

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

Three fine gardens in Northamptonshire, two of them featured in the ‘Good Gardens Guide’.

**Steane Park, Brackley:** The home of Lady Connell, the ten acres of gardens include spacious lawns, a magnificent copper beech, roses climbing up the walls of a 17<sup>th</sup> century private chapel, a wild flower meadow, a white garden, and a lake with a Monet bridge. *Coffee will be provided on arrival, and after a light lunch at a nearby restaurant we move on to...*



## Events and Outings –2013

***Tile House Farm, Finmere:*** A small but attractive garden with herbaceous borders, a gravel garden, a pool and an aviary. Some unusual plants are for sale here.

***Hill Grounds, Evenley:*** *Our last visit, where we shall enjoy tea and cake,*

is the home of experienced plants-woman Janet Cropley and her husband Bob. Here a two acre garden is sheltered by a huge yew hedge, providing a micro climate, and making it possible to grow a wide range of plants. In the garden are double herbaceous borders, four pergolas with roses and clematis, and mature trees and shrubs.



### **Spring Lecture at St Nicholas Church, Great Munden:**

By kind invitation of Howard and Sheila Guard, members of HGT will join the Friends of St Nicholas, Great Munden to listen to:

**Dr Tim Cutler FRCP FLS**

#### **“Medicinal Herb Gardens and their Relevance in Modern Medicine”**

As a keen gardener, a practising physician specialising in dermatology at The Ipswich Hospital, and a member of the Chelsea Physic Garden’s advisory board since 1998, Dr Cutler is ideally qualified to speak on the relationship between traditional medicinal herb gardens and the practice of modern medicine.



**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2013 7.00pm**

**Tickets £12**

*Sir Hans Sloane, Chelsea Physic Garden*

## Events and Outings –2013

### Some 18<sup>th</sup> Century Gardens in Context

A short series of walks and talks with Kate Harwood, Anne Rowe and Alison Moller - three landscapes, many famous designers and a puzzle or two.

#### Programme

**Wednesday May 29 (Kate Harwood)**

**Guided walk around Audley End landscape**

**Wednesday June 5 (Kate Harwood)**

**18<sup>th</sup> century flower gardens**

**The development of the grounds at Audley End**

**Wednesday June 12 (Anne Rowe)**

**Ornamental canals in Hertfordshire**

**The development of the grounds at Gobions**

**Wednesday June 19 (Anne Rowe)**

**Guided walk around Gobions Wood**

**No meeting on Wednesday 26 June**

**Wednesday 3 July (Alison Moller and Kate Harwood)**

**The Gothic 'revival' in 18<sup>th</sup> century parks and gardens**

**The development of the grounds at Wimpole**

**Wednesday July 10 (Alison Moller)**

**Guided walk round Wimpole**

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

Prices: whole course £30; each 2 hour talk £10; each 2 hour walk £5.

Priority will be given to those booking a full course.

***Please use the enclosed 'flyer' to reserve and pay for places on this series of walks and talks.***

### **A celebration of the work of James Wyatt and Humphry Repton at Ashridge**

**At Ashridge Business School, Berkhamsted Hertfordshire.HP4 1NS**

**Dates: 27<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

**Full details from the HGT website: [www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk)**

## Challenges and Constraints: Conservation from an HGT Perspective - Kate Harwood

HGT have gained a reputation as THE body to consult when looking at proposed changes to the historic designed landscapes in the county. The Garden History Society has informed local authorities that they no longer routinely comment on planning applications, and they should consult their local gardens trust. Most already do so on a regular basis, anyway, as they receive informed, helpful advice.

We have great opportunities to influence development in our historic sites, often being consulted by owners, developers and planners before applications are submitted and working with them to get the best possible outcome for all concerned. We are very fortunate in having Anne Rowe and her dedicated band of researchers to provide the information which can then be interpreted in light of the evolving Heritage Protection Plan, the new National Planning Policy Guidelines, the developing Local Plans and strategy documents and the various requirements of Natural England and Defra.

With financial constraints on various bodies - from English Heritage to local councils' conservation departments - there is more need than ever for us to act to protect our historic gardens. We are the only ones who know what there is and also its importance (or otherwise). The challenge is to keep up with the legislation and how it works on the ground and to apply it to a myriad of different situations here in Hertfordshire. Luckily, English Heritage offer free training in many aspects – designed for local authorities but very useful for lesser mortals too. We also have a presence on the joint AGT/GHS conservation committee, the Hertfordshire Conservation Forum and good relationships with planners, conservation officers and English Heritage.

Much work has been done. A very short selection: helped raise awareness of the plight of the Water Gardens in Hemel which resulted in a successful Stage 1 bid to the Lottery for restoration, working with Watford Council and the Temple Trust to get a Georgian garden re-instated in Watford, discussed important sites with Mayencroft and others for the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, helped to highlight a little Japanese Garden at Felden Lodge, and raised awareness of the trust through talks around the county. All this as well as monitoring the planning applications (about 200 per week) across the whole county, evaluating and commenting (often more than once) on those affecting 'our' sites, commenting on



local planning policy and keeping abreast of long-term developments such as Panshanger. We have had successes but we have had failures : English Heritage declining to raise the grading of Jellicoe Water Gardens, and declining to give Scheduled Ancient Monument status to the Robert Cecil Fair Square Pond at Theobalds, which we consider very important indeed.

But we do need to do more. We need to crack on with our Local Lists of Historic Parks and Gardens which has ground to a halt. We need to help and inform our local planning committees and our development control officers – some of whom may not be aware of the importance of these sites – or even that they have them! It is all the more important with the scaling back of council conservation departments. The continued existence of these gardens for future generations to interpret, enjoy and value is important and we can do our bit to help this.

## **THE JAPANESE GARDEN IN ENGLAND** **STUDY DAY at FELDEN LODGE**

**Friday April 19<sup>th</sup> 2013**  
**10.00-16.00**

### **Speakers include:**

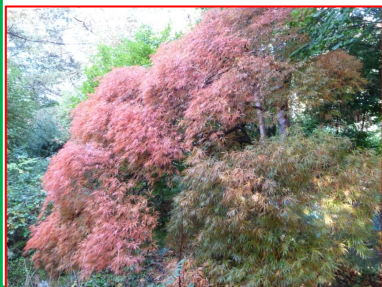
***Dr Jill Raggett:*** The Origins and Expression of the Japanese-Style Garden in Britain

***Dr Sarah Rutherford:*** A Japanese Gem in Hertfordshire: Fanhams Hall

***Kate Banister:*** The contribution of the Pulham family

***Kate Harwood:*** New discoveries in Hertfordshire; the Japanese gardens at Hanstead House and Felden Lodge

**[A visit to the Felden Lodge garden and lunch will be included in the price: £35]**



**Further details from Kate Harwood**  
**at**

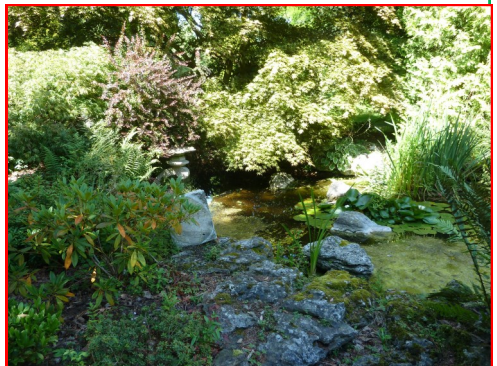
**[conservation@hertsgardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:conservation@hertsgardenstrust.org.uk) or**  
**01582 762432**

## Money, Mills, Mares and Movies

### Kate Harwood

The recently researched gardens of Hanstead House in Bricket Wood add an interesting dimension to the HGT spectrum of historic gardens. The present gardens date from 1930 and were laid out for Lady Yule, widow of 'the richest man in the Empire', Sir David Yule, who is buried in the grounds in this mausoleum which has reliefs depicting his two great passions: India and work (in his business empire based on jute production). Lady Yule did not share his passion for India – she became badly ill with malaria when she went – so lived at Bricket Wood with their daughter Gladys. The house was rebuilt by Sir David shortly before he died in 1928 and although the firm Milner White were called in to design the garden, it appears that once Sir David died, Lady Yule opted for Percy Cane<sup>1</sup> instead. She inherited a vast amount of money; between £11,000,000 to £25,000,000, depending on the source. And so she spent it. She set up the Hanstead Arabian (and Shire ) Stud, she started British National Films at Pinewood Studios with J Arthur Rank, she commissioned Cane to design the garden of her Riviera villa at Cagnes, she helped the unemployed in Scotland by commissioning a steam yacht *Nahlin* from Clydeside (later used by Edward VIII to take Mrs Simpson on a Mediterranean cruise)<sup>2</sup>, and she went in for big game hunting in a big way.

When at Hanstead she enjoyed the gardens with views out across the countryside from the perimeter terrace walk, the long borders with sunken paths, pergola, pool and music room at the end and the Japanese garden. All these were tucked into the older gardens which had sweeping lawns studded with Cedars of Lebanon. As part of the interest in wildlife, it is rumoured that the grounds contained penguins – were these free-range or kept in the lovely little Arts-and-Crafts aviary garden? Wandering down little paths brings the 'rosery' into view – like an upturned pudding basin of trellis covered with climbers, surrounded with rose beds and containing a patio with urn. Across the lawns is the little waterway which meanders through rocky shrubberies rich with plants with oriental associations such as acers and bamboo. Japanese touches, such a lanterns, stepping stones and an arched bridge give an idea of the glory of this garden in its heyday. Throughout the Yule period this garden was cared for by Head Gardener, Jack Ridout, who joined Lady Yule in 1929 and did not retire until the death of Gladys in 1957.





After Gladys died, the house became Ambassador College, and several burials in the copse around the mausoleum date from this time. It then became a training college, first for various Electricity Boards and then for HSBC. All these cared for the gardens so they have retained a great deal of their 'bones' even if their 'flesh' is somewhat too generous now! The latest phase is its purchase by developers for housing and proposals include the removal of some of the big training buildings elsewhere in the park, and replacement with housing. Dangerously, this also includes building on part of the garden. We have asked English Heritage to add this to the Register as it is such a perfect example of a Society Thirties garden which is still all there – with the added bonus of a mausoleum at the end. And we will work with St Albans Council to help preserve this garden for the future.



*Notes:*

- 1. He was also responsible for work at Dartington Hall and Amwell Grove amongst many other sites*
- 2. Now owned by Sir James Dyson*

**A Reminder from the Membership Secretary:**

**For those who pay their Hertfordshire Gardens Trust annual subscription by cheque, the due date for renewal is 1st April, 2013.**

***Penny Figgis, The Limes, Essenden, Hatfield, AL9 6HS.***

## HGT News in Brief

For all those with an interest in eighteenth century gardens and **Lancelot 'Capability' Brown in particular**, 2016 promises to be a good year, with a celebration of his life and landscapes.

Last summer an initiative was launched to plan a major celebration of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1773), 300 years after his birth. A gathering of interested parties, including the Association of Gardens Trusts, the Garden History Society, English Heritage, the National Gardens Scheme, Visit Britain and the National Trust were present at a meeting last June at Ampthill in Bedfordshire (a Capability Brown designed park), where Brown expert, John Phibbs spoke about Brown's unique contribution to the English landscape and the case for a nationwide celebration. Further information can be found at a number of sites on the internet including:

[http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/docs/CapabilityBrownTercentenary\\_Ampthill.pdf](http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/docs/CapabilityBrownTercentenary_Ampthill.pdf) and a blog:

<http://lancelotcapabilitybrown.wordpress.com/2012/10/13/introduction-capability-brown-tercentenary-2016>

Preparations are at an early stage, but it is envisaged that the Tercentenary will combine a national programme, recognising Brown's legacy in the creation of the English landscape garden, with events at a local level, where it is hoped that as many as possible of the landscapes will be open to the public. Hertfordshire Gardens Trust is starting to make plans and is keen to hear from members who would like to take part, especially any owners or managers of Brown landscapes in the county.

***If you would like to get involved, please get in touch with: Helen Leiper.  
Tel 01727 839102 or email [helenleiper@aol.com](mailto:helenleiper@aol.com)***

### **Book Group News**

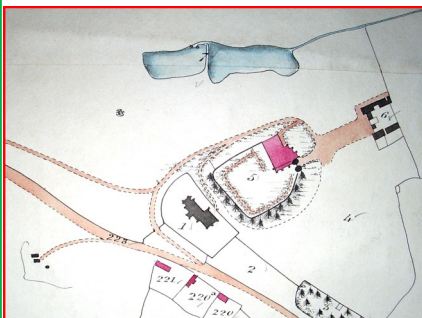
The HGT Book Group was set up last September, following a talk given by Kate Harwood on 'Landscape and Literature'. Since then we have been reading about different aspects of garden history and meet every other month for a lively discussion. Our next meetings will be held at Stansted Abbots on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March and in St Albans on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March. The St Albans group are reading *The Brother Gardeners* by Andrea Wulf, about eighteenth century plant hunting and collecting, while the Stansted Abbots group have chosen *The Cottage Garden* by Anne Scott-James. New members are always welcome.

***For further information telephone Helen 01727 839102  
or email [helenleiper@aol.com](mailto:helenleiper@aol.com).***

## Tithe Maps on CD – Bella Stuart-Smith

One of the many advantages of being High Sheriff is that I have been invited to visit all sorts of events and organisations. Despite being a member of HGT, I had never been to Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies at County Hall; knowing this to be familiar territory for members of our research group I jumped at the chance to attend the official launch of their CD, 'Hertfordshire Tithe Maps of 1834 to 1851'. These are the earliest large scale parish maps in existence and show details of who owned and occupied each plot of land in the parish. Seeing the scale and size of the Watford map, which is stored on long poles, manhandled by at least two people and when rolled out is the size of a large billiard table, this project makes our local history infinitely more accessible.

It brings it to life by revealing lots of names—like Jedediah Puddephat and fields called Skin and Bones, Good Boys Corner and Roaring Megg. And those names survive. Fifty metres from where I live now was a cottage where a Mrs Puddephat lived when my husband was growing up and it is no coincidence that there is a leisure park in Stevenage called Roaring Megg. There is lots of quirky information too - Hemel Hempstead contained the most individual names (1166) and Ashwell's map was divided into 3061 individual plots. It is the result of one of their biggest volunteer projects. More than 40 volunteers spent a total of over 2,500 hours extracting information about each house, field and orchard on each map. They have listed the names of over 16,000 people who either lived in Hertfordshire or owned a part of it. Those names can be found on 'Herts Names Online' so it is easy to find which 'award' you need to look at. I had a wonderful time looking in close up on a computer at the fields around our house, and the two ponds which no longer exist but probably explain why we have the wettest, claggiest soil in which to garden. So, they are not just for local, family and landscape historians but for gardeners too.



**Benington Lordship (No. 5) as shown on the tithe map of 1840. Inhabited buildings are shown in pink, uninhabited (including the church, No. 1) in grey. North is to the right. Reproduced by kind permission of HALS (DSA4/17/2).**

[www.hertsdirect.org/services/leisculture/heritage1/hals/hertfordshirestithemapsavailabletobuy](http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/leisculture/heritage1/hals/hertfordshirestithemapsavailabletobuy)

## **'Maydencroft ': manor, hunting park, farm and brickworks**

**Bridget Howlett—Author and HGT Member**

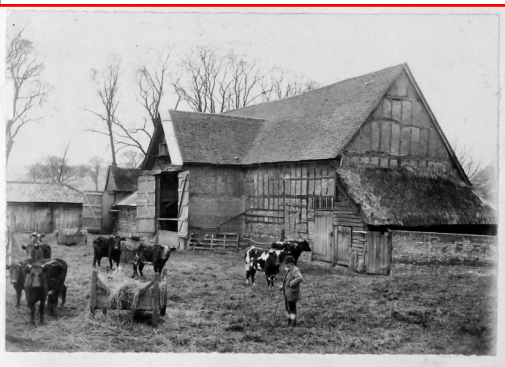
Part of the Domesday Manor of Dinsley, which included most of the parish of Ippollitts, was given by King Stephen to the Knights Templar who founded a preceptory at Temple Dinsley. The rest was owned by the de Furnival family who probably built a moated manor house at Maydencroft (meaning mead or pasture croft) in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Nearby was a park visited in 1358 by Queen Isabella, mother of Edward III, and her daughter Joan, Queen of the Scots. The fish pond and some of the park banks can still be seen. The manor was later owned by Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII. Her bailiff, Lawrence Tristram, built the oldest part of the present house as a hall open to the rafters, still blackened by smoke from a central fire.

Henry VIII visited his manors of Hitchin and Maydencroft in the early 1520s to watch his hawks fly, but nearly drowned when his pole broke as he vaulted a muddy ditch. He sold Maydencroft in 1544 to John Cocke. His son, William and his wife, Elizabeth, built most of the present house and the impressive timber framed barn where John Bunyan is reputed to have preached.

Maydencroft was sold in 1637 to the first of a succession of absentee owners who leased it to farmers and brickmakers. In front of the house horses turned a pugmill, which kneaded clay. Fuel for the kilns came from nearby Wain Wood.

Brickmaking ceased by 1840. By the 1970s, no longer viable as a small farm, Maydencroft was restored as a family home by new owners, Robert and Frances Williams. Today its fields are grazed by Longhorn cattle and Hebridean sheep and the manor is home to Maydencroft Rural and other businesses.

*Maydencroft. A manor, hunting park, farm and brickworks near Hitchin* (Hitchin Historical Society, 2012) by Bridget Howlett, price £12.95, is available from Waterstones, Eric T Moore's Bookshop and the Bookbug all in Hitchin.



*Bunyan's Barn c. 1908. The impressive barn which is 75½ feet long, 28 feet wide and 15 feet high was built in the 16th century. It has an oak frame and brick nogging. Hitchin Museum Lawson Thompson Scrapbooks Vol.3 p.111*

## **‘Prizegiving Day’**

### **Penelope Wrong— HGT Schools Gardening Judge**

When one of us judges arrives at the prize-worthy school, bearing a well-earned cheque, our welcomes are to say the least varied. On a good day, one's pre-arranged arrival is anticipated, assemblies are gathered, the cheque is handed over with a few encouraging words to some burgeoning gardeners who then take the judge on a whirlwind and enthusiastic tour to show off their horticultural triumphs. These vary from some healthy-looking radishes, lettuces, peas, courgettes and maybe a marigold or two to a would-be bug house or a dried-up puddle (we thought it would be nice for a frog) or a completely overgrown bramble and nettle-infested patch which is their wildly optimistic project for next year. On one memorable occasion I was shown a completely empty raised bed and was told, with pride, that all the carrots which were growing there had been eaten, by them, the previous week, to the consternation of the Staff but the triumph of the children - great satisfaction and glee all round. On the not-so-good days pre-arranged visits have been forgotten and one is met with blank faces (unless I have come to repair some obscure bit of educational kit?) but matters usually get sorted out, the cheque is handed over and everyone smiles.

Normally there is a liaison with a specified member of staff or a heroic parent who is the horticultural anchor-person for that school. Some are knowledgeable, some wildly optimistic and somewhat naive - these have often been lured into a costly scheme by a Garden Consultant - and some just wildly eccentric. On one memorable occasion a banana plant was produced by the aforesaid liaison lady who maintained she had grown it from seed - in East Herts - and was eagerly anticipating the arrival of many bananas. I could think of no suitable follow-up to that.

The children are always welcoming, enthusiastic and entertaining. Hopefully gardening seeds have been sown and who knows - *Chelsea here they come!*

*[The HGT Schools Project provides financial help to primary schools in the form of annual prizes to a total value of several thousand pounds each year - Editor]*

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Mr Michael Goulding OBE  
The Rt. Hon. Sir Murray Stuart-Smith  
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