

CAMBRIDGESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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The Association of Garden Trusts is a national movement for the conservation and restoration of gardens and parks of national, regional and local importance, and for the creation of new gardens. The Association was launched in London in 1993, at which time there were 18 Trusts. Today, following our launch in November there will be 26. In November last year, a broad range of organisations, groups and individuals, professional and voluntary, assembled at Wimpole Hall to ascertain the interest in forming a local Trust. The National Trust kindly lent us the Long Gallery and generous financial support was given by Cambridge County Council. Mrs. Gilly Drummond, the prime mover in the formation of Garden Trusts, talked of her work in Hampshire and the Association. This was a most successful event and the enthusiastic response through questionnaires distributed during the meeting, the subsequent support from those who had agreed to be patrons, made the formation of a Steering Group possible. The launch was agreed for November 1996 and our thanks are due to all those whose commitment has enabled this to be achieved. We now look forward to providing our membership with the opportunity to pursue the aims of the Trust, and in particular, to assist in promoting a greater awareness of landscape and a wider sense of responsibility for the environment. We hope the Trust will act as a catalyst in encouraging both owners and custodians to make greater use of the broad range of conservation skills now available, from government agencies, local authorities, voluntary organisations etc.

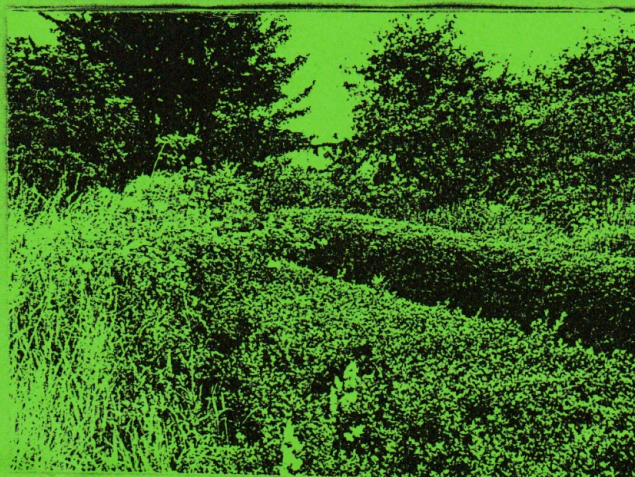
Theo Stanning

Proposed projects:

Ramsey Abbey School Garden

The restoration of the walled garden at Ramsey Abbey School seems to be most promising as the first major project of the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust. The site, owned by Cambridgeshire County Council, covers an area of one acre. Its use as a Victorian kitchen garden dates from 1839, designed by Sir Edmund Blore. It was divided by cross-paths bordered by box hedges into four roods. Walled on three sides with Ramsey School Garden Block making up part of the fourth. Nothing now remains of the range of glass-houses. There are two wells and water is piped to taps at various points in the garden. Quite a proportion of the box hedges remain as do several old, and as yet, unidentified fruit trees including a very large mulberry, which would make an interesting feature in any revival of the garden. Part of the south-east section is cultivated by Mrs. Swales, a retired teacher from the school, and, judging by the results of her work, the land seems very fertile. The Trust is investigating a possible partnership with several organisations in Ramsey and the Cambs County Council, all of whom expressed great interest and offered valuable help in various ways. The only certain use of the area is as a Victorian vegetable garden, but as part of the grounds of the Benedictine Abbey, it is possible that it was in use very much earlier. A thorough survey of the site will hopefully reveal a flexible approach.

Emma Stapleton



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Gazetteer

One priority for the Trust will be the compilation of a gazetteer of historic gardens and landscaped parklands in Cambridgeshire. Many are described in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens, in the County Council's Parklands survey and in other sources, published and unpublished. The initial task will be to collate information from these records. But there will be scope for further research, using maps, documents, fieldwork and local knowledge, and perhaps looking at types of garden, smaller town gardens and urban parks, for example, which have not so far received much attention. If you are interested in helping with this project please talk to **Fran Brown**

Gardener's Question Time - Anglesey Abbey

Ursula Buchan, Richard Ayres, Graham Rice and Geoff Stebbings were on the Panel of our first fund raising event which was held in the Lower Gallery at Anglesey Abbey. Interestingly there were no questions on roses or clematis. The audience must have been so impressed by the fine trees on their walk to the Abbey, so wanted to know more trees and shrubs. It was fascinating to hear the Anglesey Abbey preferred treatment compared with the Kew treatment and the method for germinating fern spores had the audience giggling for several minutes. We must thank all those who helped but in particular David Robinson, the administrator of the Abbey, and one must not forget the audience, without whom an event like this could never take place. Their support and enthusiasm provided a most enjoyable evening. **John Drake**

Garden Walk - Anglesey Abbey with Richard Ayres

The setting for the first walk organised by the Trust was the beautiful gardens and grounds of Anglesey Abbey on a warm and sunny evening in June. The comprehensive tour was devised and conducted by Richard Ayres, the Head Gardener. The gardens of the Abbey were originally devised and laid out in the 1920's by the first Lord Fairhaven. They are a great tribute to his vision and aptitude for garden design, created as they were from a wild and windswept Fenland landscape. Carefully planted belts of trees and hedges provide windbreaks and create the shelter in which a large variety of trees and shrubs can flourish. Some of the highlights of the tour included the arboretum, a wide variety of informal and formal plantings, a wealth of superb statuary, amongst which was a beautiful Egyptian porphyry urn. A further delight was supplied by the imposing 'Coronation Walk', a long avenue of large, majestic horse chesnuts trees. The first Lord Fairhaven was said to describe the place as his 'cathedral' because of the peace there and the manner in which the sunlight filters through the trees. Once again our thanks to the National Trust, in particular David Robinson and Richard Ayres. **Sandra Easom**



Donna Heycraft

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